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NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE HISTORY OF THE OHIO VALLEY FRONTIER, 1750-1838: CONNECTING RECENT SCHOLARSHIP WITH PUBLIC INTERPRETATION

By

Ellen Rich
B.A., University of Louisville, 2012

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Arts and Sciences of the
University of Louisville
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Arts in History

Department of History
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

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A Thesis Approved on

July 17, 2017

By the following Thesis Committee:

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Daniel Vivian, Thesis Director

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Daniel Krebs

____
Selene Phillips

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DEDICATION

To my cat

Apollo

my weird, furry companion

&

To my sisters

Sarah Exner and Lindsey Schindler

who gave infinite love, encouragement, and guidance when I needed it most

Without you all, I would never have made it here

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To my fellow graduate students—Sarah Dunn, Greyson Neff, Angelica Bullock, Mary K. Marlatt, Hannah O'Daniel—thank you for sharing in the stress of graduate school and for providing support and advice throughout the process. Angelica and Mary K., thank you for being awesome conference buddies to a first timer. To my trivia team—Sarah Dunn, Hannah O'Daniel, Mary K., and Jacob Burress—thanks for all the laughs, beers, and spot-on memes. Thank you for listening to my worries and for giving me great advice.

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ABSTRACT

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE HISTORY OF THE OHIO VALLEY FRONTIER, 1750-1838: CONNECTING RECENT SCHOLARSHIP WITH PUBLIC INTERPRETATION

Ellen Rich

July 17, 2017

This thesis aims to interpret for the public both the native and white perspectives of the conquest and colonization of the Ohio Valley frontier by Anglo-Americans in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Its focus is a planned museum exhibition, "Conquering the First American West: The Ohio Valley Frontier, 1750-1838," which explores interactions between American Indians and Anglo-Americans on the Ohio Valley frontier and their consequences. The introduction justifies the need for the exhibition and outlines its major arguments. The second section examines the historiography of the conquest of the Ohio Valley and shows why stronger public interpretation is needed. The third section is the text and object and image lists of the planned exhibition. The fourth section contains the exhibition bibliography, including a short bibliographical essay on the secondary source material and a list of objects and images used. In the conclusion, I elaborate on the consequences of the events of the Ohio Valley frontier on the region's indigenous communities today and the need for the American public to understand them.

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INTERPRETING NATIVE HISTORY FOR THE PUBLIC

The American Indian perspective of the colonization and conquest of the Ohio Valley frontier has traditionally been marginalized within the American historical narrative. Indeed, ignoring the native presence on the American frontier has been practice since Europeans first arrived in the New World. European and American governments repeatedly blocked natives from peace negotiations of wars in which they fought and died, signing away their lands without their consent. After the birth of the new republic, as American Indians slowly disappeared from everyday life in the east, American writers literally wrote natives out of American history.

Recently, colonial and early American historians have begun to explore the native perspective, producing more complex stories of the frontier experience. Where natives were virtually ignored or portrayed as helpless victims or problems to be solved by colonial and federal policy makers in earlier historical studies, they are now seen as actors with their own stories. The resulting literature has produced narratives of violence and loss but also those of accommodation and peace. The new literature shows that middle grounds existed on the Ohio Valley frontier and that Ohio Natives developed a variety of strategies in response to the Anglo-American invasion of their lands.

The recent literature has also debunked the myth of the frontier put forth by Frederick Jackson Turner at the end of the nineteenth century. His frontier thesis presented the American frontier as the process of Anglo-Americans bringing civilization

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to a vast and seemingly empty continent. Historians have now recovered the frontier's historical meaning as a cultural contact zone: a place where native and white cultures often clashed and yet sometimes coincided, not a point at which civilization overcame savagery. The story of the American frontier is not a simplistic narrative of Anglo-Americans bringing civilization to empty lands. It is a complex story that involves natives, (some who resisted until the end and some who submitted peacefully), land hungry frontiersmen, and colonial and federal leaders willing to appease them. It involves diverse experiences that depended upon local circumstances as much as national and imperial aims.

Unfortunately, the myth of the Americanization of the frontier still looms large in the American conscious. Although Americans today are aware of some of the negative effects of colonization on native communities, the full story remains largely misunderstood. Western novels and movies exaggerate the level of violence of the frontier, pitting the heroic cowboy against the villainous Indian. US history textbooks rarely discuss native history past the frontier era, preserving the myth that natives simply died out or assimilated into white American society.[1]

Americans have indicated that they view museums as places of scholarly authority and transparency.[2] Museums, therefore, have an obligation to interpret the full story, to not gloss over the darker histories simply because they are difficult to face. Exhibitions are tools for museums to engage the public with this country's difficult histories. "Conquering the First American West: The Ohio Valley, 1750-1838" aims to

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[1] Raney Bench, *Interpreting Native American History and Culture at Museums and Historic Sites* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).
[2] Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

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introduce the public to the complexities of the white settlement of the Ohio Valley recovered in the recent historiography. It seeks to debunk popular stereotypes about American Indians and their historical relationships with colonial and federal powers. It also aims to demonstrate the roles natives and whites played in the story by exploring the actions and motivations of each group.

I used images and objects from museum and archival collections in the United States and Europe, including the Filson Historical Society, the Kentucky Historical Society, the British Museum, and the National Museum of the American Indian to create "Conquering the First American West." When possible, I attempted to select objects and images that would convey historical concepts and ideas beyond those expressed in the labels and captions. For example, the Potawatomi cradleboard symbolizes native childrearing practices and domestic relations as well as the importance of agriculture to native life. The surveyor's tools represent European ideas about property ownership, law, and commerce and demonstrate the differences between native and European cultural beliefs about land ownership and usage. The combination of visual imagery, material culture, and text shows the complexity of the conquest of the Ohio Valley and its significance in American and native history.

The resulting story is one of native resistance, conflict, and yet survival. The exhibition demonstrates the natives were people with varying motivations and options for preserving their lands and culture. It shows frontier whites as eager for cheap Ohio Valley land and inspired by opportunity and revolutionary ideals of liberty and land-ownership. It demonstrates that the subjugation and dispossession of Ohio Natives was not inevitable. It happened as the result of the choices of frontier whites, natives, as well

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as federal officials. The exhibit explores why interactions sometimes ended in violence and later physical separation in order to promote a better understanding of the country's early development and the role American Indians played in it.

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FROM CIVILIZING THE WEST TO MIDDLE GROUNDS: THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF NATIVE-ANGLO INTERACTIONS ON THE OHIO VALLEY FRONTIER

Colonial and early American historians first began focusing on the American Indian experience of the Anglo-American colonization of the Ohio Valley in the 1990s. The literature prior to this time tended to focus on white attitudes on the frontier and colonial and federal Indian policy. If natives appeared in the literature at all, they were usually "cast as problems to be solved by federal policymakers or objects of study by intellectuals."[1] However, recent scholarship places natives at center of the story, seeing them as peoples attempting to maintain their lands and ways of life rather than passive victims disappearing in the wake of American expansion. Focusing on the native perspective has produced a more complex picture of the conquest and development of the nation that is largely misunderstood by the American public. The native perspective should be interpreted for the public to promote a better understanding of the roles that both natives and whites played in the conflict that occurred on the Ohio Valley frontier and its significance in American history.

Ignoring the native presence on the American frontier has been practice since Europeans first encountered the New World. European and American powers alike

[1] James H. Merrell, "American Nations, Old and New: Reflections on Indians and the Early Republic," in *Native Americans and the Early Republic*, eds. Frederick E. Hoxie, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999) 333-353, 333.

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repeatedly excluded natives from peace negotiations of wars in which they fought and died, signing away their lands without their consent. Shortly after the Revolution, as American Indians slowly disappeared from everyday life in the east, American writers began literally writing natives out of American history. Throughout the early years of the republic, popular writers such as J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur and James Fenimore Cooper described American Indians as a disappearing race, doomed to vanish before civilization.[2]

Nineteenth-century historians reflected popular attitudes about the inevitability of native extinction by ignoring native agency on the historical landscape of the Ohio Valley frontier. Francis Parkman in his 1851 study *The Conspiracy of Pontiac, and the Indian War after the Conquest of Canada* argues that natives "were destined to melt and vanish before the advancing waves of Anglo-American power."[3] Frederick Jackson Turner's famous paper "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," written in 1893, ignores the presence of natives on the frontier all together. According to Turner, the story of American western expansion can be explained simply as "the existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward."[4] Historians during this time channeled their racist attitudes into one-dimensional, glorifying accounts of Euro-Americans bringing civilization to the vast and empty continent. Turner's triumphant assertion of the centrality of the frontier experience to

[2] J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer, and, Sketches of Eighteenth Century America,* ed. Albert E. Stone (New York: Penguin, 1981). James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers; or, The Sources of the Susquehanna: A Descriptive Tale* (1823, reprinted ed. New York: Penguin, 1988). (1823; reprint, New York: Penguin, 1988)?

[3] Francis Parkman, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac, and the Indian War after the Conquest of Canada, Vol. 1.* (1851, reprinted ed. Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1994), ix.

[4] Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (1893, reprint ed., London, 2008), 1.

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American history and culture would remain the dominant paradigm of frontier historiography until the 1980s.

Early twentieth-century historians continued the pattern of neglecting native agency. If they mentioned natives at all, historians depicted them as victims of Euro-American expansion or curiosities to be studied.[5] In 1932, Grant Foreman wrote in his book on Indian removal that northern natives "yielded with comparatively small resistance to the power and chicane of the white man" than the southern tribes.[6] Although Randolph C. Downes claims in the preface to *Council Fires on the Upper Ohio* (1940) that the native and the white perspectives are both "essential to a true interpretation" of the American frontier, he goes on to depict natives as "humiliated" and "repentant" before the white man after bloody war, "the inevitable outcome of which had been crushing defeat."[7] Early twentieth-century historians claimed to consider the native perspective, but in reality they continued to perpetuate the myth of the inevitability of the American conquest of the West.

Not until the 1970s did scholars begin to examine the native experience during the colonization of the Ohio Valley. Throughout the 1970s, James H. O'Donnell III, David Curtis Skaggs, Jr. and others included the native experience during specific episodes such as the American Revolution and Indian Removal.[8] Despite such strides toward recovering

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[5] Walter Harrison Mohr, *Federal Indian Relations, 1774-1778* (Philadelphia, 1933); Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Policy in the Formative Years: The Indian Trade and Intercourse and Acts, 1790-1834* (Cambridge, 1962); Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932); Randolph C. Downes, *Council Fires on the Upper Ohio: A Narrative of Indian Affairs in the Upper Ohio Valley until 1795* (Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1940).
[6] Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal,* 13.
[7] Randolph C. Downes, *Council Fires on the Upper Ohio,* ix, 1.
[8] James H. O'Donnell III, *Southern Indians in the American Revolution* (Knoxville, 1973); Arthur H. DeRosier, Jr., *The Removal of the Choctaw Indians* (Knoxville, 1970); Ronald N. Satz, *American Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era* (Lincoln, 1975); David Curtis Skaggs, Jr., *The Old Northwest in the American*

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the native voice, however, white attitudes and political figures remained the focus of these works. According to James H. Merrell, the most notable feature of the scholarship of the era was that "works on white attitudes and federal policy—long the staple of the literature—took on a more critical tone."[9] Indeed, in Jack Sosin's *The Opening of the West*, he devotes a whopping eleven pages to the "clearing the Indian barrier" and the rest to the establishment of government and law on the Kentucky and Tennessee frontiers.[10]

During the 1980s and early 1990s, a new generation of historians began attacking the contradictions and exclusions imbedded in Turner's frontier thesis.[11] Among the most notable works are Patricia N. Limerick's *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (1987) and Richard White's *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (1991). Limerick's study refutes Turner's frontier thesis, reinterpreting the West as a place, with many actors and events rather than an empty land awaiting white settlement.[12] She argues that western historians should abandon the ethnocentric notion of the frontier and focus instead on the history of the West as a region. In *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* White argues that

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Revolution: An Anthology, (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1977); Bernard Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American* Indian (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973); Jack M. Sosin, *The Opening of the West*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970).

[9] James H. Merrell, 335.

[10] Jack M. Sosin, *The Opening of the West*.

[11] Patricia N. Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987); Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West,"* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); Clyde Milner, Carol O'Connor, and Martha Sandweiss, eds. *The Oxford History of the American West.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Donald Worster, *Under Western Skies: Nature and History in the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); David Wrobel and Michael Steiner, eds. *Many American Wests: Place, Culture, and Regional Identity* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997).

[12] Patricia N. Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest*, 1987.

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rather than producing rugged individualism (as Turner contended), the West depended heavily on the federal government throughout the twentieth century.[13]

In combination with the hundredth anniversary of the frontier thesis, these studies sparked a heated debate among historians about the merits of Turner's process-oriented approach and Limerick's place-based regional one. Critics of Limerick argued that the frontier was too entrenched in American public consciousness to simply abandon. They sought instead to recover its historical meaning as a cultural contact zone, rather than a point at which civilization triumphed over savagery.[14] Historian Stephen Aron is one such critic. In his 1996 book *How the West was Lost,* he argues that to Daniel Boone and his contemporaries, the frontier was "the periphery of Anglo-American colonization" and "the contested territory between 'Indian Country' and backcountry."[15] Daniel Boone's frontier was not a virgin land but a borderland, where cultures collided and sometimes coincided.

Stripping the frontier of the providential façade Turner assigned it shows not only the variation of frontier experiences but acknowledges the contribution of both natives and whites to those experiences. Indeed, Aron demonstrates that natives and Anglo-Americans peacefully coexisted in Kentucky until competition for game and later land drove them apart. At first natives were willing to share Kentucky, but as whites depleted the game and began to establish permanent settlements in the region, conflict between the groups intensified. Ohio Natives, viewing land and game as communal resources, fought

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[13] Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own," 1991*.
[14] Stephan Aron, *How the West was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Robert V. Hine, John Mack Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive* History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Alan Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (New York: Penguin, 2001); Larry McMurty, "How the West was Won or Lost," *New Republic* 203 (Oct. 22, 1990): 32-38.
[15] Stephen Aron, *How the West Was Lost*, 3.

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against whites for exploiting them for profit. Seen in its proper historical context, the frontier becomes a space of cultural exchange rather than a one-way process of white cultural and physical domination.

Aron also refutes Limerick's strict regional approach, contending that each frontier must be studied in the context of previous frontier experiences.[16] He argues that focusing too closely on regional history of the West ignores the influence of earlier conquests such as that of the Old Northwest. In other words, the conquest of the trans-Mississippi West must be placed in the context of the conquest of the trans-Appalachian West. In *How the West was Lost*, he argues that the Ohio Valley was where the US and its white population learned how to conquer and the costs of doing it. He argues that the conquest of Kentucky, specifically, "prefigured the ensuing conquest, colonization, and consolidation of that vast domain stretching from the Appalachians to the Pacific."[17] It was in Kentucky that the US learned to divide and conquer native peoples and to liberalize credit and reduce land prices to facilitate smooth white resettlement of native lands. Aron demonstrates that while studying the impacts of specific cultural exchanges between groups on the frontier is important, historians must also pay attention to the historical processes that were at play there in order to fully understand those exchanges.

Another influential book to come out of this historiographical debate that takes the regional approach is Richard White's *The Middle Ground*, published in 1991. White's study is one of the first written on the Ohio Valley frontier to explicitly place native peoples at "the center of the scene… seek[ing] to understand the reasons for their

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[16] Stephen Aron, "Lessons in Conquest: Towards a Greater Western History," *Pacific Historical Review* 63 (May 1994): 127.
[17] Stephan Aron, *How the West was Lost*, 2.

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actions."[18] His work examines how French fur traders and natives in the Great Lakes region in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries constructed a mutually comprehensible world in which they could peacefully coexist. He argues that both parties appealed to what they believed to be the values and practices of the other to create rituals of interaction that would be acceptable to both sides. These practices formed what White calls the middle ground: a social code by which disagreements between parties over issues such as marriage, murder, or trade could be settled.[19]

White's seminal study on the Great Lakes region, much like Aron's on Kentucky, shows that native-white interactions on the frontier were not always characterized by whites dictating to natives. He argues that neither the French fur traders nor the natives of the Great Lakes region in the seventeenth century could dictate the terms of interaction because they needed each other as allies, trading partners, and sexual partners. In fact, White proves that natives had a major trade advantage because they could trade their desired furs to the French, the Spanish, or the British at any given time to receive the best price. Thus, when the French evacuated the region after the Seven Years' War and the British, and later the Americans, attempted to control the natives, the middle ground eroded and eventually deteriorated, leading to conflict and distrust.

White's work demonstrates the diversity of the frontier experience and the need to study it on the village rather than the tribal or national level. White argues that studying

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[18] Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republic in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), xi. Other important works on the native perspective on the Ohio Valley frontier from this period: Daniel Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); *R. Douglas Hurt, The Indian Frontier 1763-1846* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002); James Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); R. Douglas Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier: Crucible of the Old Northwest, 1720-1830* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).
[19] Richard White, *The Middle Ground*, x.

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the frontier on the village level is necessary for understanding specific cultural exchanges between groups. According to White, the British settlers who moved into the region after the Seven Years' War did not participate in the rituals of the middle ground. Indeed, he argues that they "did not believe their lives depended on good relations with Indians, nor did they seek refuge among them."[20] Unlike the French fur traders, British colonists did not seek interaction with American Indians beyond those required for trade.

What White fails to explain—perhaps one of the flaws of taking a strictly regional approach—is *why* the French, and not the British, chose accommodation with the Indians of the Great Lakes. Why did the French feel they needed the natives when the British believed they did not? Historians have begun exploring the motivations of the imperial powers in the Ohio Valley and the strategies they used for implementing them to explain these differences. Alan Taylor and Eric Hinderaker point to fundamental differences in the goals of the French and British imperial aims for their respective colonies.[21] The French first colonized the St. Lawrence Valley for the sole purpose of securing the fur trade. The French trading posts that were established in this region were founded and occupied by male fur traders and contained very few women and children. Fur traders, therefore, needed to develop and maintain close ties to the native communities surrounding their posts in order to secure trade partners, obtain guides to the best furs in the area, and maintain their populations. Ohio Natives cooperated with the French fur traders, who came in small numbers, took up little land, and offered much needed trade goods such as blankets, guns, and ammunition.

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[20] Richard White, *The Middle Ground*, 317.
[21] Alan Taylor, *American Colonies*; Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

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English colonial officials, on the other hand, envisioned the British American colonies as the future breadbasket of Europe. They sought to repair England's economic and social woes by putting the growing population of unemployed poor to work on colonial plantations, producing goods to be sold in England.[22] Settlement companies offered land to those who could afford passage to the colonies. The poor came to British America to make a better life for themselves and, naturally, brought their families with them. Therefore, British colonial farmers, unlike French fur traders, had no need for maintaining good relations with neighboring natives. Ohio Natives, in turn, did not take kindly to the large numbers of British colonists encroaching on their lands and offering no trade goods.

However, this does not explain why British fur traders were less likely than their French counterparts to take up permanent residence within their communities, nor why British colonists chose not to interact with them in general.[23] This, according to Taylor, was due to differing conceptions of race. He argues that during the eighteenth century, political power in British society had begun a dispersal process among white males. This process was accelerated in the colonies, where colonists enjoyed greater independence than the common people living in Britain. There they established "a shared identity as white men, by asserting their superiority defined against Indians and Africans."[24] Indeed, historian Nicholas Canny has demonstrated that the English had practice with asserting their racial superiority over indigenous populations during their colonization of Ireland in

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[22] Alan Taylor, *American Colonies*, 122.
[23] Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, 54.
[24] Alan Taylor, *American Colonies*, xiii.

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the sixteenth century.[25] He argues that the English brought this racist mentality with them across the Atlantic. In short, a white racial solidarity developed in the British colonies alongside an expansion of liberty for white males. With such a racialized view of societal order, natives and their ways of life were generally considered inferior by British colonists. Indeed, according to James Axtell, American Indians symbolized "the 'savage' baseness that would dominate human nature" if man did not civilize himself with government, religion, and the capitalistic work ethic.[26]

As Gregory Dowd has demonstrated in his significant text, *A Spirited Resistance,* natives were forming similar concepts of race at the same time as whites.[27] He argues that from 1745 to 1815, Ohio Natives were developing a pan-Indian identity which transcended tribal and linguistic boundaries and which generated new myths of separate creations of red, white, and black peoples. He traces the movement, in which a series of prophets from across the Ohio Valley claimed to have visions from the Great Spirit telling them to cast off the influences of the white man and return to native traditions and rituals, from the days of Pontiac and Neolin to Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa. These religious visions established a strong racialized identity which recast the white man as the enemy, providing the impetus for taking military action against him.

Stressing the range of agendas and motivations on the Ohio Valley frontier, Dowd shows that native military resistance was also opposed by a strong faction of "accommodationists," natives who sought peace with the whites. These factions divided

[25] Nicholas Canny, "The Permissive Frontier: Social Control in English Settlements in Ireland and Virginia, 1550-1650," in *The Westward Enterprise: English Activities in Ireland, the Atlantic, and America 1480-1650*, K.R. Andrews, N. P. Canny, P. E. Hair, eds. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979). Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British 1580-*1650 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
[26] James Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers*, 330.
[27]Gregory Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

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native communities of the Ohio Valley over resistance against white encroachment on native lands. Contrary to earlier historians, Dowd argues that intratribal, not intertribal disunity undermined the pan-Indian resistance movements. Dowd's study depicts natives as anything but victims of white expansion; on the contrary, he demonstrates that Ohio natives adopted a variety of strategies to maintain independence and control of their lands. Unfortunately, these internal divisions over whether to resist white expansion undermined their success.

Employing the native perspective has changed the interpretation of the causes and impacts of frontier wars such as the Seven Years' War, Pontiac's War, and the American Revolution.[28] Recent studies by Colin Calloway, Woody Holton, Gary Nash and others have shown that American Indians centrally influenced the outcome of the American Revolution.[29] Calloway's book *The American Revolution in Indian Country* studies the impacts of the Revolution on Ohio Native communities. Calloway focuses on the community experience, much like White, to facilitate a better understanding of the complexity of responses of natives to the conflict. In each chapter of the book, he analyzes different native community responses to the war and the consequences for each community.

Calloway argues that burned villages, murdered chiefs, civil war, economic devastation, disease, and hunger made the American Revolution "one of the darkest

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[28] Colin Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Gregory Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance,* 1992; Richard White, *The Middle Ground*, 1991.
[29] Colin Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Salves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Gary Nash, *Race and Revolution* (Madison: Madison House, 1990); Walter S. Dunn Jr., *Choosing Sides on the Frontier during the American Revolution* (Westport: Praeger, 2007).

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periods in American Indian history."[30] To make matters worse, Ohio Natives were excluded from negotiations of the Treaty of Paris, their lands given away without their consent. In the end, whether natives fought with the American, the British, or remained neutral did not matter. Calloway argues that after the Revolution, all natives were cast as enemies of the new republic for supposedly siding with the British during the war. British allied native raids on Ohio Valley settlements during the war traumatized western settlers, justifying their exclusion from the new republic. However, despite such devastating blows, Calloway maintains that Ohio Natives forged new strategies of resistance that they employed well into the nineteenth century.

Calloway's work is significant for shedding light on the diversity of native experiences during the war and for connecting them to the broader American story of the Revolution. Indeed, he demonstrates that natives experienced internal divisions and debates over national identity just like Americans during the Revolution. His most influential assertion, however, is that even though the majority of natives remained neutral throughout the war, Americans saw them all as enemies afterward. Frontiersmen had lost friends and family to Indian raids on the frontier during the war. Natives were just a divided on accepting peace that was accomplished without them. Both sides continued to seek revenge for their losses long after the war ended. From the native perspective, the Revolutionary War can be interpreted as just a phase in twenty years of frontier warfare.

The recent historiography of the early western expansion has benefited from examining the native perspective as well. Frederick Hoxie, David Andrew Nichols, Craig

[30] Colin Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country*, 290.

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Thompson Friend, and others have reinterpreted federal Indian policy and white attitudes through native lenses to produce more complex pictures of native responses to the colonization of the Old Northwest.[31] Nichols's *Red Gentlemen and White Savages: Indians, Federalists, and the Search for Order on the American Frontier* explores the actions and motivations of federal officials, white settlers, and various native communities in the early republic. He demonstrates that after the American Revolution, federalists and Ohio Native leaders both wanted the federal government to take over the process of colonizing western lands to curb chaotic settlement and maintain peace between natives and frontier whites. Ohio Native leaders and Federalist leaders established a tenuous alliance to accomplish the gradual and nonviolent resettlement of the Old Northwest. However, the alliance was undermined by frontier whites who wanted to acquire western lands cheaply and quickly and by militant natives who resisted white western expansion.

Nichols outlines the slow decline of American Indian power and the rise of federal control in the Ohio Valley by the beginning of the nineteenth century. He argues that by the time the last Western Indian Confederacy formed during this period, the US had sufficient manpower, including hundreds of US-allied natives, to crush it. This new military power, coupled by Jeffersonian civilization policies that gave incentives to

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[31] Frederick E. Hoxie, Ronald Hoffman, Peter J. Albert, eds., *Native Americans and the Early Republic* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999); Craig Thompson Friend, *Kentucke's Frontiers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010); Daniel P. Barr, *The Boundaries between Us: Natives and Newcomers along the Frontiers of the Old Northwest Territory, 1750-1850* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 2006); David Andrew Nichols, *Red Gentlemen and White Savages: Indians, Federalists, and the Search for Order on the American Frontier* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008); Daniel R. Martell, *Tribe, Race, History: Native Americans in Southern New England, 1780-1880* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), Colin Calloway, *The Victory with No Name: The Native American Defeat of the First American Army* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

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support the federal government and oppose militants like Tecumseh, led to American victory over the confederacy.

Nichol's study demonstrates complexity of social and political divisions within native and white communities during the early republic. Not all Ohio Natives supported the Indian confederacies and not all whites opposed native autonomy in the region. Indeed, he shows that natives and whites both had varying motivations and alliances throughout the long struggle for the Ohio Valley. Nichols also explores the meanings of the ceremonies and rituals of treaty negotiations, exposing the theatrical aspects of the displays and interpreting the intentions of the characters involved. He reinterprets the Treaty of Greenville of 1795 as the US government attempting to assume the role of provider and mentor rather than punisher or conqueror. He states that natives attended the peace council in Greenville to "reestablish their independence of each nation…and to define a new relationship between those nations and the United States."[32] Rather than portraying Ohio Natives as passive victims of western expansion, Nichols incorporates them as major players who adopted varying strategies in response to white expansion.

Historians have also recently begun to explore Ohio Native responses to removal and its effects on their communities post-removal.[33] Previous literature on Indian removal tended to focus exclusively on the Cherokee and the Trail of Tears or the development and legislation of the Indian Removal Act of 1830.[34] Historian John P. Bowes argues in

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[32] David Andrew Nichols, *Red Gentlemen and White Savages*, 174.
[33] John P. Bowes, *Land Too Good for Indians: Northern Indian Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016); John P. Bowes, *Exiles and Prisoners: Eastern Indians in the Trans-Mississippi West* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Stephen Warren, *The Shawnee and their Neighbors, 1795-1870* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005).
[34] Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal*, William L. Anderson, ed., *Cherokee Removal: Before and After* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991); John Ehle, *Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation* (New York: Anchor Doubleday, 1997); Theda Purdue and Michael D. Green, eds., *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1995); Michael D. Green, *The*

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Land Too Good for Indians that all Indian removal stories cannot be compared to the Cherokee Trail of Tears as removal experiences varied from community to community depending upon regional forces, such as relationships with local businessmen, missionaries, and Indian agents, as much as national ones.

Bowes' study focuses on the removal experiences of specific Ohio Native communities, demonstrating that each community developed adaptive strategies in response to their unique circumstances. In the process, he shows that not all Ohio Natives were forced from their homes. Indeed, he discusses how the Panic of 1837 caused a national economic downturn that decreased the value of native land in Michigan, allowing bands of Ottawas and Ojibwas to escape removal. Some communities used their connections to their advantage; for example, the Anishinabek and Pokagon's band of Potawatomis purchased land and forged alliances with local whites to avoid removal.

While removal experiences should be studied on a community level, Bowes argues that native responses to western expansion and removal policy cannot be separated from the world created in the previous century, which must be understood in the context of the Old Northwest and its native inhabitants. Bowes shows that northern Indian removal did not occur on a grand scale as it did in the South. Rather, it unfolded as a fragmented process that happened over several decades. Frontier wars in the Ohio Valley had led many groups to voluntarily relocate across the Mississippi River long before the turn of the nineteenth century, and other groups continued to relocate even up until the passage of the Indian Removal Act.

Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982); Jill Norgren, *The Cherokee Cases: Two Landmark Federal Decisions in the Fight for Sovereignty* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004).

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Bowes argues that Indian removal cannot be confined to a single period in American history for it began with the first contact between Europeans and American Indians and its repercussions are still felt in native communities today. Thus, Indian removal policy, codified in the Indian Removal Act of 1830, should be interpreted as a continuation of, rather than a transition from, the civilization policy of the late eighteenth century. The Ohio Natives relocated across the Mississippi River at the beginning of the nineteenth century were forced to relocated once again to Indian Territory in the 1850s and 1860s. Boarding schools, missionary institutions, and allotment policies, among other programs, continued the assault on native lands and culture into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In this context, Bowes interprets the American Era as the era of Indian removal.[35]

Bowes's categorization of governmental and cultural institutions designed to assimilate natives as carrying out removal policies follows recent studies of settler colonialism. Historians such as Patrick Wolfe have applied the theory of settler colonialism to the American frontier.[36] Wolfe has argued that the primary motive for settler colonialism is not race, religion, or ethnicity but access to territory.[37] In "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," he identifies two formative factors that shape encounters between colonizers and indigenous peoples around the world: land is

[35] John P. Bowes, *Land Too Good for Indians*, 2016.

[36] Margaret D. Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); Bethel Saler, *The Settler's Empire: Colonialism and State Formation in America's Old Northwest* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Patrick Wolfe, Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race (London: Verso, 2016); Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* (December, 2006), 8(4), 387-409; Gary Clayton Anderson, *Ethnic Cleansing and the Indian: The Crime that Should Haunt America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014).

[37] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native."

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the object and the "logic of elimination," or destroy to replace, is the mode of operation. Wolfe depicts settler colonialism as an ongoing process that employs tools such as frontier homicide, missionary efforts, forced education, and political assimilation. He argues that white Americans have used all of these tools on American Indian peoples and historically justified their use by classifying native peoples as racially inferior.

In *The Settler's Empire*, historian Bethel Saler analyses the apparatuses of settler colonialism present in the Old Northwest at the turn of the nineteenth century. She examines the creation of the "treaty polity" a system of federal agents, laws, infrastructures, and cultural policies designed to dispossess the natives living in the Michigan Territory. She argues that federal power was used to promote a set of cultural and political ideals and institutional structures that excluded natives and African Americans during the creation of the state of Wisconsin. She interprets efforts to create a state constitution for Wisconsin as storytelling in which whites attempt to legitimate the settler colonialism that created the state. Despite efforts to exclude natives, Saler shows that they forced local officials to adapt the treaty polity to local conditions until white settlers called for their removal after the Black Hawk War in the 1830s.

The historiography of the Ohio Valley frontier has come a long way since nineteenth-century portrayals of whites bringing civilization to an empty continent. Historians have brought to light the disruptive effects of settler colonialism, including land loss, destruction of culture, traditions, languages, and tribal sovereignty on native communities. Most importantly, however, historians have recovered native voice to produce more complex narratives of America's frontier period. The early national period is arguably one of the most important eras in American Indian history. The

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transformation of native life during this period was pivotal. Into the 1780s, Ohio Natives controlled the land past the Appalachians and maintained political and cultural integrity by playing off the different colonial powers. By the end of the early national period, white settlers had crossed the Appalachians by the millions, facilitated by military defeat and economic devastation of native peoples. As natives lost power, they were pushed out of American life and into history. What Turner got right was the significance of the frontier period to American history and culture. The dramatic transformation from the 1760s to the 1840s is essential to understanding the nation's development, and natives are central to that story. Once an afterthought, the native experience has claimed a central place in the historiography.

Recovering native perspectives on conquest often produces bleak histories filled with stories of exploitation, deceit, and racially charged violence. As a result, recent historians have struggled to elucidate native experiences without simplistically portraying natives as victims of white hegemony and subjugation. As this review has demonstrated, historians have proved that middle grounds did exist at varying times on the frontier and that violence and conflict did not always dominate the historical landscape. Historians must strive to interpret native-white interactions in their historical context without oversimplifying the roles of good and evil. They must avoid declension narratives without discounting the impacts of white conquest on native life and culture.

Though scholars have recently refuted the simplistic narrative of the American frontier, their work has not been disseminated to the American public. Public education in the US lacks a detailed survey of American Indian history; textbooks rarely express a narrative of native history past the settlement era, perpetuating the myth that natives

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either died or assimilated into mainstream society.[38] Scholars have also pointed to the role of western books and movies in perpetuating national myths about cowboys and Indians in the American West.[39]

Museums are places where the public can develop a better understanding of American Indian history. As Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen proved in their influential study *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life,* Americans trust museums as institutions of accuracy and transparency.[40] Museums are therefore responsible for engaging the public with accurate histories, including the darker aspects of American history. Engaging the public with the stories of settler colonialism and its effects on native communities helps to debunk popular myths and stereotypes about American Indians and their historical relationship with the US. It demonstrates that despite the efforts of colonizers, American Indian communities have not vanished, but have survived and recaptured their cultural traditions and pride.

Not only can museums debunk popular beliefs and stereotypes, as Amy Lonetree argues, they can be forums for acknowledging and repairing the harms done to indigenous peoples by the US.[41] When museums do not tackle these difficult histories, they miss opportunities to address historical wrongs and the unresolved grief that remains present in indigenous communities. Confronting difficult pasts promotes healing and

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[38] Raney Bench, *Interpreting Native American History and Culture at Museums and Historic Sites*.
[39] R. Athearn, *The Mythic West in Twentieth Century America* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986); M. A. Bellesiles, "Guns Don't Kill, Movies Kill: The Media's Promotion of Frontier Violence," *Western Historical Quarterly* (2000), 31(3), 284-90; M. Geisler ed., *National Symbols, Fractured Identities: Contesting the National Narrative* (Middlebury: Middlebury College Press, 2005); G. Hausladen ed., *Western Places, American Myths: How We Think about the West* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2006).
[40] Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*.
[41] Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

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community empowerment among indigenous communities. By confronting the consequences of colonialism, native communities can begin to heal from the trauma they suffered. Lonetree and others argue that concentrating on survival stories is empowering, but only if the survival is placed in its proper historical context.[42] Without confronting the reasons for survival, visitors will not understand why native survival is so extraordinary and worthy of celebration.

When historical interpretations engage visitors with difficult histories, visitors gain a better understanding of past oppression and injustice and their consequences in contemporary society. For example, Ruth Abram, founding member of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience—a network of historic sites around the world that foster public dialogue on contemporary issues—interprets slave cabins to show visitors that understanding the circumstances and thought process that led one human being to regard another human being as property can help us recognize and fight the factors that encourage those views today.[43] Historians have shown that Indian removal was a societal creation, the work of numerous people who facilitated the dispossession and relocation of thousands of men, women, and children over several decades. Understanding how removal was a societal decision, not simply the political desire of a few powerful men, can help the public understand the societal frameworks that supported it and continued to

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[42] Amy Lonetree, "Acknowledging the Truth of History: Missed Opportunities at the National Museum of the American Indian," in Amy Lonetree and Amanda J. Cobb, eds., *The National Museum of the American Indian: Critical Conversations* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 305-327; Sonya Atalay, "No Sense of the Struggle: Creating Context for Survivance at the National Museum of the American Indian," in Amy Lonetree and Amanda J. Cobb, eds., *The National Museum of the American Indian: Critical Conversations* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008) 267-289; Myla Vicenti Carpio, "(Un)disturbing Exhibitions: Indigenous Historical Memory at the National Museum of the American Indian," in Amy Lonetree and Amanda J. Cobb, eds., *The National Museum of the American Indian: Critical Conversations* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 290-304.
[43] Ruth Abram, "Harnessing the Power of History," *Museums, Society, Inequality*. Richard Sandell, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2002) 129.

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shape the treatment of natives throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and today.

Giving natives a voice and challenging stereotypes allows the museums to become a space of civic engagement and public dialogue. In *Interpreting Difficult Histories at Museums and Historic Sites,* Julia Rose discusses how exploring past injures done to native communities can inspire visitors to influence societal and political change from simply changing their opinions to becoming advocates for a cause.[44] Though the debt can never be repaid to native communities, acknowledging and learning from history can help create a more tolerant, culturally sensitive, and historically-minded public. The subjugation and dispossession of American Indians during the conquest of the Ohio Valley was not inevitable. Events could have turned out differently, but both natives and whites played a part in their outcome. The conflicts in the region were both a product of previous frontier disputes in the east and a precursor for native-white relations as Anglo-Americans continued pushing west during the nineteenth century. Exploring the attitudes and motivations of both parties involved in the conflicts over the region presents a more whole story, allowing the public to better understand why the violence occurred. Understanding the conflicts in the Ohio Valley also allows the public to better grasp the context of Indian removal and western expansion in the nineteenth century. The native perspective must be interpreted for the public to promote a better understanding of the history of the American frontier and its effects on American Indians today

[44] Julia Rose, *Interpreting Difficult Histories at Museums and Historic* Sites (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 50.

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LABELS FOR THE EXHIBITION "CONQUERING THE FIRST AMERICAN WEST: THE OHIO VALLEY FRONTIER, 1750-1838"

The following text forms the labels for a proposed museum exhibit intended for a large gallery at a major regional museum entitled "Conquering the First American West: The Ohio Valley Frontier, 1750-1838." The aim of the exhibit is to introduce public audiences to perspectives drawn from recent scholarship of the history of the Ohio Valley frontier. Exhibit section headings are bolded and in all caps while subheadings are lower case in bold. Each subheading includes a list of objects, images, and maps and accompanying labels and captions that discuss specific questions, problems, and experiences on the Ohio Valley frontier. Labels and captions are in regular font.

BETWEEN BACKCOUNTRY AND INDIAN COUNTRY: THE OHIO VALLEY FRONTIER [Exhibit Introductory Text Panel]

Historians have debated the significance of the frontier in American history since the late nineteenth century. In 1893, Frederick Jackson Turner published his "frontier thesis," an essay that depicted early Americans as conquering savagery and bringing civilization to the West. Historians have largely discarded Turner's triumphalist narrative, pointing out that it ignores the subjugation of American Indians. Recent scholarship has emphasized native perspectives as essential to more inclusive, historically accurate portrayals of westward settlement.

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To contemporaries of Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett, the frontier signified the periphery of Anglo-American colonization, the territory between civilization and Indian Country where different cultures interacted and, often, clashed. When Anglo-Americans first began exploring the Ohio Valley in the mid-eighteenth century, native peoples, some displaced from their ancestral lands, had only just recently made the region their home. As Anglo-Americans began pouring into the valley in search of farmland, Ohio Natives tried to maintain independence and control of their lands.

The Ohio Valley was the first American West, the initial hurdle in American national expansion. During the Revolutionary Era, Anglo-Americans saw it as the land of opportunity. When the natives of the region stood in the way of American expansion, they had to be removed or eliminated. Into the nineteenth century, confederated Ohio Natives fought for control of the region. Losing that struggle, they were never as united again. The loss of the War of 1812 and the subsequent removal treaties signaled the loss of their home for Ohio Natives and the promise of continued national expansion for white Americans.

NATIVE PEOPLES OF THE OHIO VALLEY

Migration and Displacement

Image: A map showing the American Indian villages of the Ohio Valley around the 1750s.

Label: When Anglo-Americans began exploring the Ohio Valley in the mid eighteenth century, Ohio Natives had only recently reoccupied the region. In the previous century, they were driven out of the valley by war and disease. Only in the 1720s did bands of Shawnees, Delawares, Miamis, Wyandots, and Potawatomis begin to repopulate the

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valley. These refugee bands founded multiethnic and multicultural villages along the northern banks of the Allegany and Ohio rivers.

"Kentucke": The Land of Tomorrow

Objects: Potawatomi cradleboard. Algonquin knife and knife sheath. Eighteenth century Potawatomi moccasins. Early nineteenth century Cherokee deerskin coat.

Caption: While men hunted, women cut wood, dressed game, prepared food, and watched over children. Women used cradleboards like this to carry their young while traveling or working. The cradleboard swaddled the baby but left the child's hands free to play with a toy (the brass bells in the top corners). The strap rested across the adult's forehead or chest.

Label: Ohio Natives called the land south of the Ohio River the Wyandot word "Kentucke," meaning "land of tomorrow." During the winter, kinship groups set out on hunts into Kentucke. In the spring, families returned to their villages to plant crops. By combining hunting and farming for subsistence and using techniques that reduced soil depletion, Ohio Native families could live on only an acre or two of land.

Trade in the Ohio Valley

Objects: Eighteenth-century Shawnee copper bracelet. Late eighteenth-century Shawnee silver gorget. Deerskin pelt.

Caption: Common gifts included items such as the copper bracelet and silver gorget shown here. Europeans often gave silver gorgets, European symbols of military rank, to allied native chiefs in recognition of their status and power.

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Label: Ohio Valley natives viewed trading as an exchange of gifts rather than an economic transaction. Goods were given in thanks to the other party for sharing their goods. Those who could give the most earned the most respect and power. Gift giving established a relationship of peace and friendship. When gifts ceased, so too did the friendship.

Ohio Natives traded deer skins and beaver pelts for European made goods such as blankets, tools, hatchets, guns, alcohol, and cooking utensils. Native desire for European goods and European desire for fur fueled trade between the groups. Ohio Natives recognized the significance of the fur trade to European powers and played different nations against one another to get the most for their trade.

Objects: Early nineteenth-century Potawatomi wampum necklace. Eighteenth-century wampum belt. Eighteenth-century Ottawa wampum gorget.

Caption: Wampum, a bead made from various sea shells, held ceremonial significance for Ohio Natives. Wampum belts often accompanied the exchange of goods in trade deals between native groups and with Europeans. Important matters such as treaty agreements or war alliances were marked by an exchange of Wampum belts like this one, with designs in white and purple beads. With the scarcity of metal coins in the colonies, wampum was often used as currency, even among Europeans, up until the American Revolution.

CROSSING THE APPALACHIANS: THE BRITISH EXPLORE AND EXPLOIT THE OHIO VALLEY

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Expansion of the British Fur Trade

Image: A map showing the Anglo-American fur trading towns and frontier settlements in the Pennsylvania and Virginia backcountries by 1760. A colored drawing of an Ohio Valley native man, woman, and child by Jonathan Carver, 1766.

Caption: The French held a monopoly on the Ohio Valley fur trade since the sixteenth century. By the 1750s, the British expanded into the region. Fur traders established trade towns along the Allegheny and Ohio rivers. Ohio Natives encouraged the establishment of these towns because traders came in small numbers, took up less land than settlers, and provided much needed trade goods.

Label: Until the turn of the eighteenth century, the Euro-American population in North America barely exceeded 250,000, concentrated mainly along the Atlantic seaboard. By 1750, the population balance had shifted dramatically with Europeans and their African slave force surging to nearly 1.25 million and the native population shrinking to around 250,000. The colonial population increased as Germans, Scots, and Irish, attracted by promises of cheap land, low taxes, and religious toleration, joined the flow of immigrants. European diseases and frontier warfare had severely diminished native quality of life in the Ohio Valley.

The Long Hunter Comes to Kentucky

Objects: Powder horn, 1758. Eighteenth century long rifle. Eighteenth century shot pouch. Eighteenth century antler handled skinning knife.

Label: The first British colonists to explore Kentucky came through the Cumberland Gap in the 1750s to hunt for furs. Ohio Natives recognized the threat these "long hunters"

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posed but did not agree on how to respond to them. Many natives, especially young men, reacted by killing and capturing hunters and terrorizing backcountry settlers.

Objects: "The Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucky," by John Filson, 1784. Portrait of Daniel Boone.

Caption: Daniel Boone, perhaps the most famous figure from the Kentucky frontier, was one of many backwoodsmen who ventured into the region in search of deer skins. In May of 1769, Boone left his family on the Yadkin River in North Carolina with a party of five men to "wander through the wilderness of America, in quest of the country of Kentucky."

Label: On December 22, a group of Shawnees came upon Boone and a companion while out hunting. The Shawnees stole their supplies and took the two men captive. After seven days, the men escaped during the night and returned to their camp to find it plundered and deserted. This frightening experience did not keep Boone away from Kentucky, however. He met up with his brother, Squire Boone, a month later and continued to explore the region. Both brothers would return to found settlements in Kentucky a few years later.

Land Speculation or How to Make a Fortune off Ohio Valley Lands

Objects: Surveyor's chain, circa 1800. Surveyor's compass, circa 1770. Jacob's Staff, circa 1770. A letter from Israel Christian to the surveyor of Fayette County requesting a survey of his land.

Caption: Above are surveyor tools: a surveyor's chain, a compass, and a Jacob's staff. Surveyors began at a landmark or body of water and measured the distance by placing a wooden pole into the ground at the end of the chain and repeating the process. The distance was then measured by the number of poles. A Jacob's staff held the surveyor's

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compass level while the surveyor took measurements. The letter requests a survey of a tract owned by a land speculator: "This survey to begin at a white oak eighty poles to the South East of the said Lick and Spring."

Label: Wealthy Virginians and Pennsylvanians formed joint stock companies to survey and sell native lands in the Ohio Valley. The Ohio Company of Virginia, was one such company. Founded in 1747, its members included George Washington, the company surveyed and sold land along the Ohio River. While wealthy planters sought to profit from land speculation, small farmers did also. Many bought more land than they needed and sold off tracts as prices rose.

SEVEN YEARS' WAR: EMPIRES CLASH IN THE OHIO VALLEY

Struggle for the Ohio Valley

Object: Captain Pierre Joseph Céloron de Blainville lead marker, 1749.

Caption: This Cèloron plate claims the Ohio River and "all those which empty into it, and all the lands on both sides" in the name of Louis the 15th.

Label: As British fur traders creeped into the Ohio Valley, the French sought to strengthen their claim to the region established in the sixteenth century. In 1749, Captain Pierre Joseph Céloron de Blainville placed this lead plate and five others along tributaries of the Ohio River as the French began building more forts throughout the valley. In 1754, Lieutenant Colonel George Washington led a colonial militia to expel the French from Fort Duquesne at the disputed Forks of the Ohio (present-day Pittsburgh), sparking the Seven Years' War.

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The French and Indian War

Objects/Images: "Defeat of General Braddock" 1903 painting by Edwin Willard Deming. General Edward Braddock's pistol, circa 1750.

Caption: British General Edward Braddock was mortally wounded in a second attempt to take Fort Duquesne on July 9, 1755. In the painting, General Braddock falls off his horse as young Major George Washington grabs hold of his horse's bridle. Braddock died four days after the battle and left his pistol to Washington. It is an English flint-lock, made circa 1752.

Label: The French and Indian War was part of the Seven Years' War, a global conflict between Great Britain and France and their respective European allies. The struggle pitted the French and their Ohio Native allies against the British and the Iroquois Confederacy. While European powers fought over land they did not actually possessed, Ohio Valley natives fought to preserve their homes and independence. They fought against the British because they saw British settlers as more threatening than French fur traders.

Treaty of Paris and the Transformation of North America

Image: Side by side maps of the eastern half of the continent before and after the war outlining the various European claims as well as the borders of Indian Country.

Caption: The Treaty of Paris, signed in 1763, transferred all French territory in North America east of the Mississippi River and Spanish Florida to Great Britain. Great Britain became the sole European power on the eastern half of the continent. The treaty made no mention of the natives who fought in the war and occupied the land that was being fought over.

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Label: Although the war began badly for Great Britain, victories in French Canada and Spanish Cuba turned the tide in their favor. Victory proved extremely expensive. In an effort to boost revenues, the British government imposed higher taxes on colonists and halted the practice of gift giving with their Indian allies. These actions caused resentment among these groups that ultimately led to Pontiac's War and the American Revolution.

PONTIAC'S WAR: A NATIVE WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE

The Delaware Profit

Image: Sketch of Neolin's chart of the soul's path to hell from *A Selection, of Some of the Most Interesting Narratives, of Outrages, Committed by the Indians, in Their Wars, with the White People,* Archibald Loudon, 1808.

Caption: Neolin's teachings, while nativist in aim, were heavily influenced by the Christian doctrine brought to the region by missionaries. This drawing, based upon a chart that Neolin put down in what he called the "Indian Bible," shows the soul's path to hell. The square represents the world; on the right side are the souls that go to heaven and on the left, those who are wicked who go straight to hell.

Label: Around 1760, a Delaware named Neolin claimed to have a vision in which the Master of Life—a native god-like entity—visited him. The Master of Life told Neolin that he was displeased with his peoples' addiction to the evil ways of Europeans and that only by rejecting them could his people make it to heaven. Neolin urged Ohio Natives to reject European commodities such as alcohol and muskets and to take back up the bow and arrow. Natives from hundreds of miles away adopted his teachings.

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Pontiac's Resistance Movement

Objects and Images: Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy, 1763. Portrait of Pontiac.

Caption: This excerpt from the journal of an unidentified Frenchman written from inside Fort Detroit recounts Pontiac's speech at a council of Potawatomis and Hurons. Pontiac chided the British for expensive goods that do not last, lack of sympathy and friendliness, and stinginess. He claimed that "from all this you can well see that they are seeking our ruin."

Label: Neolin's nativist teachings inspired a wave of anti-European sentiment and intertribal unity. These feelings were exacerbated by the British government's refusal to participate in the established trade tradition of gift giving and their inability to prevent settler encroachment on native lands. In 1763, less than three months after the Treaty of Paris took effect, an Ottawa Chief named Pontiac convinced some 300 men to lay siege to Fort Detroit, triggering native uprisings across the Ohio Valley.

Object: Map showing the captured and besieged British forts and battles of Pontiac's War.

Caption: Pontiac's siege of Fort Detroit inspired natives across the Ohio Valley to attack other British forts. By the end of summer, every British fort in the west, with the exceptions of Fort Pitt, Detroit, and Niagara, were at least temporarily captured by native forces. At least 500 British soldiers and hundreds of settlers died in the attacks.

Label: What came to be known as "Pontiac's Rebellion" continued into 1764 when disease, supply shortages, and conflicting agendas undermined the war effort. Although Ohio Natives did not win the war, they forced the British to resume a friendlier trade

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policy. They also demonstrated the power of intertribal cooperation and forged ties across tribal lines that would be employed in future crises.

Establishing a Boundary

Image: Map showing the Royal Proclamation Line dividing Indian Country and the colonies.

Label: Before Pontiac's War broke out, the British government had already determined that a boundary separating colonial settlement and Indian Country needed to be established. When word of war in the backcountry reached London, the Crown issued the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which set the boundary at the Appalachian Mountains. The proclamation also prohibited private companies and individuals from purchasing land from natives, restricting land purchases to officers of the Crown at formal councils.

THE RACE TO SETTLE THE BLUEGRASS

Expanding the Boundary

Image: Map showing the different boundaries established by the Treaties of Fort Stanwix and Fort Hard Labour.

Caption: In 1768, 3,000 natives, mainly Iroquois, met with British officials at Fort Stanwix to cede their claim to lands south of the Ohio River. This treaty, along with the Treaty of Hard Labour, set the boundary of Indian Country at the Ohio River and opened Kentucky for white settlement. Ohio Valley natives who claimed the land did not attend the treaty council.

Label: Shortly after the Proclamation of 1763, British officials and Iroquois leaders began plotting a new, more permanent boundary line. The proclamation line did not include

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many Anglo-American frontier settlements already in existence and prevented speculators from making their fortunes on Ohio Valley lands. The Iroquois, determined to hold their lands inside the boundary line, were eager to open the Ohio Valley to Anglo-American settlement.

Through the Cumberland Gap: Kentucky's First British Settlements

Images: Sketch of Fort Boonesborough circa 1778 from *Boonesborough: Its Founding, Pioneer Struggles, and Indian Experiences, Transylvania Days, and Revolutionary Annals,* George W. Ranck, 1901. Painting of Daniel Boone leading a group through the Cumberland Gap.

Caption: Daniel Boone was hired by Richard Henderson, a judge from North Carolina, to cut a road through the Cumberland Gap and establish the headquarters for a settlement scheme called the "Transylvania Colony." Henderson illegally negotiated with the Cherokee to purchase land between the Kentucky and Cumberland Rivers. In 1775, Boone led a party of thirty-five men through the gap and founded the town of Boonesborough on the Kentucky River.

Label: In 1774, surveyors, settlers, and prospective proprietors moved into central Kentucky. Instead of building forts for security, settlers immediately staked out individual land claims. Settlers established claims by building cabins and fences and planting crops of corn. By the end of summer 1775, settlers had established over half a dozen towns and more than a thousand individual property claims.

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The Homestead Ethic: A Farm to Call Their Own

Objects: Early nineteenth century sickle. Letter by an unknown author from Harrodsburg, January 30, 1780.

Label: For Anglo-American men in the eighteenth century, owning a farm meant self-sufficiency and independence. The fertile soil and ample range of Kentucky made it the ideal location to realize this dream. Rather than paying the high prices demanded by speculators, settlers often became squatters. They justified their claims with what historians have named the "homestead ethic," the belief that occupying and improving lands for agriculture entitled settlers to ownership. The accepted size of a homestead was 400 acres.

THE FIGHT FOR KENTUCKY BEGINS

A New Native Resistance Movement

Items: Huron wampum belt. Portrait of Chief Cornstalk.

Label: Outraged by the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, the Shawnee attempted to organize a confederacy to oppose white settlement in Kentucky. Superintendent of Indian Affairs William Johnson worked to undermine the alliance by negotiating with the Ohio tribes separately. The alliance failed because most native leaders favored accommodation over violence, believing the British and Iroquois too powerful to defeat. Many native communities moved west of the Mississippi River to avoid future conflict.

Lord Dunmore's War: Border Violence Escalates

Items: Long rifle, 1770. Map of the Battle of Point Pleasant, 1876. Portrait of Chief Logan. Speech at the end of Lord Dunmore's War by John Logan.

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Label: Violence on the Ohio Valley frontier escalated as more Anglo-Americans began to settle Kentucky. In the spring of 1774, a group of backcountry settlers murdered 13 peaceful Shawnees and Mingos on Yellow Creek on the western bank of the Ohio River. Mingo John Logan, whose family was murdered in the attack, retaliated by killing Anglo-Americans settlers and travelers.

Word of the violence in the region prompted the Governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore, to raise a militia to protect settlers. In October 1774, Shawnee warriors under Chief Cornstalk intercepted the Virginia militia at Point Pleasant. In the Battle of Point Pleasant, 1,100 militiamen defeated 300 Shawnee warriors. Chief Cornstalk made peace and agreed to give up Shawnee claims to Kentucky.

LIBERTY AND LAND FOR ALL: THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION IN THE OHIO VALLEY

An English Civil War

Objects: George Washington's sword and scabbard, 1778. George Washington's Headquarters Flag. William Waller's powder horn engraved with the words "Liberty or Death."

Label: The War for Independence in the Ohio Valley was fought over land rather than taxes. The British policy of protecting native lands turned frontier settlers toward the rebel cause. Settlers seized upon the rhetoric of the revolution, claiming to fight for the liberty to pursue their own lands.

Ohio Natives viewed the war as an English civil war, and thus sought to remain neutral. However, as rebel Anglo-American settlers murdered peaceful natives, many tribes entered the fight on the British side. When Kentuckians murdered Shawnee Chief

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Cornstalk and his son under a flag of truce at Fort Randolph in 1777, many Shawnee joined the war.

Relieving Kentucky: George Rogers Clark's Western Campaign

Images and Objects: Painting of the fall of Fort Sackville by Frederick C. Yohn, 1923. *The Secret Orders & "…great things have been done by a few Men…"* by the Indiana Historical Society, 1974. Hamilton's request for a truce sent to George Rogers Clark. Map of British towns and Forts captured by George Rogers Clark.

Caption: During the Revolution, rumor spread on the frontier that Henry Hamilton, the British Governor of Detroit, paid bounties for American scalps. Although he denied the allegation, American settlers hated him for it, dubbing him the "Hair-buyer General." Some states did offer bounties for native scalps, South Carolina paid £75 while Pennsylvania paid $1000 per scalp.

Label: British officers armed and encouraged allied natives to attack American settlements in Kentucky. In 1778, Virginia commissioned militia officer George Rogers Clark to capture British posts in the Ohio Valley to relieve the settlers from attack. Clark and about 175 men captured Cahokia, Kaskaskia, and Vincennes without firing a shot. Despite these victories, Clark was unable to recruit enough men and arms to achieve his ultimate goal of capturing Detroit, the center of British operations in the west. British allied natives continued to raid Kentucky settlements until the war ended in 1783.

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Another Treaty of Paris: Another Blow to Indian Country

Images and Objects: "The United States of America laid down from the best authorities, agreeable to the Peace of 1783" map by John Wallis, London, 1783. Letter with a speech of United Indian Nations to Congress, December 18, 1786.

Caption: This letter transcribes a speech at a council of the "United Indian Nations" on the Detroit River in December 1786. The tribes of the Ohio Valley convey their disappointment that they were not included in the peace accord with Great Britain and their wish to formally make peace with the United States with the "united voice of the confederacy."

Label: British and American officials signed the Treaty of Paris in September of 1783, ending the war and establishing the United States of America. The British, once again, did not consult with their native allies and instead ceded their lands to the US. Natives expressed their anger and disbelief over British betrayal. As white Americans cast covetous eyes on native land across the Ohio River, natives attempted to navigate their place in the new nation.

CONQUERING THE OLD NORTHWEST TERRITORY

The Northwest Ordinance: Carving the Path to National Expansion

Images and Objects: Map of the Old Northwest Territory. Treaty with the Wabash Indians, July 21, 1787.

Label: The Congress of the new United States attempted to organize its conquered territory with the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. The Ordinance established a process for western expansion by outlining territorial forms of government and criteria for creating

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new states. In order to establish new territories, the federal government first had to legally claim the lands from the natives who occupied them.

Negotiations with a Subdued People

Image: Map showing the land cessions of the treaties of Fort Stanwix, Fort McIntosh, and Fort Finney.

Label: Congress appointed Indian Commissioners to negotiate land cessions. Commissioners met with natives on three occasions between 1784 and 1786. Commissioners treated the few natives who attended these meetings as conquered peoples, demanding lands and dictating terms. Accommodationist Ohio Natives signed away the southeast portion of the present state of Ohio. As Congress began preparing to survey these new lands, militant Ohio Natives denounced the treaties and the cycle of war in the region continued.

Statehood: Making Kentucky American

Objects: Copy of Kentucky's Constitution, April 19, 1792. Filson Historical Society, John Filson's "The Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucky," 1793. Portrait of Isaac Shelby painted by Matthew Harris Jouett in 1820. Map of Kentucky, circa 1795.

Caption: Isaac Shelby, Virginia military veteran of Lord Dunmore's War and the Revolutionary War, became the first governor of Kentucky in 1792.

Label: Kentucky's white population continued to soar, reaching 73,677 by the first federal census in 1790. Kentuckians began holding constitutional conventions and petitioning to break away from Virginia in the early 1780s. On June 1, 1792, Kentucky became the fifteenth state in the union and the first to guarantee universal male suffrage

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while also allowing slavery. Ohio Natives remained the dominant military force in the region, raids on settlements continued for several years after statehood.

NORTHWEST INDIAN WARS: NATIVES CONTINUE THE FIGHT

The Northwestern Indian Confederacy

Objects: Letter from Arthur Campbell to General Henry Knox, Secretary at War, 1789. Portrait of Shawnee Chief Black Hoof. Portrait of Miami Chief Little Turtle.

Caption: The above letter from Kentucky militia officer Arthur Campbell informs Secretary of War Henry Knox that Creek Chief Alexander McGillivray has sent a group of Creeks to the Ohio Natives to encourage hostilities against western settlements. Chief Black Hoof of the Shawnee and Chief Little Turtle of the Miami were leaders of the Northwestern Indian Confederacy.

Label: In response to the Northwest Ordinance treaties, Ohio Natives formed the Northwestern Confederacy to oppose American expansion. The confederacy first consisted of a militant minority, but as Kentuckians continued to murder neutral natives, many who favored accommodation turned to militancy. Although Ohio Natives had given up hopes of maintaining Kentucky, they continued to fight for the Ohio River boundary agreed upon with the Treaty of Fort Stanwix.

Harmar's Defeat: The Confederacy Prevails

Objects: "Interception of Indian Raiding Parties," June 9, 1790, letter from Josiah Harmar to Secretary of War Henry Knox. Portrait of Josiah Harmar.

Label: In 1784, Washington sent Colonel Josiah Harmar with federal troops to Fort McIntosh to protect American settlements and to prevent squatters from settling across

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the Ohio River. In 1790, Harmar led an expedition to sack the Miami town of Kekionga. Having received news of Harmar's advance, Shawnees and Miamis ambushed his forces, killing or capturing 108 soldiers and sending the rest into retreat.

St. Clair's Defeat: The Confederacy Persists

Image: Official portrait of American Revolutionary War General Arthur St. Clair by Charles Willson Peale, 1782.

Label: In 1791, Washington replaced Harmar with Arthur St. Clair, Revolutionary War General and the first Governor of the Northwest Territory, as commander of the US Army. St. Clair attempted another expedition against confederated native towns along the Wabash River later that year. Once again, Shawnee and Miami forces routed the army, killing at least 600 of the 1400 soldiers. The battle known as St. Clair's Defeat remains the worst defeat of the US Army by native forces in US history.

The Battle of Fallen Timbers: The Confederacy Breaks

Images: Anthony Wayne Campaign Map, 1944. Anthony Wayne Portrait, circa 1795.

Caption: In August 1794, Wayne's Legion of the United States of 3,000 soldiers successfully opposed 1,300 confederated warriors near the Maumee River. Wayne's Legion celebrated their victory by burning native towns across the valley and building new forts in their place.

Label: In 1792, Washington placed Revolutionary War General Anthony Wayne in command of a newly formed military force called the Legion of the United States. Spies informed the natives that the Legion would attack on August 18th, so they began a ritual fast on the 17th. However, Wayne's army arrived instead on the 20th, striking and

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defeating the half-starved warriors. Outnumbered, the natives fled to nearby Fort Miami, but the British in the fort refused to let them enter. Devastated by the loss of both the battle and the support of their British allies, Ohio Natives prepared to make peace.

THE CONFEDERACY'S DEFEAT: OHIO NATIVES LOSE THE NORTHWEST

Treaty of Greenville: Civilizing Ohio Natives

Images: "A New Map of Part of the United States of North America…," created by John Cary, June 1, 1805, shows the treaty line of Fort Greenville. Pipe tomahawk said to be given by Wayne to Little Turtle at the Treaty of Greenville. Anthony Wayne Flag, 1795.

Label: In the summer of 1795, confederated natives met with federal commissioners at Fort Greenville to make peace. Militant native leaders reluctantly ceded large swaths of land, pushing native territory into the far northwest corner of the present state of Ohio. As a reward for their new friendship with the US and as compensation for their land loss, the US offered annual payments to each tribe. Payments took the form of livestock or farming equipment, ushering in the new federal civilization program with which the government attempted to force natives to adopt white agricultural practices.

Closing the Ohio Valley Frontier

Images: "The Signing of the Treaty of Greene Ville, 1795," painting by Howard Chandler Christy, 1945.

Label: The Treaty of Greenville ended twenty years of frontier warfare, validating the theft of native lands and the murder of peaceful natives. Settlements in Kentucky and the Ohio Territory remained secure from native attack until Tecumseh attempted to organize a new confederacy some fifteen year later. After the Battle of Fallen Timbers, however,

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Ohio Valley natives would never be as united nor as powerful again. The federal civilization program, which offered incentives for peace to former militants, combined with the new military power of the US assured the defeat of the last Northwestern Indian Confederacy.

Remove or Perish: Ohio Natives Go West

Image: Map showing locations of Ohio native reservations in the Ohio Valley by the end of the War of 1812. "A Scene on the Frontiers as Practiced by the 'Humane' British and Their "'Worthy' allies," cartoon by William Charles, 1812. Map showing the removal migrations of Ohio Native tribes and their past and present reservations west of the Mississippi River.

Caption: By the early nineteenth century, most Ohio Natives had ceded their lands and moved west; the few who remained lived on small pockets of land or on reserves. Despite efforts by Ohio Natives, such as Chief Black Hoof and the Shawnee at Wapakoneta, to embrace the civilization program, virtually all natives were removed from the region by the 1840s.

Label: As thousands of Americans moved into the Northwest Territory after the War of 1812, they called for removal of the remaining Ohio Natives. White Americans rationalized removal as necessary for preventing future conflict. In the fall of 1838, the last natives in the region were forcibly removed to Kansas Territory, closing the chapter in their long struggle against American expansion in the region.

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ESTABLISHING AN "EMPIRE OF LIBERTY": LEGACY OF THE FIRST AMERICAN WEST [Exhibit Conclusion Text Panel]

The Ohio Valley was the first experiment in national expansion for the new United States. Its conquest, colonization, and acquisition established a pattern for successive American Wests. When claiming the region by conquest failed, the new federal government reverted to the colonial policy of recognizing and purchasing native right of soil. Land treaties were made on unequal terms and repeatedly violated without respect for native sovereignty as Indian Commissioners throughout the 1790s to 1810s encouraged natives to sell their lands, abandon their ways of life, and adopt western agricultural practices.

Despite efforts by Ohio Natives to assimilate to American culture, frontier white racism and hunger for native lands made coexistence impossible. Although many Ohio Natives remained neutral throughout the decades of frontier warfare in the region, all of them were branded as enemies of the new republic. Siding with the British during the Revolution and again in the War of 1812 reinforced to frontier whites their hatred for natives and ensured their exclusion from the envisioned "Empire of Liberty." By the 1830s, the subordination and disappearance of American Indians was an accepted part of the expansion process.

Indian Removal did not end in the 1830s, white American expansion forced natives from Kansas Territory to Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma) in the 1850s and 1860s. Federal programs continued the assault on native culture with allotment policies, beginning in the 1880s, designed to break the native practice of communal land ownership by splitting reservation land into private lots. Boarding schools and missionary institutions continued attempts to "Americanize" natives into the twentieth century.

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However, despite repeated attacks on Ohio Native peoples and their culture, they have made strides toward greater tribal sovereignty and cultural autonomy and continue to do so today.

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In researching and writing "Conquering the First American West" I relied heavily on secondary literature. For information on Ohio Valley native culture, I used Stephen Warren's *The Shawnee and Their Neighbors, 1795-1870* and Richard White's *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815. The Middle Ground* was especially useful for information on native trade traditions and practices with other natives as well as Euro-Americans in the region. On the fur trade, specifically, I used *The Middle Ground* as well as Eric Hinderaker's *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800.*

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I also consulted guides on exhibition design and interpretive strategy to develop "Conquering the First American West." For guidance on label writing and length as well as title and theme development, I used Beverly Serrell's *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach.* Barry Lord and Maria Piacente's *Manual of Museum Exhibitions* and David Dean's *Museum Exhibition: Theory and Practice* provided information on interpretive planning and curatorial methods. For advice on interpreting native history, I consulted

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LEGACIES OF COLONIALISM: IMPACTS ON CONTEMPORARY NATIVE COMMUNITIES

The conquest of the Ohio Valley by Anglo-Americans is significant within American and American Indian history. The Ohio Valley was the first experiment in national expansion for the new United States. Its colonization and conquest established patterns for successive American Wests. Until the American Revolution, Ohio Natives controlled the land past the Appalachian Mountains, maintaining their political and cultural independence. By the turn of the nineteenth century, white settlers controlled almost the entire region, facilitated by the subjugation and dispossession of its native inhabitants.

The Treaty of Greenville ended twenty years of frontier warfare in the Ohio Valley and ushered in the new federal civilization program. The treaty forced the remaining natives living in Ohio onto small reservations in the northwest corner of the present state. It established the annuity system—yearly grants of money and supplies from the federal government—institutionalizing governmental influence in native affairs. As part of the civilization program, federal officials encouraged payments to be taken in the form of farming equipment and livestock to facilitate the adoption of white agricultural practices. Federal officials hoped that natives would adopt a sedentary

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agricultural lifestyle and peacefully assimilate into American society, while conveniently freeing up their hunting grounds for white settlement.[1]

Despite efforts by many Ohio Natives to assimilate to American culture, frontier white racism and hunger for native lands and the determination of some Ohio Natives to retain their lands and ways of life defeated the civilization program. Indeed, former militant leader Chief Black Hoof embraced the civilization program and he and many Shawnee lived as farmers in Ohio after the Treaty of Greenville. Though many Ohio Natives remained neutral during the Revolution, all of them were branded as enemies of the new republic.[2] Siding with the British again in the War of 1812 reinforced to frontier whites their hatred for natives and their role as enemies.[3] Years of frontier bloodshed had convinced frontier whites that coexistence with natives was impossible.

As thousands of Americans moved into the Northwest Territory after the War of 1812, they called for removal of the remaining Ohio Natives, rationalizing it as necessary to prevent future conflict. While many white Americans viewed Indian removal as morally wrong, they hoped that it would save natives by giving them more time to adjust to civilized life. In the fall of 1838, the last Ohio Natives signed a treaty to remove to Kansas Territory, closing the chapter in their long struggle against American expansion in the region. By the 1830s, the subordination and disappearance of American Indians was an accepted part of the expansion process.

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[1] Reginald Horsman, "The Indian Policy of an Empire for Liberty," in *Native Americans and the Early Republic*, eds. Frederick E. Hoxie, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 48.
[2] Colin Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country.*
[3] Reginald Horsman, "The Indian Policy of an 'Empire for Liberty."

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Removal did not end in the 1830s; the removal treaties signed in the 1830s and 1840s used the rhetoric of "permanent lands" reserved for natives out west, but these lands proved anything but permanent. The Ohio Natives forced across the Mississippi River during the 1830s were obliged, by Anglo-American invasion and warfare, to move once again in the 1850s and 1860s to Indian Territory. Federal allotment policies, beginning in the 1880s, continued the assault by breaking natives of communal land ownership, splitting up reservation land into private lots. The Dawes Act of 1887 established the allotment program which resulted in the loss of approximately two-thirds of Indian lands in the subsequent decades.[4] Into the twentieth centuries, government sponsored boarding schools and missionary institutions continued the attack on native culture and religion. The actions of American citizens and American Indians in the first half of the nineteenth century created the social context for Indian removal as much as those of soldiers and federal policy makers. Removal was a historical process, a societal decision, not a one-time event. By understanding the societal structures that supported removal, we can understand those that influenced the treatment of American Indians throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and today.

Yet, there was room for resistance; the absence of federal authority throughout the period allowed for some native autonomy. As John Bowes has shown, groups of Ohio Natives managed to manipulate local circumstances to avoid removal from their homelands while others migrated west voluntarily, avoiding forced removal all together.[5] Ohio Natives that were removed from their ancestral homes established new lives in Kansas Territory, and once again in Indian Territory. Native women sold off parts of their

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[4] Bowes, *Exiles and Pioneers*, 258.
[5] Bowes, *Land Too Good for Indians*, *Exiles and Pioneers.*

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allotments in the 1860s for money while their husbands fought in the Civil War.[6] Throughout the onslaught, they negotiated complex relationships with local, state, and federal governments to protect their rights, promote their interests, and maintain their communities.

Despite the devastating impacts of settler colonialism on American Indians, they negotiated and fought for a place in the American nation created by whites and they continue to fight today. That they still have to fight demonstrates the impact of the events of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, natives have made strides toward greater tribal sovereignty and cultural autonomy. They continue to shape their communities and are becoming more involved in how their stories are told. With a museum on the National Mall and collaborations with local museums, American Indians are gaining more control over the interpretation of their history. The relationship between native nations and the United States has never been one-sided, but in the twenty-first century, native communities are in a better position to make the public listen to their stories.

Though historians have studied the native perspective of the conquest of the Ohio Valley, regional museums have not interpreted it for the public. The National Museum of the American Indian, though criticized in its early years for concentrating on celebratory stories without addressing the processes and effects of colonization in native communities, is now leading the charge to critically interpret settler colonialism in the US.[7] The NMAI's new permanent exhibition "Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the

[6] Bowes, *Exiles and Pioneers*, 15.
[7] Sonya Atalay, "No Sense of the Struggle: Creating Context for Survivance at the National Museum of the American Indian," in Amy Lonetree and Amanda J. Cobb, eds., *The National Museum of the American Indian: Critical Conversations* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008) 267-289; Myla Vicenti

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United States and American Indian Nations," explores the concept of native sovereignty and its repeated violation by the US through treaty violations. It opened in September 2014 to much scholarly and public acclaim and will run until the spring of 2020.[8]

Unfortunately, regional museums are far behind the Smithsonian Institution in critically interpreting the conquest of the Ohio Valley. Local museums either concentrate on native life and culture before the arrival of Anglo-Americans (Kentucky Native American Heritage Museum, Wickliffe Mounds State Park Museum, Ohio History Center) or on white frontier life and culture (Cumberland Gap National Park Museum, Kentucky Historical Society, Bluegrass Heritage Museum). The institutions that do interpret native-white interactions on the Ohio Valley frontier are either geared toward children (Frazier History Museum) or focus on frontier wars, ending before Indian removal and leaving the story unfinished (Lexington History Museum, Fort Pitt Museum, Filson Historical Society).[9]

The conquest of the Ohio Valley is central to the history of westward expansion of the United States. Conflicts between natives and whites shaped struggles for the American West during the nineteenth century. The subjugation and dispossession of Ohio

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Carpio, "(Un)disturbing Exhibitions: Indigenous Historical Memory at the National Museum of the American Indian," in Amy Lonetree and Amanda J. Cobb, eds., *The National Museum of the American Indian: Critical Conversations* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 290-304; Edward Rothstein, "Museum with an American Indian Voice," *The New York Times*, September 21, 2004, accessed July 24, 2017, www.nytimes.com/2004/09/21/arts/design/museum-with-an-american-indian-voice.html.

[8] C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa, Exhibition Review of "Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations," *The Public Historian* 38 (May 2016): 72-79; Mark S. Weiner, Exhibition Review of "Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations," *The Journal of American History* 103 (June 2016): 148-150; Philip Kennicott, "Nation to Nation: Full of the Intriguing, Often Maddening Details of History," *The Washington Post*, September 23, 2014, accessed July 26, 2017, www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/nation-to-nation-full-of-the-intruiging-often-maddening-details-of-history/2014/09/23.html.

[9] Information derived from review of websites for several of the institutions named, firsthand visits to the Filson Historical Society and The Frazier History Museum, and discussions with scholars and public history professionals knowledgeable about the sites and institutions mentioned.

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Valley natives in the name of national expansion is a crucial part of the story. Increased attention to it promises a better understanding of America's indigenous populations and their role in the American past. Whatever the eventual outcome, attention to these and other histories holds potential for a more just society. As scholars such as Ira Berlin, Ana Lucia Araujo, and Marcus Wood have argued, public interpretation of past injustices offers opportunities for healing, reconciliation, and justice. Hence sustained public attention to the history of African slavery, the Holocaust, episodes of state-sanctioned violence, and similar examples of terror and trauma. Exploring these and other "difficult" histories is not intended to reopen old wounds but, rather, to create a more equitable present. In this sense, "Conquering the First American West: The Ohio Valley Frontier, 1750-1838," is a small but important step toward an American public that knows about the violence and conflict that characterized frontier-era Kentucky and can see them in relation to the present-day status of white and native descendants. Whether or not efforts to make a more inclusive society result is beside the point. The path toward inclusion lies with dialogue and understanding. "Conquering the First American West" aims to begin this process—and thus create possibilities for a better future through judicious exploration of the past.[10]

[10] See, for example, Ana Lucia Araujo, *Public Memory of Slavery: Victims and Perpetrators in the South Atlantic* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2010); Ana Lucia Araujo, *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in Public Space* (New York: Routledge, 2012); Ana Lucia Araujo, *Shadows of the Slave Past: Memory, Heritage, and Slavery* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Ira Berlin, "American Slavery in History and Memory and the Search for Social Justice," *Journal of American History* 90, no. 4 (March 2004): 1251-1268; Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America* (New York: Routledge, 2000). On interpretation of the Holocaust, see, for example, Edward Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* (New York: Viking, 1995); Jeremy Black, *The Holocaust: History and Memory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016); James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2009); Jennifer Hansen-Glucklich, *Holocaust Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges of Representation* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University

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Press, 2014); Peter Novick, *The Holocaust and Collective Memory* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2001). For an overview of the interpretive possibilities of sites of atrocities, see Max Page, "Sites of Conscience: Shockoe Bottom, Manzanar, and Mountain Meadows," *Preservation Magazine* (Fall 2015).

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