

THE EVOLUTION OF MILITARY STRATEGY AND OHIO INDIAN
REMOVAL IN THE 1790S

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Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

Under the drives of settler colonialism Ohio became a crucial battleground in the history of American Indian removal. The relentless pressures brought on by settlers and squatters forced the United States to attempt to take control of its new borderlands in the Ohio Valley, but the new federal government and military were woefully unprepared and ill equipped for the task. As a result, the United States suffered two disastrous military defeats by the Ohio Indians, losses that have been obscured in American historical discourse. These setbacks in the early 1790s forced the George Washington administration to turn to new leadership and adopt alternate strategies to try and guarantee American success on the battlefield. Under General Anthony Wayne, the United States professionalized its military forces, employed Native scouts and auxiliary fighters, and adopted counterinsurgency tactics in order to defeat the Ohio Indian Confederation in 1794. Unable to receive meaningful support from the British or the Iroquois Confederation, the Ohio Indians succumbed to the steamrolling effect of American settler colonization and were driven from Ohio, a pattern that would be repeated throughout the West during the nineteenth century.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	v
CHAPTER	
I. DUBIOUS TREATIES	1
Introduction.....	1
Dubious Treaties	22
II. SETTLING THE OHIO LANDS	48
III. HARMAR’S FOLLY	85
IV. HARMAR’S AFTERMATH.....	119
V. ST. CLAIR’S DISASTER.....	147
VI. A MILITARY CHANGE	178
VII. INDIAN KNOWLEDGE AND BATTLEFIELD STRATEGY	207
VIII THE EXPECTED AFTERMATH	241
IX. INDIAN TRAITORS?.....	273
X. A REMARKABLE LAND GRAB	306
XI. CONCLUSION	338
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	348

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 Treaty of Greenville.....	307

CHAPTER I

DUBIOUS TREATIES

Introduction

It was a cold day in November 1791 when General Arthur St. Clair led over a thousand ill-prepared federal troops and militiamen into an engagement against an intractable Indian adversary on an anonymous battlefield in western Ohio. St. Clair's objective was to defeat the Native soldiers so that American settlers could take their lands and remain comfortably in Ohio. Although St. Clair envisioned victory, what followed instead was the worst defeat ever suffered by an American army at the hands of any Indian fighting force. This armed endeavor lacked systematic planning from President George Washington and Secretary of War Henry Knox down through St. Clair, as each of these men proved willing to use untrained and untested American federal combatants against guerrilla bands of Indian warriors fighting on their own terrain. The Americans overestimated their fighting capabilities while underestimating Native military strength and each of these factors presaged disaster for the operation before it even began.¹

After the battle Major Ebenezer Denny recalled, "The Indians seemed to brave everything, and when fairly fixed around us they made no noise other than their fire,

¹ Ebenezer Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1859), 164-71; Whenever possible, this dissertation will attempt to apply labels such as Shawnee and Miami Nations to describe the indigenous peoples that resided in Ohio during the era covered in this research. However, through the course of this investigation, the use of terms such as "Native" and "Indian" will be incorporated into this manuscript to describe these diverse populations.

which they kept up very constant and which seldom failed to tell, although scarcely heard.”¹ Because of this clandestine approach, the indigenous warriors were then able to encircle St. Clair’s troops and cut off any type of retreat. The artillery and the muskets that the Americans procured were of inferior quality and did little good on the battlefield. Denny specifically noticed the fearlessness shown by the Indians as they repulsed every American counterattack. “The battalions in the rear charged several times and forced the savages from their shelter, but they always turned with the battalions and fired upon them back; indeed they seemed not to fear anything we could do, they could skip out of reach of the bayonet and return, as they pleased. They were visible only when raised by a charge.”²

As part of their strategic plan, the Native warriors under the leadership of the Miami war chief Little Turtle targeted the United States officers in order to wreak havoc among the enlisted men. By singling out the higher ranking soldiers, the Natives tried to break the will of their antagonist. After receiving a drubbing for three hours on the field of battle, the Americans began to retreat in earnest as they suffered a humiliating defeat. This loss would haunt the United States government for the next year until they made changes in how they engaged their Native adversary.³

This military fiasco of St. Clair was the result of a flawed American governmental policy in regards to the interactions of their military with the indigenous populations on the western borderlands after the conclusion of the Revolutionary War. The difficulties began in 1783 after the passage of the Treaty of Paris. This agreement recognized Great

¹ Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny*, 164-71.

² Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny*, 164-71.

³ Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny*, 164-71.

Britain's cession of a vast area of land to the United States that stretched from the Allegheny Mountains to the Mississippi River. The Americans believed they had legitimate claims to these regions and quickly endeavored to populate some of these areas including the Ohio country with American settlers. A problem the United States government faced was that the Indians already residing there believed that Great Britain had no right to surrender this area because these groups were not consulted during the treaty negotiations. Because of this, several Indian nations including the Shawnees and Miamis, were determined to maintain their landholdings, by force if necessary.

The American greed for Native lands in Ohio reflected settler colonialism, a term that refers to a history in which settlers drove indigenous populations from the land to construct their own ethnic and religious communities. Racial hierarchy – the depiction of Native peoples as savage and inferior – inhered in settler colonialism. Settler societies include Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Australia, South Africa, and the United States among others. Unlike Australia, where settlers deemed the continent uninhabited despite the presence of “aborigines,” the United States recognized the existence of Indian tribes and therefore sought to secure indigenous lands by means of lawful treaties. That occurred even as several Native groups including the Miami and Shawnee Nations declined to negotiate with the Americans in the 1780s and prepared for the possibility of an armed conflict with the United States.⁴

The dissertation argues that American covetousness for land in Ohio represented a distinctive form of settler colonialism in the years directly after the American Revolution.

⁴ Walter Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 1-22; Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native*, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 2006, 8(4), 387-409.

This is because the American drive to gain the lands comprising Ohio represented the first chance for the nascent United States government to expand their domains westward while at the same time dispossessing the Indians of their homelands. While the British had practiced their own forms of settler colonialism for over a century on the North American mainland, the time period from 1783 to 1805 provided the United States with an initial opportunity to claim the lands they received from the British through the Treaty of Paris in 1783. Despite the goals of American settler colonialism in the 1780s it took many years for the United States to truly implement their policies and gain the advantage in their negotiations with the Indian nations that resided in Ohio and ultimately dispossess these individuals of their lands.

As the federal government attempted to negotiate land procurements with the Indians, they faced another crucial dilemma because they often had little control of all of the inhabitants of the borderlands which included squatters, or illegal settlers, that came into Ohio to try and gain territory for their families. These individuals often practiced their own form of settler colonialism as they tried to remove the Indians from their homes, often by force. When the United States government sent troops in to encourage these trespassers to leave the region, they were unsuccessful. Ultimately, the federal government abandoned their attempts to remove the squatters from Ohio who then formed a tacit alliance with the legitimate American settlers to this area including members of a new joint-stock endeavor, the Ohio Company of Associates. Both the squatters and legitimate settlers then pleaded with the federal government to send them military assistance as they battled the Natives that resented their presence in Ohio.

Whereas the United States government under the Articles of Confederation which was virtually bankrupt attempted to increase American landholdings, the Natives residing in Ohio after the Revolutionary War wanted to protect the interests of their tribal groups and their individual families. However, the Indians had different ways in achieving that objective. Some Indian nations including the Miami and Shawnee Nations adamantly insisted that the United States should not settle north of the Ohio River according to the mandates of the Treaty of Fort Stanwix agreed upon in 1768. Accordingly, they harassed and killed American settlers that ventured into Ohio and prepared to defend themselves against the possibility of an attack by the United States army. Other indigenes showed a willingness to negotiate with the United States and cede portions of their homelands in exchange for necessary supplies through a series of dubious contracts brokered by the American government.

American diplomats used nefarious methods such as alcohol and other forms of coercion to persuade the Natives to sign the agreements. Because of the pressure placed on them by the American diplomats, many of these Indian groups believed they had little choice but to sign. The United States government took advantage of this situation and designed these agreements to allow for American settlement in Ohio at the expense of the Indians of the area, but their machinations garnered resistance from many of the more recalcitrant Indian nations.

The attitude of the American government during the middle 1780s was transparent. The United States was virtually bankrupt after the Revolutionary War and the weak government under the Articles of Confederation attempted to increase profits by selling off “excess” lands on the western borderlands to American land speculators. The

series of treaties passed in the 1780s gave American representatives the idea that vast stretches of the Ohio country were open for Americans and eventually legitimate settlers began to move to the region. However, the lawful settlers and the squatters that populated the region often came into armed conflict with the indigenous populations that resented their presence north of the Ohio River. In 1787, the Constitution replaced the Articles of Confederation providing the federal government with substantially more power.

The situation in Ohio was still problematic because many Indian nations questioned the validity of the treaties agreed to between smaller bands of the Indian nations residing in Ohio and the United States. The more intransigent groups continued to harass American settlers that ventured north of the Ohio River and the American settlers and the Kentucky militia counterattacked. By 1790, President Washington and Secretary of War Knox determined that military force was necessary to displace the Indians from Ohio even as they continued their call for a peaceful settlement to American land claims. However, the American armed strategy had serious strategic flaws which ultimately led to humiliating military defeats at the hands of the Natives under the leadership of Josiah Harmar and St. Clair.

Eventually, Washington and Knox, along with Congressional leaders realized that changes needed to occur within the American military structure in order for the United States to gain the advantage on the battlefield. Federal leaders chose Wayne to lead the American military and when he took control of the troops in 1792 vast changes occurred in order to improve the chances for the United States to have military success. Wayne was a disciplinarian with his soldiers in order to establish his command over them. In

addition, he implemented more rigid training criterions for his troops whereby his men would be expected to follow strict standards in order to form a more effective fighting force.

After several years, in 1794, Wayne moved with his troops towards their ultimate confrontation with the Native soldiers in western Ohio. Along the way, he would use Native scouts and spies to give him an accurate assessment of the enemy's movements on the borderlands. In addition, Wayne engaged in what John Grenier calls the "first way of war." As part of this process, Wayne and his men set fire to valuable Native crops as well as Native homesteads in order to completely devastate his adversary's attempts to engage the United States in battle. He also constructed a series of forts throughout western Ohio so that his supply chain would be much shorter which would allow him to reinforce his troops much easier than that which occurred for Harmar or St. Clair. His efforts at fighting the "first way of war" eventually led to total victory at Fallen Timbers in 1794 and the complete decimation of the fragile Indian confederacy.⁵

While the United States endeavored to gain as much Indian territory as possible, American land policies during this time period evolved in context of unfolding and coalescing ideas of race. Eric Hinderaker, writing in *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800*, believes

The new American nation valorized economic opportunity and political power for white men, while it had neither the strength nor the will to challenge its citizens' desire to exploit nonwhites in their pursuit of opportunity and power. As a result, an empire of liberty in the broadest and truest sense remained elusive in the Ohio

⁵ John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 193-203.

Valley and beyond, and the problem of race would continue to bedevil the inheritors of the American Revolution for many generations to come.⁶

Hinderaker's assessment indicates that the federal government of this era often times was reactive to the "will of the people" as evidenced in the Washington and Knox's willingness to send troops to the Ohio Valley at the end of the 1780s to assist American settlers as they battled with their Indian antagonists.

In addition, the victory over the British in the American Revolution allowed the United States to rationalize the displacement of Indians and defined what defined what an American was "through appeals to nature or ongoing natural processes." Furthermore, Americans used racial categorizations to denigrate Indian populations and claim that the Native groups did not have a legitimate claim to their own lands. In order to specifically malign Indian cultures the Americans specifically criticized aspects of Native societies. This included disparagements of Indian languages, derisions of gender standards, and denunciations of Native spiritual dogmas. All of these condemnations of Indian culture allowed the Americans to claim that Native society consisted of "savagery" and "barbarism."⁷

As the United States gained military advantages against the indigenous populations of Ohio they attempted to change Native cultures. According to Sean P. Harvey, American "democratic colonialism, premised upon race, was committed not only to pushing aside Native peoples and opening resources to whites but also to transforming

⁶ Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 270.

⁷ Sean P. Harvey, *Native Tongues: Colonialism and Race from Encounter to the Reservation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 10-15.

Native societies through a ‘civilization’ program.”⁸ As part of this plan, Washington and his advisors tried to “acculturate” Indians into the larger American society while hoping that the Indian groups would continue to yield more lands to the United States.⁹ When Thomas Jefferson became president in 1801, federal officials wanted the Natives to continually surrender their lands to the point that these individuals would have no choice but to adopt American farming methods for their own survival. These inherently racist policies of acculturation and assimilation had virtually no chance of success because of the Indian resistance to adopt them due to the unwillingness of many to give up their ancestral standards of living.¹⁰

The idea of settler colonialism on the North American continent evolved in the first years after British settlers landed at Jamestown in 1607. Once the British had firm settlements in Virginia and New England, they worked actively to dispossess the indigenous populations of their lands through fraudulent treaty negotiations and outright warfare. These strategies proved successful for the British during the seventeenth century as they expanded their realms on the North American continent dramatically. In Virginia and New England British subjects had the opportunity to work with the Indians to foster good relations between the groups and allow the Indians to reside on their territories peacefully. However, settlers in Virginia and New England and then the remainder of the original thirteen colonies wanted to increase their landholdings quickly and the Indians were an impediment to that goal. This dispossession and indiscriminate warfare launched by the British subjects allowed them to gain the advantage during the

⁸ Harvey, *Native Tongues*, 10-15.

⁹ Harvey, *Native Tongues*, 10-15.

¹⁰ Harvey, *Native Tongues*, 10-15.

seventeenth century and they attempted to neutralize the power of the Indians within their territories.¹¹

By the eighteenth century, the British had to counter a French threat to territories in the Ohio Valley. As both European powers attempted to wield their influence in the region, the indigenous populations residing in these territories attempted to play off one power against the other as they tried to increase their own importance. By the outset of the French and Indian War in 1754 both the British and the French wanted to use the Indians as allies as they fought the other European power. When the war began, many of the Indians gravitated towards the French because they saw them as more equitable trading partners, but as the war evolved this alliance fractured. Eventually, the British realized that they had to try and ally themselves with the Indian groups if they wanted to be successful on the battlefield.¹²

The British prevailed in the conflict and by 1763 France was defeated and lost the vast majority of their North American territories. This occurrence dramatically shaped how Great Britain regarded the Indians in the years following the Treaty of Paris in 1763. No longer would the British engage in gift exchanges, as had the French in the years prior, which enraged the Natives living on the borderlands. In the spring of 1763, a confederacy of Indians launched a series of attacks against the British from Fort Detroit all the way through Virginia. The Ottawa war leader Pontiac led the assault upon Fort Detroit and this began a series of raids known as Pontiac's War. As the battles continued throughout 1763 the British government deemed it necessary to form a legitimate

¹¹ Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 32-35.

¹² Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 45-55.

boundary between European and Native settlers. This Proclamation of 1763 made it illegal for British settlers to procure land and migrate into the trans-Appalachian West. Only the British government could negotiate land acquisitions in this region. Not surprisingly, this infuriated the American settlers who believed they had a right to move where they wanted which caused consternation for the British government.¹³

In order to ease tensions on the borderlands, on October 24, 1768, Sir William Johnson began a meeting with 3,102 Indians at Fort Stanwix, New York, to negotiate a land settlement between the British government and the Indians. What Johnson was able to do was to reduce the amount of land ceded in the Iroquois territory and increase it in the Ohio Valley. This allowed the Iroquois to continue to try and dominate the daily affairs of the Indians living in the Ohio country. The new boundary line went into Pennsylvania, down the Ohio River to the Tennessee River. This enabled the British to take parts of Pennsylvania and Kentucky for their own use. An Iroquois delegate stated “that no further attempts shall be made on our Lands, but that this Line be considered as final.”¹⁴ Although Johnson and many in the British government were pleased with the results of this agreement, it did not fully solve the problems of who controlled the land in these regions and Johnson later stated that individuals living on the borderlands would continue to push onto Native lands and “the Colonies would not, or could not prevent

¹³ Timothy Shannon, *Iroquois Diplomacy on the Early American Frontier* (New York: Viking, 2008), 160-70.

¹⁴ Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground, Indians, Settlers and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 42-45; 352-53.

them”. Many members of the Shawnee, Delaware, and Mingo Nations warned that they would fight any encroachments onto their lands.¹⁵

The Treaty of Fort Stanwix meant to solve the problems in the Ohio Valley, but in fact the issues were not resolved as both American settlers and the indigenous populations prepared themselves to battle again for control of the borderlands. As the American Revolution commenced, most of the Native groups on the borderlands decided to ally themselves with the British government because they saw them as less of a threat than the rapacious Americans who constantly clamored for more indigenous land.¹⁶ During the American Revolution, residents of the Ohio Valley engaged in brutal warfare with the intent of eradicating the Natives from this region. Once they gained their independence from Great Britain, the Americans attempted to increase their landholdings on the territory received from the British as part of the Treaty of Paris in 1783. This included the munificent territory that comprised Ohio which now was at the forefront of American attempts to expand their landholdings. The actions in this region served as the antecedent for how the United States attempted to control the remainder of the Northwest Territory in the early nineteenth century.

The primary American sources used throughout this dissertation will include personal journals and correspondences from Washington and Knox, and St. Clair. While Washington and Knox made the final decisions on Indian policy in the 1780s and 1790s St. Clair was responsible for managing the day-to-day activities on the western borderlands in his role as the governor of the Northwest Territory. Unfortunately, St.

¹⁵ Taylor, *The Divided Ground*, 42-45; 352-53.

¹⁶ R. Douglas Hurt. *The Ohio Frontier, Crucible of the Old Northwest, 1720-1830* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 50-60

Clair had little experience in Indian diplomacy and this adversely affected the Americans when he interacted with the Natives. While the Americans made their plans to engage their Native adversary, British officials stationed in Canada often gave assurances to their Indian allies that they would assist them if and when the Americans attacked. The primary British sources indicate the duplicitous nature employed by their representatives stationed in Canada. Unfortunately for the Indians of the region the British agents consistently duped them because they never had any intention of committing British forces to fight the Americans who tried to overtake Ohio.

Native American sources from the era include correspondences with both American and British representatives. Although some Indians called for restraint, many other leaders believed it was vital for the indigenous populations to unify and ward off the possible advances of the settlers and the American army. These men included the Miami war chief Little Turtle and the Shawnee military leader Blue Jacket. While some Indians spoke English, many of these personalities had their words interpreted by correspondents, which contributed to a frequent source of misunderstanding. Other primary sources utilized include correspondence between British officials stationed in Canada and their Native allies in the United States.

Chapter one describes the treaty making processes between the United States and the Indian nations during the 1780s. Reading the actual settlements reveals much about how some Americans viewed the Indians. The official language is often pejorative and it treats the Indians as acquiescent individuals. The Americans stated that since the Indians fought for the British and that because Great Britain agreed to American victory in a treaty in 1783, the Indians were therefore a defeated enemy. The Indians countered by

stating that the United States never defeated them on the field of battle and that their lands rightfully belonged to them.¹⁷ This difference of opinion would characterize the entire period of the 1780s as each side approached the agreements with a vastly different mindset. The Americans realized that they were going to have trouble convincing the larger Indian population to cede them territory and as such they negotiated with smaller populations of Natives. The United States believed that by negotiating with tribes of Indians who were desperate for any kind of assistance they could receive, they could gain substantial tracts of land in the Ohio region.¹⁸

These actions angered many of the other Indian nations including the Shawnees and Miamis. These groups stated that since not all of the nations agreed to these treaties, they were illegitimate.¹⁹ The treaties and other executive papers themselves reveal a paternalistic attitude towards Indians which permeated the negotiations in the 1780s. The American commissioners repeatedly stated that they were being generous towards the indigenous populations and were only trying to gain their land for the good of all involved. They offered a type of protection for the Indians if they agreed cede their property. The United States wanted to replace Great Britain as the country that supplied the Indians, but only as long as they agreed to the terms set by the Americans.²⁰

In 1787, the Americans launched a new governmental system under the Constitution, but there were vexing problems that threatened to undermine the new

¹⁷ Taylor, *The Divided Ground*, 114

¹⁸ Neville B. Craig, ed. *The Olden Time, Volume I*, (Millwood, NY: Klaus Reprint Co., 1976), 1:404-32.

¹⁹ Wiley Sword, *President Washington's Indian War: The Struggle for the Old Northwest, 1790-1795*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 23-26.

²⁰ Craig, *The Olden Time*, 1:404-32.

government. One of the most problematic situations occurred in the Ohio territory as a vast number of the Indian nations resented the treaties signed by only a fraction of the Native population. These individuals understood that the American government used dishonest means to gain the signatures of bands living in Ohio. As such, more intransigent indigenous populations including the Miami and Shawnee Nations vowed to retain their homelands by force. This would present a troubling situation in which the American government proved to be woefully unprepared.²¹

In 1790, there was a change from diplomatic endeavors to outright warfare to claim the plentiful lands in Ohio. The Americans sent their troops into the heart of enemy territory in the hopes of claiming the territory that they believed was rightfully theirs due to the treaties signed the previous decade. At the end of the 1780s, individuals such as Washington and Knox officially wrote that they wanted to negotiate peaceful settlements with the Native population, but eventually drifted towards open warfare. These men asserted that both races could live in harmony if the Indians accepted the legitimacy of the Treaties of Fort Stanwix, Fort Miami, and Fort Harmar, but by 1790 this was a virtual impossibility.²²

Chapter two examines the tenuous relationship that existed in the Ohio territory in the 1780s as illegal settlers, or squatters, made their claims to land ownership which frustrated national leaders. During the course of the decade more and more trespassers came to Ohio and the national military could not extricate these individuals. As the

²¹ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 23-26.

²² Clarence Edwin Carter, *The Territorial Papers of the United States, The Territory Northwest of the River Ohio, 1787-1803*, Volume II, Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1934, 216-17

national government dealt with these individuals they also set in motion a series of land ordinances that would attempt to parcel out the Ohio lands to legitimate settlers such as the Ohio Company. After the passage of the Northwest Ordinance in 1787 federal officials realized that the violence that permeated the borderlands was not going to end. Even though the government believed the squatters were problematic, Knox sent soldiers to the borderlands to offset the violence that occurred there between the Americans and the Natives and maintain some type of order while protecting all American settlers.

Chapters three and four discuss the aborted Josiah Harmer campaign against the Ohio Indians in 1790 which launched the series of Ohio Indian Wars. The senior members of the American government including Washington and Knox believed that the American military could defeat the indigenous populations and assert American dominance over the Ohio region. However, this was an incorrect assertion and this mission doomed itself from the start.²³ The tiny American military in 1790 had little chance of vanquishing the Native Americans. Reflecting a cardinal tenet of republican ideology, many of the federal officials distrusted a large standing army. Because of this, the amount of federal troops remained at a dangerously low level. The Americans relied on the militia who did not turn out to be the most dependable fighters, as these irregular forces often had different priorities than the federal soldiers. Because the militia did not receive payment from the American government, they fought the Indians largely to gain plunder on the battlefield. They had no direct loyalty to the United States. Additionally,

²³ William Henry Smith, *The St. Clair Papers: The Life and Public Services of Arthur St. Clair*; hereafter titled *St.CP*, Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1882, 2:125-26.

these local militias had to enter territory that they had little knowledge of while the indigenous populations fought for their homelands on familiar territory.²⁴

St. Clair, Harmar, and Knox showed a definite misunderstanding of the Native American nations and their true intentions. Although Washington and Knox yearned for a peaceful settlement to the problems on the borderlands, eventually they determined that the only way to solve the problems was by armed force. The problem faced by the United States was that their military structure did not have the capabilities to fight an irregular type war on the borderlands in Ohio. A major problem with the American rationale was that rarely, if ever, did they view the Indians as potential allies and because of this, the federal government refused to employ Native scouts and spies to work for the American cause in 1790 and 1791.²⁵

The fifth and sixth chapters examine the expedition led by St. Clair in 1791 to western Ohio to remove the antagonistic Natives. The United States learned little from the previous failed Harmar assault on Indian country. Problems that doomed the campaign consisted of a dearth of federal troops, mismanaged supply systems, and absence of Native collaborators.²⁶ Owing to his own stubbornness and unwillingness to see the realities of the situation, St. Clair set himself up for an even worse fate than that experienced by Harmar in 1790. He was unwilling to use the defeat of the previous year as a motivating factor in his own campaign. He believed that he alone could bring the

²⁴ General and After Orders, October-November 1790, *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, hereafter titled *ASP:IA*, 104-06.

²⁵ Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, August 23, 1790, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:155-62.

²⁶ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War* 131-51; Report of Secretary of War, January 22, 1791, *ASP:IA*, 112-13.

Indian nations into submission. This disaster would be the worst defeat inflicted by Indian troops on the American military.²⁷

After St. Clair's defeat, the federal government belatedly realized its mistakes and decided to revamp the entire military structure. There was an intense debate in the American Congress and finally changes occurred. One of the most important revisions was the call finally for the army to use Indians as allies to fight the other indigenous populations. The United States government ultimately grasped that the Americans needed to use counterinsurgency tactics, but they only authorized a limited amount of funds to make this situation happen. They needed to find the right leader to train and motivate the American troops who had been humiliated twice by the Native forces. Eventually, the government decided to employ Wayne for this mission. In contrast to St. Clair, Wayne would effectively train and then lead his men to victory, culminating at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794 which was the final blow to the Indian confederacy of the late eighteenth century.²⁸

Chapters seven and eight cover how the military was able to reform itself under the leadership of Wayne, a hero from the Revolutionary War. He was unlike his predecessors in that he realized that he and his men would need to use counterinsurgency tactics to remove the Natives that grew more and more inflexible. The federal government agreed to an extent and allowed Wayne to employ Indians as scouts and spies in order to defeat the enemy. Wayne realized that the men under his command were ill-trained and he tried to install a sense of discipline on his ragged troops as they

²⁷ General Knox to the President, October 1, 1791, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:243-44.

²⁸ The Library of Congress, *United States Statutes at Large*, 2nd Congress, 1st Session, 241

prepared to engage the indigenous populations once again. This would prove vital in helping to ensure an eventual American victory. Eventually Wayne made his move and in August 1794, he and his men assembled near present-day Toledo, Ohio to engage the Indians. Although the opposing sides were similar in size, at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, Wayne and his men gained a decisive victory over the Indians that opposed him. Following the victory at Fallen Timbers, the Americans wanted to crush any further resistance. Although there were some Indians that wanted to continue the fighting, most resigned themselves to defeat.

Chapter nine examines the process by which the Americans and the various Native groups agreed on a peace for the Ohio country. During the first part of 1795, Wayne spoke with various Indian leaders about how to best approach the upcoming peace treaty. He wanted to be able to negotiate a peace that would have lasting consequences. It is obvious that Wayne believed he dominated the situation and he thus dictated the terms of negotiations. The Indians that he spoke with also realized this and many tried to make the best deals for their various nations in the wake of military defeat. Eventually, in August 1795, the United States and the Indian nations negotiated an accord known as the Treaty of Greenville. After intense negotiations in which Indian leaders, notably Little Turtle, voiced their opposition, the Treaty of Greenville ultimately became reality. Under the Treaty of Greenville the United States gained three-fourths of Ohio's most productive land, furthering the long-term process of American settler colonization.

Chapter ten surveys the period of relative peace from the passage of the Treaty of Greenville in 1795 to the ratification of the Treaty of Fort Industry in 1805 which allowed the United States to gain land previously reserved for the indigenous populations

in central and western Ohio. The Indian groups were tired from years of fighting against waves of surging Americans and many of their leaders resigned themselves to discontinue aggressive action and try and work with American officials. Despite these efforts, during these years the United States continued to place pressure on the Indians to either remove or acculturate themselves to the American way of life. Men such as Thomas Jefferson, who became president in 1801, believed it was in the best interest of the Native population to assimilate or else move westward so that the Americans could claim these lands for farming and settlement. Additionally, during these years the United States placed pressure on the Native Americans to give up more of their lands and their actions worked with the final passage of the Treaty of Fort Industry.

By the early nineteenth century national leaders such as Jefferson were more adept at placing pressure on indigenous populations to give up more and more of their land as they learned from the mistakes of federal leaders in the 1780s and early 1790s. Because the United States controlled more and more of the land that comprised the Northwest Territory they were better able to dictate to the Indian populations that they needed to abide by the mandates of the federal government. This allowed for a methodical advance onto Native lands in places such as Indiana and Illinois and set the stage for the eventual removal of all Indians that lived east of the Mississippi River during the 1830s with the passage of the Indian Removal Act.

This dissertation will conclude by reiterating the process of how settler colonialism came to fruition in what comprises the United States. From the first British settlements at Jamestown and Plymouth to the eventual removal of all Native landholdings by the end of the nineteenth century, the federal governments in Great

Britain and the United States attempted to displace Indians from their homesteads through a series of dubious treaties or outright warfare. Each of these processes ultimately contributed to the eventual dispossession of the indigenous populations from their lands. The United States attempted to follow the lead of the British government with their implementation of their own form of settler colonialism at the end of the eighteenth century. At first, the United States attempted to negotiate treaties with the different indigenous groups that resided in Ohio in order to gain their lands, but eventually resorted to open warfare.

However, many of these Indians including the Shawnee and Miami Nations were unwilling to enter into these agreements with the United States because they did not trust the intentions of the Americans. At the same time, the American federal government received pressure from their settlers, legal and illegal, in Ohio that clamored for protection against Indian attacks. Eventually, the military under Harmar and St. Clair was sent in to remove the Natives and open the region for American settlers, but met with disaster because of the poor preparations for engaging the Indians in battle. It was not until changes were made to the military structure in 1792 that Wayne was able to implement the “first way of war” in 1794. These variations eventually allowed for an ultimate victory by the United States military over the Natives by August 1794 at Fallen Timbers.

Dubious Treaties

At the conclusion of the American Revolution in 1783, the new United States exalted in its military victory over the British. Eight difficult years of difficult fighting taxed the new nation, but the Americans emerged as an independent republic. Now that the United States separated themselves from the parent government in Great Britain, they moved forward with implementing the ideals of the new nation. The problem that plagued the Americans from 1783 to 1787 was the inherently weak federal government under the Articles of Confederation. Because the national administration was so fragile, it did not allow for a fully functional national policy on matters related to politics or economics. It would not take long for problems to appear that could not be solved by the federal government. One of the places that would soon become a trouble spot was the Ohio territory where squatters, or illegal settlers, started to pour over the border of the Ohio River into what were technically Indian lands which caused serious problems between the Americans and the Natives.

Despite the problems that lay in the future, on April 11, 1783, the Confederation Congress of the United States formally stated that the hostilities in the American Revolution were over and that the British and their Native allies were defeated entities. The Congress also claimed that the Americans and the British were working on the final draft of the official treaty to conclude the war. When they eventually learned about the eventual peace agreement, the Natives living in the United States were angry at it because they believed they were not defeated on the battlefield. The representatives of the United

States now believed it was the responsibility of the defeated Natives to work with the American government in order that they could coexist with each other.²⁹

The conviction that the United States gained total victory against the Indian nations during the war and that the Natives were defeated on the battlefield and needed to surrender their lands was mistaken. This approach, known as “right of conquest”, was not a realistic assessment of the situation on the borderlands in 1783. The United States failed to acknowledge that they had not defeated the Indians on the battlefield during the Revolution and that there was no way the Natives were willingly going to cede their lands as “punishment” for siding with the British during the Revolution. Although Great Britain would eventually agree to renounce the lands between the Allegheny Mountains and the Mississippi River, the Indians believed the British government had no right to surrender territory that was not theirs to relinquish. Despite this set of circumstances, the “right of conquest” model guided American settler colonialism with the Indian nations in the first years after the conclusion of the Revolutionary War.³⁰

Specifically, the United States pledged to the Natives that “lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress.”³¹ However, the settlers already on these disputed lands did not want to compromise with the Natives and they believed that these territories should be open to American pioneers instantaneously. Furthermore, these were the people that dealt

²⁹ Taylor, *The Divided Ground*, 111-41.

³⁰ Reginald Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy, 1783-1812* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 10-13

³¹ Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 66-67.

constantly with the possibility of Native attacks on their homes. With this in mind, these individuals continued to press their federal government to do something to displace the Indians and provide for their safety and well-being. Leaders such as Knox wanted to protect American settlers, but they did not want to take Indian lands outright.³²

The treaty negotiations that the United States initiated during the 1780s were a travesty because the Americans attempted to bargain from a position of strength on the borderlands. The United States gained immense landholdings through the Treaty of Paris as the British ceded quite a bit of territory. Although Great Britain agreed to relinquish territory that stretched from the Allegheny Mountains to the Mississippi River, they did not consult their Indian allies at the peace conferences in France. Not surprisingly, the Indian nations that lived in the United States were aghast that their allies gave up so much land to the Americans. Once that occurred, many of the Indian nations, including the Shawnees and Miamis, determined that the United States would not occupy the lands they believed were rightfully theirs.

Benjamin Lincoln, who worked as the first Secretary of War under the Articles of Confederation stated, “all the Tribes and Nations of Indians who live to the Southward and Westward of the line agreed on [at the peace treaty], must no longer look to the King beyond the water, but they must now look to the Great Council, the Congress of the United States at Philadelphia.”³³ Lincoln affirmed what many in the emerging American government believed about Native relations in that the Indians needed to make a type of peace with the United States. How the American government would attempt to maintain

³² Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 66-67.

³³ Taylor, *The Divided Ground*, 111-41.

the relationship with the Natives was uncertain. Although American representatives were unsure of what would be in the official peace treaty still being negotiated, they worked enthusiastically to stake the claim of the United States to the territories gained from the British.³⁴

After the Confederation Congress stated that Great Britain and the United States were working on an official treaty to end the Revolutionary War, some Americans made their sentiments known about what was necessary on the borderlands now that peace was imminent. Nearly one week after the Confederation Congress made their declaration, Henry Knox, a general from the Revolutionary War, penned a message to Washington in which he stated it would be wise to keep an armed force employed by the Confederation Congress on the western borderlands to protect American investments in that region. Washington agreed with Knox's sentiments and in June 1783 he advocated another possibility in opening the western borderlands. He wanted Revolutionary War combatants to populate the regions so that they could protect American settlers. Washington assumed American soldiers near Indian communities "would be the most likely means to enable us to purchase upon equitable terms of the Aborigines their right of preoccupation; and to induce them to relinquish our Territories, and to remove into the illimitable regions of the West."³⁵

Despite these goals the federal military was rather small at the conclusion of the Revolutionary War due to fears of a large standing army in this country, this made it impossible for national troops to protect the borderlands. A more reasonable proposal

³⁴ Taylor, *The Divided Ground*, 111-41.

³⁵ Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy*, 1-10.

came from General Philip Schuyler of New York who composed a communication to the President of the Confederation Congress in July 1783. Schuyler had experiences with Natives during the Revolution and even though all of his proposals did not receive approbation directly by the Confederation Congress, they assisted in adjusting the suggestions forwarded by Knox and Washington.³⁶

Schuyler supposed that it was not necessary to maintain hostilities towards the Natives. He claimed that even if the Indians needed to leave their territories they would come back as soon as the American forces left their posts and the cost of maintaining an armed force on the borderlands would be detrimental to the Confederation Congress. Schuyler maintained that if the Indians remained in harmony with the United States, the Americans could still expand their holdings westward. Because the Natives and their British allies lost the Revolutionary War they needed to cede more and more of the Native territories to the United States. Eventually, the United States could take even more land when they wanted because

for as our settlements approach their country, they [the Indians] must, from the scarcity of game, which that approach will induce to, retire farther back, and dispose of their lands, unless they dwindle comparatively to nothing, as all savages have done, who gain their sustenance by the chase, when compelled to live in the vicinity of civilized people, and thus leave us the country without the expense of a purchase, trifling as that will probably be.³⁷

Washington concluded that Schuyler's plan was more feasible for dispossessing the Natives. Washington rethought his original plan and stated that the Natives must turn over any prisoners they held and then receive notification of what Great Britain relinquished to the United States at the conclusion of the war. Perhaps the most

³⁶ Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy*, 1-10.

³⁷ Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy*, 1-10.

important factor in Washington's revised thinking was his proposal of a boundary line that would separate the Natives from the Americans. This line would not be permanent, but every effort would occur to keep Americans off the Native lands. The ultimate hope was that the Americans with their increased advancements onto the borderlands could encourage the Indians to sell off more and more of their lands to the United States. For each of these men, land relinquishments on the part of the Indians were a more viable alternative than outright warfare, which would have been impossible for the small federal army at hand.³⁸

While the United States made their plans for the eventual American progression onto the borderlands, the various Indian nations voiced their concerns to the government of Great Britain stationed in Canada. The Six Nations had specific complaints about their apparent betrayal by the British government. In order to deal with their Iroquois allies the British intended to increase the gifts given to the Indian nations in the summer of 1783. In May 1783, several Indian leaders including members of the Six Nations told General Allan MacLean that they felt betrayed by the British for giving away their properties to the Americans without asking them first, emphasizing that the Indian nations did not consult with the British about any land cessions to the United States.³⁹

They believed that the Treaty of Fort Stanwix from 1768 encompassed negotiations held in good faith which allowed Great Britain to gain outright possession of much of Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and present-day West Virginia, but placed the

³⁸ Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy*, 1-10.

³⁹ Allan MacLean to Frederick Haldimand, May 18, 1783, in Charles M. Johnston, ed., *The Valley of the Six Nations: A Collection of Documents on the Indian Lands of the Grand River* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 35-41; Taylor, *The Divided Ground*, 111-141.

definitive boundary line between British subjects and Indians at the Ohio River which the Natives believed was to remain in perpetuity even after the conclusion of the Revolutionary War. This arbitrary border line would be at the front of the debate between the United States and the Indian nations during the 1780s as the majority of Natives believed the Treaty of Fort Stanwix to be a permanent boundary that would separate British and then American settlers from the Indians.⁴⁰

Although representatives from Great Britain negotiated the Treaty of Paris, the British officials stationed in Canada continued to respond to the peace settlement in a rather uneasy way because of the pressures they received from their Indian allies. In a letter on September 8, 1783, Alexander McKee, an influential member of the British Indian Department, wrote to another British official, Arent de Peyster, and stated that the Natives hesitated to release American prisoners for fear that it would cause problems for the different Indian nations. These Natives received encouragement by the British government to free their prisoners in order that true harmony could come to the borderlands.⁴¹

In addition, McKee asserted that the Indians under his leadership worried about the designs of the United States on Native lands as the Americans consistently crossed the Ohio River to set up residence on what the Indians perceived to be their homelands. This letter signified even though the ratification of the Treaty of Paris became official

⁴⁰ Allan MacLean to Frederick Haldimand, May 18, 1783, in Charles M. Johnston, ed., *The Valley of the Six Nations: A Collection of Documents on the Indian Lands of the Grand River* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 35-41; Taylor, *The Divided Ground*, 111-141.

⁴¹ Captain McKee to Colonel De Peyster, September 8, 1783, *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, hereafter titled *MiHC*, 11: 385-86.

many in the British government stationed in Canada had a continued sense of unease as to how the Native populations would feel about the mandates of that agreement. McKee, who worked in tandem with many of these Indian warriors, could see that they feared the United States would continually cross into Ohio and try and displace the Natives from their lands. This is exactly what occurred.⁴²

In September 1783, as the Treaty of Paris became official, a group of Indian leaders met with the British at Detroit. McKee oversaw this meeting and he relayed messages from Canada put forth by Sir John Johnson, Great Britain's superintendent of Indian affairs. Representatives from the Shawnee, Delaware, and Mingo Nations attended these tribunals. Many of the Indians present at these conferences stated that they were willing to follow their British fathers and abide by the mandates of the Treaty of Fort Stanwix from 1768 which guaranteed that the Ohio River would be the official territorial boundary. However, many of these same individuals worried about the encroachments of the Americans onto their homelands and they asked for the assistance of the British to ward off these advancing settlers. The Natives asserted, "their situation was alarming if they could judge from the words & actions of the Americans, who made no secrets of their designs upon their country, declaring pretensions to it by conquest, and its being given up to them by the English who were thrown upon their backs."⁴³

Although Great Britain acknowledged the legitimacy of the United States of America and ceded to them vast land tracts through the Treaty of Paris, the government in London insisted that their military officials in Canada needed to continue to put

⁴² Captain McKee to Colonel De Peyster, September 8, 1783, *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, hereafter titled *MiHC*, 11: 385-86.

⁴³ Transactions with Indians at Sandusky, August-September 1783, *MiHC*, 20:174-83.

pressure on the new nation to falter. Great Britain stood to gain immense profits if the American republic collapsed on itself and they were able to reclaim the lost territories from the Revolution. To this end, they continually used their Native allies and promised continuous support so that the Indians caused serious problems for the Americans on the borderlands. The government of Great Britain did this in the hopes that the fledgling American government would disintegrate and allow the British to reclaim their dominance in North America.⁴⁴

The British tried to cause further problems for the United States by using the specific language from the fifth section of the Treaty of Paris to forestall leaving American territory. This portion of the document stated that the United States would endeavor to have its citizens compensate those individuals that remained loyal to the British Crown during the Revolution. While many Americans supported the Revolution wholeheartedly, there were many inhabitants residing in America who believed they owed a sense of loyalty to the home government in Great Britain. As a result, the American patriots often confiscated their property during the course of the war as they deemed it a wartime necessity. Now the British wanted these people to receive restitution for what they lost during the conflict. While this seemed like a reasonable request on the part of the British government it became a major problem during the next decade as the United States looked to increase its national power. The Americans would consistently refuse to compensate these Loyalists which caused the British government to

⁴⁴ William S. Hein & Co., *The Definitive Treaty of Peace and Friendship, Between His Britannick Majesty, and the United States of America, Signed at Paris, the 3d of September, 1783*, Buffalo: William S. Hein & Co., 2013, 1-12.

refuse to abandon their posts on American soil at Detroit, Michilimackinac, Niagara, and Oswego.⁴⁵

In October 1783, a month after the official ratification of the Treaty of Paris, the Confederation Congress endorsed a committee that tried to formulate a plan for how to deal with the Natives living on the northern and western borderlands.⁴⁶ Eventually, the Congress determined that peace between the Natives and the Americans proved to be the ideal situation because continued warfare would drain the economy of the United States government. However, for true amity to occur, the Indians would need to surrender a portion of their lands. This concession was a result of the Indians supporting the British during the conflict and the fact that the British and their Native allies lost the war. If the United States wanted to completely press their perceived advantage they believed they could push the Indian nations west to the Mississippi River. However, the Americans said they were willing to act in a magnanimous manner and were willing to draw a boundary line on the contested lands that would separate the United States from the various Indian nations.⁴⁷

The passage of the Treaty of Paris and the resultant diplomatic undertakings through the “right of conquest” on the part of the Americans represented the first chance for the United States to increase their domains westward as they tried to enhance their power on the borderlands. The emerging nation had grand designs on the territories they

⁴⁵ William S. Hein & Co., *The Definitive Treaty of Peace and Friendship, Between His Britannick Majesty, and the United States of America, Signed at Paris, the 3d of September, 1783*, Buffalo: William S. Hein & Co., 2013, 1-12.

⁴⁶ *Journals of the Continental Congress*, 25: 681-93.

⁴⁷ Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy*, 10-13; *Journals of the Continental Congress*, 25: 681-93.

received from the British through the Treaty of Paris. The Americans endeavored to expand their landholdings while at the same time dispossessing the Indians of their homelands through the negotiations of dubious treaties. This time period was crucial to American history because the United States wanted to show the Indian nations, the British, and the Spanish that the American nation was a legitimate entity and that these other groups needed to pay heed to the growing American republic. Although the United States attempted to operate from a position of strength during this era, they were actually rather weak, militarily and politically, and it was impossible for the Americans to dictate policy on the borderlands as a result.

Washington's sentiments received approval by other leaders as they saw the western territories as a lucrative opportunity for American expansion. The United States faced a series of economic challenges directly following the Revolutionary War, most notably its sizable national debt that they incurred fighting the Revolution. The Americans could hopefully sell off some of the lands gained from Great Britain so they might be able to eliminate their financial obligations to foreign creditors. If the United States could gain firm control of these territories while stripping the lands from the Natives they might also be able to ward off the military threats posed by the British in Canada and at forts on American soil as well as the Spanish who were entrenched on the southern peripheries of the United States.⁴⁸

As a major part of the "right of conquest" model the American government used for much of the 1780s was the series of disreputable treaties the United States attempted to negotiate during this decade with the diverse Native groups. This process of

⁴⁸ Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 65-66.

discussing settlements with the Indians was different than the agreements passed by the British government in the century-and-a-half before the American Revolution. Rather than following the British model of procuring Indian lands and acknowledging the Natives as landowners, the United States now would attempt to negotiate pacts with the Indians without paying any money for the land they seized from them. This new policy separated American settler colonialism from that practiced by Great Britain in the years leading up to the American Revolution because the United States attempted to dictate land policy when they had no substantive armed force to back up their aggrandizing behavior. It would not take long for the Americans to realize this policy would not work and they eventually changed it, but in the middle years of the 1780s the belligerent tendencies of the United States government alienated many Native groups and set the stage for armed conflict.⁴⁹

It did not take long for treaty negotiations to begin in earnest and it was the state of New York, with encouragement from the federal government, which took the lead in engaging the Natives for more of their lands. The state of New York attempted to increase their land area in 1784 and Governor George Clinton received authorization from the Confederation Congress to enter into talks with the Six Nations about the possibility of them ceding some of their lands to that state. Joseph Brant, the Mohawk leader, proposed that the two sides meet at Fort Stanwix in the Mohawk Valley of New York to discuss the matters before them. Representatives from the government of New York met with the Six Nations at the end of August 1784, but the conferences went nowhere because the Indians present at these tribunals stated they had no authority to

⁴⁹ Stuart Banner, *How the Indians Lost Their Land: Law and Power on the Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 112-13

surrender territory to the state of New York and attempted to play a waiting game before they made any concessions to the American government.⁵⁰

The efforts of New York spurred the Confederation Congress to act much more quickly in obtaining Native territory.⁵¹ The representatives of Congress called another meeting at Fort Stanwix in October 1784. The American commissioners asserted, “By the treaty which has been read between the United States, and the King of Great Britain, the Indian nations will perceive that the King of Great Britain renounces, and yields to the United States all pretensions, and claims, whatsoever, of all the country South, and West of the Great Northern Rivers, and Lakes, as far as the Mississippi.”⁵² If the Treaty of Paris clause transferring the lands of the western regions to the United States was not bad enough for the Natives, the American representatives also informed the Indian groups that nowhere in that agreement did the British mention the Indians.⁵³

The Indian efforts to preserve their homelands would continue to run headlong into unceasing American settler colonial expansion. Despite the best efforts of these Native leaders, the American commissioners claimed that these Indians were “a subdued people” and the United States had the right to negotiate as they saw fit.⁵⁴ After more speeches between the American and Indian representatives, on October 22, 1784, Indian delegates signed the treaty at Fort Stanwix. In a devastating blow to the Iroquois they gave up all their hunting grounds in Pennsylvania and massive landholdings in New

⁵⁰ Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy*, 15-20.

⁵¹ Banner, *How the Indians Lost Their Land*, 112-13; Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, ix; Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native*, 387-409.

⁵² Treaty of Fort Stanwix, 1784, Craig, *The Olden Time*, 2:418.

⁵³ Treaty of Fort Stanwix, 1784, Craig, *The Olden Time*, 2:418.

⁵⁴ Treaty of Fort Stanwix, 1784, Craig, *The Olden Time*, 2:423-24.

York. This agreement had direct ramifications for the remainder of the decade as the Americans attempted to gain more land from the Native Americans through dubious treaties.⁵⁵

Many of the members of the Iroquois League not involved in the Fort Stanwix negotiations resented the proceedings there. Those Iroquois chieftains involved in the Fort Stanwix negotiations received criticism from their own people and other nations for the foreseeable future. In 1786, a Six Nations meeting at Buffalo Creek refused to ratify the Fort Stanwix Treaty and denied individual Indians the right to speak for the entire confederation and cede lands to the Americans. The most direct ramification of the Treaty of Fort Stanwix was the split among the Iroquois nations had in their loyalties. The Mohawks turned towards the British while the Oneidas and Tuscaroras remained on good terms with the Americans. The Senecas, Cayugas, and Onondagas remained on American lands and stood to lose the most if war broke out.⁵⁶

Brant, the skilled Mohawk leader, took the results of the Fort Stanwix Treaty and attempted to build an alliance with the remaining Mohawk Nation residing in America and Canada. Because of his powerful oratory and diplomatic skills Brant proved to be an effective leader of the Mohawks. After he was able to unite his own people he then went to work on bonding all of the members of the Iroquois League. Brant believed his people should ignore the British mandate of keeping the Indians out of Canada. Rather than congregating his people on the New York frontier, Brant proposed having his people live at Grand River in southern Ontario. Despite his intentions, Brant infuriated many within

⁵⁵ Charles J. Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904.

⁵⁶ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 23-26.

the Mohawk Nation who believed he held too much power. Led by Captain Isaac Hill and Captain Aaron Hill, a faction within the Mohawks worked to subvert the authority of Brant. These men sponsored an assassination attempt on the Mohawk leader but were unsuccessful. The British worried about this infighting and supported a meeting at Niagara in February 1789. Some of the people at this meeting backed the work of Brant, but he could not get all the Mohawks to follow his leadership. Brant retained power but he had lost a substantial number of his people, thus undermining his effort to unite the Six Nations⁵⁷

American commissioners were elated at the results of the Treaty of Fort Stanwix as the United States gained valuable territory at the expense of the Indian nations. Because of this set of circumstances, representatives from the American government met with members of the Wyandot, Delaware, Chippewa, and Ottawa Nations at Fort McIntosh in western Pennsylvania on January 21, 1785 to further American claims and negotiate specific land cessions in Ohio. While the United States government was thrilled to gain the valuable lands in the state of New York, the Confederation Congress had an even bigger goal in gaining the territory that comprised Ohio for American settlement as they saw it as a key to the eventual expansion of American settlement onto the borderlands. The members of the Confederation Congress, as well as the numerous speculators such as Washington who could make immense profits off the sale of Ohio lands, realized that for the United States to begin to grow they would need to take firm

⁵⁷ Taylor, *The Divided Ground*, 111-41.

control of Ohio as it was the logical first step as the American “empire” expanded westward towards the Mississippi River.⁵⁸

The nations that negotiated the Treaty of Fort McIntosh represented a contingent of western Indians, but did not include the Shawnee and Miami Nations who considered the entire affair an abomination. At this meeting, the United States again reiterated their concept of the “right of conquest” on Ohio lands from the Revolutionary War, which the tribes assembled, rejected. While Indian representatives disputed this claim, the American officials bluntly declared “because we claim the country by conquest, [you are here] to give not to receive.”⁵⁹ The second article of this agreement stated that the Indian nations in conference with the United States were now under the protection of the United States and no other foreign power whatsoever. The Americans wanted to displace the British yet the Indian nations continued to receive numerous presents from Great Britain. The British meant to supply their Native allies with necessities during this time period so that the Indians could attempt to forestall American advances onto the borderlands.⁶⁰

The third clause in this settlement delineated the new boundaries between the United States and the Indian nations. The proposed new border would begin at the mouth of the Cuyahoga River in present-day Cleveland, Ohio, and proceed southward through the portage between the Cuyahoga and Tuscarawas Rivers in contemporary Akron, Ohio. From there, the line proceeded further south to Fort Laurens in Tuscarawas County, Ohio, and then moved southwest towards the site of the modern-day Indiana border. The fourth

⁵⁸ Philip Weeks, *Farewell, My Nation: The American Indian and the United States in the Nineteenth Century* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2001), 24-25.; United States Statutes at Large 7:16-18.

⁵⁹ Weeks, *Farewell, My Nation*, 24-25.; United States Statutes at Large 7:16-18.

⁶⁰ Weeks, *Farewell, My Nation*, 24-25.; United States Statutes at Large 7:16-18.

section of this pact allowed the Wyandot and Delaware Nations to remain on the lands on their side of the new boundary line and the fifth section claimed that any American that tried to settle on lands granted to the Native Americans forfeited their claims to the United States government.⁶¹

These portions of the contract would have allowed the United States to gain a vast amount of arable land in the territory of Ohio and permitted the American settlers in this region to expand their landholdings. Many Indian nations did not accept the mandates of this treaty. As a result, it would be virtually impossible for the United States to legitimately claim this region without taking it by force or future treaty negotiations. The remainder of this document endeavored to enforce the dictates of this treaty. The Indians who signed this deed promised that they would and settle in the regions given to the United States.⁶²

This Fort McIntosh treaty infuriated those Natives who were not present, including the Shawnee Nation. Not surprisingly, members of the Shawnees asserted to the United States,

According to the Lines settled by our Forefathers, the Boundary is the Ohio River, but you are coming upon the ground given to us by the Great Spirit – we wish you to be strong and keep your people on that side of the River. We have no objections to carry on Trade with your Traders, provided they do not attempt to settle in our Country, but it is too clear your design is to take our Country from us – we remind you that you will find all the people of our Colour in this Island strong unanimous, and determined to act as one man in Defence of it, therefore be strong and keep your people within Bounds, or we shall take up a Rod and whip them back to your side of the Ohio. It is now incumbent on you to restrain your

⁶¹ *United States Statutes at Large*, 7:16-18.

⁶² *United States Statutes at Large*, 7:16-18.

People and listen to us, otherwise the Consequence of what may happen hereafter will be your fault.⁶³

The Shawnees thus reiterated that the Ohio River was the boundary between American and Native settlements as agreed upon at the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768. The Shawnee Nation did not give credence to the Treaty of Fort McIntosh because all of the Indian nations did not receive representation at this summit. Accordingly, the Shawnees determined to hold out for as long as possible against American encroachments onto their lands.⁶⁴

The Americans knew that even though they conducted a peace agreement with some of the groups living in the Ohio region with the passage of the Treaty of Fort McIntosh, they would eventually have to come to terms with the more recalcitrant Natives including the Shawnee and Miami Nations. Eventually, the Americans sent invitations to a settlement meeting in the summer of 1785. Many members of the Shawnee Nation responded by chastising the Americans for taking their people prisoner on repeated occasions. In addition, they claimed that the United States commissioners only devised these conferences to split the loyalties of their people. In November 1785, the Shawnees responded bluntly that to come at them in a hostile manner was no way to perpetuate amicable relations on the borderlands. They asserted that they understood of the American “design to divide our councils.” This was an observant statement by these members of the Shawnee Nation who understood how the United States attempted to use divide-and-conquer tactics to drive a wedge between the various Indian peoples.⁶⁵

⁶³ Indian Council Held at Wakitunikee, May 18, 1785, *MiHC*, 25:691-93.

⁶⁴ Indian Council Held at Wakitunikee, May 18, 1785, *MiHC*, 25:691-93.

⁶⁵ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 29

American envoys eventually convinced some of the Shawnee Nation desperate for provisions in order to survive the winter to meet, and in January 1786, a meeting occurred at Fort Finney at the confluence of the Great Miami and Ohio Rivers, near present-day Cincinnati. The American approach to these meetings reflected the drives of settler colonialism since United States representatives stated that the Shawnees must give way to American settlement as they battled against the United States during the Revolution and because the British ceded their lands to the Americans. The American delegates stated that the “United States do grant peace to the Shawanese Nation, and do receive them into their friendship & protection.”⁶⁶ Furthermore, the agents working for the United States government maintained that the Americans would grant the Shawnees a substantial territory to live and hunt on so that they could take care of their families for the foreseeable future, which was mere rhetoric.⁶⁷

After the treaty signed at Fort Finney, the Confederation Congress exulted in its apparent successes. However, these treaties continued to sow bad blood between the Natives and the Americans because many Indians perceived the compacts as unmitigated fraud and thus completely distrusted the American representatives. The Confederation Congress, desperate for money, procured these territories from the Natives without any type of payment for the lands gained during these negotiations and they continued to assert their dominance in guiding Indian-American relations on the borderlands.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Treaty at the Big Miamis, January 31, 1786, *MiHC*, 24:22-26; Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy*, 22-23.

⁶⁷ Treaty at the Big Miamis, January 31, 1786, *MiHC*, 24:22-26; Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy*, 22-23.

⁶⁸ Banner, *How the Indians Lost Their Land*, 112-13

In late 1786, many Ohio Indians, including members from the Shawnee, Ottawa, and Delaware nations, met near Detroit for an intertribal meeting to discuss policy issues. At this meeting, the Indians asserted, “Brethren of the United States of America: It is now more than three years since peace was made between the King of Great Britain and you, but we, the Indians, were disappointed, finding ourselves not included in that peace, according to our expectations: for we thought that its conclusion would have promoted a friendship between the United States and Indians, and that we might enjoy happiness that formerly subsisted between us and our elder brethren.”⁶⁹ The Indians assembled also stated, “all treaties carried on with the United States, on our parts, should be with the general voice of the whole confederacy, and carried on in the most open manner, without any restraint on either side.”⁷⁰

They believed that problems arose because the Americans brokered treaties with smaller sections of the Indian population, namely the Treaties of Fort McIntosh and Fort Finney. Consequently, the majority of the Indians did not participate in determining these agreements, and according to the Indian representatives, the broader population of Natives considered these treaties null and void. The Natives implored the Americans to “prevent your surveyors and other people from coming upon our side of the Ohio river (sic).”⁷¹ This plea seemed impossible as the Americans continued practicing settler colonialism by inhabiting the Ohio country and the Indians continued harassing American settlements on both sides of the river. They reiterated the need to keep settlers

⁶⁹ Speech at the Confederate Council, November 28 and December 18, 1786, *ASP:IA*, 1:8-9.

⁷⁰ Speech at the Confederate Council, November 28 and December 18, 1786, *ASP:IA*, 1:8-9.

⁷¹ Speech at the Confederate Council, November 28 and December 18, 1786, *ASP:IA*, 1:8-9.

south of the Ohio River and stated they would defend themselves against the Americans if they settled north of that boundary.⁷²

While the Americans attempted to renegotiate the borders with the Natives, the Indians held another council meeting at the Miami River in 1788 in an attempt to agree on a plan for dealing with the Americans. At one point during the meeting, the Wyandots presented the Kickapoos and Piquas with a large string of wampum in order to promote unity among the Indians. The gesture failed, as when the Wyandots placed the wampum over the shoulder of the principal chief of these nations he let it fall to the ground. The Wyandots then left the meeting and stated that Kickapoo and Piqua nations would have to work with the Americans on their own. This interaction symbolizes the lack of unanimity among the Natives as rivalries persisted and undermined the prospects of a true pan-Indian alliance.⁷³

Notwithstanding these issues, Joseph Brant of the Mohawks attempted to ameliorate some of the problems faced by the Natives. Although many Indian nations were steadfast in insisting that the Ohio River be the boundary between American and Native settlements, Brant proposed giving up Indian lands in Ohio to show that the Indians were willing to compromise. In return, all he asked was that the Americans conduct discussions in a flexible manner. As a moderate leader, Brant realized the importance of constant negotiations with the Americans, but he was not going to let the American greed for land unduly influence his decisions. Not surprisingly, Governor Arthur St. Clair refused to accept even this token of conciliation because he did not

⁷² Speech at the Confederate Council, November 28 and December 18, 1786, *ASP:IA*, 1:8-9.

⁷³ Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, November 4, 1788, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:95-96.

believe that it was a sincere gesture. Additionally, he believed that the British were unduly influencing the Indians to cause troubles for the Americans. An infuriated Brant admonished the governor for his rejection of the olive branch of peace. As the governor proposed this new meeting at Fort Harmar, Brant and the Mohawks, the Shawnees, and Delawares returned to their homelands, not wanting to participate in this perceived American charade.⁷⁴ St. Clair, unmindful to the realities of the diplomacy in the area, totally misread the true intentions of Brant. He seemed to think that all Indians were untrustworthy, no matter how much they professed peace, a common view among many governmental officials at the time.

St. Clair vastly underestimated his Indian foes. Writing to John Jay in December 1788, the governor stated that the western territories were a source of mischief and increasing expense rather than providing a fund to pay for the American national debt. This may have been true, but the western territories still provided the best possibility for the American government to substantially reduce the federal monetary obligations to the European powers. In addition, St. Clair believed that the Spanish government might lure some American settlers into their territory with the promises of large land grants. The governor also told Jay that he believed the failure of talks with Brant and the other western nations was inconsequential and he believed that despite these losses the Indian confederacy would still unravel.⁷⁵

A stronger position within the Indian confederacy now belonged to the nations such as the Shawnee that were more willing to fight the Americans. Instead of placating

⁷⁴ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 64-67.

⁷⁵ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 66-67.

these nations, the intransigence of St. Clair caused these more hostile elements to gain an even stronger foothold in the leadership of the Indian confederacy. Those nations about to speak to the United States representatives at Fort Harmar were not the Indians with the most power in the revamped Indian confederacy. The uncompromising Natives considered any other Indian that dealt with the United States government as a traitor to their people which included members of the Iroquois League. In addition, the more aggressive members of the Indian coalition would not abide by the suspicious treaties as these individuals were not going to concede anything to the American government.⁷⁶

Despite the apparent façade of these treaty negotiations, in December 1788 and January 1789, the Americans and the Indian representatives met at Fort Harmar in Ohio. Twenty-seven chiefs, including Cornplanter of the Seneca, and about two-hundred Wyandots, Senecas, and Delawares attended these councils. At these meetings, the Indian delegates hoped to agree on the idea proposed by Brant which would only cede land east of the Muskingum River to the Americans. As the meeting continued, the Americans bribed the Natives with \$3,000 in presents. Finally, on January 9, 1789, a small assortment of chiefs from the Seneca, Wyandot, and Delaware nations signed the Treaty of Fort Harmar. Article two of this document basically reaffirmed the agreements of the Treaty of Fort McIntosh with the settlers gaining a vast majority of the Ohio lands.⁷⁷

The third section of this agreement asserted that the Indians were to remain unmolested in the regions that they received as a result of this contract and if they wished

⁷⁶ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 66-67.

⁷⁷ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 104.; Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties, 2:18-23

to sell any more lands, they could only do so with the United States. The fourth piece of this compact claimed that the Natives would be allowed to hunt on American lands as long as they conducted themselves peaceably. The Shawnees rejected the treaty outright and stated that these other nations did not speak for the entire Indian coalition and as such they would not be bound by them. They prepared to battle the Americans should an outright war break out. St. Clair foolishly was even more convinced that the Indian union had been broken. This flawed perspective guided his judgments; hence he constantly misread the situation. Many members of the Indian alliance now convinced themselves that they had little choice but to face the incoming settlers by force. A delegation of Indians went to Detroit to gain ammunition and other tangible support from the British.⁷⁸

Natives furious over previous compacts such as the Shawnee and Miami Nations did not attend the Treaty of Fort Harmar and those in attendance gave up much more than they anticipated. Additionally, Knox in 1789 thought that an Indian war would be harmful to the United States in that it would cost too much money and would pose tremendous logistical problems. Knox wanted the United States to act with a sense of honor as it attempted to move westward. The only way to accomplish this was through legal dispossession of the Native territories. Washington agreed with the Secretary of War and during his early stages of his presidency he advocated maintaining harmonious relations with the Natives while at the same time advocating a methodical advance onto the Native lands through what they perceived as legitimate treaties. As these events occurred, he hoped that the Indians would acculturate into American society.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 104.; Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, 2:18-23

⁷⁹ Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy*, 40-50.

The problems associated with the failure of these treaties to gain traction with the Natives reflected poorly on the American federal government. Throughout the entire decade of the 1780s, the United States attempted to persuade Indian groups into signing treaties that would cede vast sections of the Ohio territory while completely displacing the Native groups that resided there. This idea of using the “right of conquest” model had no chance of working because the Native groups in Ohio rightfully stated that the United States never defeated them on the battlefield and as a result these indigenous groups had no reason to give up their lands as punishment for supporting the British during the American Revolution. This process of land acquisition through the “right of conquest” paradigm was at the heart of the American settler colonial project for the first several years after the conclusion of the American Revolution. Unfortunately federal leaders were sure that these agreements would allow for an orderly settlement by the United States onto these lands, but in actuality they served to muddle further an already complicated situation.

It is hard to imagine that the American leaders believed that using the “right of conquest” model would be effective in trying to gain the valuable lands that comprised Ohio in the mid-1780s because of the weaknesses of the government mandated by the Articles of Confederation. Perhaps the Confederation Congress, the weak government in place under the auspices of the Articles of Confederation, was trying to send a message of strength to the Indian nations by informing them that they were a defeated entity who needed to work in tandem with the American government for their own good. It is also possible that the Confederation Congress was trying to impress the British or the Spanish who were ensconced on territories directly adjacent to that of the United States and were

waiting for any opportunity to swoop in on the burgeoning nation. Another conceivable likelihood was that the Confederation Congress was trying to impress the individual states of the American Union who often times scorned the limited powers of the federal government during the 1780s. Whatever the reasoning, when the Continental Congress was eventually replaced after 1787, it was apparent that the situation on the borderlands was delicate. Because of this, many Native groups would not give up their lands to the American government willingly.

CHAPTER II

SETTLING THE OHIO LANDS

The treaties negotiated by the Confederation Congress with the various Indian nations during the 1780s were a charade on the part of the United States as the American government attempted to deal from a position of organizational strength when that did not exist. The Confederation Congress negotiated these land agreements including the Treaties of Fort McIntosh and Fort Finney, in part, to offset the actions of settlers, legal and illegal, that populated the Ohio country during the 1780s. These colonizers came into Ohio in droves during this decade as they saw the Ohio territory as the key to their financial stability and they were determined to lay claim to valuable territories in the region. Although the members of the Confederation Congress attempted to forward notions of settler colonialism in Ohio with the negotiations of treaties with the Indian nations, they had no military power to back up their prerogatives. Other groups including the squatters and the Kentucky militia had their own ideas of how to interact with the Natives and this often included violence when the opportunity arose to forward their own claims. While the Confederation Congress attempted to regulate the actions of these settlers, they were often powerless to accomplish that objective and their actions often times proved that they had little control over their residents that lived on the borderlands.

Although members of Congress attempted to forward notions of settler colonialism in Ohio with the negotiation of treaties with the Indian nations in order to eventually facilitate an orderly settlement of the Ohio region, they had no military power to back up their prerogatives. Other groups including the squatters and the Kentucky militia had their own ideas of how to interact with the Natives and this often included violence when the opportunity arose to forward their own claims. The actions of the squatters and the militia proved that the Confederation Congress had no control over its own residents.¹

Immigrants, both legal and illegal, that came to the Ohio territory during the 1770s and 1780s played a direct role in how the United States attempted to acquire Indian lands. The actions of these individuals during the Revolutionary War caused problems for residents living in Pennsylvania who feared that these people who came to the Ohio region illegitimately might cause the Indians living in their regions to strike back against the Pennsylvania settlements. These Pennsylvania residents sent a request to the Continental Congress during the Revolutionary War asking for assistance in removing these squatters from the Ohio territory. The appeal stated that the trespassers “make encroachments on the Indian Territorial Rights ... to the great imminent & manifest danger of involving the Country in a Bloody, ruinous, and destructive War with the Indians.”² In 1776, when the Congress received this entreaty they paid it little attention as the concern of the Continental Congress was fighting the British on the Eastern Seaboard as the Revolutionary War was going badly for the Americans.³

¹ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 95-100.

² Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 144-45; Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 66.

³ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 144-45

In October 1779, Colonel Daniel Brodhead, the commander at Fort Pitt, gathered intelligence that a group of squatters came across the Ohio River to try and gain Indian lands. Brodhead sent sixty soldiers from the Eighth Pennsylvania Regiment, under the leadership of Captain John Clark, to find the interlopers and eliminate their smallholdings. Clark and his men found the homes of the unlawful residents, but these people escaped from the army. Brodhead eventually sent further excursions to root out the squatters, but these were not successful either.⁴ Brodhead also sent a courier to the Delaware Indians at Coshocton informing them that there were illegal American settlers on their lands and that they received no approbation from the American military. Brodhead assured these Natives that he was doing everything in his power to eradicate these American holdings.⁵

The further influx of illegal settlers stalled until the Delaware Nation was driven from the Tuscarawas and Muskingum River valleys in the spring of 1781 as the Revolutionary War waged both on the Eastern Seaboard and on the western borderlands. At that point, the Americans again began to cross into Ohio in greater numbers and tried to gain a foothold in the region. Brodhead's replacement at Fort Pitt, General William Irvine, faced the same problem of trespassers as had Brodhead. The American pioneers were determined to travel to Ohio to claim territory and set up their own form of government while attempting to squeeze the Natives off their lands. By the spring of 1782, this movement to establish illicit settlements in the Ohio country accelerated. Irvine noted that there were "sundry meetings of people at different places for the

⁴ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 144-45.

⁵ Daniel Brodhead to George Washington, October 26, 1779, *Washington-Irvine Correspondence* (C.W. Butterfield, Madison, WI: D. Atwood, 1882), 193-94n.

purpose of concerting plans to migrate into the Indian country, there to establish a government for themselves.”⁶ In April 1782, there were billboards placed on trees that proclaimed a meeting at Wheeling “for all who wish to become members of a new state on the Muskingum.”⁷

The situation with the illegal American settlers did not resolve itself at the conclusion of the Revolutionary War. The Confederation Congress passed a resolution on September 22, 1783, which forbade the settlement of Americans on Indian lands “without the express authority and direction of the United States in congress assembled.”⁸ Many Virginia delegates believed this mandate needed to occur in order to make sure the region did not become “profitless.”⁹ Other delegates concerned themselves because they thought this territory might “become a prey to lawless Banditti and adventurers, who must necessarily have involv’d us in continued Indian wars and perhaps have form’d Establishments not only on dissimilar principles to those which form the basis of our Republican Constitutions, but such as might eventually prove destructive to them.”¹⁰ Although the Congress attempted to rein in these illegal settlers in Ohio, it did not matter as the squatters refused to listen and continued to try and construct settlements on Indian

⁶ William Irvine to William Moore, December 3, 1781, *Washington-Irvine Correspondence*, 229-32; Andrew R.L. Cayton, *The Frontier Republic: Ideology and Politics in the Ohio Country, 1780-1825*, Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1986, 1-10.

⁷ William Irvine to William Moore, December 3, 1781, *Washington-Irvine Correspondence*, 229-32; Cayton, *The Frontier Republic*, 1-10.

⁸ Cayton, *The Frontier Republic*, 1-11.

⁹ Cayton, *The Frontier Republic*, 1-11.

¹⁰ Cayton, *The Frontier Republic*, 1-11.

lands in Ohio. The federal government was not going to deter the trespassers because it had virtually no chance of regulating the behavior of these individuals.¹¹

Although the unlawful residents believed they had a legitimate reason to remain in Ohio, they continued to incur the wrath of national officials who saw them as a great threat as they attempted to prepare to move legitimate settlers into the region. George Washington, himself, specified the danger imposed by these squatters as he stated, “To suffer a wide-extended country to be overrun with land-jobbers, speculators, and monopolizers, or even scattered settlers is inconsistent with that wisdom and policy which our true interest dictates, or which an enlightened people ought to adopt.”¹² He believed that if the Confederation Congress did not try and regulate affairs in the Ohio territory, this area would fall under the sway of what he perceived to be illegal colonizers with little regard for the law and order of the United States which could seriously jeopardize an orderly American advance onto the western borderlands.¹³

Some of these squatters came from Kentucky and Pennsylvania. No matter where these people came from they all believed that the land in Ohio was rightly theirs because they created dwellings and had no loyalty to the Congress which they believed had no allegiance to them. In 1785, these settlers explained that they came from “the Lowest Ebb of Poverty; the greatest part of us having no property in Lands: our stocks Reduced almost to nothing: our Case seemed Desperate. But viewing as it Appeared to us an Advantage Offering of Vacant Lands which with the Alarming Nesesitys (sic) we were

¹¹ Cayton, *The Frontier Republic*, 1-11.

¹² To James Duane in Congress, September 7, 1783, *The Writings of George Washington*, New York: G.P Putnam’s sons, 1891, 10:303-04.

¹³ To James Duane in Congress, September 7, 1783, *The Writings of George Washington*, New York: G.P Putnam’s sons, 1891, 10:303-04.

under Joined with the future Prospect of Bettering our Circumstances: invited us to Enter on those lands ... Pregnant with hopes of Future Happiness we sat Content in the Enjoyment of our Scanty morsel.”¹⁴

This communication shows that these individuals felt desperate after the conclusion of the Revolutionary War. They wanted the Confederation Congress to understand why they felt the need to move their families north of the Ohio River. Many of these squatters that came from Kentucky and Pennsylvania found that the land laws of these regions benefited speculators that possessed many acres of land which was not surprising. These often wealthy landlords then charged rents that were perceived as excessive by the small freeholders. The property-owners perceived these squatters to be lower-class settlers on their lands who should follow their commands and not complain about their situation. Those frustrated with the state of affairs in Kentucky and Pennsylvania looked enviously at the lands that comprised Ohio. They wanted to become independent farmers that were beyond the reach of wealthier landowners if they chose to move their families and go to Ohio.¹⁵

In a further appeal sent to the Confederation Congress, 431 settlers claimed they needed their own territory in Ohio because if they remained where they were they would be in perpetual slavery to their landlords. In this communication to the Congress the settlers explained the predicament that they were in. These individuals believed that

¹⁴ “Petition of Inhabitants West of the Ohio River, to the Continental Congress”, April 11, 1785, in Archer Butler Hulbert, ed., *Ohio in the Time of Confederation*, Marietta, OH: Marietta Historical Commission, 1918, 103-05

¹⁵ Alan Taylor, “Land and Liberty on the Post-Revolutionary Frontier,” appears in *Devising Liberty: Preserving and Creating Freedom in the New American Republic*, David Thomas Konig, ed., (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 81-108.

“almost the whole of the lands in the Country aforesaid are Engrossed into the hands of a few Interested men, the greater part of which live at ease in the internal parts of Virginia.”¹⁶ If these unfortunate individuals remained in Kentucky they would “become Slaves to those Engrossers of Lands and to the Court of Virginia.”¹⁷

These squatters realized that in this era if you did not own land you were at the lower end of the social spectrum in the United States. To these people the ideals of freedom entailed obtaining territory that had not yet been deforested. They believed that plots should not be parceled out by a distant government or sold to wealthier investors who had no intention of populating the territory in question. When these individuals banded together to form small communities they would need each other for mutual defense against the possibility of Indian attack. At this point, these squatters would work together and limit how much land each person could obtain. Joseph Doddridge, a resident of western Pennsylvania stated that many settlers believed 400 acres “as the allotment of divine providence for one family, and believed that any attempt to get more would be sinful.”¹⁸ Those people that tried to gain too much land at the expense of the other settlers was “held in detestation” which fostered a feeling of camaraderie among these people.¹⁹

The tax lists of this era show that these pioneers had a reason to fear perpetual dependence on their landlords if they remained in Kentucky or Pennsylvania. In western

¹⁶ “Petition of Kentuckians for Lands North of Ohio River,” to the Continental Congress in Hulbert, ed., *Ohio in the Time of Confederation*.

¹⁷ “Petition of Kentuckians for Lands North of Ohio River,” to the Continental Congress in Hulbert, ed., *Ohio in the Time of Confederation*.

¹⁸ Taylor, “Land and Liberty on the Post-Revolutionary Frontier,” 81-108.

¹⁹ Taylor, “Land and Liberty on the Post-Revolutionary Frontier,” 81-108.

Pennsylvania in the mid-1780s, more than a third of adult men owned no land and the largest landowners claimed a quarter of the property in that state. During the next decade, the number of landless men increased to 41 percent of the population. The situation was worse in Kentucky. In 1800, roughly 45 percent of Kentucky's adult men owned no land while the richest landowners monopolized one-third of the available parcels in that region. These experiences showed if you owned no property you were often at the mercy of those that did. As a result, many of these individuals decided to leave those areas and attempt to gain lands in the Ohio region.²⁰ Partly because of this, by 1785, there were more than 2,200 families that made their residence unlawfully north of the Ohio River periphery and this number would continue to grow as the decade progressed.²¹

The Confederation Congress tried to resolve the issue of squatters when American representatives negotiated the Treaty of Fort McIntosh in 1785. In this agreement there was a clause stating that squatters who inhabited lands reserved to the Wyandots and Delawares would not receive assistance from the United States army and that the Indians “may punish [them] as they pleased.”²² Colonel Josiah Harmar was told by Indian commissioners to “employ such force” as was necessary to disengage American squatters who settled on Indian lands. Harmar attempted to solve the problem in a speedy manner and on March 31, 1785, Harmar ordered Ensign John Armstrong and twenty infantry

²⁰ Taylor, “Land and Liberty on the Post-Revolutionary Frontier,” 81-108.

²¹ Taylor, “Land and Liberty on the Post-Revolutionary Frontier,” 81-108; Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 144-45.

²² Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 146-47.

soldiers to move in to the Ohio territory and deal with the problem. Armstrong was not successful and relayed his failure to Harmar on April 12 of that year.²³

Harmar was a lifelong soldier that served with distinction during the Revolutionary War. He led the Pennsylvania forces in the early stages of the war and went from a captain to a brevet colonel during the course of the armed conflict. He assisted Washington's forces from 1778 to 1781 and then with Nathaniel Greene's armies during the southern campaigns at the conclusion of the war. After the conclusion of the fighting Harmar received an appointment as the senior officer of the United States army which was a position he held from 1784 to 1791. During his term as senior officer of the United States armed forces he received a promotion to brevet general and served to regulate affairs on the borderlands. In addition, he was the most likely choice to lead the inexperienced American armed forces into battle in the case of a full-fledged Indian war.²⁴

The Confederation Congress also issued an official proclamation on June 15, 1785 in which the members of that legislature stated that they were aware that people illegally crossed the Ohio River and took up residence north of that waterway. The declaration specifically prohibited all of the unlawful settlers and encouraged those families that already settled north of the Ohio River to depart quickly. If these individuals did not retreat from the Ohio country in a swift manner they were open to retribution from the Congress. While the members of Congress hoped that this would have the desired effect and eliminate these people from their new homesteads it was

²³ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 146-47.

²⁴ William Gardner Bell, *Commanding Generals and Chiefs of Staff, 1775-2005*, (Washington, D.C.,: Center of Military History United States Army, 2005), 58.

going to be virtually impossible to enforce because Congress did not have the ability to back up their threats with military force as the national army at this point was virtually nonexistent.²⁵

Continued military expeditions also failed to have any impact on removing the intruders from the Ohio country. On October 4, 1785, an Indian commissioner named Richard Butler warned the squatters to leave their homesteads, but he gave them an opportunity to harvest their crops. However, he indicated, “I observe it is with a degree of reluctance [that they comply], and that they are fond of construing every indulgence in the most favorable and extensive manner for themselves, and seem to hint that saving their crops includes feeding their cattle on the ground the ensuing winter, and of course give them a footing in the Spring, and so on.”²⁶

At approximately the same time as Butler wrote his communication soldiers constructed Fort Harmar at the mouth of the Muskingum River in an attempt to rally federal forces to root out the trespassers once and for all.²⁷ In 1786, Captain John Hamtramck set out with 160 soldiers on a mission to remove the squatters once again. He and his men noticed nine houses, which he immediately burned, and his men also destroyed many acres of corn. However, once Hamtramck and his men left the area the intruders reappeared to start over again. By this time, the Congress realized that

²⁵ Hulbert, ed., *Ohio in the Time of Confederation*, 113-14.

²⁶ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 146-49.

²⁷ Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, 240-41.

removing the trespassers with the sparse American military forces was going to be a virtual impossibility.²⁸

The problem with the squatters in the 1780s illustrates the unique nature of settler colonialism in Ohio. Although both the Confederation Congress and the illegal settlers had the same objective with the removal of the Natives from their landholdings, both groups attempted to accomplish their mission in different ways. The squatters wanted to permanently remove the Indians from the region and were willing to resort to violence to accomplish their objectives if the Indians resisted. The federal government attempted to gain these territories through what national leaders perceived as the legitimate negotiation of treaties with the various Indian nations that resided in Ohio. As the Confederation Congress attempted to discuss these agreements with the Natives, they had to deal with the further problem of trying to remove the illegal settlers. Because the weak federal government with no standing military could not remove the squatters from the borderlands before they could sell off the land to appropriate speculators it caused great consternation for congressional leaders because it complicated their attempts to procure the Ohio region by treaty.

The situation with the squatters marks an interesting aspect of American settler colonialism. The federal government, whether it was under the auspices of the Articles of Confederation or the Constitution, had its own way of trying to remove the Natives from their lands. Representatives from the federal governments during the 1780s and 1790s constantly tried to negotiate treaties that would allow the United States to officially expand their settlements into Ohio with limited Indian resistance. Federal leaders

²⁸ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 146-49; Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, 240-41.

believed that this was the proper way to gain possession of Ohio. However, these agreements only sowed further bad relations between the Americans and the Natives.

A further problem that arose for the national governments was that they could not control the individuals that started to populate Ohio before these treaties were even discussed. The squatters came to Ohio in droves during the 1770s and 1780s because they believed that they had no other choice as the best lands were unavailable to them in other places. They would practice their own form of settler colonialism as they tried to develop new homesteads on the borderlands while killing many Indians that got in their way. The Confederation Congress repeatedly tried to remove these squatters with no success and their violent actions would pose a problem as the federal government tried to wrest more territory from the Natives.

While the Confederation Congress dealt with the problem of illegal settlers in the Ohio region, they also endeavored to generate a series of land regulations that attempted to parcel out the Ohio domains in an orderly manner. These efforts manifested itself in the Land Ordinances of 1784 and 1785 which attempted to make the territory in Ohio firmly under the control of the American government so they could sell the territories to legitimate investors. The first order of business was the Land Ordinance of 1784 drafted by Thomas Jefferson. Under this decree seven territories would develop impermanent governments that would follow the lead of the initial thirteen states. When a territory reached 20,000 free people Congress would allow for the creation of a permanent government. These territories would become states of the Union when their population

equaled that of the smallest of the original thirteen states and two-thirds of the original states agreed to their admission into the federal Union.²⁹

The Land Ordinance of 1785 helped establish how the western domains would be divided up into parcels that could be sold to appropriate depositors. Any public land was to be measured and apportioned into townships that were six miles square, “by lines running due north and south, and others crossing these at right angles.”³⁰ At the western border of Pennsylvania on the Ohio River, each township was to consist of 640 acres with certain property reserved for the instillation of public schools. Because the Confederation Congress could not tax its citizens, many in Congress believed that the sale of these lands in Ohio would alleviate the debt the United States still had from the Revolutionary War. While this was a systematic approach to dispose of this property the Indian nations did not accept that the United States controlled these regions because they reiterated again that Great Britain had no right to cede these lands to the United States as part of the peace process related to the passage of the Treaty of Paris.³¹

The ordinances attempted to allow for the surveying of Ohio lands in a methodical manner, but the Confederation Congress still had the problem of the squatters that they could not remove by force. Many prominent individuals such as Washington believed that these individuals might be swayed by British and Spanish representatives who might encourage them to separate from the United States and join with these foreign powers. Because of this, the Congress endeavored to move swiftly to ensure that the

²⁹ Cayton, *The Frontier Republic*, 1-10.

³⁰ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 144.

³¹ Ordinance for Disposing of Western Lands, May 20, 1785, *Journals of the Continental Congress*, 28:375-91.; Phillip R. Shriver and Clarence E. Wunderlin, Jr., *The Documentary Heritage of Ohio* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000), 51-53.

Ohio region would be settled by legitimate settlers. A group of investors took advantage of this situation forwarded by the Confederation Congress and formed an entity that would buy territory in Ohio. This group called itself the Ohio Company and was established by eleven Revolutionary War veterans on March 1, 1786 as a joint-stock company. Their ultimate goal was to eliminate what they perceived as the unsubstantiated claims of the squatters that populated the region while gaining enormous profits off the Ohio lands for themselves. All this would occur for this joint-stock company as they disposed the Natives of their territories.³²

The Ohio Company represented a unique opportunity for the federal government to try and work in tandem with this organization so that the Ohio territory would be properly surveyed and then settled by legitimate pioneers who would hopefully provide a financial windfall for the federal government it tried to alleviate the national debt incurred during the Revolutionary War. It was the hope of the Confederation Congress that the actions of the Ohio Company would allow for an orderly settlement in Ohio and reduce the influence held by the squatters in the region. The problem that occurred for the Confederation Congress was the Ohio Company itself was only a joint stock company with no military presence and because of this it was powerless to restrict in the activities of the squatters. Eventually, the region would hold both legitimate and illegitimate settlers who vied for control of the Ohio territory and often came into conflict with each other. This situation would also exacerbate the problems with the Natives residing in the

³² Timothy J Shannon, "The Ohio Company and the Meaning of Opportunity in the American West, 1786-1795," *New England Quarterly*, 64, September 1991, 393-413.

area who now had more American settlers to deal with as they tried to maintain their landholdings.³³

As the Ohio Company increased its landholdings it hoped to allow for an orderly settlement of the Ohio territory while neutralizing the effect of the trespassers that already came to the area. Part of the reason for this attempt to move westward from New England was that many of the original shareholders in the Ohio Company were horrified at what they perceived to be the inability of the Confederation Congress under the Articles of Confederation to maintain order in the United States. After Daniel Shays led a rebellion against the government of Massachusetts in 1786 because of the government's poor treatment of farmers that were heavily in debt many other soldiers believed leaving Massachusetts and trying their luck on the borderlands might be a more attractive alternative.³⁴

As part of their endeavors on the borderlands, the Ohio Company vowed that it would engage in diplomatic negotiations with the Natives living in Ohio although this proved to be a pretense from the very beginning. Rufus Putnam, one of the leading speculators involved with the Ohio Company, believed it was crucial to develop trading agreements with the Indians in order to build alliances with them. The members of the Ohio Company were aghast at the violence that pervaded the relationship between the squatters and the Natives and they vowed that they would engage in much more harmonious relations with the Indians. Despite their rhetoric, the ultimate goal for this

³³ Shannon, "The Ohio Company and the Meaning of Opportunity in the American West, 1786-1795", 393-413.

³⁴ Shannon, "The Ohio Company and the Meaning of Opportunity in the American West", 393-413; Patrick Griffin, *American Leviathan, Empire, Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008), 200-300; Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 156-57.

new organization, just like the trespassers, was the ultimate removal of the Natives from the Ohio region.³⁵

The ideals of the Ohio Company became problematic in the summer of 1786 when many Indian warriors launched a series of raids on American homesteads along the Ohio River because they believed the treaties negotiated by the United States and the various Indian nations had been done in bad faith. These Natives were also furious at the continued intrusions onto their lands by American settlers. In response to these attacks, the Kentucky militia prepared a counterassault on the Indians that originally launched the raids. George Rogers Clark prepared a foray on the villages that sponsored the attacks. Benjamin Logan was to lead one squadron against Native communities along the Mad River in western Ohio, which was a branch of the Great Miami River, while Clark streamed his warriors against Indian settlements on the Wabash River in Indiana. As part of their offensive campaign, the Kentuckians tried to find weakened Indian communities and “Once Kentuckians discovered the vulnerability of Indian villages and cornfields, they burned and plundered with devastating effect.”³⁶

By October 1, 1786, Logan and his squadron, which included Colonel Daniel Boone and Major Simon Kenton, left Kentucky and crossed the Ohio River and progressed to Shawnee hamlets on the Mad River. The nonviolent Shawnee settlement of Mackachack located in contemporary Logan County, Ohio was in the path of these warriors. Mackachack was headed by Moluntha, a Shawnee chief who signed the Treaty

³⁵ Cayton, *The Frontier Republic*, 37-39.

³⁶ Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, 240-44; Stephen Aron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 49-50.

of Fort Finney earlier in the year and was told by American representatives of the Confederation Congress that he and his people were “included among the friends of the United States.”³⁷ To show his loyalty to the American government Moluntha flew an American flag above the village of Machachack. When the militia members reached his township on October 6, Moluntha believed he would interact with these individuals as part of the American “chain of friendship.”³⁸ However, Logan had other objectives which included attacking the^{Shawnee} community. He and his men assailed the settlement and in the process killed men, women, and children without regard for the fact that these people professed peaceful intentions towards the Americans.³⁹

After the hostilities concluded, Logan’s men took stock of their situation and took many of the residents as prisoners of war, including Moluntha. As Logan tried to control the situation, Captain Hugh McGary, another militia member, who was part of a military defeat inflicted by Shawnee warriors at the Revolutionary War Battle of Blue Licks, killed Moluntha by striking him with a hatchet in the head and then scalping him. Over the course of the next several days, the Kentucky militia continued their assaults on other Shawnee estates in western Ohio. By October 8, Logan and his men retreated back to Kentucky with the scalps of eleven Indian soldiers, ten Indian chiefs, and other women and children. In addition, the Kentucky combatants returned with twenty-six women and two children as captives and four “rescued” white detainees.⁴⁰

³⁷ Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, 240-44; Aron, *How the West Was Lost*, 49-50; Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 95-100.

³⁸ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 95-100.

³⁹ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 95-100.

⁴⁰ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 95-100.

McGary was eventually court-martialed by the Kentuckians, but he only received a one year suspension from service to the militia. Even though he was the individual that killed Moluntha, his actions represented the will of the entire squadron who believed that they needed to act swiftly to decrease the possibility of an Indian attack on their homesteads even when they encountered Natives that professed peace and a desire to live in harmony with their American neighbors. Federal District Court Justice Harry Innes stated that “The Indians have always been the aggressors” and that their form of total warfare made it impossible for the Kentuckians to determine which Natives were peaceful and which were aggressive.⁴¹

The actions of the Kentuckians guaranteed that violence would continue on the borderlands and Logan assumed that continued negotiations by the Confederation Congress with the Indian nations were fruitless because he and his men believed they operated from a position of strength to where they could impose their own form of justice upon the Indian nations in the region. This was not the reality of the situation and while Logan and his men exulted in their perceived successes, they only managed to further inflame the passions of both Americans and Shawnees and the violence that the Americans and the Indians committed against each other did not decrease during the following year. In fact, it became much more lethal as both sides intended to harass, intimidate, and ultimately defeat their enemy.⁴²

The murder of Moluntha indicated just how powerless the Confederation Congress under the auspices of the inherently weak Articles of Confederation was in the

⁴¹ Aron, *How the West Was Lost*, 49-50.

⁴² Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 95-100.

1780s. Although Moluntha ascribed to the ideals of the American government and agreed to the mandates of the Treaty of Fort Finney whereby he and his peoples flew the American flag to show that they agreed to the dictates of the settlement he was murdered nonetheless by militia members that had their own ideas of borderland justice. Increasing numbers of the militia participants from Kentucky believed that continued aggression towards the Natives living in the region would eventually eliminate the problem posed by Indian residency in the area and if that meant killing every last Native person that lived in the area, they were willing to do that. When the murder of Moluntha occurred in 1786, the Confederation Congress did not have the power to control their own citizens who continued to pursue and kill Indians that got in their way.⁴³

This troublesome situation caused members of the Confederation Congress to reassess the situation on the borderlands and attempt to increase its presence in these regions. Even though the militia members many times operated on their own against the wishes of the federal government, by 1787 the Confederation Congress attempted to enhance the authority of the national government in Ohio by sending armed assistance to the residents on the borderlands. Harmar sent two units of federal troops to Louisville, where he commanded them to work with the Kentucky militia to prevent the possibility of the Indians raiding American settlements. At approximately the same time, the Confederation Congress dispatched additional soldiers to the Ohio Valley. These national warriors obtained assistance from 1,000 Kentucky militia members who received orders to assist the federal combatants if the situation warranted it. The Confederation Congress believed that by sending federal troops to the region that those soldiers could be

⁴³ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 95-100.

in charge of operations, with the militia only serving as additional combatants who were to follow the orders of the regular soldiers. These actions would hopefully defuse the actions of the militia members who wanted to eliminate all of the Indians that stood in their way of controlling the entire region.⁴⁴

The Confederation Congress realized that its influence was minimal in Ohio before 1787 and because of that it tried to increase national authority with the presence of federal troops. While Congress professed a desire to protect American settlers on the borderlands and offset the actions of the militia participants, it also wanted to increase the influence of speculators from organizations such as the Ohio Company. If organizations such as the Ohio Company could become a major influence on the borderlands with the protection of national soldiers, they might be able to work in tandem with the federal administration to increase the validity of both the Ohio Company and the national government in Ohio while at the same time minimizing the influence of the militias who continued to attack the Indians without compunction. By doing this, the Confederation Congress also hoped to minimize the violence as it continued to engage the Natives in further treaty negotiations.⁴⁵

To illustrate the desire of the Confederation Congress to shape the situation in the Ohio country by encouraging more and more speculators to invest in the region, at approximately the same time as the federal soldiers went to protect the residents of the borderlands, the national government sold a million acres of land north of the Ohio River to the Ohio Company; an additional million acres went to John Cleves Symmes for the

⁴⁴ Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, 241.

⁴⁵ Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, 240-44; Colonel Harmar to the Secretary of War, October 10, 1786-November 15, 1786, *StCP* 2:18-23.

Miami Purchase; and another substantial expanse of territory went to the Scioto Company. The government continued to sell off lands that fall to other genuine investors. These actions marked the first large-scale sale of valuable territory in Ohio to entrepreneurs including members of the Ohio Company who were then to sell of the lands in smaller parcels to individual depositors.⁴⁶

Members of the Confederation Congress believed that their actions would have a positive impact for Americans in the Ohio country. Interestingly enough, the increased national troops in Ohio actually helped to now protect the squatters that had been the bane of the Confederation Congress for over a decade. The original troops that came to the region before 1787 were supposed to remove the squatters from the region permanently, but the soldiers sent to Ohio in 1787 now allowed these illegal settlers to receive protection from the federal government as long as they followed the mandates of the Confederation Congress.⁴⁷

This set of circumstances indicated that the Confederation Congress realized that they could not completely contain the actions of the squatters that populated the Ohio territory because these individuals had their own set of priorities as they tried to gain the lands on the borderlands. By sending in federal troops to the contested regions of Ohio, the Confederation Congress seemed to admit that they ultimately could not control the actions of the squatters as they were too numerous and the federal government did not

⁴⁶ Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, 240-44; Colonel Harmor to the Secretary of War, October 10, 1786-November 15, 1786, *StCP* 2:18-23.

⁴⁷ Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, 240-42

have the military ability to offset their actions. In the end, the Confederation Congress was willing to accommodate the needs of their settlers on the borderlands.⁴⁸

While the Confederation Congress worked to increase its presence and that of the Ohio Company in Ohio during 1787, it also heeded the advice of some of its leading statesmen and passed the Northwest Ordinance which also affected the development of the western borderlands. This new mandate allowed for the possibility of the eventual displacement of the Natives living in the region and American advancement onto these disputed lands when legitimate settlers infiltrated the region. Eventually, the Northwest Ordinance would allow for the assimilation of territory in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. It laid the groundwork for western expansion for the next generation as each of these areas would eventually gain more and more pioneers that continually clamored for more fertile land.⁴⁹

Even though the lawmakers appeared to work to dispossess the Natives, they couched the language of the Northwest Ordinance so that it appeared the United States acted in a benevolent manner to their Indian neighbors. The third article of this document provided, “The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress; but laws founded in justice and humanity, shall from time to time be made for preventing wrongs being done to them, and for preserving peace

⁴⁸ Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, 240-42

⁴⁹ Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 66.

and friendship with them.”⁵⁰ This implied that the Indians were the rightful owner of many of the lands on the western borderlands and it was the duty of the government to treat them with respect even as they tried to gain more territories through treaties. This vernacular was insincere and the Indian nations were not fooled by the American government’s apparent magnanimity.⁵¹

The actions initiated by the federal government including the increased military presence on the borderlands and the sale of lands to speculative organizations were supposed to awe the Indian nations into giving up more of their territory because in the eyes of members of the Confederation Congress the United States was making a show of force. If the Americans could prove that they were the rightful owners of the disputed territory they could continue to press the Indians to give up more of their land. However, this mindset was illusory as the Natives still did not respect the authority of the Americans and many of these groups responded in a negative manner to these entreaties. The actions by the Confederation Congress assured that aggression would continue on the part of the Americans and the Natives because neither side was willing to give up their territory. The Indians were not fooled by the machinations of the American government and several of the Indian groups, most notably the Shawnee and Miami Nations continued to press to remove American settlers from Ohio permanently.⁵²

After the passage of Northwest Ordinance the Superintendent of Indian Affairs appointed Harmar to negotiate with the Shawnee and other hostile Wabash Indians, but his actions met with limited success because of the suspicions held by the various Indian

⁵⁰ Northwest Ordinance, *Journals of the Continental Congress*, 32:334-43.

⁵¹ Northwest Ordinance, *Journals of the Continental Congress*, 32:334-43.

⁵² Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, 240-42

groups who still did not trust the actions of the American government. These groups understood the duplicitous nature that United States representatives employed when engaging in these types of meetings as they tried to harangue the Indians into ceding more of their lands to the United States. By this point, it would be virtually impossible for Harmar or any other American emissary to engage the Natives in continued negotiations, but he received direct orders to continue to try to convince the Indians that it was in their best interests to work with the American government who would then offer them protection.⁵³

The Natives continued to attack American holdings after the passage of the Northwest Ordinance as the American settlers, both speculators and squatters, continued to pour into Ohio. The federal army attempted to protect these American pioneers, but it was impossible to protect every person that came to Ohio. For those that lived near American garrisons the army could provide a type of protection because of the firepower that they controlled at these strongholds, but the further away that these settlers lived from the forts, the more likely they were to be attacked by Natives who looked to disrupt American settlements and drive these people from Ohio for good.⁵⁴

Because of their successes, the Indians then launched further raids into Kentucky which caused the militia members from that region to counterattack against the Indians, a situation the federal government tried to avoid. It became apparent again that the Confederation Congress was largely powerless to control the militia when they wanted to attack the Indians for perceived outrages. Harmar then realized he and his troops could

⁵³ *Journals of the Continental Congress*, 33:385-91.

⁵⁴ Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, 242-43.

not rein in the militia members and he hoped that continued American negotiations with the Indians would reap some kind of success, but he eventually realized that it was going to be virtually impossible to come to a peaceful resolution about the Ohio lands.⁵⁵

As Harmar endeavored to work with the Indians, Knox paid attention to the situation on the borderlands and stated that he believed a confederacy of intransigent Natives upset with the machinations of the United States government formed north of the Ohio River. He asserted that either a full-fledged Indian war for which the Americans were not prepared or a treaty would occur with the antagonistic Natives in the very near future. The secretary of war stated that the United States might need to rethink how it interacted with the Indians and he suggested using British models under which the government would pay monies to the Indians in order to legally secure their lands. This would be a change of official policy away from the model of “right of conquest.” He further claimed that if the Americans were willing to pay cash for the disputed lands, it would cost approximately \$20,000. If the Americans wanted to take these regions by force, the cost of supplying the federal army for a two-year engagement would total about two million dollars. This change of policy would have limited effectiveness because of the distrust that the Indian nations held towards the American government and the fact the Indian nations did not want to give up more of their lands.⁵⁶

Also after the enactment of the Northwest Ordinance, the Confederation Congress appointed Arthur St. Clair to be the first governor of the newly named Northwest Territory in 1787. It was surprising that Washington and Knox chose the untested St.

⁵⁵ Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, 242-43.

⁵⁶ *Journals of the Continental Congress*, 33:385-91.

Clair to lead discussions with Indians about their land claims. He and his subordinates discussed land cession strategies with the Natives, but he seemed to lack understanding of how these individuals felt about negotiations with the United States. To further complicate his job, St. Clair received pressure from many different officials including Washington and Knox as well as the settlers on the ground on the western peripheries who clamored for protection against Indian attack. St. Clair was in a precarious situation as he faced pressures from many sources that all had their own ideas of what was best for the American residents of the Northwest Territory. Whatever choices he made were going to be open to criticism from some individuals.⁵⁷

St. Clair served as a secretary to commissioners sent by the Continental Congress to negotiate with the Indians in 1775 that led to the Fort Pitt Treaty which stated that the Ohio River was the boundary between American and Indian communities. After this assignment ended, the Continental Congress selected him to be a colonel in the Continental Army. In this capacity, he served to assist the Americans in their invasion of Canada at the end of 1775 and then he aided Washington at the battles of Trenton and Princeton. Finally, in 1777 after achieving the rank of brigadier-general, St. Clair received an assignment to be the commander of Fort Ticonderoga in New York. St. Clair eventually abandoned the garrison and allowed the British to seize that strategic location. The army court martialled St. Clair, but he received exoneration from any charges;

⁵⁷ Fred J. Milligan, *Ohio's Founding Fathers* (New York: iUniverse, Inc., 2003), 81-94.; Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise Phelps Kellogg, *The Revolution on the Upper Ohio, 1775-1777* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1908), 25-126.

however, for the remainder of the war, St. Clair did not command any strategic American emplacements.⁵⁸

During the same year as the passage of the Northwest Ordinance national leaders realized that the Confederation Congress under the Articles of Confederation was too weak and needed to be replaced by a stronger federal government. In September 1787 representatives meeting in Philadelphia agreed to the passage of a stronger Constitution which would give the federal government substantially more power. The Commerce Clause of the Constitution stated that Congress gained the right to “regulate Commerce with foreign nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes.”⁵⁹ Because the Indian nations were perceived as uncultured they were deemed to be “foreign nations”, but the Constitution did mandate the United States to enter into diplomatic negotiations with the Indians. However, these consultations allowed the federal government to seize Native territories if they saw it as in the best interests of the expansion of the United States which they would attempt to do in the early 1790s.⁶⁰

The passage of the Constitution changed the perception of settler colonialism in the United States. Many individuals living on the borderlands hoped that a stronger federal government would use the power given to it by the delegates of the Constitutional Convention to protect the interests of those living on the borderlands. These people believed that a stronger federal army could protect the interests of settlers who at times believed they had received little security from the previous fragile national government. Many of these people felt isolated on the borderlands and believed that the administration

⁵⁸ Milligan, *Ohio's Founding Fathers*, 81-94.

⁵⁹ Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 65.

⁶⁰ Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 65.

under the Articles of Confederation had little concern for the plight of those living in disputed areas in the Ohio territory. Now a strong national leader could use his power to call up the military to remove the Natives from the territories that Indian groups ceded to the United States, but this would prove to be a misleading hope as the federal military was still inherently weak and its ability to protect its settlers was minimal.⁶¹

After the passage of the Northwest Ordinance and the Constitution, the Ohio Company worked quickly to make permanent establishments in Ohio that reflected the genteel nature of New England society. In early 1788, members of this organization charged Putnam with leading a group of four surveyors and twenty-two other men to clear a space for a long-lasting community near the Ohio River in southeastern Ohio which received the name Marietta. In April 1788, these individuals began work on building a durable settlement and by July there were 48 residents living in this area.⁶² While constructing the new village the members of the Ohio Company attempted to instill New England ideals on the borderlands. This would be done by using two blockhouses to construct a school and a church. However, these plans for an orderly settlement were soon thwarted as squatters poured into the village, most notably from Virginia and Pennsylvania. These newcomers upset the balance of power in Marietta as they were unwilling to conform to the structured regiment of the New Englanders. However, the squatters would soon be used as a defense against Indians who might want

⁶¹ Griffin, *American Leviathan*, 195-96.

⁶² Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 175-90.

to attack Marietta. In 1789, the Ohio Company offered 100-acre pieces of land to squatters in order to attract more settlers to the region.⁶³

By doing this they could incorporate these people into the Marietta community for their own purposes of trying to maintain the landholdings in Ohio while attempting to ensure that the Natives did not regain the land they had worked so hard to populate with individuals from New England. This tenuous relationship between the legitimate settlers and the squatters would continue for the next several years as the Natives began to make more and more threats against the American homesteads in the Ohio region. Eventually, the legitimate settlers and the squatters even if they did not completely trust each called on the federal government to protect them from the possibility of continued Indian attacks and hopefully remove the Natives that impeded American settlement in Ohio.⁶⁴

Because the members of the Ohio Company were now willing to use squatters as a type of defense against the Indians the members of this group were going to continue to press the government for more and more land. Although the Ohio Company stated that they would engage in diplomatic negotiations with the Indians of Ohio this is in essence was a pretense. Because this organization worked in tandem with the government the desires of both soon became readily apparent. After 1787, there was no possibility of maintaining a “middle ground” in Ohio whereby the Americans and the Indians could coexist and trade with each other so that both groups might thrive.⁶⁵ The American

⁶³ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 175-90.

⁶⁴ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 175-90.

⁶⁵ Frazer McGlinchey, “A Superior Civilization: Appropriation, Negotiation, and Interaction in the Northwest Territory, 1787-1795,” appears in *The Boundaries between Us: Natives and Newcomers along the Frontiers of the Old Northwest Territory, 1750-1850*, Daniel P. Barr, ed., (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 2006), 118-42.

government would do whatever it took to remove the Natives from their smallholdings. Although Washington and Knox called for peaceful negotiations at the end of the 1780s they would soon face the inevitability of armed conflict between the groups because Indians were willing to fight to maintain their landholdings.⁶⁶

Spurred by the relentless drives of American settlers, the Ohio Company and the national government determined to gain more Indian land. This is apparent in the appeal from officers of the Continental army when they stated that “whenever the honorable Congress shall be pleased to procure the aforesaid lands of the natives, they will make a provision for the location and survey of the lands.” These sentiments illustrate that both the Ohio Company and federal leaders were going to work consistently to procure more Native lands, by force if necessary. By the end of the 1780s, the official governmental policy changed from negotiating suspicious treaties to the outright purchase of Indian territories, but the mindset was the same: gather as much land as was possible and displace the Natives from their lands. The continued violence on the borderlands would cause the federal government over the course of the next several years to harden its stance and be more willing to engage the Indians in open warfare if they would not relinquish more of their territory.⁶⁷

Once Washington became president in 1789, issues on the western borderlands were of the utmost importance. In a letter to St. Clair in October 1789 Washington stated that Congress empowered him to call forth the militia for the protection of the western settlements if the Natives proved to be unwilling to negotiate with the United States for

⁶⁶ McGlinchey, “A Superior Civilization, 118-42.

⁶⁷ McGlinchey, “A Superior Civilization: Appropriation, Negotiation, and Interaction in the Northwest Territory, 1787-1795,” 118-42.

further land cessions. However, he was still willing to bargain for a peaceful settlement regarding borderland issues if the Natives had an inclination to deal with the American government. “It is highly necessary that I should, as soon as possible, possess full information whether the Wabash and Illinois Indians are most inclined for war or peace”, Washington reasoned. He also stated, “If for the former, it is proper that I should be informed of the means which will most probably induce them to peace. If a peace can be established with the said Indians on reasonable terms, the interests of the United States dictate that it should be effected as soon as possible.”⁶⁸

Even though he stated his intentions for peace, it seemed as if Washington had serious doubts about the reality of that occurring. As such, he also directed St. Clair,

If, however, notwithstanding your intimations to them, they should continue their hostilities, or mediate any incursions against the frontiers of Virginia and Pennsylvania, or against any of the troops or posts of the United States, and it should appear to you the time of execution would be so near as to forbid your transmitting the information to me, and receiving my further orders thereon, then you are hereby authorized and empowered in my name to call on the lieutenants of the nearest counties of Virginia and Pennsylvania for such detachments of militia as you may judge proper, not exceeding, however, one thousand from Virginia and five hundred from Pennsylvania.⁶⁹

Washington wanted to maintain peace with the Indians, but at the same time, if they continued with their threatening gestures, the United States government believed they had no choice but to defend the interests of the western regions of the United States. On the borderlands, Natives believed they were protecting themselves by preparing for armed resistance. The situation continued to worsen for the remainder of 1789.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ The President to Governor St. Clair, October 6, 1789, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:125-26.

⁶⁹ The President to Governor St. Clair, October 6, 1789, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:125-26.

⁷⁰ The President to Governor St. Clair, October 6, 1789, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:125-26.

Washington may have believed had the American military been able to go in and root out the recalcitrant Natives in Ohio in one swift motion, it would show the Indians and the British that the American military could rise up to the challenge of these rivals, but given the nature of the federal army this was highly unlikely and the prospects of military disaster were strong in 1789 and 1790. Neither the British nor the Indian soldiers likely feared the small American military system because they were untested and largely untrained for advanced guerrilla operations in enemy territory. In essence, although he professed a desire for peaceful negotiations, what he wanted was for the Indians to surrender their lands to make that happen. To further his cause, Washington needed to send in the proper people to work for the American cause. He thought this included St. Clair who he believed needed to play a crucial role in the diplomacy on the borderlands.⁷¹

While St. Clair endeavored to settle issues with the Indians in the Northwest Territory, Knox believed it was necessary to continue to increase the power of the federal military in order to deal with the seemingly unreceptive tribes on the borderlands. In his interactions with the various Native chieftains, he found that these men did not think the American army was a formidable fighting force and because of this they were uncertain in signing peace initiatives with the United States. Knox agreed that many of these Indians had been the victims of settler colonialism, but without an effective military he was unable to stop the violence on the borderlands. Since the passage of the Northwest Ordinance in 1787 the American population in the Ohio River valley region increased

⁷¹ The President to Governor St. Clair, October 6, 1789, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:125-26.

dramatically. From October 1786 to June 1788, soldiers at Fort Harmar tabulated that more than 12,000 people sailed down the river to claim their new territory.⁷²

As St. Clair prepared to collaborate with the Natives in January 1790, Congress passed an act to regulate trade and intercourse, designed to ensure that the prosecution of Indian affairs would still proceed in an orderly manner until the time came for the United States to use armed intervention against the Native Americans. One of the most striking features to this new law concerned the sale of Indian lands. This act now stated “that no sale of lands made by any Indians, or any nation or tribe of Indians within the United States shall be valid to any person or persons, or to any State, whether having the right of presumption to such Lands or not, unless the same shall be duly executed, at some public treaty, held under the authority of the United States.”⁷³

While the federal government attempted to regulate Indian trade, St. Clair arrived in Fort Washington in southwestern Ohio at about the same time on January 2, 1790. He remained in this area for a week and then moved on towards the Mississippi River. On his journey, he stopped at the rapids of the Ohio River and prepared speeches to give to the Indians residing on the Wabash River. In these addresses, the governor stated, “I do now make you the offer of peace; accept it or reject it, as you please.”⁷⁴ This statement gives all the appearances of being more threatening than assuaging as the governor did not moderate his stance in the least. He stated to the Natives present that he was offering

⁷² Mark Puls, *Henry Knox: Visionary General of the American Revolution* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 206-07; Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, 242-43.

⁷³ An Act to Regulate Trade and Intercourse with the Indian Tribes, January 4, 1790, *MiHC*, 24: 149-51.

⁷⁴ Life and Public Services of Arthur St. Clair, Smith, *St.CP*, 1:161-66; Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, August 23, 1790, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:155-62.

them harmony in the name of the United States government. However, if they did not accept these peace overtures, St. Clair hinted that he would call on American forces for an offensive expedition to defeat the hostile Natives.⁷⁵

On January 4, 1790, Knox wrote to Washington his opinions of the problems on the borderlands in the Northwest Territory. He believed that the violence that permeated this region during the 1780s was problematic for the United States. He stated that the militia tried to defend the interests of the militia in the region, but it was still in the best interest of the American government to increase the military presence of the federal army in the region in order to protect the settlers that lived in Ohio. He had stated this opinion in the past, but it seemed to him that by 1790 the situation on the borderlands was to the point that an armed engagement between the United States and the Indian nations was highly likely.⁷⁶

A problem that Knox faced was that his federal military was small and those men were untrained and untested in the intricacies of guerrilla warfare. The men that comprised the national military were often taken from the lowest ebbs of American society and had no true loyalty to the United States government. Those men were often only looking for a job in order to survive. Sending these troops into battle was a bad idea for the American government as it was likely they would be unprepared to engage in protracted warfare. In addition, the Secretary of War commented that it was problematic

⁷⁵ Life and Public Services of Arthur St. Clair, Smith, *St. CP*, 1:161-66; Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, August 23, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:155-62.

⁷⁶ William H. Guthman, *March to Massacre: A History of the First Seven Years of the United States Army, 1784-1791*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1970), 148-50.

when the state of Kentucky sent in their own militia to root out the Indians and as a result only the efforts of the federal army could bring tangible results for the Americans.⁷⁷

Knox also believed that St. Clair should attempt to try and negotiate a treaty with the western nations. Knox asserted that the best way to effect an agreement with these Natives was to provide them with gifts as well as necessary provisions for the upcoming year as the British constantly did for their Native allies.⁷⁸ “The practice of the British government and its colonies, of giving presents to the Indians of North America is well known,” Knox explained. “They seem to have been convinced that it was the cheapest and most effectual mode of managing the Indians.” This would have been a wise move by the United States to try and provide tangible gifts to the Natives, but the problem they faced was they never implemented this policy to its full effect and because of this the British continued to supply their Indian allies with the necessities so that the Indian groups could survive the often brutal winters on the borderlands.⁷⁹

The settlement of the Ohio lands during the 1780s presented major problems for the federal government in their attempts to gain Indian lands in the region. Although the United States received the territory comprising Ohio from Great Britain through the Treaty of Paris, they realized they would need to make treaties in order to gain the Ohio lands outright. As the Continental Congress attempted to do this in the mid-1780s they had limited success. While these discussions occurred between the Americans and the Native groups, other Americans were beginning to inhabit the Ohio country. Although national leaders hoped that legitimate settlers such as the Ohio Company would populate

⁷⁷ Guthman, *March to Massacre*, 148-50.

⁷⁸ Guthman, *March to Massacre*, 148-50.

⁷⁹ Guthman, *March to Massacre*, 148-50.

the region after the negotiations of the fraudulent treaties during that decade, the squatters who already resided in Ohio presented a problem that required direct action from national leaders.

Each of these groups used their own form of settler colonialism to try and displace the Indians living in Ohio and these methods often involved violence to remove the Natives from the region. Although attempts were made by federal forces to remove the squatters from their homesteads, none of these endeavors were ultimately successful and the squatters continued to move into Ohio in droves further complicating an already untenable situation. Eventually, the authentic immigrants and the squatters developed a tacit relationship and both groups appealed to the federal government for direct military action to assist them in their efforts to offset the attacks perpetrated by the Native groups that wanted all Americans out of Ohio. The federal troops sent to Ohio were not able to diminish the attacks by Indians or the militia of areas such as Kentucky. In addition, organizations such as the Ohio Company also struggled to populate Ohio with appropriate pioneers because of the refusal of the Indian nations living in Ohio to negotiate further treaties with the United States. The Ohio Company continued to work with the federal government to try and gain these lands and stated they would engage in diplomatic overtures with the Natives in the region, but that was also not successful. As the decade of the 1780s ended, the state of affairs in Ohio was problematic. Years of trying to eliminate Native holdings in Ohio by either diplomacy or outright violence further exacerbated the situation and it caused the new federal leaders to determine what to do next to expand American landholdings.

The situation in Ohio in the winter of 1790 was precarious as the United States longed for the valuable territory in Ohio in order that the United States might expand its perceived empire. Each of the groups living in Ohio placed pressure on the national government to assist them throughout the decade. At this point, Washington and Knox, while they called for the discussions of future treaties, realized they had to send their untested military into the region to make a statement of American strength. The continued violence on the borderlands throughout the 1780s had resulted in the deaths of many Americans and Indians and many of the more intransigent Natives showed no signs of slowing their attacks by 1790. The more obdurate Native groups believed the only way to offset continued American expansion onto their homelands needed to occur through direct military pressure on their part. Although Knox and Washington preached the efficacy of continued agreements with the Indians to gain their territories, by this point both men concluded that an all-out offensive against the Natives was the next logical step for the Americans to take to procure the Ohio region from the Indians.

CHAPTER III

HARMAR'S FOLLY

During the 1780s, the Confederation Congress attempted to forward the idea of the “right of conquest” in their interactions with the indigenous residents of Ohio with the hope of encouraging many of the Native groups to willingly cede their land to the federal government. The problem with this reasoning was that many of the Indian groups in Ohio, including the Shawnee and Miami Nations, resented the pressure put on them by the weak federal government under the backings of the Confederation Congress who had no virtually no power to regulate American affairs at the national level. The ideals of settler colonialism were apparent during this era which would have involved the Native groups willingly ceding their lands to the United States as a penalty for supporting the British during the American Revolution. Because of the intransigence of many of the Native groups, including the Shawnee and Miami Nations, this was very unlikely to occur

Because of the ineffectuality of the federal government led by the Confederation Congress, the 1780s proved to be a fruitless decade of territorial acquisition as the United States attempted to expand their landholdings westward. Although the federal leaders during this decade wanted to dispossess the Natives of their lands in Ohio, this proved to be an impossible task. As the Americans continued to negotiate treaty after treaty with smaller bands of larger Indian nations, they incurred the wrath of several Native groups,

including the Shawnee and Miami Nations. At the same time, American squatters that resided on the Ohio lands attempted to maintain their landholdings against fierce Indian resistance. Eventually, these squatters and the perceived legitimate landholders through organizations such as the Ohio Company pressured the federal government for assistance to displace the Indians from their lands.

When the decade of the 1790s began, Washington and Knox stated they wanted their official representatives to engage in peaceful negotiations with the Natives living within Ohio in order that they would willingly cede their lands to the United States in order that the Indians and the Americans could remain in harmony with each other. However, these American federal leaders quickly realized that these goodwill endeavors on the part of United States spokesmen were not going to be ultimately successful and it was likely that a military encounter would be necessary to send a message to the recalcitrant Natives who did not want to negotiate with the Americans. The relentless drive of settler colonialism in Ohio increasingly encouraged Washington and Knox to resort to a military solution in 1790.

The peace efforts in 1790 turned out to be an unmitigated disaster for the United States as few Indian groups were willing to negotiate with American representatives and the failure of these diplomatic overtures all but guaranteed that an American army would be in the field to engage the Natives before the conclusion of 1790. It was not surprising that Washington and Knox then decided on the eventual use of federal soldiers to protect the interests of the United States so that the Americans could seize these territories. This rationale by Washington and Knox was a logical progression in the settler colonial spirit that pervaded in the federal government in 1790 as these men finally acquiesced to the

needs of their settlers on the borderlands who repeatedly called for an armed intervention to remove the Natives.

On January 23, 1790, St. Clair told Major Hamtramck, the post commandant at Vincennes, Indiana, that “It is much the wish of the general government that peace may be established with those people, and the trial to effect it must be made. Should it fail, there is no doubt but an attempt must be made to chastise them.”¹ St. Clair asked for the commandant’s opinion on how to best deal with the Indians of the borderlands. Hamtramck had been a senior officer in Indiana for some time and he could give first-hand accounts of the best ways to engage the Natives in that region. Eventually, the governor ordered Hamtramck to oversee the actions of representatives who received instructions to engage the Indians in peace overtures.²

Shortly after Arthur St. Clair communicated with Hamtramck he sent off a letter to Knox and stated, “I have great confidence in the friendly disposition of the Wyandots, and their influence over many of the tribes is considerable. The Miamis, and the renegade Shawanese, Delawares, and Cherokees, that lay near them, I fear are irreclaimable by gentle means.”³ He was correct in assuming that the Miami and Shawnee Nations were prepared for open warfare with the Americans, as these groups repeatedly spurned the treaties negotiated by the United States and smaller tribes of Natives. At this time, St. Clair gave the appearances of wanting a peaceful solution and did not believe the time was right for open warfare. He claimed, “I do not think we are yet prepared to chastise them. That is a business which should be well considered, and

¹ Governor St. Clair to Major Hamtramck, January 23, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:130-32.

² Governor St. Clair to Major Hamtramck, January 23, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:130-32.

³ Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, January 26, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:132-33.

there are arrangements to be taken in case of the necessity of doing it, that would, at present, be inconvenient.”⁴

Hamtramck communicated with St. Clair in April and told the governor that he sent two messengers to relay the American position of peace. Hamtramck informed the governor that the first messenger received threats and he had only recently dispatched the second courier. Hamtramck pointed out that, “The Indians of the Miami continue their depredations on the Ohio.” As such, “All these affairs, I am afraid, obstruct the pacific desires of the United States toward the Indians.”⁵ The Shawnee leader Blue Jacket responded to the envoy by claiming, “We are all sensible to your speech, and pleased with it, but, after consultation, we can not give an answer without hearing from our father, at Detroit, and we are determined to give you back the two branches of wampum, and to send you to Detroit to see and hear the chief, or to stay here for twenty nights for to receive his answer.”⁶

Blue Jacket went further with his comments and questioned the integrity of the American government. He rightfully believed that the Americans were dishonest in their interactions with the Natives. Blue Jacket was firm in his dealings with the messenger and stated, “From all quarters, we receive speeches from the Americans, and not one is alike. We suppose that they intend to deceive us.”⁷ The Indian chief correctly gauged how many of the members of the United States government acted when they dealt with the Natives. By attempting to keep the Indians divided and unsure as to what the other

⁴ Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, January 26, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:132-33.

⁵ Major Hamtramck to Governor St. Clair, April 19, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:135.

⁶ Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, August 23, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:155-62.

⁷ St. Clair to the Secretary of War, August 23, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:155-62.

groups were doing, the Americans hoped to cause enough confusion to press their claims in the Ohio region.⁸

St. Clair wrote to Knox on May 1 and the governor claimed that the Miami Indians were inclined to make warfare on the Americans no matter how many peace missions the United States representatives sent forth. He explained, "The confidence they have in their situation, the vicinity of many other nations not very well disposed, and the pernicious counsels of the English traders, joined to the immense booty obtained by the depredations upon the Ohio, will most probably prevent them from listening to any reasonable terms of accommodation, so that it is to be feared the United States must prepare effectually to chastise them, and the consequence of not doing it may, very probably, be the defection of those who are now at peace with the entire loss of the affections of the people of the frontiers."⁹ This correspondence shows that the governor now leaned towards open warfare to bring the Miamis and the other hostile nations into line, but he still waited to instruct his officers to begin preparations for warfare.

On May 27, Knox directed his subordinates to undertake hostilities if they believed it would prove beneficial to the Americans. He advised, "That the Governor and Brigadier-General Harmar be informed that, upon mature consideration, if in their judgment the said expedition would promise success as to the immediate object of it, tend to strike a terror in the minds of the Indians hostilely disposed, and be highly satisfactory to the people of the frontiers, they are authorized to undertake it immediately."¹⁰ Knox

⁸ Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, August 23, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:155-62.

⁹ Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, May 1, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:136-40.

¹⁰ Summary Statement of the Situation of the Frontiers by the Secretary of War, May 27, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:146-47.

did not call for a major mission to extirpate the Natives from their positions. He asserted that a quick and decisive mission composed of one hundred federal troops and three hundred militia members who were on a thirty day indenture could wreak havoc in the contested regions.

On June 7, Knox told St. Clair that he and the president received his communications about the problems with the peace missions from the previous months. He admitted that Washington voiced displeasure at this situation and the Secretary of War asserted that the president after great debate approved an all-out offensive expedition against the Indians. Once the decision was made to employ military force, the American government chose General Harmar to lead his forces to root out the recalcitrant Natives living in the Ohio region. As this occurred, Knox commanded to St. Clair that the United States was only looking to punish the hostile Indians.¹¹

It was readily apparent that the federal government wanted to keep the friendly Natives in the American fold at all costs. St. Clair conferred with Harmar and these men decided on a punitive expedition as the best way to punish the antagonistic Indians. The governor claimed, "It, however, is to be understood fully that the vengeance of the Union is to be pointed only against the perpetrators of the mischief and not against the friendly nor even neutral tribes, nor that the measures proposed (expedition) should interfere with your plans for a general accommodation with the regular tribes."¹² Washington mandated that it took an agreement by both men before any offensive mission occurred.¹³

¹¹ General Knox to Governor St. Clair, June 7, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:147-48.

¹² General Knox to Governor St. Clair, June 7, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:147-48.

¹³ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 86.

On the same day he met with Harmar, St. Clair advised his subordinate officers, “I have now to inform you that there is no prospect of peace with the said Indians at present; on the contrary, they continue very ill disposed towards the United States in general.”¹⁴ The president instructed St. Clair to make every attempt to negotiate with the Indian nations peacefully while nonetheless planning for an armed engagement. St. Clair stated that some of the Indians showed hostile intentions towards many states, but he asserted that Virginia received extraordinary animosity from the Native groups. As such, the governor called on Virginia to supply militia members for duty by September of that year and that these men would fight side-by-side with the regular troops. He reiterated the importance of these troops being punctual for the rendezvous point as he realized that if he waited much longer, the weather in the Ohio region would prevent an offensive expedition in 1790.¹⁵

St. Clair also noted, “I find all prospects of peace with the Indians are at an end,”¹⁶ and he proposed to provide Hamtramck about 300 militia men to join him at Vincennes. Combined with Hamtramck’s regular forces and any French militia, Harmar supposed Hamtramck could have approximately 500 warriors at his disposal. The governor stated that the contractor employed for this mission guaranteed him that the necessary provisions and packhorses would be available for any military offensive. Harmar wanted Hamtramck to attack Vermillion, L’Anguille or any of the other Wea Indian towns that Hamtramck thought were vital. Harmar spelled out that Hamtramck’s

¹⁴ Copy of a Circular Letter from Governor St. Clair, to the County Lieutenants, July 15, 1790, *ASP: IA*, 1:94-95.

¹⁵ Copy of a Circular Letter from Governor St. Clair, to the County Lieutenants, July 15, 1790, *ASP: IA*, 1:94-95.

¹⁶ Harmar to Hamtramck, July 15, 1790, Thornbrough, *Outpost on the Wabash*, 236-38.

was going to be a diversionary force, as he sent his men for the main attack. Harmar wanted Hamtramck to begin his mission before the general moved out with his men. He gave the commandant a rough starting date of September 25. If Hamtramck were successful with his mission, he was to inform the general through the correspondence of a trusted Frenchman so that the general could determine how the combined forces could continue to wreak havoc against the hostile Indians.¹⁷

On August 7, Hamtramck corresponded with Harmar about some of his instructions from the previous month. Hamtramck told the general that he was happy to help, but he needed more men to engage the enemy. Hamtramck proved to be a prescient soldier when he stated,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th of July 1790 in which you informed me of the expedition against the Indians. It certainly was high time that such thing took place. The number of men your (sic) are pleased to order me I believe will do very well, if I am to return immediately after striking, but if I should be obliged to keep in that part of the country until I have heard from you, I am apprehensive that I should not come off so safe, for the Indians of the Vermillion who are 200 warriors, the Ouia 330, the Keecapoes (sic) (opposite the Ouia) 100 and those of Ell River 150, all whom are close to each other can assemble them selves in to one body, amounting to 750 men, which force would then be more than mine and perhaps make a too powerfull (sic) obstruction to my return. However to be persuaded, sir, that I shall take every possible measures to comply with your direction and that if it is practicable I will send you a French man or some other man from that country.¹⁸

While it was wise for Harmar to want to attempt to bait the enemy into thinking he was attacking elsewhere, Hamtramck was also astute in realizing the dearth of soldiers he had for his mission. Additionally, Hamtramck realized that it would be illogical for he and his men to overextend themselves to the point that they would be far behind

¹⁷ Harmar to Hamtramck, July 15, 1790, Thornbrough, *Outpost on the Wabash*, 236-38.

¹⁸ Hamtramck to Harmar, August 7, 1790, Thornbrough, *Outpost on the Wabash*, 246-47.

enemy lines with little hopes of returning in full force.¹⁹ That same day, St. Clair wrote to the senior officer of the Pennsylvania militia. In this communication, he stressed that the Pennsylvania militia should appear at Fort Washington by September 10. He warned them to be diligent on their journey and to be prepared for attack. He warned the militia that should they encounter any of the Wyandot and Delaware Nations, the Americans should treat them with the utmost kindness.²⁰

On August 23, St. Clair advised Knox, “The number of militia I was empowered to call for, was one thousand from Virginia, and five hundred from Pennsylvania.”²¹ Of this number, three hundred members of the militia under his command were to march to Vincennes and join Hamtramck. The remaining twelve hundred militia constituents were to march to Fort Washington to be under the command of Harmar. St. Clair estimated that the general would have roughly fifteen hundred men at his disposal. The governor stated that when the time was right, Harmar would march with his men and attack the Miami villages and inflict heavy casualties. The governor informed the Secretary of War of his plan to have Hamtramck lead a diversionary force into Indiana to keep the heat off of Harmar’s troops. He stated his intentions for Hamtramck’s mission was to keep the Wabash Indians from joining their Miami brethren.²²

While St. Clair attempted to put forth an air of confidence he also expressed reservations that he did not have enough men to send on these missions. He wished for the president to call forth more men to supplement the troops he already had in place. He

¹⁹ Hamtramck to Harmar, August 7, 1790, Thornbrough, *Outpost on the Wabash*, 246-47.

²⁰ Copy of a Letter from Governor St. Clair to the Senior Officer of the Pennsylvania Militia, August 7, 1790, *ASP:IA*, 95.

²¹ Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, August 23, 1790, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:155-62.

²² Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, August 23, 1790, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:155-62.

reminded the Secretary of War that there was still time to add more men to this expedition and was almost begging for additional enlistments. He further complained of the situation in Pennsylvania as problematic to recruiting militia from that state and he believed that the lack of ammunition in Pennsylvania contributed to the difficulties in that region. These problems should have been enough to possibly postpone the operation until the United States could call up a sufficient number of men to commence the mission.²³

The same day, Knox sent a message to St. Clair and asserted in no uncertain terms the desires of the federal government to limit these engagements to only the hostile Indians and stated,

There are existing jealousies in the minds of the British officers, in Canada, of the designs of the United States respecting the posts to have been relinquished by the last peace. It will be a point, therefore, of delicacy, that you should take measures, by sending some officer or messenger, at a proper time, to assure the commanding officer of the real object of the expedition. That the Shawanese, and some others joined with them, have committed such enormous offences against the citizens of the United States, as are any longer insupportable; but, to assure him of the entire pacific disposition of the United States toward Great Britain and its possessions. You will also find it, at some certain moment, highly proper to inform the Indians, with whom you have formed treaties, of your pacific dispositions towards them²⁴

Knox also made an unwise move as he notified the British of American plans. This was a mistake on the part of the Secretary of War. He should have known that if the Americans informed the British that they were going to attack the antagonistic Natives, the British would notify their Indian allies of the impending advance of American troops. In

²³ Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, August 23, 1790, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:155-62.

²⁴ The Secretary of War to Governor St. Clair, August 23, 1790, *ASP:IA*, 98-99.

addition, Indian scouts would also be able to see a large army moving through the Ohio country which would have also hurt the American war effort.²⁵

The following day, Knox told Harmar, “The expedition you are about to undertake is not only of great importance in itself, but it may be attended with extensive and remote circumstances. Every consideration, therefore, of a public nature, as well as personal to yourself, require that it should be conducted in the most perfect manner; that there should not be any omissions, but all just arrangements made to produce a due execution of every plan and order.”²⁶ In addition, he warned the general that it was vital for him to attempt to gauge his enemy and make every effort to gain intelligence about the Indians.²⁷

The general responded to Hamtramck’s letter of August 20 and informed the major that once he struck at the Indians as part of the larger mission, he could either remain in the field or return to his home base. Harmar stated that he had the utmost confidence in the capabilities of Hamtramck and would not question his methods. It probably would have been prudent to order Hamtramck to remain engaged for as long as possible to take some of the pressure off of the main mission. Perhaps Harmar was not convinced that Hamtramck’s mission would meet with success so he informed the major to take every precaution and protect his interests in case of adversity.²⁸

²⁵ The Secretary of War to Governor St. Clair, August 23, 1790, *ASP:IA*, 98-99.

²⁶ The Secretary of War to Brigadier General Harmar, August 24, 1790, *ASP:IA*, 98-99.

²⁷ The Secretary of War to Brigadier General Harmar, August 24, 1790, *ASP:IA*, 98-99.

²⁸ Harmar to Hamtramck, September 3, 1790, Thornbrough, *Outpost on the Wabash*, 254-56.

By the late summer of 1790 as settlers continued to pour into Ohio, members of the United States government decided that an attack on the recalcitrant Natives in Ohio was inevitable. The continued treaty negotiations were not gaining traction with all of the Indian nations residing in Ohio rendering a military confrontation virtually inevitable. This changed mindset reflected the realities of settler colonialism on the borderlands. The three most important national leaders, Washington, Knox, and St. Clair, realized by the summer of 1790 that in order to try and gain these disputed areas they would have to send their untrained and untested military in the open terrain and engage the Indians on their home territory. Although Washington and Knox believed that open warfare was a last resort to gain these lands it was actually a natural progression of settler colonialism, which prompted the transition from failed treaty negotiations to armed engagements in order to gain the valuable Ohio territory for the United States. The activities in the 1790s indicated that the United States was willing to do whatever it took to snatch the Ohio territory from the Indians.

When the American leaders finally decided that a military confrontation was inevitable, they chose a specific target for the army to attack which was Kekionga, a heavily fortified stronghold at the confluence of the St. Mary's, St. Joseph's, and Maumee Rivers located at modern-day Fort Wayne, Indiana. Kekionga was a major thoroughfare for the Indians of the region and it served as a fur trading post for the British as well. Because of this strategic location Kekionga served as the ultimate military objective for the American army to launch an offensive expedition against the Natives of the western borderlands. St. Clair likely chose this target deliberately to show

the power of the American military, disrupt trade and the Native relationship with the British, and control a major transportation hub.²⁹

Problems plagued this expedition before it began. Under Harmar's command the federal troops were going to attempt a major military move during the autumn. Another problem that manifested itself even before the official mission began was the supply chain for the troops. Under any circumstances, it would have been difficult to supply an army over a hundred miles from their base camp. In this situation, the supply system was going to be even more taxed because the Americans ventured into enemy territory with which they were unfamiliar. Harmar himself had difficulties with suppliers as evidenced in a dispatch he sent to Henry Knox, "I am sorry to inform you of the distressed situation that all the posts have been in, still are, and are likely to continue for want of provision – I am daily advancing money out of my own purse for the contractors' agent here, to purchase meat from hand to mouth – If force should be employed against the Savages some other mode of Supplies must be fallen upon, otherwise there is not the least prospect of Success in any expedition that may take place, or in establishing any new posts; this will positively be the case."³⁰ Harmar further explained. "Our boats are all nearly worn out; there are but 3 or 4 fit for service. If 2 or 3 boat builders were enlisted as artificers, and sent out to Head Quarters, it would be a saving to the Public – It is my duty to give timely notice of these matters. You will please to observe in my former

²⁹ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 80-110.

³⁰ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 91; Guthman, *March to Massacre*, 67.

letter that the Contingent money was nearly expended; further sum will be necessary, etc.”³¹

It seemed as though St. Clair was in a rush to strike at his Indian adversary by the autumn of 1790 whether or not he was properly supplied by his contractors. By the summer of 1790, St. Clair called on one of the more important contractors Robert Elliot to meet with him and Harmar to discuss how this man and his company could supply the American army. At this conference, St. Clair asked Elliot to deliver a quantity of horses, flour, corn, axes, spades, knapsacks, and haversacks for the American army. Elliot stated that he should be able to procure each of these items except for the flour which he deemed impossible to obtain. St. Clair should have been more pragmatic in dealing with this supplier and not placed the entire fate of the mission on whether this individual would supply the American army on time and with the proper materiel.³²

St. Clair was going to rely on a combination of federal and militia troops to achieve destruction of Kekionga, but this could be a dangerous combination due to the disdain both groups held for each other. At the time of Washington's inauguration as president in 1789, there were only 672 men registered for active duty in the national military, not remotely enough men to carry out a protracted military engagement on the borderlands. By April 1790 Congress passed a law that expanded the numbers of federal soldiers to 1,216 which should have improved the defenses of the country. However, as Congress passed this new legislation, it also attempted to save money by reducing the pay of officers and enlisted men. This undermined morale in the federal army. As

³¹ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 91; Guthman, *March to Massacre*, 67.

³² Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 91; Guthman, *March to Massacre*, 67.

problematic as the situation was with the national army, the situation with the militia was just as troubling as some 1,500 militia men were expected to meet at Fort Washington by mid-September 1790, but only a portion of that number showed up. It seemed as though trouble loomed on the horizon for Harmar and his mission in September 1790 because the United States and its army was ill-prepared to engage their intractable enemy on the borderlands.³³

As Harmar prepared his soldiers for battle in September 1790, the Ohio country was a contested space between the Americans and the Indians as each group believed it maintained the rightful ownership of the land. After years of making treaties, the United States governmental leaders finally decided the time was right to punish the obstinate Natives living in Ohio who tried to impede American settlement. Washington and Knox believed that it was time to send a message to the tribes, yet the federal army was not equipped to fight a guerrilla-type war against the well emplaced Natives that lived in Ohio. Despite ominous signs such as the lateness of the season, a poor supply chain, and ill equipped militia members, the United States army rushed headlong into their first active engagement against a well-prepared enemy. The results were disastrous.

Knox laid out the plan and purpose of the campaign to St. Clair on September 14, 1790. “The proposed expedition is intended to exhibit to the Wabash Indians our power to punish them for their positive depredations, for their conniving at the depredations of others, and for their refusing to treat with the United States when invited thereto,” the Secretary of War explained. “This power will be demonstrated by a sudden stroke, by

³³ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 80-110.

which their towns and crops may be destroyed.”³⁴ He suggested to St. Clair that the United States force should number roughly eighteen hundred men for this mission. Knox believed a strong American showing might cause the Indians to treat for peace or launch a counteroffensive the following spring. Although Knox called for a masterstroke of American power, he also preached caution.³⁵

The Secretary of War responded to a suggestion made by the governor in which the United States would establish a post at the Miami villages. Even though he believed that it might be beneficial for the Americans to create a garrison in the heart of Indian country, he also stated, “it must be acknowledged that the measure would involve a much larger military establishment than perhaps the value of the object or the disposition of the United States would admit, and that it would be so opposed to the inclinations of the Indians generally, even of the tribes with whom we have made treaties, as to bring on inevitably an Indian war of some duration.” Furthermore, he cautioned, “it is supposed that the British garrisons would find themselves so uneasy with such a force impending over them as not only to occasion a considerable reinforcement of their upper posts, but also their fomenting, secretly at least, the opposition of the Indians.”³⁶ Because of this reasoning Knox believed it to be unfeasible at that time to construct a stronghold within the Native territory.³⁷

St. Clair corresponded with Knox on September 19 and informed the Secretary of War that, “The depredations on the Ohio and Wabash still continue. Every day, almost,

³⁴ General Knox to Governor St. Clair, September 14, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:181-83.

³⁵ General Knox to Governor St. Clair, September 14, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:181-83.

³⁶ General Knox to Governor St. Clair, September 14, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:181-83.

³⁷ General Knox to Governor St. Clair, September 14, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:181-83.

brings an account of some murder or robbery, and yesterday a number of horses were taken from this settlement.”³⁸ It seems as if he was trying to reassure Knox that the upcoming expedition against the intractable Natives was the only option remaining for the United States at that time as more and more Americans were being killed each and every day. St. Clair was also frustrated that his ammunition and stores had not yet arrived from the quartermaster’s stores. Again, it seemed as though there were enough problems for St. Clair that he should have suspended Harmar’s campaign. That did not seem likely as St. Clair and Knox were anxious to send Harmar onto the borderlands to demonstrate the power of the American military against the wayward Natives.³⁹

While preparations occurred for Harmar to strike north against the Indian villages, St. Clair took the advice of Knox and sent a letter to Patrick Murray, the commandant of the British troops at Detroit. He informed the senior officer, “I am commanded by the President of the United States to give you the fullest assurance of the pacific disposition entertained toward Great Britain and all her possessions, and to inform you, explicitly, that the expedition about to be undertaken is not intended against the post you have the honor to command, nor any other place at present in the possession of the troops of his Britannic Majesty.”⁴⁰ He implored the British commander, “There is every reason to expect, both from your own personal character and from the regard you have for that of your nation, that those tribes will meet with neither countenance nor assistance from any under your command, and that you will do what in your power lies to restrain the trading

³⁸ Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, September 19, 1790, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:183-86.

³⁹ Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, September 19, 1790, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:183-86.

⁴⁰ Governor St. Clair to Major Murray, or Officer Commanding the British Troops at Detroit, September 19, 1790, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:186-87.

people, from whose instigations there is too good reason to believe much of the injuries committed by the savages has proceeded.”⁴¹ It is highly unlikely that Murray, upon reading this, would do anything differently than he had in the past. Even if the Americans stated that they had no designs on British property, the representatives of Great Britain’s government were not about to abandon the Indians just because the Americans asked them to grant them that favor. In addition, it was almost a guarantee that the British representatives would inform their Native collaborators that the United States intended on attacking them in the near future.⁴²

On the same day as these other communications to Knox and Murray, St. Clair wrote to the chiefs and warriors of the Wyandot Nation. The governor considered these men to be less of a threat to the Americans and as such he offered them an olive branch of peace. He reaffirmed his position by stating,

The Shawanese must be whipped they have at last carried their mischiefs so far that the United States can bear them no longer. Be not afraid then, when you hear of Armies marching, nor suppose that they are designed to do you any injury, they are not, they will do no harm to any that hold fast the chain of Friendship one end of that chain is in the hands of the Wyandots and the other in those of the United States, keep fast hold of you end and they will not let theirs go and between us we will keep it bright and clean and it will be a safe guard and a defence to you by night and day against every harm. Remember that I hold you Brothers if we were obliged to whip the Shawanese it would come upon them like a consuming fire, and the sparks might burn yourselves if you were not careful to prevent them. Take care then and keep your young men at Home let them not go near the Shawanese least evil come upon you both, trust to what I say to you, I do not speak with a double tongue, but tell you the truth from the bottom of my heart, if

⁴¹ Governor St. Clair to Major Murray, or Officer Commanding the British Troops at Detroit, September 19, 1790, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:186-87.

⁴² Governor St. Clair to Major Murray, or Officer Commanding the British Troops at Detroit, September 19, 1790, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:186-87.

you hold fast the chain of friendship in truth and sincerity the United States will keep mischief far from your Borders.⁴³

He advised these people to keep their warriors at home in case trouble arose as he did not want any of these warriors to die needlessly. He again claimed that the United States valued the friendship of the Wyandot Nation.⁴⁴

In mid-September 1790, the militia and the regular army members began to gather at Fort Washington, in what is modern-day Cincinnati, Ohio. Harmar planned to launch an attack into the middle of Indian country to send a message that the American government would do anything in their power to subdue the various Indian nations. From the outset, there were inherent problems with these armed forces. Supply issues were a major concern as “The militia from Kentucky began to assemble at Fort Washington about the middle of September; those were very ill equipped, being almost destitute of camp kettles and axes; nor could a supply of these essential articles be procured. Their arms, were generally, very bad, and unfit for service.”⁴⁵ This should have been a warning sign to the governor and the lead general that they should have delayed the mission until they were more properly supplied. It seems as though these men were willing to overlook a very obvious supply issue and still send their troops onto the borderlands to engage their enemy.

⁴³ Gov A. St. Clair to the Chiefs and Warriors of the Wyandot Nation, September 19, 1790, *MiHC*, 24:98-99.

⁴⁴ Gov A. St. Clair to the Chiefs and Warriors of the Wyandot Nation, September 19, 1790, *MiHC*, 24:98-99.

⁴⁵ Court of Inquiry on General Harmar, September-October 1791, *American State Papers, Military Affairs, Volume I*; hereafter titled *ASP:MA*, Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1832-1861, 20-35.

As repairs were made to the arms of the Kentucky militiamen, Harmar waited on the Pennsylvania militia to arrive at Fort Washington. On September 22, 1790, Governor St. Clair arrived and informed Harmar that the Pennsylvania militia would arrive soon. When these men arrived, Harmar realized that instead of the 500 men he requested, only 300 showed up and many of them were “hardly able to bear arms – such as old, infirm men and young boys.”⁴⁶ The arms of the Pennsylvania men were actually worse than those of the Kentucky men and many of these individuals had no weapons at all. The deputy commander of the Pennsylvania militia, Major James Paul, stated that these individuals were substitutes for other militia members and many of them had never shot a gun in their lives.⁴⁷

Although Harmar had reservations about employing many militia members, he had little choice but to use these men as they would comprise the majority of his armed forces. The federal troops would arrive, but they would be small in number. Did the United States make a mistake in sending in so many untested militia members for these battles or would the Americans have been smarter to increase the size of the federal army before any offensive action was taken? Which type of warrior would have brought the best chance for American victory and was either the regular army or the militia superior to the other as a fighting force? To answer these questions, it is important to look at the birth of the United States regular army.⁴⁸

In the spring of 1783, Congress under the Articles of Confederation assigned a committee to study the possibility of a permanent American army. General Washington

⁴⁶ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 92-94.

⁴⁷ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 92-94.

⁴⁸ Guthman, *March to Massacre*, 2-5.

stated that a small regular army was crucial to intimidate the Indians, but that a large standing army might be problematic for the country during peacetime. The members of Congress then discussed the issue for over a year before they made a final decision. Elbridge Gerry, a Massachusetts delegate in Congress stated to his colleagues that if Congress were given the right to call up troops from the different states eventually that tribunal would want to extend the terms of enlistment for the soldiers which would be beyond the scope of its power.⁴⁹

Gerry felt that this would overstep the bounds of the Congress under the Articles of Confederation. He believed it was important to have a small number of troops stationed on the western borderlands, but he believed that the militia would suffice in protecting these American settlers. Gerry's sentiments echoed that of many in the United States during the 1780s that were fearful of a large standing army. It became apparent as the decade progressed that the demands of defeating Indians on the borderlands clashed with republican aversion to standing armies going back to British colonialism. Individuals such as Gerry believed that a national army would impinge on the rights of ordinary Americans and as such many believed in the legitimacy of using militia over a federal army. Many other members of the federal government also worried about the possibility of a large standing army and on June 3, 1784 Congress passed a resolution establishing a federal military of only 700 men.⁵⁰

Despite any concerns about the size of the military, the Continental Congress stated that "troops were immediately and indispensably necessary for taking possession

⁴⁹ Guthman, *March to Massacre*, 2-5.

⁵⁰ Guthman, *March to Massacre*, 2-5.

of the western posts, as soon as evacuated by the troops of his Britannic majesty, for the protection of the Northwestern frontiers, and for guarding the public stores.”⁵¹ However, when the British learned that the new American military contained so few soldiers, officials in Great Britain gave secret orders to the British commander in Canada not to vacate the prime strongholds in the Great Lakes area. The United States then protested to the British commander in Canada who stated he had not been given specific orders to abandon these posts by his supervisors. The British government then told the Americans that until the Americans paid the debts of British loyalists from the war, they would not abandon these strategic posts. While these mandates galled many Americans, there was not much the United States could do to displace the British with such a weak federal army. As such, the centralized military never gained any type of admiration from the American populace or from foreign powers. Because of this set of circumstances, the national army was not used to protect the American settlers who ventured onto the borderlands for the next several years.⁵²

Further problems arose in trying to recruit members for the federal military. Many young men still remembered how poorly the soldiers were treated during and after the Revolutionary War as many of those people never received pay for their service to the new country. Quite a few returning soldiers came home to find that they lost their jobs and homes while fighting the war. Due to these circumstances, it proved almost impossible for federal recruiters to fill the ranks of the new national army. Recruiters from several states then turned to less attractive unemployed recruits who were at the lower ends of American society who would be willing to join in return for food and

⁵¹ Guthman, *March to Massacre*, 2-5.

⁵² Guthman, *March to Massacre*, 2-5.

clothing. Even with these soldiers filling the ranks of the military, recruiters in states such as Connecticut and New York were not able to completely fill their muster rolls.⁵³

Instead of training for irregular warfare which would be required to subdue the tribes, the federal government demanded that regular troops fight in a conventional manner. During the American Revolution, Washington relied on the discipline and training provided by Major General Baron von Steuben for his beleaguered troops who were often cold and hungry as they attempted to survive. When Harmar took control of the federal forces he attempted to employ many of the commands set forth by von Steuben. The instructions given by von Steuben specified what each man in the military unit was designed to do and by using these directives any commander could give the simple commands to his soldiers and they would hopefully mesh into an effective fighting force rather quickly.⁵⁴

While these edicts worked well for Washington's struggling army during the American Revolution, they proved to be less effective when fighting a counterinsurgency-type war against the Indians who engaged in their own types of guerrilla warfare while defending their homesteads. There was no preliminary instruction for the federal troops on how to fight a guerrilla type of war before either Harmar or St. Clair's campaign which set these men up for failure on the battlefield.⁵⁵

Knox, St. Clair, and Harmar were all veterans of the Revolutionary War in the East. They were used to European military tactics and they had no real experience in

⁵³ Guthman, *March to Massacre*, 20-23.

⁵⁴ Guthman, *March to Massacre*, 20-23.

⁵⁵ Guthman, *March to Massacre*, 11-12.

dealing with guerrilla tactics. As a result, these men failed to train their warriors in the proper battlefield tactics. On the other hand, during the Revolution in the western country, the frontiersmen fought guerrilla warfare against the British and the Indians with limited success. The militia knew that guerrilla warfare was the only way to conquer the Indians on the battlefield, but the American government seemed oblivious to this fact. When Harmar's campaign in 1790 occurred, the militia suffered heavy casualties along with the regular troops by attempting to fight in a conventional manner. On the battleground, the militia most often ran away from the situation leaving the regular army to do the bulk of the fighting and dying. Because of this, the militia gained the enmity of the regular army men.⁵⁶

At approximately the same time the Americans under the leadership of Harmar moved out of Fort Washington at the end of September and headed northward. On October 3, Harmar met up with Colonel John Hardin and bivouacked thirty miles north of Fort Washington. At that point, the troop strength stood at 320 regular soldiers and 1,133 militia members. By October 9, the troops arrived at the Miami River in southwestern Ohio, which was ninety miles from Fort Washington, and continued their march northward. The ultimate objective of the American army was Kekionga. To conquer Kekionga was a daunting task, but if the American army could gain a major victory in this region, it might be able to change the balance of power on the borderlands.⁵⁷

Hamtramck realized that Kekionga connected the Indians of that neighborhood with the Natives throughout the rest of the Northwest Territory. Hamtramck wanted to

⁵⁶ Guthman, *March to Massacre*, 11-12; 150-52.

⁵⁷ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 96-101.

construct an American post in this region, but Knox stated that this was unfeasible. Rather, the Americans were to deal a swift blow to the enemy and they were also to punish the British traders that set up in that area. In order for the soldiers of the United States to impose a major blow to the enemy, they would have to move in a stealthy way. The problem was that the American army meandered to its objective and allowed for the Indians to consistently scout them and shore up their defenses. St. Clair's message to the British finally arrived by courier on October 14, but did not solve the situation between the United States and Great Britain.⁵⁸

Major John Smith, the senior officer at Detroit, stated that the British were not concerned by the actions of the Americans and they had not encouraged their Indian allies to make problems north of the Ohio River. This reaction was a ruse as the British concerned themselves immensely with the American actions. Smith promptly sent communications to British merchants in the Miami Villages which stated that the Americans could attack at any time and the Natives should prepare to defend their goods against the Americans. Messengers also arrived to assist the Indians in any way possible as they protected themselves against the incursions of the United States military. The British realized that this encounter required all the resources available to the Indians in that area short of committing British troops to the region.⁵⁹

By October 14, 1790, the Natives made the decision to abandon the town at Kekionga while commanding the British and French traders to take away as many commodities as was possible. In addition, the Natives killed the local cattle so that the

⁵⁸ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 101-110.

⁵⁹ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 101-110.

Americans could not take it for themselves and they concealed in excess of one thousand stacks of corn in the homesteads of the Indians. After further deliberations, on the following day the Natives assembled ordered the settlement burned so that it could not protect the American army as it advanced onto the borderlands. What Harmar and his men failed to realize at this point was that this was a shrewd military move by the Natives of the region. By burning their homesteads, the Natives made it look as if they were panicking at the movements of the American army when in actuality they drew the United States forces deeper and deeper into hostile territory where they could bait them into a battle where the Natives had distinct military advantages.⁶⁰

At approximately the same time the Natives retreated from Kekionga, the Americans captured an Indian prisoner. This man stated that “the Indians were clearing out as fast as possible, and that if they did not make more haste, the towns would be evacuated before their arrival.”⁶¹ As a result, Harmar sent out Hardin to surprise the enemy. While each of these statements had some validity to them, the Americans took the word of this prisoner at face value and caused the Americans to rush headlong before they were absolutely ready to carry the fight to their enemies. Whatever his reasoning was, this turn of events led Harmar to appoint Colonel Hardin to make an assault upon the Indian defenses.⁶²

As the Indians razed the community at Kekionga, the American army continued to push towards it. On October 14, 1790, Hardin received direct orders from his superior

⁶⁰ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 94-103.

⁶¹ Court of Inquiry on General Harmar, September-October 1791, *ASP: MA*, 21-35.

⁶² Court of Inquiry on General Harmar, September-October 1791, *ASP: MA*, 21-35.

officer to surprise the Natives with an initial attack.⁶³ On October 15, Hardin and his men rode into Kekionga to find it burning. Rather than making an orderly advance throughout the town, the militia members quickly scattered to loot any remaining valuable items. This behavior continued as Hardin's men traveled to several other Indian towns which triggered disgust among the federal soldiers and caused one officer to remark that "one hundred and fifty warriors might have beat us off the ground."⁶⁴

On October 17, Harmar and the remainder of the brigade joined up with Hardin's forces at Kekionga. The leading general commended his troops for their actions and he wondered why the Indians did not stay and defend their homesteads. He was completely unaware that the Natives were in the process of drawing him further onto the borderlands so that they could strike when it was effective for them. This lack of foresight hampered this mission as the Americans were not able to determine the moves that the Natives wanted to make to defend their interests. It was at this point that Harmar commanded that Lieutenant Colonel James Trotter take a party of 300 men and look for any Indians that might be in the area. Eventually, Trotter and his men came across two Natives and killed them. He pleased himself with this discovery and returned to camp which displeased Harmar and Hardin. Colonel Hardin then asked for command of that detachment for the following days, which Harmar granted to him.⁶⁵

It seems apparent that the Americans were overconfident in that they would be able to eventually root out any displaced Natives that they might come across. The

⁶³ Court of Inquiry on General Harmar, September-October 1791, *ASP: MA*, 21-35; Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 98-103

⁶⁴ Court of Inquiry on General Harmar, September-October 1791, *ASP: MA*, 21-35; Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 98-103.

⁶⁵ Court of Inquiry on General Harmar, September-October 1791, *ASP: MA*, 21-35.

problem for the American soldiers was that their supply lines were heavily overextended at this point and they were attempting to gather intelligence in an area that was unfamiliar to them. If they had encountered the enemy at this point, they were not guaranteed of success. Each of the American soldiers was entering uncharted territory with this engagement and Harmar and his subordinate officers should have been more aware of the possibility of them being duped by the Natives to place themselves in an untenable fighting situation. None of these men had ever been involved with this kind of engagement with such an enemy who knew the terrain much better than the Americans.⁶⁶

On October 19, Hardin marched out to take on the Indian adversary. Major Ebenezer Denny, a soldier who kept an extensive diary and that was part of this campaign, noted “I saw that the men moved off with great reluctance, and am satisfied that when three miles from camp he had not more than two-thirds of his command; they dropped out of the ranks and returned to camp.”⁶⁷ This was an ominous sign for Hardin and his men as it appeared that these soldiers were not too keen on fighting the enemy that day. However, by this point Hardin determined to make a name for himself by attacking the Indian warriors and because of this he moved his men into a situation that they might be overmatched.⁶⁸

Hardin marched with his men and came upon two Indian warriors who were able to make their escape. Hardin sent a detachment to the rear to retrieve soldiers that had lost their way. The time and manpower used to recover these men caused an inordinate delay in engaging the Natives. While this occurred, the American army under Hardin

⁶⁶ Court of Inquiry on General Harmar, September-October 1791, *ASP: MA*, 21-35.

⁶⁷ Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny*, 144-51.

⁶⁸ Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny*, 144-51.

came to an opening where there were Indian baubles lying about. The men, most notably the militia, attempted to retrieve the booty. Little Turtle, a Miami chieftain, baited the Americans into a space where he and his men could inflict heavy damage. The Miami commander and his men opened fire on the unprepared American army and began to overtake them. At this point, the militia fled and the regular army attempted to hold off the Native charge. Not surprisingly, this was not effective and eventually all the men formed a hasty retreat to the apparent safety of the home camp. After Harmar heard about the drubbing inflicted upon his men, he tried to make sense of the situation. He realized that approximately three-quarters of his regular soldiers and one-hundred militiamen were absent.⁶⁹

The next morning, Captain John Armstrong returned and told his superior that the militia members under his command performed abominably. He stated that only one hundred Indian warriors opposed his troops and some of these Natives only carried tomahawks rather than rifles. He stated that he would not serve with any militia members on any future missions. Although Armstrong wanted to lay the blame for the entire defeat on the militia members, that was an unfair statement.⁷⁰ Harmar responded to these grievances by chastising those militia members that ran from the field. He stated, “The cause of the detachment being worsted yesterday, was entirely owing to the shameful cowardly conduct of the militia, who ran away, and threw down their arms, without firing scarcely a single gun.”⁷¹ He further stated that as the American troops retreated if any of

⁶⁹ Court of Inquiry on General Harmar, September-October 1791, *ASP: MA*, 25-27; Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 106-08.

⁷⁰ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 108-16.

⁷¹ General Orders, *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, 105.

the militia members acted out of line he would order his artillerymen to fire upon these soldiers.⁷²

On the battlefield Little Turtle showed himself to be a brilliant tactician and he took advantage of an overconfident American army that overextended itself to the point that it could not withstand any kind of assault made by the Indian armies. Once the Americans placed themselves in an indefensible position, Little Turtle seized the opportunity and overran the American warriors to the point that these men fled from the field in great haste. It would not have mattered if the entire American outfit was regular soldiers or militia because they lacked training in engaging their enemy in frontier warfare which foreshadowed their eventual defeat.⁷³ Despite the problems faced by the entire army, on October 20, Harmar proclaimed his general orders to his men. Although he denied Hardin permission to return to the battlefield at Kekionga, he did not order a full retreat of his men and decided to burn the Indian essentials. He asserted, "The party under command of Captain Strong is ordered to burn and destroy every house and wigwam in this village, together with all the corn, &c which he can collect. A party of 100 men (militia) properly officered, under the command of Colonel Hardin, is to burn and destroy effectually, this afternoon, the Pickaway town, with all the corn, &c which he can find in it and its vicinity."⁷⁴

This burning of the Indian essentials was to provide some measure of success for Harmar and his men as he believed by destroying these items; he could cause distress for these people as winter approached. The following day, Harmar ordered his men to begin

⁷² General Orders, *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, 105.

⁷³ General Orders, *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, 105.

⁷⁴ Court of Inquiry on General Harmar, September-October 1791, *ASP:MA*, 25-29.

preparing to retreat towards Fort Washington.⁷⁵ However, at about nine that evening, Harmar ordered four hundred militia and regulars under the command of Major John Palsgrave Wyllys to return to Kekionga to surprise any Indians that may have returned. Wyllys and his men made a plan to attack the Indian enemy on October 22 with Hardin serving under him for this mission. He wanted to coordinate his attack on his adversary, but that did not happen. After a fierce fight Wyllys died on the battlefield and some of his men made their way back to the home camp. Harmar ordered that a relief expedition sent out, but these men came across Hardin and his men that also retreated from the battlefield.⁷⁶

Harmar heard the accounts of the battle and he assumed that his men inflicted heavy damage on the enemy. Later that day, he stated,

The General is exceedingly pleased with the behavior of the militia in the action of this morning. They have laid very many of the enemy dead upon the spot. Although our loss is great, still it is inconsiderable in comparison of the slaughter made amongst the savages. Every account agrees that upwards of one hundred warriors fell in the battle; it is not more than man for man, and we can afford them two for one. The resolution, and firm determined conduct of the militia this morning, has effectually retrieved their character, in the opinion of the General. He now knows that they can and will fight.⁷⁷

Harmar was correct in stating that his loss of manpower was great and he probably did not have all the numbers at his disposal due to circumstances often beyond his control. His assessments of the Indian losses were probably accurate as well. In addition, the

⁷⁵ Court of Inquiry on General Harmar, September-October 1791, *ASP:MA*, 25-29.

⁷⁶ Court of Inquiry on General Harmar, September-October 1791, *ASP:MA*, 25-29; Denny, *Military Journal of Ebenezer Denny*, 148-49.

⁷⁷ Josiah Harmar General Orders, October 22, 1790, *ASP:IA*, 106.

Americans lost more men than they should have due to poor planning and execution of this battle to gain advantage of the Ohio country.⁷⁸

The Indians baited the unsuspecting Americans into fighting their kind of war on their homelands. They used every advantage available to them and capitalized on the American overconfidence and weakness that they presented at Kekionga. The United States soldiers went to fight against an enemy that they really knew little about. While the Americans retreated to base camp, the Indians looked to push their advantage. After questioning several American prisoners and then executing them, Blue Jacket and others pushed for an attack on the disconsolate United States troops. The Indians would wait for the Americans to retreat from their camp and then attack. That evening as the Natives prepared to pounce on the enemy a lunar eclipse occurred which lasted for several hours. The Ottawa Nation paid special attention to this eclipse and stated if the Indians attacked again they would suffer significant losses. The Ottawas then left followed by other Indians and the next morning and because of this set of circumstances Blue Jacket only had a limited number of warriors and called off the attack.⁷⁹

While Blue Jacket was upset at losing his warriors, those Natives that left thought that they acted in an appropriate way at the time. Even though they were not able to gain a total victory, the Natives involved at Kekionga showed the power of the Indians assembled and sent a message of power to the United States government. Denny stated he believed that Harmar thought “had the enemy made an attack upon their camp that evening, or the morning following, the militia were so panic struck, that very few of them

⁷⁸ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 117-19.

⁷⁹ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 117-19.

would have stood: the consequences that would have happened, stared every person with horror; the sick and wounded, and all the stores, artillery, &c would have fallen a prey to the savages.”⁸⁰

The major was correct in that the United States soldiers were fortunate that the Indians did not launch an all-out attack on the disheartened American troops as they could have easily overrun the forces of the United States military if they would have pressed their advantage. Had the Indian warriors renewed the attack on the Americans, this engagement would have been a complete disaster for the United States military structure. In addition, had the British supplied actual troops, the defeat for the American army would have been much worse. Despite the realities of the situation, this did not stop Harmar and St. Clair from quickly overstating the overall effectiveness of their campaigns.⁸¹

As settler colonialism fueled American expansion into Ohio, the United States shifted from the negotiations of treaties to outright warfare by the fall of 1790 which initially led to disastrous results for the American military forces who engaged a well-emplaced Native opponent. This change in strategy from the arbitration of treaties to absolute warfare was a logical progression for an imperial power to take because the Americans coveted the fertile territory that comprised Ohio and they were determined to do what it took to gain those lands from the Natives. This occurred whether or not the United States possessed an advantage on the borderlands.

⁸⁰ Court of Inquiry on General Harmar, September 1791, *ASP:MA*, 25.

⁸¹ Court of Inquiry on General Harmar, September 1791, *ASP:MA*, 25.

Peaceful negotiations had partly failed because of the unwillingness of many of the Native groups to engage the Americans in diplomatic conferences as they did not view themselves as a defeated entity. In addition, the intransigence of the American federal government to involve the Indian groups in legitimate negotiations for the cession of Native territory also created havoc on the borderlands. Because of this impasse, the United States decided to use their feeble army to defeat the Indians in battle. The problem encountered by the Americans as evidenced by the Harmar conflict was that the American military as constituted at that point had no chance of success while fighting using European-style military tactics against a well-trained and disciplined adversary that was well-versed in fighting a guerrilla type war to defend their homelands. The worst was yet to come for the American army as they would continue to engage their Native adversary without making substantial changes to how they fought their enemy.

CHAPTER IV

HARMAR'S AFTERMATH

The devastating defeat at Kekionga in October 1790 embarrassed the United States army as the Native soldiers, well trained and disciplined in guerrilla fighting, gained outright victory on the battlefield. Everything the Americans tried to accomplish with their military forces went awry and they received a thrashing from the Indian warriors. Although the warning signs should have been evident for the federal leaders that the modes of fighting for their army were ineffective, no person seemed to understand that in order to defeat the Natives they would have to change their battlefield tactics. By November of 1790, the United States committed itself to eliminating the Indians from their homesteads by force even if that meant sending in another mission to root out the intransigent Natives. However, federal leaders proved unwilling to change their battlefield tactics which would spell doom for any future military mission as they pursued the ultimate goal of the elimination of the Indians from their smallholdings in Ohio.

Members of the federal government as well as the speculators and squatters realized that populating Ohio with American settlers was the first important step in gaining all of the lands comprising the Northwest Territory which included the future states of Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. The ideals of Manifest Destiny characterized during the American expansionistic period of the 1840s were apparent in

the 1790s as well. Many Americans believed that they had a right to expand the holdings of the United States as far as was possible. The Indians stood as an impediment to that expansion and the United States army thus strove to remove them from the land.

After the first armed conflict occurred in 1790 it was virtually impossible to return to the bargaining table to gain more Indian territories because the Natives had the military advantage at the end of 1790. Because the Indians held the power on the borderlands, they would be less receptive to the possibility of negotiating treaties that would strip them of their territories. While Washington, Knox, and St. Clair gave the appearances of wanting to discuss more settlements, they had no intentions of following through with it. Because of this the idea of settler colonialism which originally manifested itself with the negotiations of fraudulent treaties would now directly involve repeated military engagements to procure the Native lands in Ohio. It was apparent to both the United States and the Indian nations that the Americans would continue to send armed forces to try and gain their ultimate objective. Before the American government committed troops to another armed engagement they needed to first make an appraisal of the Harmar campaign.¹

Although the engagement had been disastrous for the Americans, St. Clair forwarded a self-serving account to his superior officer about the apparent accomplishment of this aborted mission. "I have the pleasure to inform you of the entire success of General Harmar at the Indian towns on the Miami and St. Joseph Rivers, of which he has destroyed five in number, and a very great quantity of corn and other

¹ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 120-140.

vegetable provisions,”² St. Clair stated to Knox a week after the military fiasco. While he mentioned that the United States lost a significant number of soldiers, his words indicate that he thought that was an acceptable number since in his mind, Harmar and his men secured an important victory over the Natives when in actuality the Native soldiers overran the American warriors.³

The governor himself supposed that “about two hundred of the Indians likewise have fallen in the different encounters that have happened between them and the detachment.”⁴ While it was true that the Americans destroyed some of the Indian foodstuffs, it was only a negligible gain for the Americans because these individuals would receive supplies from the British allies to replace what was lost. St. Clair added, “The Indians, though they could not be brought to a general action, fought by detachment in a very determined and desperate manner.”⁵ Rather than battling in a frantic manner, the Indians fought calmly at Kekionga while the American soldiers acted in a frantic way as they ran for their lives. St. Clair made this report to Knox approximately a week after the Harmar campaign and he tried to give as glowing of an account as possible. The problem was that his statements belied the reality of the battle.⁶

A week later, on November 6, 1790, St. Clair again insisted that Harmar’s campaign was a success after reading the dispatches from General Harmar himself. Although he waited for the findings of other officers including Hamtramck to make a final assessment, he asserted to Knox, “The Savages have got a most terrible stroke, of

² Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, October 29, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:188-89.

³ Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, October 29, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:188-89.

⁴ Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, October 29, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:188-89.

⁵ Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, October 29, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:188-89.

⁶ St. Clair to the Secretary of War, October 29, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:188-89.

which nothing can be more decided proof than that they have not attempted to harass the Army on its return.”⁷ His claim that the Natives did not try and pursue the American army fails to take into account the fact that many of the Indians refused to pursue the Americans due to the lunar eclipse. If they had pressed their advantage it was highly likely they could have overrun a substantial portion of the American army and inflicted mass casualties.⁸

Washington did not fully accept St. Clair’s statements. On November 19 the president chastised the secretary of war and questioned the soundness of placing Harmar in charge of this campaign. Washington flatly stated that he “will declare to you without reserve, that my forebodings with respect to the Expedition against the Wabash Indians are of disappointment; and a disgraceful termination under the conduct of B. Gen Harmar.”⁹ Alluding to Harmar’s reputation for attraction to strong drink, Washington further condemned the general by stating, “I expected little from the moment I heard he was a drunkard. I expected less as soon as I heard that on this account no confidence was reposed in him by the people of the Western Country. – and I gave up all hope of success, as soon as I heard that there were disputes with him about command.”¹⁰ By castigating his lead general, Washington attempted to deflect most, if not all, of the blame from him and Knox for sponsoring this mission when it was apparent that the American soldiers

⁷ Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, November 6, 1790, Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States, Volume II*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1934, 309.

⁸ Governor St. Clair to the Secretary of War, November 6, 1790, Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States, Volume II*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1934, 309.

⁹ The President to the Secretary of War, November 19, 1790, Carter, *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, 2:310.

¹⁰ The President to the Secretary of War, November 19, 1790, Carter, *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, 2:310.

were not prepared to engage the enemy using guerrilla tactics. Harmar deserved criticism for his poor leadership skills, but he was not the only one at fault for this disaster.

Although the president was furious at the failure of the Harmar campaign, he still believed it was necessary for the United States to do what it needed to do to expand westward. In his annual address to Congress in December 1790 Washington indicated that the violence on the borderlands was detrimental to the Indian nations as well as the Americans. He firmly believed that it was his duty as president to protect the settlers that felt threatened on the borderlands. He specifically stated about the violence carried out by the Indian nations, “These aggravated provocations rendered it essential to the safety of the western settlements, that the aggressors should be made sensible, that the government of the Union is not less capable of punishing their crimes, than it is disposed to respect their rights and reward their attachments. As this object could not be effected by defensive measures, it became necessary to put in force the act, which empowers the President to call out the militia for the protection of the frontiers; and I have accordingly authorized an expedition, in which the regular troops in that quarter are combined with such drafts of militia as were deemed sufficient.”¹¹

Washington’s sentiments with this speech indicate that even though the Americans received a drubbing by a well-fortified antagonist the ultimate goal of the United States had not changed at the end of 1790. Even though he pressed for continued treaty negotiations with the Indian nations, the president also believed that additional military force to extricate the Natives from their homesteads was necessary. The ultimate

¹¹ Speech to Congress, December 8, 1790, *The Writings of George Washington*, Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1891), 12:1-3.

goal for the president was continued westward expansion by the United States.

Washington stressed the vital nature of bringing the territories that comprised the borderlands, including Ohio, under firm American control so that settlers could populate these regions. Washington was direct in his commands and he expected his subordinate officers to carry out his wishes as the situation on the borderlands remained tense.¹²

Although Harmar would receive condemnation from many individuals including the president, Major Denny stated that he was proud to serve under the general on the previous mission and he regretted that it was not successful. While Denny praised his commanding officer, he launched criticisms at the behavior of the militia. He stated that on the retreat back to Fort Washington, the militia did not follow orders and were uncontrollable. Denny also claimed that Harmar had no choice but to punish several militia members for indiscretions and he was sure that once these men returned to Kentucky they would criticize the general for his actions. If anything, Denny believed that Harmar should have disciplined these troops more than he did. This communication illustrated specifically the divide that existed between the regular soldiers and the militia members as some of the federal combatants praised their leader while many of the militia criticized him. As the Americans regrouped after the Harmar campaign, the Natives attempted to chart their next move which included consultations with their British ally.¹³

Blue Jacket told the British that his warriors valiantly fought against the Americans and attempted to drive them off. He lamented that some of the Natives became superstitious after the eclipse and did not pursue their advantage against the

¹² Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 131.

¹³ Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny*, 149-52

United States troops. The Indian chief further claimed that the Americans “had got about Twenty Leagues back towards the mouth of the Rocky River retreating in great confusion, having left behind them on their way many of their wounded and several Horses – and he believes their losses will oblige them to leave their cannon behind.”¹⁴ Blue Jacket was well aware that the Americans were ill-equipped to fight a guerrilla-type battle and because of this they scattered when confronted by a staunch adversary that intended to press their advantage and he understood the benefits of retrieving American supplies when they absconded from the field.

The Shawnee chief then beseeched the British for more support including the possibility of the British soldiers when the Americans attacked again. The Shawnee Nation had not sold off their lands to the Americans and they were staunch followers of the British Crown. However, if the Indian nations did not receive additional support they “must divide like a cloud separated by a Whirlwind and scatter away to the long running and never tired waters of the Great Mississippi, and be no more seen among you.”¹⁵ The British needed to consider this statement as a possibility if they could not further supply their Indian allies with supplies and soldiers. If that occurred, the British would lose a valuable and loyal collaborator in their efforts to engage the Americans in the Ohio region. Rather than blindly celebrating his military triumph, Blue Jacket looked toward future confrontations with the Americans and wanted British help. He understood that the Natives would not be victorious in the Ohio country over the long-term fighting

¹⁴ Information of Blue Jacket, November 1, 1790, *MiHC*, 24:135-37.

¹⁵ Blue Jacket’s Speech and Answer, November 1790, *MiHC*, 24:135-38.

strictly on their own and he understood that the Americans were going to continue to engage their Native adversary as long as was possible.¹⁶

The British responded to Blue Jacket by stating that the British government was proud to call itself the friend of the Shawnee Nation and it remembered how staunch of a supporter the Shawnees had always been to the Crown. Not surprisingly, Alexander McKee stated that he could not assist the Natives without the sanction of the government at Quebec and he could not provide the Indian nations with British soldiers to fight the Americans because Great Britain was not officially at war with the United States.¹⁷ McKee was a well-respected British Indian agent and during the era of the Ohio Indian Wars he was actively involved in trying to supply the Native allies with materiel so they could defeat the Americans on the battlefield, but he still had to follow official governmental mandates.¹⁸ The policy forwarded by McKee was consistent with what the British proclaimed since the end of the Revolution. While they wanted their Indian ally to harass the Americans as the United States attempted to expand their landholdings, the administration in Quebec, under direct orders from the home government in London, had no intentions of starting another British-American war.¹⁹

McKee asserted to his Indian followers that he would do everything in his power to make sure that the Indian people did not perish during the upcoming winter. “Your Families shall receive what little assistance is in our Breasts to feed and cloathe them, and your other distresses and wants shall be transmitted to your Father and Governor at

¹⁶ Blue Jacket’s Speech and Answer, November 1790, *MiHC*, 24:135-38.

¹⁷ Blue Jacket’s Speech and Answer, November 1790, *MiHC*, 24:135-38.

¹⁸ Larry L. Nelson, *A Man of Distinction Among Them : Alexander McKee and the Ohio Country Frontier, 1754-1799* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1999), x-xi.

¹⁹ Blue Jacket’s Speech and Answer, November 1790, *MiHC*, 24:135-38.

Quebec,” he pledged. “You should endeavor to restrain your young men from committing any depredations, or going to war.”²⁰ The British government thus wanted to assist their allies for their survival during the winter, but they also sought to avoid a deepening conflict on the borderlands by refraining from providing any tangible military support to the Indian nations. Unfortunately for Blue Jacket and the other Indian leaders, they had no means to demand more from the British²¹

McKee grasped that the Natives, “notwithstanding their success in repulsing the American Army, they do not consider themselves adequate to a war without our support, and if their late conduct is disapproved of, that they must disperse and retire, and they show a strong inclination of removing beyond the Mississippi.”²² Whether or not the Natives would have removed themselves beyond the Mississippi River if they did not receive direct British support is questionable. However, what this entreaty indicated was that the Indians realized that even though they were skilled in guerrilla war, they were not strong enough themselves to hold off the American onslaught onto their lands indefinitely. They knew that the Americans, even though soundly defeated on the battlefield, would attack them again and it was not guaranteed that they would be as successful against a second American attack. Additionally, the Natives were resigned to the fact that the American settlers were going to continue to push into the region even if their army was defeated by Indian warriors.

²⁰ Blue Jacket’s Speech and Answer, November 1790, *MiHC*, 24:135-38.

²¹ Blue Jacket’s Speech and Answer, November 1790, *MiHC*, 24:135-38.

²² Col. A. McKee to Sir John Johnson Relative to Indian Affairs Near Detroit, November 7, 1790, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:140-41.

British representatives in Detroit viewed an American triumph over the tribes as virtually inevitable if they tried enough times to extricate the Natives. “The Americans pretend their sole object is to chastise the Indians, for depredations made on their Back Settlements,” a British report explained. “But this is generally believed to be only a pretence for bringing a sufficient force into the Country to seize on the Posts they pretend a Right to by Treaty, they have been repuls’d in their first essay, but they will certainly return in the Spring with a force the Indians cannot resist, the Indians destroy’d or driven over to the Spanish Lines, the Posts will be no longer tenable by us, and the whole Trade from that Quarter ruin’d, nothing can save the Indians but giving them effectual aid against the Americans or negotiating a Peace between them.”²³

British officials feared that if the Americans attacked, “either with a view of conquering the Indians or attacking the Posts, the most dreadful depredations will be committed, the Trade will be totally neglected, and rendered nothing but a scene of confusion & insecurity; together with the perpetration of the most violent acts of injustice towards the Traders, whose property would be pillaged, and themselves rendered a prey to the caprice & cruelty of both parties.”²⁴ If this was to occur, according to these traders, the continued fighting could destroy the North American portion of the British economy.²⁵ Of all the warnings received by the British government about the affairs on the borderlands, this dispatch from the agents at Montreal carried the greatest weight.

²³ Advices from Detroit Relative to Actions in Miamis Country, December 1790, *MiHC*, 24:158-62.

²⁴ Memorial and Petition of the Merchants of Montreal Trading to the Indian or Upper Country, December 28, 1790, *MiHC*, 24:162-64.

²⁵ Memorial and Petition of the Merchants of Montreal Trading to the Indian or Upper Country, December 28, 1790, *MiHC*, 24:162-64.

The traders at Montreal thus clearly articulated the stakes in the struggle for control of the Ohio region.

In December 1790, over a month after the conclusion of Harmar's campaign, Hamtramck sent a letter to St. Clair to convey his feelings about the previous campaign and the intentions of the Indians. He admitted that Harmar's campaign was a disaster, but he did not directly blame the general for the poor outcome. He told the governor "that nothing can establish a peace with the Indians as long as the British keep possession of the upper forts; for they certainly are daily sowing the seed of discord betwixt the measures of our Government and the Indians."²⁶ The major asserted that even though the British were not directly involved in the fighting, they were giving tacit support to their Indian allies so that they could cause trouble for the Americans.²⁷

He further claimed that if the Indians did sue for peace the following spring, "it will be done to deceive us, and ought not to be granted before we have another expedition, and have established respectable garrisons in the most important parts of their country; then we will be able to make peace on our conditions, and not on theirs."²⁸ It would be almost impossible for the United States to construct forts in Indian country for the next several years. Hamtramck wanted the Americans to enter the peace process and guide the terms of any treaties which would be difficult until they gained a military victory. Hamtramck also informed the governor that "The Indians never can be subdued by just going into their towns and burning their houses and corn, and returning the next day, for it is no hardship to an Indian to live without; they make themselves perfectly

²⁶ Major Hamtramck to Governor St. Clair, December 2, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:197-98.

²⁷ Major Hamtramck to Governor St. Clair, December 2, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:197-98.

²⁸ Major Hamtramck to Governor St. Clair, December 2, 1790, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:197-98.

comfortable on meat alone; and as for houses, they can build them with as much facility as a bird does his meat.”²⁹

After the disaster that was Harmar’s campaign, St. Clair should have listened to a different voice about the problems in dealing with the Indians. St. Clair, Harmar, and Knox were rather intransigent on how to deal with the Native American population in Ohio and seemed set on carrying out any aggressive attack on the Indian nations in a specified manner. They viewed the Natives as barbarians who should know their proper place as subordinate wards of the American government. Nothing short of outright victory was good enough for these men and they endeavored to use the power of the largely untested federal military to achieve their objectives. While Hamtramck was not correct with each of his statements, he did possess the insight to see the problems on the borderlands in a different light. He was an outsider to the inner workings of these higher governmental officials and could give an impartial account of the situation.

Some of Hamtramck’s words turned out to be prophetic as the Indians looked to push their advantage during the winter of 1791 as many of these groups felt that they had an advantage over the reeling United States soldiers even without the support of British troops. The Americans never suspected that the Indians would attack them during the middle of winter and they left their guard down. Two likely targets were the Symmes lands in the Cincinnati region as well as the settlements near Marietta which were the most heavily populated American settlements in Ohio. The Indians were unable to carry

²⁹ Major Hamtramck to Governor St. Clair, December 2, 1790, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:197-98.

out large scale assaults, but they could use hit-and-run tactics to wreak havoc on the Americans and attempt to possibly drive them out of Ohio.³⁰

A first attack happened on January 2, 1791 north of the Marietta community. A group of Wyandot and Delaware warriors confronted an American settlement at Big Bottom on the Muskingum River and eleven men, one woman, and two children died as a result of this attack. The Natives took several prisoners and retreated towards their British allies in northwestern Ohio. Although these Natives were not completely able to extricate American settlers from Ohio, they did send a message to the remaining settlers in the territory that they needed to be constantly on guard to prepare for the possibility of future attacks. In addition, these raids signified that American settlement in Ohio would not continue to expand until the United States government pacified the Indians through a successful military expedition.³¹

On January 8, 1791, Blue Jacket's warriors attacked the Symmes region north of Cincinnati as they believed that this area contained settlers that they could intimidate. That day, a group of Indians attacked United States settlers and one American died as a result of this attack. Those men not killed retreated to Dunlap's Station and reported their encounter, but there were no extra precautions taken as these people believed it was only an isolated incident. Two days later, Blue Jacket's warriors harassed the Americans again as the Indian soldiers called for the Americans to surrender their position. The Americans bluffed their own strength and did not capitulate. Eventually, the two sides stared each other down for the remainder of the day as the Indians were willing to lay

³⁰ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 126-30.

³¹ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 126-30.

siege to this garrison. After dusk, one of the men who escaped from the Indians on January 8, Abner Hunt, tried to escape through the Indian position, but the Natives captured him.³²

Eventually, these Indian warriors took their new prisoner and began to torture him until he died. In the early morning of January 11, two more men tried to flee and eventually made their way out of the predicament. As they marched they encountered a relief expedition marching to assist the settlers at Dunlap's Station. By the time they got there, the Indians dispersed which allowed the Americans to maintain their position at this garrison. The Americans took stock of their losses in cattle and corn and realized that it the Indians achieved their objective of burning and destroying valuable American possessions. Many of the pioneers were fearful for their lives and they agreed it would be easier to abandon this position and return to supposedly safer positions on the Ohio River which constituted a moral victory for the Native Americans at this time.³³

The attack at Big Bottom specifically unnerved the settlers of the Ohio Company at Marietta. They implored the federal government not to abandon them. Putnam stated to Knox that the settlers at Marietta were desperate and unless they received armed assistance from the federal government they might have to abandon their township. Putnam stated, "I hope that the government will not be long in deciding what part to take, for if we are not to be protected, the sooner we know it the better; better that we withdraw ourselves at once than to be destroyed piecemeal by the savages; better that the government disband their troops now in the country and give it up altogether, than to be

³² Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 126-30

³³ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 126-30.

wasting public money in supporting a few troops, inadequate to the purpose of giving peace to the territory.”³⁴

Putnam also penned a correspondence to Washington in which he displayed his apprehensions about the attack and he also gave an account of the attack at Big Bottom. “On the evening of the 2d instant, between sunset and daylight-in, the Indians surprised a new settlement of our people, at a place on the Muskingum called the Big-bottom ... in which disaster eleven men, one woman, and two children, were killed: three men are missing, and four others made their escape. Thus, sir, the war which was partial before the campaign of last year, is, in all probability, become general: for I think there is no reason to suppose that we are the only people on whom the savages will wreak their vengeance.”³⁵

What these raids proved is that the Indian presence in Ohio was firm and they were not intimidated by the Americans. The fact that Wyandot and Delaware warriors attacked at Big Bottom contradicted the language used about these supposedly peaceful nations the previous year. The situation at Dunlap’s Station showed that the Indians could wreck American goods as easily as the Americans could harm their property. The Natives proved that they were furious at how the Americans dealt with them and they wanted to continue to harass all American settlements in the region. These events further scared the residents of these areas far removed from the battles at Kekionga. The United States government needed to regroup before they lost the faith of all the people living in

³⁴ Rufus Putnam, esq. to the Secretary of War, January 8, 1791, *ASP:IA*, 122.

³⁵ McGlinchey, “A Superior Civilization,” 118-42.

Ohio. These events were major psychological victories for the both the peaceful and antagonistic nations living in Ohio.³⁶

While these unfortunate events occurred, Harmar responded to Hamtramck in a letter dated January 15, 1791. He assured the commandant that, “I observe the great difficulties you had to encounter in commanding the militia upon the late expedition, which will ever be the case as they are totally unaccustomed to discipline, but nevertheless I am certain you did the best in your power to prevent a junction of the Wabash Indians with those of the Miami, and can assure you that your conduct during your tour has met my approbation.”³⁷ Harmar went out of his way to compliment the actions of Hamtramck while he was facing the wrath of the federal government himself because he appreciated the work done by Hamtramck. Harmar was smart enough to realize that Hamtramck had done what was in his power to help produce a victory over the Natives even though he did not accomplish his objectives several months prior.³⁸

Despite Hamtramck’s assertions that the previous campaign was not entirely the fault of Harmar, Washington and Knox looked for a scapegoat for the debacle at Kekionga. The most obvious person to take the heat was the man that led the troops into defeat. On January 31, 1791, Knox sent a letter to Harmar which stated

The general impression upon the result of the late expedition is that it has been unsuccessful; that it will not induce the Indians to peace, but on the contrary encourage them to a continuance of hostilities, and that, therefore, another and

³⁶ Harmar to Hamtramck, January 15, 1791, Thornbrough, *Outpost on the Wabash*, 269-73.

³⁷ Harmar to Hamtramck, January 15, 1791, Thornbrough, *Outpost on the Wabash*, 269-73.

³⁸ Harmar to Hamtramck, January 15, 1791, Thornbrough, *Outpost on the Wabash*, 269-73.

more efficient expedition must be undertaken. It would be deficiency of candor on my part were I to say your conduct is approved by the President of the United States, or the public. The motives which induced you to make the detachments on the 14th, 19th, and 21st of October last, and without supporting them..., require to be explained... I further suggest to your consideration... to request to the President of the United States to direct a court of inquiry, to investigate your conduct in the late expedition.³⁹

Essentially, Knox laid the blame for the entire defeat on Harmar, which is not surprising because many of the dispatches that made their way to the secretary of war rebuked the general and his actions. Knox was correct in stating that the events of the previous year would not induce the Indians to make peace. In fact, the victory on the battlefield guaranteed that the Natives would continue to step up their attacks on American settlers north and south of the Ohio River.⁴⁰ Eventually the court passed its verdict. These members believed that Harmar was an effective leader who followed military protocol, but ran into bad luck when engaging the enemy.⁴¹

Despite the results of this tribunal, Harmar's failure to defeat the enemy and open to Ohio territory up for American settlement guaranteed he would never receive another military commission. After all of the reprisals from the federal government for Harmar's expedition, there are several issues that stand out that should at least partially restore the general's reputation. While he was overmatched and ill most of the excursion, there were many factors beyond the general's control that led to his defeat. First, the unreal expectations placed on Harmar from St. Clair, Knox, and Washington contributed to Harmar's difficulties. These men wanted the general to deliver a swift blow to show the power of the United States army, but they had a poor plan in place for Harmar to deliver.

³⁹ "Knox to Harmar", *Draper Manuscripts*, 394-401.

⁴⁰ "Knox to Harmar", *Draper Manuscripts*, 394-401.

⁴¹ Court of Inquiry on General Harmar, September-October 1791, *ASP: MA*, 21-35.

The power structure wanted Harmar to use European modes of fighting to defeat an enemy skilled in guerrilla warfare and well entrenched in their positions.

From the early part of 1790, the men that supplied the American army mismanaged and cut corners when it came to supplying the troops. The greed and graft associated with many of the men that supplied the army almost guaranteed a failure on the battlefield because the supplies were of shoddy quality. Rather than providing for the soldiers, these contractors only endeavored to make a profit, largely at the expense of the American military. Because of this highly untenable situation, Harmar was always wanting for more and better supplies while training and then leading his men into battle and had little chance for success. Although Harmar proved to be a largely ineffective leader, by dismissing the strength and character of their opponent, the American officials set up Harmar and his men for total disaster.

They never considered that to fight the Indian warriors, the American military structure would need to revamp how they battled the enemy by using guerrilla tactics. Even after this humiliation, no one in the federal government wanted to change how they operated on the borderlands. There were no adjustments made as to how to engage the Indians which would set the Americans up for future disappointments in their interactions with the Indians as the United States began to prepare for another destructive foray onto the borderlands in 1791. During 1791, the Ohio country would continue to be a contested space between the United States and the Indian nations residing in Ohio and the Americans would try again to displace the Indians that resided on the western borderlands.

Following the aftermath of the Harmar campaign, the American government vowed to restore the honor of the American military. Because of this mindset, the federal regime rushed headlong again into engaging the enemy even though they were woefully unprepared for this undertaking yet again. The United States prepared again to fight against Indians and not with Indians. They still would not use Natives as scouts or spies to aid the American effort. In addition, no major review of the problems associated with Harmar's expedition occurred as the American government planned to fight the second battle on the borderlands exactly as they did the first engagement. Washington and Knox stubbornly held onto modes of warfare that would be unsuccessful against determined guerrilla resistance forces. The Americans set themselves up for disaster because they had not yet grasped that European battlefield tactics would be useless when fighting their Indian adversary.

While the Americans continued with their preparations for another military engagement, McKee distributed annual presents to the tribes. The British realized that it was vital for them to consistently stock their Native allies with the goods they would need to survive throughout the year. This specifically manifested itself during the winter months, but it was also vital during the summer as well, as the Indians often did not have access to the same quality of goods that the British possessed in abundance. These gifts could include weapons, but often more importantly consisted of food and clothing.⁴²

⁴² Colonel McKee's Speech to the Following Nations of Indians, at the Foot of the Miami Rapids, July 1, 1791, E.A. Cruikshank, *The Correspondence of Lieut. Governor John Graves Simcoe, 1789-1793*, Toronto: The Society, 1923, 1:36; hereafter titled *Simcoe Papers*; Forwarded to Colonel Simcoe, August 17, 1791, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 55.

If the United States practiced this policy on a more consistent basis, their relations with the Native populations might have improved. McKee inquired of them what it would take for them to make peace with the United States. They stated that they would broker a peace if the Americans accepted a boundary that ran up the Muskingum River and across the portage to the Cuyahoga River. The Americans were no longer in the mood to negotiate even though they had offered a similar boundary in the Treaty of Fort Harmar in 1789. The Americans wanted to show their power to the Indians and the British especially after Harmar's embarrassing defeat the previous year. It seems apparent that the United States was going to keep attacking the Indians until they defeated them in a military engagement and removed them from colonial space desired by the American settler state.⁴³

Knox vowed that the United States would sponsor another expedition against the antagonistic Indians in 1791 and affirmed, "It, therefore, appears, from the examination of this subject, to be incumbent on the United States to prepare immediately for another expedition against the Wabash Indians, with such a decided force as to impress them strongly with the power of the United States."⁴⁴ The United States had not shown that they could defeat the Indians in guerrilla battles on their homelands and suffered a major embarrassment when the Natives trounced Harmar. Despite this reality, Knox implored the administration to support another mission with 3,000 American troops against the Ohio Indians to show them the supremacy of the United States on the borderlands. He

⁴³ Colonel McKee's Speech to the Following Nations of Indians, at the Foot of the Miami Rapids, July 1, 1791, E.A. Cruikshank, *The Correspondence of Lieut. Governor John Graves Simcoe, 1789-1793*, Toronto: The Society, 1923, 1:36; hereafter titled *Simcoe Papers*; Forwarded to Colonel Simcoe, August 17, 1791, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 55.

⁴⁴ Report of Henry Knox, January 22, 1791, *ASP:IA*, 112-13.

still called for the construction of an American post among the Miamis. Knox believed that construction of these garrisons would show the Indians, as well as the British, the legitimacy of American claims to the region.⁴⁵

Knox underestimated the challenges of constructing a fort in the middle of the hostile region. After their recent success, many of the Indian groups would redouble their efforts to protect their homelands and would use every means possible to eject any American invaders onto their native soil. What some American officials failed to realize at this point was that all of the Indian nations, whether they espoused open warfare or not, would encourage the Miami Nation, at least tacitly, in their efforts to defend their homelands. The American government believed that they could use divide-and-conquer methods to subvert any kind of Indian alliance, but the remaining Indian nations championed the efforts of their Miami brethren to ward off the United States.⁴⁶

Although the United States prepared for another major clash with the Natives, Knox was willing to try diplomacy and he sent Colonel Thomas Procter in March 1791 to the home of the Miami and Wabash Indians to engage them in peace negotiations. “The great object of your long journey is,” he advised, “is to impress the said Miami and Wabash Indians with the candor and justice of the General Government. That the United States require only that they would demean themselves peaceably. That, if they should refuse to listen to this invitation, they only will be liable for the evil which will fall upon and crush them.”⁴⁷ Knox believed that this strong language would allow for these groups

⁴⁵ Report of Henry Knox, January 22, 1791, *ASP:IA*, 112-13.

⁴⁶ Report of Henry Knox, January 22, 1791, *ASP:IA*, 112-13.

⁴⁷ Instructions to Colonel Thomas Procter, March 11, 1791, *ASP:IA*, 145-47.

to come to the negotiating table with the United States and come to an agreement whereby they would cede their lands to the Americans. That was impossible at this point.

The Secretary of War attempted to sound magnanimous with his statements while at the same time asserting American authority where they had none. Knox advised the colonel to take Cornplanter and other peaceful chiefs with him on his journey. It is doubtful that Cornplanter could have persuaded these groups, but the Americans wanted to use him anyway. Knox wished that Procter could get these groups of Natives to return with him to Fort Washington so that they could enter into negotiations with United States officials. If he were successful in bringing these nations to Fort Washington, Procter would receive an additional five hundred dollars on top of his daily expense money. If he were injured or disabled on this mission, he could possibly receive the pension of a lieutenant-colonel-commandant. If he died, his children would receive the pension of a lieutenant-colonel-commandant for seven years. Procter was then to leave Fort Washington after delivering up the Natives because Knox did not want him involved in direct treaty negotiations.⁴⁸

At approximately the same time, Knox then informed the Miami Indians that the Americans and Natives should be able to live in harmony with each other. The events of the previous year were troublesome for both groups and Knox did not want a repeat of those incidents. The secretary of war repeated the stated American intention of living in peace with their Indian comrades. However, if the Miami Nation continued to fight the Americans, Knox promised them that the United States military had enough strength to drive the Miamis out of their homelands if they so desired. Knox claimed, "The United

⁴⁸ Instructions to Colonel Thomas Procter, March 11, 1791, *ASP:IA*, 145-47.

States are powerful, and able to send forth such numbers of warriors as would drive you entirely out of the country. It is true, this conduct would occasion (sic) some trouble to us, but it would be absolute destruction to you, your women, and your children.”⁴⁹

The Secretary of War asserted that all of the powerful Indian nations south of the Ohio River maintained alliances with the United States. This was not a true statement as many of the Natives south of the Ohio River still had major disputes with the American government. Additionally, he stated that the Six Nations wanted these Indians making peace with the Americans so that both groups could live in harmony. If the Miamis refused to enter into negotiations, Knox believed all the other Indians would leave them to fend for themselves against the United States military and would welcome their defeat at the hands of the United States army. The only acceptable term for the Americans was the unconditional surrender of the recalcitrant Natives.⁵⁰

While the Miamis considered their next move, other Indians attempted to learn what the British were going to do for the Natives during the remainder of 1791. Blue Jacket, the Shawnee chief, met with the British at the end of January 1791. He wanted his British friends to be happy that the Indians drove off the American invaders the previous autumn. The Shawnees were not warlike according to the Indian chief. Rather, they only did what they had to do for the survival of their people. Blue Jacket informed the representatives of Great Britain that his people were staunch supporters of the Crown

⁴⁹ Message from the Secretary of War to the Miami Indians, March 11, 1791, *ASP:IA*, 145-47.

⁵⁰ Message from the Secretary of War to the Miami Indians, March 11, 1791, *ASP:IA*, 145-47.

since the time of the American Revolution and that they would continue to support the father country in whatever way they could.⁵¹

They firmly believed that their allies wanted the best for the Indian nations and would do whatever was necessary to guarantee the survival of the Natives. He clarified that he and his people believed that the British had always been generous with them and never gave away their lands during the Treaty of Paris in 1783. Blue Jacket affirmed, “We have not ceded our Country (the lands on the Miamis) to the Americans by Deed, Treaty, or other ways, as other nations have, and we have been always led to understand, that when our Great Father over the wide waters gave peace to his disobedient children, he did not give away our Country to them, and in this belief we are confident, as we are told he always balances the Scale exactly.”⁵²

Whether Blue Jacket totally believed this statement is debatable as many of the Indians grew weary of what they believed was insincere support from their British allies. However, now that it was the middle of winter and his people were lacking in provisions, Blue Jacket gave a restrained response and stated that his people believed truly in the efforts of the British. He called on Great Britain to supply his people to guarantee their survival. The Shawnee chief stated if the Indians did not receive this assistance, the different nations would scatter towards the Mississippi River. Even if they did not obtain help from Great Britain, these nations were in no position to make a long journey into unchartered territory. Blue Jacket, like many of the Indian chiefs knew how to attempt to

⁵¹ Blue Jacket’s Speech, January 23, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:135-37.

⁵² Blue Jacket’s Speech, January 23, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:135-37.

manipulate the British. Each side realized how much they needed the other for success on the American borderlands.⁵³

The British responded by stating that they were grateful that the Shawnees considered them as friends. McKee signed off on the communication in which the British representatives stated that they appreciated the support they received during the Revolution and promised to do what they could to aid their comrades. They assured the Indians that he agreed with their attempts to protect their homelands, but he implored the Natives to keep their young men from committing depredations on the borderlands until diplomatic efforts occurred once again with the United States. McKee was well aware that the more trouble the Indians caused, the less likely the Americans would be to negotiate peace. While the British wanted the Indians to make trouble for the Americans, they also knew that his country could not afford an all-out war with the United States.⁵⁴

While the British conferred with Indian representatives, other tribal leaders went directly to the seat of the American government to air grievances. Seneca chiefs, including Cornplanter, journeyed to Philadelphia because they were upset with the fact that the Americans killed some of their people while these chieftains made their way to Philadelphia. Cornplanter was concerned that the American government was behind several Indian deaths and they searched for the truth so they could attempt to placate their people to some degree. They stated that they were willing to do everything in their power to promote peace as they were staunch allies to the American cause. However,

⁵³ Blue Jacket's Speech, January 23, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:135-37.

⁵⁴ The [British] Answer, January 23, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:135-37.

these killings caused great alarm and made the possibilities of peace much more remote with a majority of the Indian nations.⁵⁵

Like many other cases of borderland violence, rogue individuals committed these atrocities. However, these singular killings gave the appearance of something more sinister and widespread in the eyes of many of the Indian chiefs. Knox responded to these statements by stating to Cornplanter: "I inform you, that the President of the United States has not, and will not, order any friendly Indians to be killed."⁵⁶ This was meant to assuage any anxiety that Cornplanter might be feeling, but it was in essence a hollow gesture on the part of the Americans as any Indian that stood in the way of American advancement onto the borderlands was likely to be threatened with violence or possibly death.⁵⁷

The secretary of war claimed that the president chafed at these murders and would do everything in his power to bring these criminals to justice which was highly unlikely because the Americans would have difficulty in singling out the murderers. The governor would compensate these people for any horses or other property taken from them, yet he did not realize that these people did not want monetary goods for their losses, but rather some kind of justice to prove that the Natives were respected by the new United States government. Knox reiterated his intentions of friendship with these friendly nations. He stated that it was a mistake for these Natives to hold the entire country accountable for the actions of a few misguided individuals who did not speak for

⁵⁵ Message from the Cornplanter, March 17, 1791, *ASP:IA*, 145.

⁵⁶ Message from the Secretary of War to the Cornplanter, March 28, 1791, *ASP:IA*, 145.

⁵⁷ Message from the Secretary of War to the Cornplanter, March 28, 1791, *ASP:IA*, 145.

the majority of Americans, but his words rang hollow as the United States continued to prepare to engage the intransigent Natives once again.⁵⁸

By the spring of 1791, United States officials were determined to send in another military force to remove the Natives from their homesteads. This mindset was apparent even though the warning signs were evident that another armed engagement very likely could be an unmitigated disaster for the United States because the Americans insisted on engaging their enemy in the same way as they had in 1790. The settler colonial spirit and the yearning for the Ohio lands were too strong for members of the federal government as well as the speculators and squatters for any other possibility to occur besides a military conflict. The territory in Ohio was seen as too valuable not to make every effort to remove the Natives from their homesteads.

The ideals of settler colonialism appeared on the American landscape since the mid-1780s. Originally, the Confederation Congress determined the best way for the United States to expand westward and gain the valuable Indian land in Ohio was through the negotiation of duplicitous treaties. As the 1780s progressed, the United States believed they gained a legitimate claim to these regions as they negotiated these agreements with smaller bands of the Indian peoples that lived in Ohio. However, the majority of the Miami and Shawnee nations refused to accept these treaties. Washington and Knox could state that they wanted to engage the Natives in repeated treaty negotiations, but those semantics concealed their true intentions of wanting to remove the Indians from their lands permanently with the use of American military force.

⁵⁸ Message from the Secretary of War to the Cornplanter, March 28, 1791, *ASP:IA*, 145.

By 1790, Washington and Knox believed the only way for the United States to displace the Indians residing in Ohio was through military force. The actions of 1790 indicated that no person involved in the arrangements for using the American military knew exactly what they were doing. Issues such as poor troop recruitment, substandard supply chains, and ineffective army training doomed the Harmar campaign before it even began. Despite these limitations, the Americans were convinced that they would be victorious on the battlefield. As a result, the United States military structure rushed headlong during 1790 towards an armed engagement with an enemy who would present an enormous challenge to the untrained American army. These military preparations that occurred during 1790s showed that the United States was rushing towards a humiliating defeat on the battlefield as the Americans operated from a position of strength that it did not possess. In addition, the man that would lead the United States into battle, St. Clair, was a poor choice for lead general of this campaign largely because of his physical infirmities as well as a limited knowledge on how to engage his Indian adversary that used guerrilla tactics to defend their homelands.

CHAPTER V

ST. CLAIR'S DISASTER

For the first several months of 1791 federal leaders followed the logical course of settler colonialism as they geared their army for another military battle while attempting to engage in treaty negotiations. American leaders were still embarrassed by Harmar's defeat and determined that they needed to send their army into battle once again to show the true power of the United States military. However, the Americans refused to change how they would engage their enemy in battle and thus set themselves up for failure once again. Instead of using more money to train their forces in how to engage in guerrilla warfare the federal government spent their capital to employ more federal soldiers to fight in a traditional European-style armed engagement. The actions from March to November 1791 were fraught with mistakes that spelled defeat for the United States military once again.

On March 21, 1791, Knox informed St. Clair of his appointment as lead general in the war against the Ohio Indians. After much debate at the highest levels of the government, St. Clair seemed to be the most logical choice to replace Harmar due to his military experience and his familiarity with the Ohio territory. Despite his positive attributes, St. Clair suffered from gout which would eventually seriously hamper his ability as a lead general. Knox claimed that the vast majority of the people of the United States wanted to avoid further bloodshed on the battlefield. He claimed: "An Indian War,

under any circumstance is regarded by the great mass of the people of the United States as an event which ought if possible to be avoided.”¹

Knox intended for St. Clair to engage the Natives in treaty negotiations while at the same time preparing his troops for battle. The general was to use the Six Nations as intermediaries in the attempt to make peace with the more antagonistic Natives because many individuals living in the United States saw the Iroquois Confederation as friends of the American government. However, if these overtures failed, St. Clair was to use the entire power of the American military to defeat the unfriendly nations on the battlefield. In this letter, Knox reminded St. Clair of the disaster of the Harmar campaign and he told the general of the importance of the upcoming expedition against the Natives because the United States yearned to expand its settlements in Ohio.²

It was at this point that Knox gave St. Clair an impossible task. The secretary of war expected the general to seek out the recalcitrant Native groups and encourage them to come to some type of treaty negotiations in 1791. This was going to be virtually impossible because the more antagonistic groups such as the Miami and Shawnee Nations had no intentions of consulting with United States representatives. While he endeavored to bring the Natives to the bargaining table, the secretary of war expected St. Clair to organize his woefully unprepared federal army to engage the Indians on the battlefield one more time. St. Clair was set up to fail from the beginning of this undertaking.

¹ Instructions Given by Henry Knox, March 21, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:186-97.

² Instructions Given by Henry Knox, March 21, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:186-97.

As part of the master plan of the federal government, Knox stressed the vital nature of the Americans eventually creating a military post near the Miami villages. The secretary of war claimed that a federal garrison deep within the Indian domains was a crucial step in claiming the Ohio region for American settlement. Knox asserted,

Having commenced your march upon the main Expedition, and the Indians continuing hostile, you will use every possible exertion to make them feel the effects of your superiority; and after having arrived at the Miami Village & put your work in a defensible state, you will seek the enemy with the whole of your remaining force, and endeavour by all possible means to strike them with great severity.³

In addition, the creation of a military garrison deep in the heart of the Indian domains would leave the British concerned as to the true intentions of the United States. Knox did not want the citadel to be a temporary structure and believed it should be able to accommodate approximately one thousand men. Additionally, he warned that the British in the area might take this construction as a sign of hostility. It was crucial for St. Clair to assure any person employed by the government of Great Britain that the purpose of this garrison was to punish the hostile Indians, not the British.⁴

Knox also authorized a secondary American expedition against the Wea Indians of what is now Indiana. He asserted to Colonel Thomas Proctor, “The great object of your long Journey is to impress the said Miamie and Wabash Indians with the candor and Justice of the general Government. That the United States require only that they would demean themselves peaceably.”⁵ This entire process was problematic because the Native nations in question had no intentions of suing for peace when they still held the

³ General Knox’s Instructions to General St. Clair, March 21, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:197-98.

⁴ General Knox’s Instructions to General St. Clair, March 21, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:197-98.

⁵ H. Knox, Sec’y of War, to Col. Thomas Proctor, March 11, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:180-83.

advantage in the field. Additionally, by this point, Knox also authorized Brigadier-General Charles Scott to strike at the heart of the enemy should peace overtures be refused.⁶ This expedition was to proceed in all haste and St. Clair had the ability to call on as many militia members as necessary. The goal of the mission was to encourage the Natives of Indiana to sue for peace and influence their Ohio brethren to do the same. The secretary of war also sanctioned a second or third raid should the first one be successful. The number of men to be used on any of these tours was to be limited and Scott was to capture as many women and children as possible.⁷

While plans for Scott's mission evolved other problems quickly arose for the new lead general in regards to the supply chain. Corruption at the highest levels beleaguered each of these campaigns during the Ohio Indian Wars. William Duer, a New York financier, was now responsible for supplying the army. Duer and Knox were heavily involved in land speculation and as a result Duer tended to pay no attention to his responsibilities to the army. He received \$75,000 to purchase army supplies, but he took some of the money intended to buy necessities such as beef, corn, and flour and used it to consider possible property investments. As a result, Duer's subagents were destitute of money and could not buy provisions which left the army in a predicament.⁸

There were other dishonest individuals involved in supplying the American army. Samuel Hodgdon, who received an appointment of quartermaster general, earned a reputation as a sycophant of Knox who looked to the secretary of war for employment. Hodgdon proved to be inept at his job as he did not seem to have an idea as to how to

⁶ H. Knox, Sec'y of War, to Col. Thomas Proctor, March 11, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:180-83.

⁷ H. Knox, Sec'y of War, to Col. Thomas Proctor, March 11, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:180-83.

⁸ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 131-51.

best supply his army. Even worse, Hodgdon was parsimonious and attempted to save money whenever possible. As a result, he often bought substandard equipment to supply the men in the field. The problems with these men would last throughout the year and would cause considerable consternation for St. Clair as he repeatedly delayed the movement of his troops northward into the heart of the Indian country. The desire for competent supply men would be a major complaint for the general and delayed the movement of his troops until October, which helped thwart the mission.⁹

As the supply system stalled to a dead halt, Timothy Pickering, an American emissary, spoke with the Six Nations on April 17 and stated he realized that some of the western nations yearned again to take up the hatchet against the United States. He stated to members of the Six Nations, “You told me that the Shawanese had invited you to join them in a war, against the United States, but that you had refused to join them.”¹⁰ He warned the Six Nations that some other Indians may attempt to get them to join in the war against the United States. It was imperative that these Natives not listen to those appeals because they were untrustworthy. He stated that the United States only engaged in battle with these hostile elements to protect their property and save their settlers. He wanted to engage in treaty negotiations with the Six Nations who in the past tried to command the Indian groups in Ohio. The problem that would occur with this situation was the rivalry between the Six Nations and the more uncompromising nations and the

⁹ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 131-51.

¹⁰ Copy of a Speech from Timothy Pickering to the Six Nations, April 17, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:237-39.

fact that the United States did not seem aware of the little regard that the western Natives held for the Six Nations.¹¹

At the same time Pickering spoke to the Six Nations, St. Clair worked to appease other Indian groups. On April 20, St. Clair spoke to the Delaware Nation northwest of the Ohio River. He stated that when the Shawnees and Miamis forced the Americans through their intransigent ways to take up arms the previous year, the United States government warned the Delawares and told them to keep out of this engagement. The United States was again willing to offer peace to the antagonistic nations, but if they did not accept this overture, the United States would use force. St. Clair again cautioned the Delawares to keep out of this fracas. Without coming right out and saying it, St. Clair appeared to want to use the Delawares as intermediaries to engage the more aggressive Indians in peace talks. Although the Delawares were not associated with the Six Nations, they also would have little possibility of encouraging the Shawnees and Miamis to speak with American representatives.¹²

Three days later, St. Clair conferred with representatives from the Seneca Nation, one of the Six Nations band. Part of his communications was in response to the concerns raised by Cornplanter, a Seneca chief, the previous month. He attempted to assuage the apprehensions of Cornplanter by stating that his shock over the killings of members of the Seneca Nation. The governor promised that the culprits would receive justice and he asked for Cornplanter's continued friendship. Because the Senecas were members of the Six Nations, St. Clair saw it as vital that he attempt to maintain the alliance of the Seneca

¹¹ Copy of a Speech from Timothy Pickering to the Six Nations, April 17, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:237-39.

¹² Gov. A. St. Clair to the Delaware Nation, April 20, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:209-11.

Nation should the United States have to wage war again on the unreceptive factions within the Indian confederacy. He concluded these conferences by stating his continued admiration for the Seneca Nation, which he implored to hold fast to their positive association with the United States.¹³

St. Clair also conversed with the Wyandot Nation the following week and told them many of the same things he said to the Delaware Nation. The general claimed that the Miamis and Shawnees were foolish for engaging the Americans in battle. He further stated that he wished the Wyandots would steer clear of any battles that were to happen with the other groups because St. Clair did not wish any harm to come to these friendly Indians. The United States government only came in peace and wished to bring the Miami and Shawnee Nations back under the protection of the United States government while gaining their lands in Ohio.¹⁴

St. Clair communicated with Negushway, the principal chief of the Ottawa Nation, and reiterated the friendship that existed between the American government and the Ottawas. He also told this leader that the Shawnees and Miamis were unwise for rousing the ire of the American government. The governor told the Indian commander that some of his people had been foolish in the past and he did not want there to be any lingering problems between the two groups. St. Clair blamed the British for attempting to drive a wedge between the United States and the Ottawa Nation. He believed the British did this to try and manipulate the trade between all of the groups involved. He

¹³ Governor St. Clair to the Chiefs and Warriors of the Seneca Nation, April 23, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:239-41.

¹⁴ Governor A. St. Clair to the Chiefs and Warriors of the Wyandot Nation, April 30, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:214-15; 217-19.

gave the chief a belt of white wampum which signified peace and asserted that the United States was ever the friend to the Ottawa Nation.¹⁵

St. Clair corresponded with Scott on May 18 and informed him that any prisoners taken should receive transport to some post on the Ohio River. In addition, any captive taken by Scott and his men needed to receive treatment of the utmost respect.¹⁶ On June 1, Scott and his men attacked the Indians and he lost few of his own troops. The next day, the Americans burned Ouiatanon as well as Indian cornfields and gardens. That evening, Scott sent Colonel James Wilkinson to Kithtippecanuck, eighteen miles to the northeast. On June 3, Wilkinson and his men destroyed that village as well. He believed that the Indians of that region intended to surrender, but found that this was not a correct assumption. Despite this, on June 4, Scott released sixteen of his prisoners, who were old or sick and then left for home. In his official dispatch to his superiors, Scott made it a point to boast about his victory and stated that the men on his mission acted with the utmost civility.¹⁷

St. Clair was not upset with the outcome of this expedition and he wrote to the Committee of Kentucky at the end of June to offer his congratulations for the recent travails of Scott and his men. It is not surprising that St. Clair used laudatory language towards the committee members at this time. St. Clair realized the importance of the Kentucky militia in any raid. While militia members received the scorn of many of the regular army members, they were indispensable as they provided troop numbers that

¹⁵ Gov. A. St. Clair to Negushway the Principal Chief of the Ottawa Nation, *MiHC*, 24:215-17.

¹⁶ General St. Clair to Brigadier-General Scott, May 18, 1791, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:207-09.

¹⁷ Report of Brigadier General Scott, June 28, 1791, *ASP:IA*, 131-35.

were impossible to gain through the standard military structure. The governor claimed that the efforts of Scott must have made all of the residents of Kentucky proud. He further proclaimed that the president authorized another mission against the rebellious Indians. This expedition would benefit the overall effort against the unfriendly Natives. He asked the representatives of Kentucky who would be the most qualified man for this upcoming excursion. He stated that the number of soldiers should not exceed five hundred for the forthcoming raid.¹⁸

The Six Nations convened a council meeting on June 8 at Buffalo Creek. They commended the British for taking care of them while there were disagreements among the Indian nations. They also lauded the British for trying to make peace between the United States and the antagonistic nations. They sensed that the hostilities between the United States and the Western nations were going to continue for the foreseeable future. They stated: We have been asked, rather told, by Governor St. Clair to take up the Hatchet against our Western Brethren.”¹⁹ This concerned these Natives because they realized that the worst possible scenario for them was to become part of this conflict. They realized that if they played the situation right they could watch the Americans and the Western nations fight each other. They knew how to effectively manipulate the situation for their own needs.²⁰

On June 20, Alexander McKee stated to John Johnson that he did not believe that the Indians in Ohio would seek peace as they were still upset that the Americans attacked their homesteads the previous year. In addition, he believed that the United States

¹⁸ General St. Clair to Committee of Kentucky, June 24, 1791, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:222-23.

¹⁹ Council of Western Indians, June 8, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:249-50.

²⁰ Council of Western Indians, June 8, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:249-50.

intended on attacking the Indians again and this time they might assault British possessions in Ohio. Because of this, McKee suggested building a British fortress in the Miami River region. McKee seems to be one of the few British officials that saw the realities of the situation. Many other British representatives constantly asked the Natives what it would take for them to seek peace with the Americans. McKee saw past this and realized that the Indians were going to continue to do what it took to defend their homelands.²¹

As the British and their Indian allies prepared for the distinct possibility of another American raid, Knox and St. Clair worked closely together to prepare the American forces to go onto the borderlands to engage their Indian adversary. The secretary of war gave St. Clair wide latitude in calling up militia members for his upcoming excursion because they were needed to augment the numbers of federal troops employed on this mission. Knox also stated that he had reservations about the men supplying the American army and he hoped that St. Clair would not bog himself down by slow suppliers. The secretary of war was wrong to expect St. Clair to be responsible for affairs that were largely beyond his control.²²

On July 21, Knox wrote to St. Clair yet again and asserted that he urged Duer to take all the steps necessary to fully provide the American army. Knox believed that Duer would follow through on his word, but he was not sure about the reliability of some of his subordinates who seemed to be questionable. This is not surprising since Knox and Duer worked together to make money off land speculation. This does not sound like a ringing

²¹ Col. A. McKee to Sir John Johnson, June 20, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:262-64.

²² J. Knox, Sec'y of War, to Maj. Gen. A. St. Clair, July 21, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:290-92.

endorsement from the secretary of war and it should have concerned St. Clair considerably. If by some chance Duer could not furnish the goods to the army, it was necessary for St. Clair to counteract these deficiencies and not overspend.²³

St. Clair buoyed himself by the success of the raids of the previous months. On July 31, he commanded Wilkinson to carry out an additional raid on the Indian towns. He commanded Wilkinson to head toward L'Anguille, a Wabash community in eastern Indiana. He wished for Wilkinson to attack with all of his available force and to capture as many women and children as possible. Wilkinson was to treat his captives with the utmost of kindness and his captives were to come to American garrisons on the Ohio River. The intriguing aspects of this communication are the methods St. Clair ordered Wilkinson to employ. By striking at the heart of the enemy and taking hostages, the American army did have some success in its endeavors. This was an example of guerrilla warfare at its finest, yet St. Clair failed to employ these methods when he made his attacks in October and November 1791. Why was Wilkinson allowed to use guerrilla type tactics in August, but St. Clair did not use these same methods later in that same year? One possibility is that Knox and Washington knew that Wilkinson's raid was only limited and would only wield slight advantages for the Americans. They may have been afraid to commit more men and materiel for fear of receiving a beating on the battlefield while losing valuable men and supplies.²⁴

In early August, Wilkinson and his men set out for L'Anguille. On August 7, Wilkinson and his men attacked the Indian forces and gathered in thirty-four prisoners.

²³ J. Knox, Sec'y of War, to Maj. Gen. A. St. Clair, July 21, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:290-92.

²⁴ General St. Clair to Brigadier-General Scott, July 19, 1791, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:227-29.

The next day he set fire to the cabins and destroyed the corn in the area. Wilkinson then attempted to continue his march, but eventually gave up due to problems with his horses and provisions. That was exactly the same problem faced by Harmar the previous year. He returned to his home base on August 21. Wilkinson had some success due to the fact that he did not oppose the bulk of the Indian armies on his marches. He only came across small villages and hamlets on his journeys and thus he was able to inflict some, if not heavy, damage upon his enemies. However, the Americans were quick to capitalize on any successes and deemed these expeditions to be major triumphs even though they were only minor victories.²⁵

Wilkinson wrote St. Clair in late August and informed him of the details of his mission. He stated that he and his men encountered rough terrain, but yet muddled through towards their objective. He also asserted to St. Clair that he did not think he met his objective on the battlefield, but was otherwise content with the results of his raids on the Indian towns. He believed he destroyed his primary objective and had taken many prisoners. What he failed to mention is that he encountered few, if any, large bands of Native warriors to impede his progress. Had he met up with larger pockets of resistance, his outcome might have been totally different with far fewer successes. He flatly asserted, "Should the services secure to the country I immediately represented, and the corps which I had the honor to command, the favorable consideration of the government, I shall infer the approbation of my own conduct, which, added to the consciousness of my having done my duty, will constitute the richest reward I can enjoy."²⁶

²⁵ General Wilkinson to General St. Clair, August 24, 1791, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:233-39.

²⁶ General Wilkinson to General St. Clair, August 24, 1791, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:233-39.

While the raids by Scott and Wilkinson had some good effects, they were to be short-lived. The United States government would not continue to send in rangers to extirpate the Indians. The federal government was determined to defeat the Indians in a pitched battle with their regulars because of the cost involved. Five hundred rangers would cost roughly \$50,000 while six hundred regulars would only cost approximately \$12,000. Additionally, the federal government could save more money by enlisting levies, men only recruited for six months. The government decided to raise a brigade of regulars, attach levies to it, and use the militia for support. While it is not surprising that the infant American government under the powers of the new Constitution attempted to save money whenever possible, they would find out that attempting to win a battle with a marginal investment in men and materiel would dearly cost the United States army.²⁷

Despite the obvious problems inherent with the upcoming mission, St. Clair continued to ready himself throughout the late summer and early autumn of 1791. On the first of October, Knox stated to the president that St. Clair was nervous about the upcoming campaign, but yet confident in its goals. Knox further declared that St. Clair supposed, “that it is possible to assemble twelve to fifteen hundred hostile Indians, but they can not subsist long together, as the country is very far from being stocked with game.” Again, the Americans underestimated their Indian adversary. Because the Indians were defending their homelands, all they needed to do was not lose any armed engagement with the Americans. All of the pressure was on the United States soldiers as they had very little margin for error when the hostilities began. As a result, the Indians did not need to raise a substantial force of warriors to offset the charge of the Americans

²⁷ John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 197-98.

when it occurred and they could pick and choose where they decided to fight. Once the battle began, the British would supply their Native ally with as much substantive assistance as possible, including foodstuffs, in order that they could defeat the American army that engaged them.²⁸

St. Clair may have been attempting to put on a façade to his superior to mask concern about his upcoming mission. The most interesting thing about this communication is Knox's statements that the operation should have begun two months prior in August. That would have been during the summer season when as Knox stated it would have given the Americans that much extra time to improve their situation. He further claimed that the time it took to collect the troops, the lowness of the water on the Ohio River, and the slow delays caused by some of the agents supplying the army made this impossible. Knox was correct in his assumptions that this mission should have started much earlier in the year. Despite his hesitations about the other factors he mentioned, starting a campaign in October would prove to be very problematic.²⁹

On October 3, Major General Richard Butler, the second-in-command for this expedition, communicated with St. Clair. He informed St. Clair that he and his men would move northward the following day.³⁰ On October 6, St. Clair corresponded with Knox and stated that he thought he had two thousand men, with the exception of the militia, at his disposal. He asserted with great regret "but the season is now so far advanced, that I fear the intermediate posts, which would, indeed, have been highly

²⁸ General Knox to the President, October 1, 1791, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:243-44.

²⁹ General Knox to the President, October 1, 1791, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:243-44.

³⁰ Major-General Butler to General St. Clair, October 3, 1791, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:244-45.

necessary, it will be impossible to establish.”³¹ Again, this should have been a warning sign to St. Clair to postpone the mission until the following year because he was almost guaranteed of not being able to construct the garrison that Knox wanted previously that year.

Two days later St. Clair communicated with Israel Ludlow, an agent for the contractors that were to supply the general’s troops. He complained that he had not yet received ninety thousand rations of provisions by that time. He chided the contractor by stating that he had been promised a set number of supplies and at that time he had yet not received any. He further stated, “If you found the transportation impracticable, you ought to have informed me, that I might have taken means to have got supplies forward, *or not have committed my army to the wilderness.*” This quote is revealing because St. Clair realized that because of the slow pace of the supply chain, it would be almost impossible to supply his men for any extended period of time when they marched out into the field. It sounds like he wanted to postpone the campaign, but he received pressure from his superior officers, Washington and Knox, to strike at the heart of the enemy and make a show of American force.³²

Because of the delays in receiving supplies, the advance of the troops was painstakingly slow. St. Clair further complained about the lack of provisions for his army. He stated that he might abort the entire mission if this problem did not resolve itself immediately. This is indicative of the abysmal supply chain that had been in place for both the Harmar and St. Clair campaigns. The absence of provisions left the

³¹ General St. Clair to Secretary Knox, October 6, 1791, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:245-46.

³² General St. Clair to Israel Ludlow, Agent of the Contractors, October 8, 1791, Smith, *St. CP*, 246-47.

American army at a serious disadvantage. Poor military training and the horrific supply chain in place for the American army would contribute greatly to St. Clair's upcoming defeat. The men that supplied the United States soldiers needed to shoulder as much of the blame as St. Clair for the disaster that awaited the American army.³³

While St. Clair and his men meandered through the forests of western Ohio, the Indians knew of St. Clair's impending attack well in advance and in October, the Indians prepared themselves for battle. Some of the Indians preferred Buckongahelas, a Delaware war chief, to lead the battle. After some debate, Buckongahelas yielded and let Little Turtle take control of the troops. Buckongahelas stated that he thought Little Turtle was a younger and more vibrant commander and he was impressed with the military leadership he showed in the battle against Harmar. Because of these feelings, he would gladly assist the Miami leader in the upcoming campaign against St. Clair. After this decision occurred, Little Turtle informed his warriors how they would engage the enemy. He believed he had approximately 1,400 warriors to fight St. Clair and thought the Americans had more men waiting to fight. He wanted to divide his forces into groupings of twenty men each with four of them responsible for hunting for food which would supply the combatants as they waited for St. Clair. This allowed the soldiers to be well fed as they organized for their military encounter.³⁴

³³ General St. Clair to Samuel Hodgdon, Quartermaster General, October 21, 1791, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:248-49.

³⁴ Gerard T. Hopkins, *A Mission to the Indians from the Indian Committee of Baltimore Yearly Meeting to Fort Wayne, in 1804* (Philadelphia: T. Ellwood Zell, 1862), 65-66; Harvey Lewis Carter, *The Life and Times of Little Turtle: First Sagamore of the Wabash*, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press), 1987, 105.

On October 28, 1791, over one thousand Natives left the Miami villages and intended to engage the Americans in an armed encounter. The information they received about American troop movements came from deserters and prisoners who came into the Miami villages daily. With this kind of vital information at their disposal, the Indians were in high spirits and guaranteed victory. Little Turtle moved his men in detached units that could maintain communication with each other and this allowed him to encircle the American troops rather easily. He also became aware of information that Hamtramck was in the process of pursuing deserters who fled southward.³⁵

Little Turtle felt confident in his prospects for victory and he decided to try a bold stroke to inflict damage on the American army. Rather than simply entice Americans into a position on the battlefield where they were vulnerable, Little Turtle would strike the enemy while they were still in camp, which he hoped would cause mass confusion. By striking before the Americans knew what was going on he hoped to inflict as many casualties as possible while protecting the welfare of his troops. He hesitated slightly at this decision because he knew the American army possessed artillery which caused consternation for the Indian warriors. However, this artillery was not located in a protected position and was susceptible to an attack.³⁶

On November 1 Sargent noted that the army had not moved that day and he could not figure out why that occurred. Another soldier named Colonel Darke believed, “Our

³⁵ Simon Girty to Col. A. McKee, October 28, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:329-30; Capt. Joseph Brandt to Joseph Chew, December 30, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:358; Carter, *The Life and Times of Little Turtle*, 106.

³⁶ Simon Girty to Col. A. McKee, October 28, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:329-30; Capt. Joseph Brandt to Joseph Chew, December 30, 1791, *MiHC*, 24:358; Carter, *The Life and Times of Little Turtle*, 106.

commander is so exceedingly afflicted with the gout that all the men that can possibly get in reach of him are scarcely enough help to him on and off his horse and, indeed, now a litter is made to carry him like a corpse between two horses.”³⁷ St. Clair acknowledged that he had been ill for the previous week. To make matters worse, the skies above the soldiers became more threatening which portended the possibility of inclement weather for the army’s march. The following day, it began to snow which signaled serious trouble for an army that was not receiving the proper supplies.³⁸

For the next several days St. Clair attempted to rally his forces with limited success. On November 3, he met with his subordinate officers and determined to change their base camp to an area that was rather dry. By that evening the remainder of St. Clair’s forces arrived at this new location. A problem occurred at this point because there was no attempt to institute a defensive position. In addition, although the base camp was located in a dry spot, the area surrounding it was rather marshy which would cause consternation for some of the soldiers. As darkness fell that evening, advance Indian scouts harassed the Americans. At that point, Butler promised he would inform St. Clair himself of the attack, but he then decided to keep the message to himself because he held the lead general in disdain. This action would prove to be problematic for the Americans on the following day when the Indians decided to renew the attack.³⁹

According to Denny, on November 4, shortly before sunrise the Indians attacked the American encampments and overran the militia who were forced to retreat to the base camp. Slowly, the Indians began to advance on the main regiment and they began to

³⁷ Sword, *President Washington’s Indian War*, 168-69.

³⁸ Sword, *President Washington’s Indian War*, 168-69.

³⁹ Sword, *President Washington’s Indian War*, 168-75.

engage the Americans in a pitched battle. As they gained the advantage on the battlefield the Natives then tried to cut off the Americans from any type of reinforcements. Denny stated, “The Indians seemed to brave everything, and when fairly fixed around us they made no noise other than their fire, which they kept up very constant and which seldom failed to tell, although scarcely heard.”⁴⁰

The artillery and the muskets that the Americans procured were of inferior quality and did little good on the battlefield. Denny specifically noticed that each time the Americans tried to repel the Indian attack, but the Natives counterattacked and put more pressure on the Americans. He asserted, “The battalions in the rear charged several times and forced the savages from their shelter, but they always turned with the battalions and fired upon them back; indeed, they seemed not to fear any thing we could do. They could skip out of reach of the bayonet, and return as they pleased. They were visible only when raised by a charge.”⁴¹ As part of their strategy, the Indians targeted the American officers in order to wreak as much havoc as they could among the enlisted men. By singling out the officers, the Natives tried to break the will of their adversary.⁴²

After receiving a drubbing for three hours on the battlefield, the Americans began to retreat in earnest. The Indians followed for roughly four or five miles, but then stopped the pursuit. The Natives discontinued their chase because of the magnanimity of Little Turtle who became sickened by the sight of so many dead soldiers. He stated that

⁴⁰ Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny*, 164-71.

⁴¹ Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny*, 164-71.

⁴² Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny*, 164-71.

“they must be satisfied with the carnage, having killed enough.”⁴³ It was more likely that the Indian combatants realized it was more vital for them to pick up the discarded weapons and goods left behind by the Americans which they could use to fight the American army in the future. Whatever the reasoning, by the Natives not pressing their advantage, this may have saved the lives of even more Americans as they retreated in great haste to what seemed to be apparent safety. By the evening, a majority of the troops retreated to Fort Jefferson, twenty-nine miles in the rear. Before the end of that evening, St. Clair ordered the troops to march back to Fort Washington due to fears of an Indian attack on Fort Jefferson. The bulk of the troops dragged into Fort Washington on November 8.⁴⁴

During the course of this disaster, Denny paid special credit to Harmar who he served with the prior year. It is readily apparent that he had the utmost respect for Harmar and he lauded the general every chance he got in his journal. Denny claimed that Harmar stated this mission would be a disaster due to a multitude of reasons. Denny stated about his general,

He saw with what material the bulk of the army was composed; men collected from the streets and prisons of the cities, hurried out into the enemy's country, and with the officers commanding them, totally unacquainted with the business in which they were engaged, it was utterly impossible they could be otherwise. Besides, not any one department was sufficiently prepared; both quarter-master and contractors extremely deficient. It was a matter of astonishment to him that the commanding general, who was acknowledged to be perfectly competent, should think of hazarding, with such people, and under such circumstances, his

⁴³ Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny*, 164-71; Hopkins, *A Mission to the Indians from the Indian Committee of Baltimore Yearly Meeting to Fort Wayne, in 1804*, 133-34.

⁴⁴ Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny*, 164-71; Hopkins, *A Mission to the Indians from the Indian Committee of Baltimore Yearly Meeting to Fort Wayne, in 1804*, 133-34.

reputation and life, and the lives of so many others, knowing, too, as both did, the enemy with whom he was going to contend; an enemy brought up from infancy to war, and perhaps superior to an equal number of the best men that could be taken against them.⁴⁵

The people that comprised the standing army were not trained soldiers, but rather men looking for a way to escape the drudgery of their lives. Denny was correct to say that the regular combatants serving under St. Clair were undisciplined and had no business calling themselves soldiers.⁴⁶

The second rebuke is rather telling of how Harmar perceived the American preparedness for the battle. He states that the officers commanding this mission were totally unprepared as how to deal with the Indian enemy. Although he does not say it in this passage, the general chastised members of the higher levels of government including Washington and Knox for this situation. He alludes to the fact that with the American military structure in place at that time, it was impossible for these men to see the Natives as an elusive adversary that would be difficult to defeat in an armed engagement. His experiences the prior year showed him that a European-style assault on the Indians that were well entrenched within their domains would lead to yet another disaster for the United States.⁴⁷

Harmar does not openly criticize St. Clair for being a deficient general in this passage, but he does not think that he was an effective leader either. Although he calls St. Clair a competent general, Harmar spoke from experience when he questioned why St. Clair would lead his men into an encounter where the Americans were overmatched.

⁴⁵ Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny*, 164-71.

⁴⁶ Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny*, 164-71.

⁴⁷ Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny*, 164-71.

The reality for both generals was that they were under direct orders from their superior officers Washington and Knox to strike at their enemy even if they did not believe they were appropriately prepared to launch a punitive expedition against the Natives.

Although both generals made serious strategic mistakes on the battlefield, the odds were stacked against them because of the politics involved with these missions.⁴⁸

St. Clair's defeat is the worst defeat ever by Indian armies against United States forces. This outcome was much worse than the defeat laid on Harmar the previous year and was a major embarrassment for all involved. Winthrop Sargent, the adjutant general of the army, believed had the Indians given a constant pursuit of the American army, they could have killed every American soldier. Denny estimated that 630 Americans died that day which was roughly half of the American force assembled and this number sickened him. These two accounts give a firsthand impression of the appalling number of American soldiers killed during the military encounter and they also speak to the disaster to which this campaign was from the beginning.⁴⁹

The actual numbers were just as devastating as the initial accounts forwarded by Sargent and Denny. Of the approximately 1,400 American soldiers that took part in the fight about 650 were killed and this number included 69 of 124 commissioned officers. Another 270 individuals were wounded and this included women and children that had been present at the battle. The Natives had minimal casualties as only 21 soldiers died on the battlefield and another 40 were wounded. This catastrophe was much worse than the drubbing received by General Custer at Little Bighorn in 1876 and it cast a pall over the

⁴⁸ Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny*, 164-71.

⁴⁹ Winthrop Sargent, "Winthrop Sargent's Diary While with General Arthur St. Clair's Expedition Against the Indians", *Ohio History*, 1924, 33:237-73

entire American military structure as they had now been trounced twice by the Indians on the battlegrounds of Ohio.⁵⁰

Two sound defeats at the hands of the Natives showed the United States that they were distressingly unprepared to fight guerrilla type warfare against the Indians living in the Ohio region who knew the terrain much better than the American army. It was up to men such as Washington and Knox to rethink their approach on the western borderlands because direct assaults on the Natives without using any type of guerrilla tactics were a disaster for the American army. How to solve these dilemmas would cause great consternation for all involved at the higher levels of the American government and it would take a total overhaul of the American military structure for the United States to see victory in Ohio.

In the aftermath of the drubbing received by St. Clair and his men in western Ohio, the general attempted to make sense of the situation. St. Clair wrote to Henry Knox on November 9 and tried to explain how he and his men suffered such a devastating defeat. He attempted to show that he and his men had spent November 3, the day before the battle, building what seemed like a strong position with adequate defenses. He admitted that he and his troops saw several Indians who were on the opposite side of the creek of the American encampment. They quickly disbanded as the militia advanced on them. He planned on making an attack as soon as his first regiment joined the rest of his troops. What St. Clair did not realize was that these Indians who he encountered were

⁵⁰ Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 69; Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 194-95.

probably on a reconnaissance mission for the rest of the Natives assembled not too far off who prepared to attack the Americans themselves.⁵¹

On the morning of November 4, St. Clair was shocked when the Indians made a surprise assault on his regiment. He embarrassedly stated,

for, on the fourth, about half an hour before sun-rise, and when the men had been just dismissed from the parade (for it was a constant practice to have them all under arms a considerable time before day-light), an attack was made upon the militia. Those gave way in a very little time, and rushed into camp through Major Butler's battalion, which, together with part of Clark's, they threw into considerable disorder, and which, notwithstanding the exertions of both those officers, was never altogether remedied, the Indians following close at their heels. The fire, however, of the front line, checked them, but almost instantly a very heavy attack began upon that line, and in a few minutes it was extended to the second likewise. The great weight of it was directed against the centre of each, where the artillery was placed, and from which the men were repeatedly driven with great slaughter. Finding no great effect from our fire, and confusion beginning to spread from the great number of men who were falling in all quarters, it became necessary to try what could be done by the bayonet.⁵²

This correspondence illustrates that the Indians were stealthy warriors who attacked when the enemy did not expect it. By assailing their enemy before sunrise, the Natives counteracted any advantage the Americans had with greater numbers of soldiers. St. Clair and his fellow combatants were utterly unprepared for the assault and failed to mount an effective offensive campaign against the Indians. After a short amount of time, the Natives pressed their advantage and the Americans attempted merely to survive.⁵³

St. Clair's correspondence with the secretary of war shows how he and his men were completely overwhelmed when he asserted,

⁵¹ Copy of a letter from Major General St. Clair to the Secretary for the Department of War, November 9, 1791, *ASP: IA*, 136-38.

⁵² Copy of a letter from Major General St. Clair to the Secretary for the Department of War, November 9, 1791, *ASP: IA*, 136-38.

⁵³ Copy of a letter from Major General St. Clair to the Secretary for the Department of War, November 9, 1791, *ASP: IA*, 136-38.

Lieutenant Colonel Dark was accordingly ordered to make a charge with part of the second line, and to turn the left flank of the enemy. This was executed with great spirit. The Indians instantly gave way, and were driven back three or four hundred yards; but for want of a sufficient number of riflemen to pursue this advantage, they soon returned, and the troops were obliged to give back in their turn. At this moment they had entered our camp by the left flank, having pushed back the troops that were posted there. Another charge was made here by the second regiment, Butler's and Clarke's battalions, with equal effect, and it was repeated several times, and always with success; but in all of them, many men were lost, and particularly the officers, which, with so raw troops, was a loss altogether irremediable. In that I just spoke of, made by the second regiment and Butler's battalion, Major Butler was dangerously wounded, and every officer of the second regiment fell except three, one of which, Mr. Greateon, was shot through the body. Our artillery being now silenced, and all the officers killed except Captain Ford, who was very badly wounded, and more than half of the army fallen, being cut off from the road, it became necessary to attempt the regaining it, and to make a retreat, if possible.⁵⁴

This portion of the correspondence further shows how the Indians fought unlike any enemy the American soldiers had ever encountered. The Natives targeted the American officers in order to decimate the United States troops. Targeting the officers was a part of guerrilla warfare that the Americans were woefully unprepared for when engaging the Indians. By eliminating these men, the Natives were able to instrument a total rout of the American troops as the remainder of these men hurried away for their own survival.⁵⁵

The general made it a point in this letter to criticize his troops for a lack of discipline and to try and deflect the blame for the loss due to his physical infirmities. He complained, "I have nothing, sir, to lay to the charge of the troops, but their want of discipline, which, from the short time they had been in service, it was impossible they should have acquired, and which rendered it very difficult, when they were thrown into confusion, to reduce them again to order, and is one reason why the loss has fallen so

⁵⁴ Copy of a letter from Major General St. Clair to the Secretary for the Department of War, November 9, 1791, *ASP: IA*, 136-38.

⁵⁵ Copy of a letter from Major General St. Clair to the Secretary for the Department of War, November 9, 1791, *ASP: IA*, 136-38.

heavy upon the officers, who did everything in their power to effect it. Neither were my own exertions wanting; but, worn down with illness, and suffering under a painful disease, unable either to mount or dismount a horse without assistance, they were no so great as they otherwise would, and perhaps ought to have been.”⁵⁶

It seems odd that St. Clair condemned the troops that he commanded. It would seem that he would have been responsible for regulating the behavior of his soldiers. This seems like a veiled criticism of the militia soldiers who the general never liked as a part of his mission. St. Clair, like many other regular army soldiers, held militia members in contempt because they believed they were not committed to the national cause on the frontline. These men often went into an armed confrontation to seize valuable goods rather than engaging the enemy for the good of the country. Second, if the general was as ill as he stated, he should never have engaged the enemy with his troops into and been replaced by a leader who was not suffering from physical ailments.⁵⁷

St. Clair followed up this correspondence with a dispatch to a Major Brown in which he communicated his heartfelt sorrow over the loss of the militia commander Lieutenant-Colonel Oldham. He commended some of the militia members that stayed throughout the entire battle. Despite these approbations, the general had harsh words for the majority of the militia members employed for this mission. He believed that the desertion of some of the mercenaries was the major cause for the American defeat. He wanted every officer remaining in the American army to bring these deserters to justice.

⁵⁶ Copy of a letter from Major General St. Clair to the Secretary for the Department of War, November 9, 1791, *ASP: IA*, 136-38.

⁵⁷ Copy of a letter from Major General St. Clair to the Secretary for the Department of War, November 9, 1791, *ASP: IA*, 136-38.

This comment seems to be very shortsighted and to lay the brunt of the blame on these men was wrong because everything that could have gone wrong with this mission eventually did. The retreat of the private army members was only a small part of the larger problem with this ill-conceived mission.⁵⁸

At the end of this correspondence, St. Clair made a statement that would have ramifications for future American missions. He affirmed, “While I wish the militia individually a safe return to their families, and to their country all happiness, I can not (sic) resist the giving them this further proof of my good-will by observing that, in no case where I have seen militia employed, has there been that subordination and prompt obedience of orders which are necessary to the success of military operations, and I recommend it to them, should they be again called into their country’s service, to endeavor to acquire those habits, and to practice them with alacrity, as the only means, under God, by which either personal honor or public advantage can be obtained.”⁵⁹

In essence, St. Clair is stating that he does not want to use the militia again as a military force until they learn to obey the orders of senior military leaders. This was unlikely as these men did not receive payment by the federal government and only joined the force for their own reasons. The militias consisted of untrained farmers who were fighting Indians for no pay in order to protect their own homesteads and gain valuable booty. They had different priorities than men such as St. Clair. They would never submit themselves to the rigorous demands of ordinary army life. In defense of St. Clair,

⁵⁸ General St. Clair to Major Brown, November 12, 1791, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:267-68.

⁵⁹ General St. Clair to Major Brown, November 12, 1791, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:267-68.

the American government sent him with not enough troops to fight an emplaced enemy as the regular warriors that St. Clair used were often not the best soldiers.⁶⁰

St. Clair sent another communication to Knox towards the end of November. Amazingly enough, the general believed that he and his men could attack the Indians again sometime that winter which was impossible. He lamented the fact that he did not have enough men to undertake this mission at that time. Even if he had enough soldiers to engage the Natives once again, it was highly unlikely that many soldiers, specifically the militia, would have battled once again. Why St. Clair believed that another expedition after his recent disaster would have been a success remains a mystery. A judicious leader would have admitted defeat and attempted to patch together the remnants of his shattered military. It is very possible that the general realized that he may face the wrath of the federal government if he did not come back with some kind of success. Had he led his men against the Natives again one more time that fall he and his men may have been annihilated and the nascent federal army destroyed.⁶¹

Knox responded to St. Clair's messages by stating that he was not happy with the results of his excursion against the Indians which was not surprising given the absolute drubbing St. Clair's forces received. However, the Secretary of War stated that he did not hold St. Clair personally responsible for the military outcome. He further asserted that St. Clair's reputation would not be disparaged because of the results on the battleground of western Ohio. Knox asserted, "Your misfortune, to be sure, has been great and unexpected. But, sir, it was one of those incidents which sometimes happens in

⁶⁰ General St. Clair to Major Brown, November 12, 1791, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:267-68.

⁶¹ General St. Clair to General Knox, November 24, 1791, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:269-71.

human affairs, which could not, under existing circumstances, have been prevented.”⁶²

Furthermore, Knox went on to say that he thought that 2,500 Indians opposed St. Clair during their engagements. Because of these numbers, Knox claimed that superior numbers opposed and defeated St. Clair when he fought the Indians. He was looking for a way to assuage any remorse that St. Clair may have experienced because of his resounding defeat at the hands of the Natives.⁶³

Although Knox hesitated to place full blame for this military disaster on St. Clair, the general proved that he was not prepared to engage the enemy with guerrilla tactics on the day of battle which ultimately contributed to his appalling defeat. St. Clair proved that he and his fellow soldiers had little knowledge of his Indian adversary. The day before the armed engagement, St. Clair gave his soldiers a respite, but in the process of doing this he did not make any preparations for the possibility of a surprise Indian attack. The American army also had no knowledge of the size of their enemy and they also were unaware of how the Natives intended to fight the United States military. These issues of American military unpreparedness combined to allow for the surprise attack engineered by Little Turtle and the remainder of the Indians on November 4.⁶⁴

Other American military men were less sanguine in their assessments of this campaign. John Armstrong, classified by many of the time period as an expert on Indian warfare and who battled the Natives during the French and Indian War, believed,

⁶² General Knox to General St. Clair, December 23, 1791, Smith, *St. CP*, 2:275-76.

⁶³ General Knox to General St. Clair, Smith, *St. CP*, 2: 275-76.

⁶⁴ Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 195-200; Leroy V. Eid, “American Indian Military Leadership: St. Clair’s 1791 Defeat,” *The Journal of Military History*, 57:1, 71-88.

Who could doubt, who knows the abilities of the first officers of that army, that the only successful mode of coping with Indians in a forest had not been preconceived (sic) over and over long before that day. The partial or momentary advantage, gained by the flanking parties only, as I apprehend, with screwed bayonets, would easily discover the error of the former arrangement; but alas, it was then too late, either to devise a new one or change the old for a better. Placing the militia in a body over the brook, permit me to say, was an unwarrantable step, when two or three small pickets would have served a better purpose. It seems probable that too much attachment to regular or military rule, or a too great confidence in the artillery (which, it seems, formed part of the lines, and had a tendency to render the troops stationary), must have been the motives which led to the adopted order of action. I call it adopted, because the General does not speak of having intended any other, whereby he presented a large and visible object, perhaps in close order, too, to an enemy near enough to destroy, but from their known modes of action comparatively invisible; whereby we may readily infer that five hundred Indians were fully sufficient to do us all the injury we have sustained, nor can I conceive them to have been many more.”⁶⁵

As a veteran of fighting the Natives during the French and Indian War, Armstrong knew firsthand how the Natives engaged in that conflict fought their battles against both the British and the French in order to gain their own advantages on the battlefield. His criticism that the American leaders were too disposed to regular army maneuvers was rather prescient in the face of this disaster as he understood the advantages of engaging in guerrilla warfare with the Natives. Because Knox and St. Clair were unwilling to change the way in which the American army fought their enemy, they set St. Clair and his men up for utter disaster which is exactly what occurred. Armstrong seemed to understand, unlike Knox and St. Clair, that the Natives engaged in a far more surreptitious manner than the Americans expected and that they employed far fewer men than was originally thought. They did not need an overwhelming force to defeat the United States soldiers

⁶⁵ General Armstrong to the President, December 23, 1791, Smith, *St. CP*, 2: 276-77.

and all they needed to do was strike when it suited them which is exactly what the Native soldiers did.⁶⁶

The mindset at the highest levels of the American government in November 1791 was that of utter shock as to how the United States could have suffered two humiliating defeats at the hands of the Native warriors in Ohio. It was unfathomable to federal leaders how the American army could suffer such embarrassing losses to a perceived inferior adversary. The reality of the situation was that the federal military went into battle twice untrained and unprepared for the realities of guerrilla warfare. Once Harmar and St. Clair sent their soldiers onto the borderlands they were easy targets for a well-emplaced antagonist that used all of their advantages to inflict defeat upon the Americans. The United States was lucky in both instances that the defeats that they suffered were not much worse. In order for the ideals of settler colonialism to manifest itself whereby the United States would procure the Native lands and allow American settlers to populate Ohio it was going to take a concerted effort to change military tactics on the borderlands if the United States wanted to achieve military success. How that would occur was still unclear in November 1791 as the military options for the United States were still rather muddled.

⁶⁶ General Armstrong to the President, December 23, 1791, Smith, *St.CP*, 2: 276-77.

CHAPTER VI

A MILITARY CHANGE

When St. Clair engaged his adversary in November 1791 he still used outdated fighting techniques as he attempted to defeat his enemy. He and his superior commanders, Washington and Knox, did not learn from what occurred the prior year under the leadership of Harmar and because of this, the United States military was destined to repeat the same mistakes. The St. Clair fiasco was even more of an embarrassment to the American government than was the Harmar defeat one year prior as the Native warriors crushed a substantial number of the United States troops that still fought using European-style tactics that were very ineffective when fighting on the borderlands. Because the United States government insisted that their army use these tactics, it set the American army under the leadership of St. Clair for failure. Had these Native warriors pressed their advantage after their victory in November 1791 it was very likely they could have inflicted far greater casualties and perhaps devastated the entire American military force. By the time the Americans examined the situation, many in the federal government finally realized that the American style of warfare was not going to defeat their Indian adversary.

Those far-reaching reforms of the American military structure would have a major impact on how the United States engaged in settler colonialism in the 1790s. After years of negotiating fruitless treaties with the Indian nations in Ohio, the federal

government attempted to send in their military to remove the Natives from their lands. Two embarrassing defeats by a well-trained enemy humiliated the United States into making changes to their army. These alterations would lead to a major overhaul of the American military structure and would allow for the next leading general to implement more counterinsurgency tactics to engage the Indians on the battlefield. When that occurred, the United States would finally be able to engage in what became known as the “first way of war.”¹

After St. Clair’s loss on the battlefield, the American public responded in varying ways, with some people fully supporting the actions of the federal government including Hugh Brackenridge, the author of *Modern Chivalry*. He believed that the United States was justified in moving their settlers into Ohio after 1783. Despite the observations of Brackenridge, much of the thrust of the conversations about the Ohio Indian Wars came from individuals that were sharply critical of federal policy. A writer for the *American Daily Advertiser* wondered if the war being fought by the United States was a sensible endeavor. He asked, “Do we not commit the same offence against reason and justice in attempting to take their hunting grounds from them without their consent, that Great Britain committed against the American colonies in attempting to tax them without their consent.” He further queried, “Is it consistent with honor or justice to carry on a war only for the sake of revenge? Is there any honor to be acquired by killing Indians?”²

¹ Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 193-203.

² Andrew R.L. Cayton, “The Meanings of the Wars for the Great Lakes,” appears in *The Sixty Years War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814*, David Curtis Skaggs and Larry L. Nelson, eds., (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001), 373-90.

An additional writer for a Boston newspaper chided the federal government for their actions and pondered whether the battles against the Natives were harmful to the long-term vitality of the United States because of the negative consequences they carried for the American people. He wondered if the Americans had “an indubitable right”³ to seize Indian territories because the United States already encompassed enough land for its people. He further stated that these battles were not the responsibility of the varied Indian nations because although some of these individuals were incensed at the actions of the American government and goaded the Americans into battle they were “provoked ... to commit depredations.”⁴

The declarations of these individuals indicated that there was not unanimity in how the government should deal with the Indian nations. Knox attempted to defend the actions of federal leaders by asserting ‘the pacific and human dispositions of the General Government towards the Indian tribes’ and he specifically condemned certain Natives that were not able to work with the United States as “a number of separate banditti.”⁵

This language used by the Secretary of War indicates that Knox and Washington realized the controversial nature of the expeditions against the Natives and they realized that not all Americans were firmly behind the actions of the national army as they tried to remove the Indians from their homesteads. They were going to need to continue to try and rally support for the American cause; however, at the end of 1791 that was a daunting task for these men and they would continue to face harsh criticisms from some of members of the general public as well as some congressional leaders that also

³ Cayton, “The Meanings of the Wars for the Great Lakes,” 373-90.

⁴ Cayton, “The Meanings of the Wars for the Great Lakes,” 373-90.

⁵ Cayton, “The Meanings of the Wars for the Great Lakes,” 373-90.

questioned the validity of these expeditions because of the inordinate amount of American casualties suffered at the hands of the Native warriors.⁶

While many members of the American government and the general public seemed destined to call St. Clair's defeat an unfortunate defeat, the Native Americans that fought against the Americans reacted much differently. In a November 1791 conference among the Natives on the banks of the Ottawa River in northwestern Ohio, the Indians present discussed matters relative to the assembled nations. An old war chief named Gushgushagwa rose to address the congregation. He spoke passionately about protecting his people and felt that the Americans brought problems to the Indian peoples. The Indian leader stated, "All the knowledge we have, of the white people crossing the great salt water at first, is from the traditions of our fathers; for it was before our memory! Whether God drove them out of their own land, on account of their evil works, or to punish us for ours, I do not pretend to say; but, this we all know; they have introduced among us every evil and vice, and not a single virtue! I repeat to you my friends, that the white people have been our teachers in every vice, but not of one single virtue!"⁷

This impassioned speech reflected the sentiments of many Indian warriors after they engaged the United States in two pitched battles for control of the Ohio territory. Very few Natives trusted the intentions of the Americans. They realized the United States coveted their lands and would stop at nothing to gain their objective, the complete subjugation of the Indian nations residing in Ohio. Furthermore, as an elderly warrior, Gushgushagwa realized that the Americans used many methods to subjugate his Native

⁶ Cayton, "The Meanings of the Wars for the Great Lakes," 373-90.

⁷ *Minutes of Debates in Council on the Banks of the Ottawa River, November 1791*, (Philadelphia: William Young, 1792), 1-22.

allies including the repeated negotiations of suspicious treaties and the introduction of alcohol into any official correspondence between the two groups. If the Indian nations did not band together to drive off the American squatters, all of the Natives that lived in Ohio would be subject to repeated American incursions, both direct and cultural, onto their territory and the possible loss of their homelands.⁸

Another Indian spokesman, Yeshivo, spoke and implored the Indians to seek peace with the Americans even though they had just roundly defeated them on the field of battle. This Indian chief made his assertions as a pragmatic step in order to protect the welfare of the assembled nations. He asserted, “that all the injuries and injustice imposed on you by the United States, were they, if possible, tenfold more iniquitous, will not add to your strength, nor lessen the numbers or power of your oppressors: compared to them, your numbers are so few, that were you to lose one warrior for each hundred you might destroy of theirs, they would in time extirpate you from your country.” To this Indian warrior, victory over the Americans in 1790 and 1791 did not guarantee the expulsion of the United States from Ohio. Rather, it guaranteed that the Americans would continue to try and remove the Natives from Ohio with repeated military engagements. In the end, the numerical superiority of the United States would win out and the Indians would lose their lands anyway if they did not make an attempt to come to some kind of agreement with the United States.⁹

The comments of Gushgushagwa and Yeshivo illustrated that even after the resounding defeat of the American army, there was not total unanimity in how to deal

⁸ *Minutes of Debates in Council on the Banks of the Ottawa River, November 1791*, Philadelphia: William Young, 1792, 1-22.

⁹ *Minutes of Debates in Council on the Banks of the Ottawa River, November 1791*, 1-22.

with the United States government by the various Indian nations that comprised Ohio. Some Natives wanted to continue active warfare to drive the Americans south of the Ohio River while others believed it was in the best interests of the various Indian nations to come to a kind of compromise with the United States to prevent future hostilities between the two groups. While the Indian confederacy vacillated the Americans attempted to reconfigure how they would engage their Native adversary on the battlefield. The United States continued to try and drive a wedge between the disparate Native groups over the course of the next several years.¹⁰

The winter of 1791-1792 was only one of a few times the Indians could fully take advantage of the perceived American military weaknesses because the United States was reeling after two decisive defeats at the hands of the Indian nations. They needed to band together in unison to drive the Americans from Ohio. To wait would allow the United States government to regroup and launch another attack into the Native American heartland. However, the Indians decided after the Ottawa River meeting to not press their advantage, but rather they wavered as to the next course of action. The inability to band together into a united front caused many of the individual groups such as the Shawnee, Miami, and Delaware to look out for their own tribal interests and plead to the British for increased assistance to help them survive that winter.¹¹

With the exception of Pontiac's Rebellion in the 1760s, the Native Americans were either unable or unwilling to come together for an extended period of time to pursue common intertribal goals. Ancient rivalries and the fact that each of these nations placed

¹⁰ *Minutes of Debates in Council on the Banks of the Ottawa River, November 1791*, 1-22.

¹¹ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 197.

the needs of their own people above the wants of the larger group of Natives were the major reasons why a united Indian confederacy failed to materialize.¹² Although it was unlikely that these groups could band together in a true Indian confederacy, the Indians still held the advantage on the borderlands even if they did not press their successes. For the United States to be triumphant, they would have to launch yet another expedition against an enemy that had enjoyed victory twice before against the Americans.

The British also expressed surprise over St. Clair's stunning military defeat. Alexander McKee wrote to John Johnson and informed Johnson that the Americans lost 1,200 men killed during this engagement which was an exaggerated figure. In addition, he reported that the United States lost much of their ammunition and field implements. He continued by claiming that only 21 Indians died during this battle. That number was almost correct as the Natives lost relatively few men during this clash. Although McKee praised his Indian allies for bravery under fire, he was utterly shocked at the ease with which they defeated the American army who possessed more men on the field of battle.¹³ "The astonishing success of a few Indians, not more than 1,040, who have opposed and destroyed, the whole American force will most probably cause a more numerous collection of Indians at that time than was ever before known in this part of the Country," McKee declared. "This circumstance will naturally lead you to consider the necessity of sending forward at as early a period as possible, all the supplies for the year as well as the extraordinaries (sic), which will become indispensably necessary for so numerous a Body of Indians, and more particularly as the Deputies who were at Quebec have expressed,

¹² Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 197.

¹³ Col. A. McKee to Sir John Johnson, *MiHC*, 24:335-37.

that Lord Dorchester promised them a Supply of Provisions, when the nations next met for considering on their affairs.”¹⁴

This portion of this communication shows that McKee realized the importance of supplying the Indian allies for the foreseeable future. He understood that even though the Natives garnered an impressive victory the previous month, they would be in desperate need of provisions to survive the winter in the Ohio country. As an Indian agent, McKee realized the necessities of day-to-day life of his Native brethren. This dispatch shows yet again that the Indian agents that worked closely with the Natives often had a better sense of what it would take for them to survive than the higher officials in places such as Quebec, London, and Philadelphia. Because of this it would take constant communications between the forces living in the Ohio region and their superiors in Quebec in order to placate the Indian nations as they continued to forestall the American advances onto their territory.¹⁵

McKee reaffirmed how important it was for the British Empire to continue to supply their allies. He stated,

It must now, more than ever, most evidently appear that whilst we keep the Western Indians our friends, this post may bid defiance to any enemy, from any land expedition, that may be contemplated against it; and I am persuaded myself that the Provisions and Supplies which Government have allowed, or may hereafter allow to them, either from benevolence, or a desire to cultivate their friendship, and good will, exclusive of the advantages derived from their trade, are most apparently useful and advantageous to Great Britain.¹⁶

These statements are revealing as to the extent of what many of the British officials felt about the situation in Ohio. Although McKee was not at the top of the British hierarchy,

¹⁴ Col. A. McKee to Sir John Johnson, *MiHC*, 24:335-37.

¹⁵ Col. A. McKee to Sir John Johnson, *MiHC*, 24:335-37.

¹⁶ Col. A. McKee to Sir John Johnson, *MiHC*, 24:335-37.

he was one of many that worked hand-in-hand with the Natives on a daily basis. His opinions proved to be insightful. McKee admitted that supplying the Natives was advantageous for British interests in the Northwest Territory if they wanted to maintain a presence in that region. Whether the British government stated they supplied the Natives for humanitarian reasons or otherwise, it was vital to supply them.¹⁷

As the Natives made sense of a still precarious situation for themselves, the United States also reconsidered basic Indian strategies. Because of the insatiable drives of settler colonialism, the United States appeared to be an avaricious invader of Native territories to many people in this country as well as many European nations that watched the United States function in the first years after their independence. To counter this covetous appearance the American government made a momentous change of policy in how they acquired Indian lands. American representatives now admitted that the United States did not conquer the Natives during the Revolution and the Americans did not have a claim to these regions by right of conquest. Furthermore, Great Britain had no permission to relinquish territories the Natives made claims to and the only way the United States could procure these areas was if the Indian nations sold it to the Americans willingly.¹⁸

This change of policy was both shrewd and strategic. The United States needed to reconsider its unsuccessful attempts to gain Native territories in the years immediately following the Treaty of Paris. Many of the lands gained through the treaties negotiated in

¹⁷ Col. A. McKee to Sir John Johnson, *MiHC*, 24:335-37.

¹⁸ Richard White, *The Middle Ground : Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York : Cambridge University Press, 1991), 456-58.

the 1780s affected only the Shawnee Nation along with other smaller bands of native tribes. An American mediator, Rufus Putnam, believed that the Indian coalition reinforced their claims of American aggression through the old policy of land conquest. He asserted that the Indians believed the Americans “are after your lands they mean to take them from you and to drive you of the country ... they will never rest until they got the whole.”¹⁹ By changing their policies of land acquisition the United States hoped to drive a wedge into the fragile Indian association of nations.²⁰

Although the United States gave the appearances of wanting to engage in peaceful and harmonious interactions through the purchase of Native lands, the ultimate goal was still the dispossession of all Indian territories in Ohio which was the true goal of the American settler colonial project. Knox lamented the fact that American pioneers might have caused hardships for the Natives and that it was regrettable that the United States had gone to battle twice with the Natives. However, he believed that “justice is on the side of the United States.”²¹ His rationale was indicative of how the members of the federal government felt about extricating the Indians from the valuable lands that the Americans coveted in Ohio. The United States would give the impression that they were acting tactfully in their interactions with the Natives, but if the Indians resisted the onslaught of American settlers into Ohio and did not come to terms with the Americans, “justice” was with the United States as they continued to use their military to remove the Natives from their homesteads.²²

¹⁹ White, *The Middle Ground*, 456-58.

²⁰ White, *The Middle Ground*, 456-58; Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 70.

²¹ Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 69-70.

²² Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 69-70.

On December 26, 1791, Knox composed an assessment of the American situation in Ohio following the disastrous military defeats of Harmar and St. Clair. He reiterated the American claim that all they wanted was to live in peace with their Indian brethren, but this reassurance was a facade. The Secretary of War chastised the Indians for their supposed depredations against the Americans following what he believed were legitimate treaties in the 1780s. In addition, Knox stated that all the Natives received invitations to participate in these agreements, but many of them declined the offer. The Indians received warnings at this time that if they did not stop harassing the Americans, the United States would send a military expedition into the Indian regions to protect their interests.²³

In this communication, Knox further emphasized the causes for the American military defeat at the hands of the intractable Indians. First, he claimed that there were a deficient number of good troops employed on these missions. This seems to be a slight against the militia who the regular army detested. Every person that reported from the scenes of these two battles reported that the militia ran from the field virtually at the first sign of trouble during battle. Knox did not want to use the militia for the bulk of the fighting and the militia would receive employment for defensive purposes at the discretion of the President. Knox proposed increasing the number of regular troops to 5,168 in order to serve a three-year maximum enlistment. In addition, each regular soldier received a raise in pay in order to hopefully keep them more content. The amount of federal money earmarked for this enterprise would total \$1,026,477.05. This was an

²³ Henry Knox, Statement Relative to the Frontiers Northwest of the Ohio, *ASP: IA*, 197-99.

incredibly large amount of money for the federal government to spend at that time on the military.²⁴

The most telling aspect of this portion of Knox's message was that the President could now employ Indians from nations allied with the Americans as agents to fight the hostile Natives. These Indians would receive employment as scouts and spies for the Americans. Knox and Washington seemed to now realize that the best way to fight other Indians was to employ Natives that were familiar with their type of warfare. The Americans hesitated on using Natives as part of the actual force attempting to extricate other Natives from Ohio, but Knox admitted that it was time to use Indians as allies because if the United States government did not employ them, they could be mobilized against the Americans.²⁵

In many official communications before this, the American government saw Indians as an enemy, not a potential collaborator, which was unfortunate because the use of Indian allies on the battlefield would have been very useful for the United States army. It took two crushing defeats at the hands of the Natives in 1790 and 1791 for the federal government to finally change its thinking. These decisions flowed from desperation rather than design. Many members of the American government really did not want to use Native supporters, but they had no choice. They did not view Indians used in concert with the American military as equals. However, many Americans belatedly realized that if they had used Native associates under the leadership of Harmar and St. Clair, the

²⁴ Henry Knox, Statement Relative to the Frontiers Northwest of the Ohio, *ASP: IA*, 197-99.

²⁵ Henry Knox, Statement relative to the Frontiers Northwest of the Ohio, *ASP: IA*, 197-99.

results on the front lines might have turned out differently than the two humiliating defeats.²⁶

The second cause of defeat for the Americans according to Knox was the lack of discipline displayed by the troops on the field of battle, most notably the militia members of these American fighting forces. In the early part of 1791, Congress voted to create an additional infantry regiment with extra officers. This same mandate allowed the President to raise two regiments of levies, temporary federal troops, with six month terms of service as well as any militia to assist the endeavor. The problem with this new law was that Washington wanted the legislation passed in December 1790, but Congress did not pass the law until March 3, 1791. A Congressional committee remarked that this lag left time “hardly sufficient to complete and discipline an army for such an expedition during the summer months of the same year.”²⁷

As problematic as these events were, the actions of Knox were just as puzzling. Knox gave the contract for supplying the troops beyond Fort Pitt to William Duer who was a rather nefarious character. The men that did come in as Denny stated were some of the worst elements of American society. These men included homeless people and those that had broken the law. These men were not looking to become soldiers. Rather, they were looking for a job so that they could feed themselves and their families. When an army finally assembled in 1791, St. Clair did not have the time or patience to train these

²⁶ Henry Knox, Statement relative to the Frontiers Northwest of the Ohio, *ASP: IA*, 197-99.

²⁷ Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 90-91.

men properly. With a poorly equipped and trained army, only the worst could possibly happen and it did with dire consequences for the United States.²⁸

The third reason for the American losses was the lateness of the season in which the excursions occurred. After delaying all summer, St. Clair finally set out for his objective in October 1791. He was not happy about this delay as he wished to start the expedition in July or August. When the army met the Indians on November 4, snow already fell and on the return to Fort Washington, it snowed again. While the warmer weather would not have guaranteed success, it would have helped with the forage for the horses and increased morale. It was imprudent for the American government to begin this expedition in October and end it in the cold, rainy, and snowy weather of November.

A month after Knox presented plans for military reform; Congress voted whether to raise three more companies of soldiers to protect the borderlands. They did not sanction these contingents, but would continue to work to try and revamp the American military.²⁹ Eventually on March 5, 1792 the second American Congress passed “An Act for Making Farther and More Effectual Provision for the Protection of the Frontiers of the United States.”³⁰ Some of the members of Congress realized how troublesome the affairs on the borderlands were and they were willing to work with the President and Secretary of War to remedy this situation. This act implemented many of the suggestions made by Knox several months prior. One of the most important aspects of this new law was that the President now had the ability to employ Indians for various jobs, including scouts and

²⁸ Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 90-91.

²⁹ Cayton, “The Meanings of the Wars for the Great Lakes,” 373-90.

³⁰ The Library of Congress, *United States Statutes at Large*, 2nd Congress, 1st Session, 241-43.

guides. The money set forth by Congress for this plan was not to exceed twenty-thousand dollars, but it allowed for the use of Indians in the service of the United States army.³¹

Although the Congress placed limits on the amount of money spent to employ Indians, it is readily apparent that the members of Congress, along with Knox and even Washington, saw the necessity in employing Natives to battle other Indians. They grudgingly accepted the fact that they needed to revamp the American military system for success on the battlefield. How exactly this was to be implemented remained to be seen, but at least the American government could admit that changes needed to be made. This one small measure changed the tenor of how the United States military perceived their mission and would have major benefits for how the army was able to conduct its campaigns.³² In order to raise funds for these new rules, the Congress proposed to tax liquor even more heavily than they did in the past. The American government was desperate for revenue and turned to an outlet that was controversial. Excise taxes on liquor were a tricky subject in the 1790s because of the amount of profits gained by farmers by making their own alcohol from the grains they grew on their farms. American farmers tended to look negatively on a strong federal government that they believed had no right to tax their livelihoods.³³

³¹ The Library of Congress, *United States Statutes at Large*, 2nd Congress, 1st Session, 241-43.

³² The Library of Congress, *United States Statutes at Large*, 2nd Congress, 1st Session, 241-43.

³³ *Annals of Congress*, House of Representatives, 2nd Congress, 1st session, 1791-92. 1364-69.

This opposition to the new excise tax manifested itself with the Whiskey Rebellion in western Pennsylvania because farmers there realized that in order to make a profit off of their wheat and corn they had to transform wheat and corn into whiskey. The new excise tax on liquor threatened to hurt the economic livelihoods of these individuals. In August 1794 local law officials attempted to arrest sixty people that tried to elude the tax and bring them before legal officials in Philadelphia. The local residents responded to this situation as 6,000 people gathered and menaced any national administrator that attempted to enter the area. After this occurred, the Pennsylvania protestors burned the house of the chief tax collector and promised that they would create their own government and withdraw from the United States.³⁴

Washington responded to this situation by ordering 12,900 militia troops from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia to prepare to march towards western Pennsylvania. He advised the mutineers to cease and desist by September 1 and return to their homesteads or the militia would make them do this. This did not occur and on September 9 Washington commanded the militia to march to the region and end the uprising. Eventually, the locals started to disperse when faced with the possibility of engaging a substantial military force and these individuals eventually disbanded. Although the locals did not engage the militia members in a military fight, the situation involved with the Whiskey Rebellion reinforced for many on the western margins of the United States that the federal government often operated by a different set of priorities than that of their residents living on the western peripheries of the country.³⁵

³⁴ Puls, *Henry Knox: Visionary General of the American Revolution*, 217-21.

³⁵ Puls, *Henry Knox: Visionary General of the American Revolution*, 217-21.

As the Americans attempted to restructure their military system, by early 1792 many of the Natives appeared disenchanted with the limited martial assistance they received from Great Britain. This was not surprising as the Indians had time and again heard from their British allies that they would be receiving the military assistance they needed to ward off the Americans. Major John Smith reported, “Since writing you last I have nothing new to communicate, but that a general discontent seems to prevail among the Indians, as they are made believe they are deceived by the British government.”³⁶ Smith asserted that the Indians were to the point that they would no longer listen to the commands given to them by the British representatives in North America. He implored his government to actually follow through on its promises and assist the Natives.³⁷

George Ironside reiterated what Smith stated and claimed that the Americans or Spaniards had sent some speeches to the nations living in the Wabash region stating that the British deceived them by making empty promises about military aid. Ironside further stated that these unnamed representatives were saying that the British gave the Indians some assistance, but they really wanted them to kill each other as they sat back and watched the carnage. Furthermore, Ironside reported that the Delaware King told him that he and his people would not listen to any promises made by the British government. The agent feared that if something did not occur to rectify this untenable situation, the Natives would attack and butcher British traders.³⁸

Despite these concerns from some of the lower level officers in the British system, Lieutenant Governor Simcoe asserted that the Indians had the wishes of Great

³⁶ Major John Smith to Messrs. Geo. Leith & Co., February 14, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:375.

³⁷ Major John Smith to Messrs. Geo. Leith & Co., February 14, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:375.

³⁸ Geo. Ironside to Col. A. McKee, February 14, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:376.

Britain for continued prosperity as long as these nations realized that Great Britain must remain neutral in any war between the Indians and the Americans. He believed that an increased force in the capital of Upper Canada at Newark would aid the Natives while the British continued their policy of neutrality. Although Simcoe sounded high-minded with this communication he sought mainly to protect British interests in Upper Canada in the event that the Americans attacked it. The lieutenant-governor never broached the subject of problems that the Natives might be encountering with British aid.³⁹

McKee continued his correspondence with Johnson in March and voiced his concerns about perceived Indian problems with the British. He stated that the Miami Nation might have issues with Great Britain and members of the Delaware faction might leave and move to Illinois. This could cause a rift in British-Indian relations in the western regions. He asserted that he sent one of his subordinates to meet with the Miamis to determine whether they had problems with the treatment by the British government. It seems as though as the months passed, the talk of Indian dissatisfaction reached the higher levels of the British government in North America. Whether or not the British tended to these concerns would remain a question.⁴⁰

Finally, Lord Dorchester, the governor-general of British North America, weighed in on the issues between the Indians and the British. He attempted to draw a boundary line between the British and the Natives as well as the Americans and the Indians. He asserted,

³⁹ Lieut. Gov. J.G. Simcoe to Henry Dundas, Sec'y, February 16, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:377-78.

⁴⁰ Col. A. McKee to Sir John Johnson, March 5, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:380-81.

The principle laid down, "that His Majesty and the American States, should join in securing exclusively to the Indians a certain portion of territory lying between, and extending the whole length of the lines of their respective frontiers, within which both parties should stipulate not to suffer their subjects to retain or acquire any lands whatever," is undoubtedly extremely advisable to be adopted, as far as possible, that is, as far, as there are Indians who have claims to be attended to, and who are capable of occupying the ground, that may be set apart for them. This is clearly the case with respect to the western country, the immediate object of the present warfare, and also, though perhaps with some exceptions, in regard to that territory, which extends along the Southern and South eastern shore of Lake Ontario, and the upper part of the St. Lawrence.⁴¹

Although this communication attempted to modify the boundary lines that had been in question since 1783, Dorchester did not speak to the larger issues of Indian dissatisfaction with the appearances of British duplicity in regards to promises of military aid to fight the United States. Dorchester did what so many other British representatives did during the time period in that he made empty promises of expanding Indian territories while not promising outright martial assistance for the Natives.⁴²

While the British continued to make meaningless guarantees to the Natives, Knox worked to maintain communication with Joseph Brant. The Secretary of War stated that he was sorry that the Indian chief was not able to meet with Pickering previously and he invited him to come to Philadelphia and speak with him personally about the best course of action on the borderlands. Knox attempted to flatter Brant by telling him the President respected him and he said, "He considers your mind more enlightened than theirs, and he has hopes that your mind is filled with a true desire to serve the essential Interests of your Countrymen."⁴³ The Secretary of War reiterated the American intention of only wanting peace on the borderlands. He stated that the United States only went to war against the

⁴¹ Lord Dorchester to Henry Dundas, March 23, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:386-89.

⁴² Lord Dorchester to Henry Dundas, March 23, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:386-89.

⁴³ H. Knox, Sec'y of War, to Capt. Joseph Brant, February 25, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:379-80.

Natives to protect their own interests, but that the Americans did not want to destroy the Indian population.⁴⁴

As the American government looked to restructure the military system in place, St. Clair called for a court of inquiry to examine his recent expedition. In a letter to the President, St. Clair thanked the chief executive for the opportunity to lead his men into battle. He lamented the fact that the Americans were roundly defeated, but he claimed that he could not have done anything more to ensure a more positive outcome. St. Clair asserted that he was very ill during the expedition and he thought that would prevent him from leading an expeditionary force yet again. He asked the President to hold a court of inquiry to investigate whether he accept liability for defeat and be held for some type of censure. He also promised to assist whoever was to replace him as the commanding general. St. Clair stated,

While I am persuaded that every thing (sic) was done in the course of the last campaign that could be done, on my part, to answer the public expectation fully, yet it is denied by some, doubted by many, and known to but few out of the army. A wish to rectify the public opinion, and a duty that I conceive I owe to myself, induces me to request that an inquiry into my conduct may be instituted. When that is over, I may hope to be permitted to resign the commission of Major-General which I now hold. Should the result of the inquiry be that in any instance the duties of my station were neglected; or that I did not improve every hour and every opportunity to the best advantage; or that the operations of the army, after it was in a condition to operate, were delayed one moment in consequence of my illness, I shall patiently submit to the merited censure. To whoever may be appointed my successor, I shall be happy to give every light and information my situation as General of the army and Governor of the Western Territory put it in my power to obtain, and to evince to you and to the world that the confidence you were pleased to repose in me was not misplaced.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ H. Knox, Sec'y of War, to Capt. Joseph Brant, February 25, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:379-80.

⁴⁵ General St. Clair to the President, March 26, 1792, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:282-83.

The House of Representatives met on March 27, 1792 to introduce a resolution to launch an inquiry into the failed campaign against the Indians which stated, “That a committee be appointed to inquire into the causes of the failure of the late expedition under Major-General St. Clair; and that the said committee be empowered to call for such persons, papers, and records, as may be necessary to assist their inquiries.”⁴⁶ This committee studied the events intensely and made a report given to the members of the larger House. Many witnesses gave testimony in regards to the events of the previous November.⁴⁷

After a lengthy discussion that included intense debates the committee appointed by the House came to a unanimous agreement and made their report on the events that occurred in western Ohio the previous autumn. First, this tribunal reported that many of the suppliers of the army were grossly tardy with their delivery of vital necessities to the troops which caused great troubles for the American army as they prepared to engage their enemy. As a result of these inordinate delays, the American troops could not possibly have been trained and disciplined in the manner in which was necessary to fight the Indians. Second, the House also chastised the lateness of the campaign and specifically pointed out the destruction of the green foliage by frost. Because of the devastation of this vital plant life, the horses employed by the Americans had nothing to subsist on while on the borderlands. Third, the House also criticized the lack of discipline and experience among the troops which evidenced itself time and again during

⁴⁶ Report of a Special Committee of the House of Representatives on the Failure of the Expedition Against the Indians, March 27, 1792, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:286-99.

⁴⁷ Report of a Special Committee of the House of Representatives on the Failure of the Expedition Against the Indians, March 27, 1792, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:286-99.

the hostilities. Despite these criticisms of the campaign, the House committee refused to reprimand the general.⁴⁸

It is not surprising that the House absolved St. Clair of any wrongdoing on the field of battle. This would have been a major stain for the members of the American government, including Knox and Washington, to have been associated with a court martial of their commanding general. The House appeared to want to resolve the matter quickly and they blamed many circumstances except the man leading the troops even though he probably ought to have taken some of the blame for the fiasco that was his campaign. Washington and Knox were happy to let this series of events occur as they did and they hoped that a change of leading generals would be a sign of future American success.⁴⁹

Shortly after the House met to discuss his campaign, St. Clair exchanged a series of letters with Washington that discussed the general's status with the military. He formally resigned his commission as lead general at that point as he awaited the outcome of the court of inquiry. He reiterated, "I have never entertained a doubt that an inquiry into the causes of the failure of the late expedition, whether directed particularly to my conduct or to that connected with other causes that may have operated, in whatever way it might be conducted, would prove honorable to me, and satisfactory to the public as far as I was connected with it, but setting, as I do, a due value upon the public opinion, and desirous not to lose that place in the esteem of the virtuous and intelligent of my fellow-

⁴⁸ Report of a Special Committee of the House of Representatives on the Failure of the Expedition Against the Indians, March 27, 1792, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:286-99.

⁴⁹ Report of a Special Committee of the House of Representatives on the Failure of the Expedition Against the Indians, March 27, 1792, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:286-99.

citizens, which I have long held, you will not wonder that, under existing circumstances, a degree of anxiety, not only that an inquiry should be made, but that everything capable of being misconstrued should be avoided on my part.”⁵⁰

No one in the federal government seemed upset that he resigned and they looked to put his campaign behind them as an unfortunate event that should have turned out much differently had the United States employed the proper soldiers to effect change on the borderlands. St. Clair continued to work in the Northwest Territory as territorial governor until 1802 when President Thomas Jefferson discharged him from his office. While he did many good things as the governor of the Northwest Territory including leading the territory towards statehood in 1803, his reputation remained tarnished due to his military defeat by the Ohio Indians in 1791.⁵¹

At approximately the same time that Congress met to determine how to revise the American military system, Knox revised how he planned to interact with the hostile Natives on the borderlands. The Secretary of War believed that a “strong coercive force” of American soldiers was necessary “to terminate this disagreeable war as speedily as possible.”⁵² The army that fought the Natives would have to coordinate its forces in order to defeat them. Knox realized that this program would take time to implement and in the meantime he tried to guarantee that neither the Six Nations nor the southern Indian nations would join with the antagonistic Natives as the Ohio Indians prepared to defend their homelands again. To accomplish this objective, Knox would engage in peace

⁵⁰ General St. Clair to the President, April 7, 1792, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:285-86.

⁵¹ Arthur St. Clair to James Madison, December 21, 1802, Smith, *St.CP*, 2:599-601.

⁵² Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 208.

proposals with the Indians while the American army trained once again to engage the Indians on the battlefield.⁵³

The Secretary of War insinuated that if the peace proposals were somehow successful and the Indians ceded their lands, the United States could appear to have acted with “perfect humanity and kindness” to the Indians.⁵⁴ Although this was Knox’s official policy, he had no illusions that it would be successful. In January 1792 the Secretary of War instructed Peter Pond and William Steedman to interact with the Natives at Niagara and Detroit while engaging as clandestine infiltrators. The British emissaries at these two locations were suspicious of the activities of the Americans and refused to let them proceed to the military installations. The following month, Lieutenant Colonel James Wilkinson received orders from Knox to direct “confidential agents”⁵⁵ from Vincennes and Cincinnati to the obdurate Indians while requesting that the Indian chiefs come to Fort Washington for a meeting with American representatives.⁵⁶

Shortly after this, Knox sent Captain Alexander Trueman of the First United States Regiment to go to the western Indians with a directive of peace. Trueman jumped at this chance because he sought promotion to major and he realized that this could be a very perilous mission if he accepted. In April 1792, Knox advised,

I have herewith also delivered you a speech for the Western Indians, with which you will repair to the Miami Village, accompanied by such Indians, men or women, or both, as shall be judged best by you, and Lieut Colonel Commandt Wilkinson. This Speech is also accompanied by a White belt, It will be of the highest importance that you should have an Interpreter, capable of fully

⁵³ Sword, *President Washington’s Indian War*, 208.

⁵⁴ Sword, *President Washington’s Indian War*, 208.

⁵⁵ Sword, *President Washington’s Indian War*, 208-10.

⁵⁶ Sword, *President Washington’s Indian War*, 208-10.

explaining your Ideas. You will observe that the Speech is designed to effect a peace with the hostile Indians on the terms of humanity & Justice. Your language must all therefore be to the same effect. As the Confederacy of Indians is supposed to be extensive, it will require time to bring your negotiations to a favourable issue. Your patience, your fortitude, and your knowledge of the human character, will all be tested by the objects of your mission. It may be said on all occasions, and the issue will justify the assertion, that nothing is more desired than to remove all causes of discontent and to establish a peace upon a firm foundation. But that in order to bring about an event, so pregnant with happiness to the Indians, they must instantly abstain from all further hostilities, recall their parties, if they have any out, as we shall do, and let every thing (sic) be settled amicably. If the Chiefs of the hostile Tribes can be induced to repair here, it is conceived, the view of the population of the country, and the improvements of all sorts, will exhibit to their minds, in strong colors the futility of their continuing the war, as a further inducement to repairing here, presents of Clothing and Silver Ornaments may be stipulated.⁵⁷

On the same day that Knox made this statement to Trueman, Wilkinson spoke to the intransigent Indians including the Miamis and the Shawnees and stated that he came to these nations as a peaceful negotiator. However, rather than appearing as a peaceful proposition, Wilkinson stated that if the Indians did not listen to these overtures of amity, the United States would have no choice but to launch another punitive expedition and destroy the Natives. He stated that the Americans defeated the British during the Revolutionary War and would have no problems in eventually conquering the Natives.⁵⁸

The problem with Wilkinson's threats was that they carried no weight with the Indian nations who were not intimidated by the machinations of the Americans. This evidenced itself with the envoys he sent into Native territory. As Wilkinson threatened the Natives with American reprisals for their violent ways the messengers he sent to interact with the Indians encountered a group traveling to Kekionga. Even though they

⁵⁷ H. Knox, Sec'y of War, to Capt. Alexander Trueman, April 3, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:390-91.

⁵⁸ Speech of James Wilkinson to the Indians, April 3, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:391-93

had an official directive of peace from Wilkinson they were captured by the Natives and were taken into custody and were executed.⁵⁹

On April 4, 1792, Knox addressed the Natives in the Ohio and Indiana regions. He blamed the warfare that was taking place on the Indians. He claimed,

The President of the United States entertains the opinion, that the War which exists is founded in error, and mistake on your part. That you believe the United States want to deprive you of your Lands, and drive you out of the Country. Be assured, this is not so – On the contrary that we should be greatly gratified with the opportunity of imparting to you all the blessings of civilized life, of teaching you to cultivate the earth and raise Corn, to raise Oxen sheep and other domestic animals, to build comfortable houses and to educate your children, so as ever to dwell upon the Land. The President of the United States requests you to take this subject into your serious consideration, and to reflect how abundantly more it will be for your Interest, to be at peace with the United States, and to receive all the benefits thereof, than to continue a war, which however flattering it may be to you for a moment, must in the end prove ruinous.⁶⁰

This entire communication was a deception by the Secretary of War for several reasons.

He blamed the Indian nations for beginning the hostilities in 1790 when the tribes were not engaged in an offensive war, but rather a defensive war to protect their homelands.

Additionally, despite Knox's pledges the United States had no intentions of letting the Natives stay on their lands and learn American agricultural methods. By this point, the only goal for the Americans was the extrication of the Indians from their lands in Ohio so that the United States could send their settlers into the region and populate it.⁶¹

Knox went on in his address to the Natives to ask many of their leaders to return with him to Philadelphia to speak with the President. The Secretary of War affirmed,

⁵⁹ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 210-11.

⁶⁰ Speech of H. Knox, Sec'y of War, to the Indians, April 4, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:394-96.

⁶¹ Speech of H. Knox, Sec'y of War, to the Indians, April 4, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:394-96.

Do not suffer the advantages you have gained to mislead your judgement (sic), and to influence you to continue the war, but reflect on the destructive consequences which must attend such a measure. The President of the United States is highly desirous of seeing a number of your principal Chiefs, and convincing you in person how much he wishes to avoid the evils of war for your sake, and for the sake of humanity. Consult therefore on the great object of peace, call in your parties, and enjoin a cessation of all further depredations, and as many of the principal chiefs as shall choose, repair to Philadelphia, the seat of the General government; and there make a peace founded on principles of justice and humanity. Remember that no additional lands will be required of you, or any other Tribe, to those that have been ceded by former treaties, particularly by the Tribes that had a right to make the Treaty of Muskingum in the year 1789. But if any of your Tribes can prove that you have a fair right to any lands comprehended by the said Treaty, and have not been compensated thereof, you shall receive full satisfaction upon that head.”⁶²

The Trueman expedition fared no better than the one sent out by Wilkinson.

Trueman went to Fort Washington in the middle of May. At that point, he received orders that he would be working in tandem with another American representative, John Hardin, to engage the Natives. Trueman was to proceed to the Maumee River to speak with the Indians there. Hardin was to go to the Wyandot settlements on the Sandusky River and encourage the tribe to come to Philadelphia to engage in diplomatic overtures with the Americans. If that failed, he received orders to join up with Trueman on the Maumee River. However, both men were summarily executed by the Indians.⁶³

By July 1792, Knox became infuriated with the entire process. He believed that these American representatives had been arbitrarily slaughtered and he tried to determine the next move for the United States army. By August, he lamented, “The season of the year is too far advanced, the number of recruits too few, and the undisciplined state of the army such as to preclude any great expectations of ... important movements this

⁶² Speech of H. Knox, Sec’y of War, to the Indians, April 4, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:394-96.

⁶³ Sword, *President Washington’s Indian War*, 210-12.

season.”⁶⁴ He warned that “another conflict with the savages with raw recruits is to be avoided by all means.”⁶⁵ Although Knox wanted to delay sending another American force to engage the Natives at the end of 1792, he along with Washington still resolved to send the military in to root out the Natives. Because of this mindset, the Secretary of War stated that the Americans must reconstruct their military structure and began to make preparations to strike at the enemy in 1793. At that time, it would be vital for the United States to be successful on the battlefield.⁶⁶

As St. Clair received absolution for his role in the American military nightmare in November 1791 the United States was still no closer to claiming the Ohio lands by force in 1792 than they had been in 1790. It actually seemed as if they were further from their goal in 1792 than in 1790 because of the drubbings they twice received on the battlefield. It was apparent by the summer of 1792 that the United States was in a quandary about how to appropriate the Native lands for American settlement. There was little hope for a peaceful resolution to this issue by 1792 because the Native groups were unwilling to engage the American emissaries in peace negotiations. This was a crucial period in how the United States attempted to engage in settler colonialism. If the Americans retreated at this point, it would be almost impossible for them to gain their true objective, complete control of the Ohio country. That was unlikely to occur though.

Another military excursion would be required to gain the valuable lands from the Natives. The congressional mandate in 1792 that proposed to change how the Americans would engage their Indian adversary was a step in the right direction as the federal

⁶⁴ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 210-12.

⁶⁵ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 210-12.

⁶⁶ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 210-12.

leaders finally realized that their European-style fighting tactics proved fruitless when engaging an enemy that was skilled at guerrilla warfare. Two defeats had encouraged Congress to act quickly to change American fortunes on the battlefield. The key at this point was to find the right general that could use the resources available to him and be willing to mold his soldiers into an effective fighting force. If this occurred, the Americans stood an excellent chance at gaining victory on the battlefield and eventually displacing the Natives from their homesteads.

CHAPTER VII

INDIAN KNOWLEDGE AND BATTLEFIELD STRATEGY

The choice for the next lead general of the American army would be one of the most crucial decisions made during the Washington presidency. Although the United States had been summarily defeated on the battlefield twice by a well-emplaced enemy, that did not detract American leaders from an ultimate goal, the complete removal of the indigenous peoples from Ohio. The settler colonial spirit did not die with these defeats in 1790 and 1791, but how the United States would accomplish their goals in gaining these valuable lands would drastically change. The idea of negotiating treaties with the Indian nations proved time and again to be an unmitigated disaster and the use of European-style tactics by the American military also proved to not work. As the American leaders continued to ponder who would replace St. Clair they realized that they needed to make changes to the American military structure and that included choosing a general that would be willing to use whatever advantages he had to defeat his adversary and implement the “first way of war” so that the United States could finally be successful on the battlefield.¹

It was eventually determined that Anthony Wayne of Pennsylvania would be the next Major General of the United States army. Wayne had risen through the ranks of the American military. He received an appointment of brigadier general in the Continental

¹ Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 193-203.

Army on February 21, 1777 and fought effectively during the Revolutionary War. When the war concluded, he did not adapt well to civilian life like many other soldiers. After failed personal endeavors, Wayne ran for elected office. He won election to the U.S. Congress, but the loser of that election contested the results. In 1792, he had little money and drifted away from his family. When Washington chose him as his lead general, he was at a low point in his personal life.²

Wayne stepped into a situation in which American morale was low. The United States officials tired of their generals losing military engagements to the Natives. In addition, Wayne was a controversial choice because many saw him as a heavy drinker who was not highly intelligent. The accusations of his drinking would prove to be largely unfounded as he made his way onto the battlefield in 1794. It seems as though the best way to besmirch a military figure at the end of the eighteenth century was to accuse him of drinking heavily even if that did not turn out to be true. Despite these accusations, Wayne also would prove to be an effective tactician. The new general was also a disciplinarian who strove to get all he could from his troops. The choice of Wayne would prove fortuitous for the United States army.³

Wayne journeyed to Pittsburgh on May 25, 1792 to lead the American forces. He arrived in Pittsburgh on June 14 and was surprised to find less than a hundred fighting men on his staff. One of the first things that Wayne did was to hire competent men to supply his troops on the field of battle. This was in sharp contrast to the previous year when Duer defrauded the American supply system. Those unscrupulous individuals contributed as much to the defeat as did poor planning and poor execution on the field.

² Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 206-07.

³ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 206-07.

Wayne, the veteran Revolutionary War officer realized that if he did not have an effective supply system to provision his men on the borderlands, his army stood little chance of success. One of the first changes Wayne made was the system of disciplining soldiers that deserted. He suggested that deserters receive a brand on the head with the word “coward.” Every man that heard about this trembled at this idea.⁴

In a letter to Wayne in September 1792, Knox commented that the President favored some of Wayne’s theories on how to discipline his troops and did not endorse others. Knox asserted, “The sentences of the Courts Martial you have confirmed, seemed absolutely necessary – Hereafter it is to be hoped there may be less call for the punishment of death. – The Branding however is a punishment upon which some doubts may be entertained as to its legality.”⁵ Although these methods were controversial, they had intended effect of showing the troops that Wayne was in firm command of the mission. The general then attempted to reform how his soldiers fought on the battlefield. He concluded that those troops in the previous military debacles had received poor training from Harmar and St. Clair. The lack of discipline showed itself with both the regular troops and the militia members that participated in these excursions. He wanted his soldiers to have a sense of discipline and obedience above all else. He set up mock battles whereby part of his force would have to attempt to set up a defensive position upon attack. Eventually, he would move his men to southwestern Ohio and drill them on encircling the enemy as the Indians had done to Harmar and St. Clair. These methods

⁴ Alan Gaff, *Bayonets in the Wilderness: Anthony Wayne's Legion in the Old Northwest*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 56-68.

⁵ Richard C. Knopf, ed., *Knox to Wayne and Wayne to Knox, September 14, 1792, Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1960, 95-99.

were inspired as they allowed Wayne to construct a strategy to counteract the Indians in the field.⁶

Wayne gave all the appearances of understanding that his army would need to use different tactics to defeat his adversary. He knew that his predecessors used feckless European military tactics on the borderlands. Wayne realized his enemy did not fight in a conventional European manner. Wayne's efforts were the first real attempts by the American military to fight a guerrilla type of war. To defeat the Indians, he needed to anticipate tactics and change how his troops acted in the field. The shift to a new type of warfare was overdue and gave the Americans a better chance for success. Out of desperation Wayne changed the fighting techniques used by the American army. Two resounding defeats of an infant army structure shook the American governmental system to its core. Wayne responded to the appeals of his superiors in Philadelphia who were tired of American defeats on the battlefield by adopting a new way of war.⁷

Although Wayne prepared his soldiers for battle, the federal leaders in Philadelphia continued to press for treaty negotiations. Knox sent a letter to Putnam on August 7, 1792 in which the Secretary of War commanded him to "cultivate and make peace with the Wabash tribes, to the utmost of your power." The most important thing the secretary of war stated to Putnam was that "The United States require no lands of the Wabash Indians not heretofore ceded."⁸ Knox wanted Putnam to stress this to the

⁶ Knopf, ed, Knox to Wayne and Wayne to Knox, September 14, 1792, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 95-99.

⁷ Knopf, Knox to Wayne and Wayne to Knox, September 14, 1792, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 95-99.

⁸ The Secretary of War to Brigadier General Rufus Putnam, August 7, 1792, *ASP:IA*, 237-38.

Indians whom Putnam interacted with at the treaty table. It is not surprising that Knox sent Putnam to the Wabash Confederacy. These Indians were not seen as recalcitrant as Natives such as the Miamis and Shawnees.⁹ On September 27, 1792, Putnam negotiated a treaty with the Wabash Indians in which the United States promised perpetual peace between the United States and all the members of the Wabash Nations. Putnam stated that these individuals were under the protection of the United States and that the Natives had a fair claim to the lands they now possessed and that the Americans would not take this land from them except through a fair purchase that was satisfactory to these people.¹⁰

As the Americans attempted to make a treaty with the Wabash Indians, members of the various Indian nations met in a council at the Glaze from September 30 to October 9, 1792. Messquakinoe, a Shawnee chief, addressed members of the Six Nations and stated, “You know when we last met at the foot of the Rapids 4 years ago it was unanimously agreed on by all Nations, to be strong, and to defend our Country; But we have never seen you since that time.”¹¹ Although this chief stated that he believed there was good reason as to why the Six Nations were not present, he also displayed resentment over the lack of military support shown by the Six Nations while the Western nations battled with the Americans.¹²

⁹ The Secretary of War to Brigadier General Rufus Putnam, August 7, 1792, *ASP:IA*, 237-38.

¹⁰ A Treaty of Peace between the President of the United States and the Wabash Indians, September 27, 1792, *ASP:IA*, 338.

¹¹ Proceedings of a General Council of Indian Nations, September 30-October 9, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:483-501.

¹² Proceedings of a General Council of Indian Nations, September 30-October 9, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:483-501.

On October 5, Messquakinoe further questioned the Six Nations for their constant interactions with the American government for the previous two years while many of the other nations were fighting the United States. He stated, “You are still talking to the Americans. Your head is still towards them and you are now talking to them.”¹³ This communication indicated the Indian chief felt let down that the Six Nations constantly interacted with the United States government. Cow Killer, a Seneca chief, responded to this line of questioning by stating that the Six Nations had spoken to the American government and the President only to attempt to broker a peace in the Western regions between the United States and the hostile nations. Cow Killer asserted that Washington only wanted to procure the territory in Ohio legitimately while compensating the Natives for this land.¹⁴

On October 7, Messquakinoe stressed that “We do not want compensation; We want a restitution of our lands which He holds under false pretenses.”¹⁵ The Indian groups did not want to sell the lands north of the Ohio River no matter what offer the Americans made to them. In addition, he boldly claimed that the boundary between the Americans and the Natives was the Ohio River and on this subject, there was no debate. There was agreement on this at the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768 when the Americans and the British presented a united front. The Shawnees and the other groups saw it as a

¹³ Proceedings of a General Council of Indian Nations, September 30-October 9, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:483-501.

¹⁴ Proceedings of a General Council of Indian Nations, September 30-October 9, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:483-501.

¹⁵ Proceedings of a General Council of Indian Nations, September 30-October 9, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:483-501.

binding contract. A good deal of the Indian nations agreed on maintaining this line for future generations despite the encroachment of the Americans.¹⁶

The Iroquois had mentioned several times that they would be willing to negotiate treaties with an amended boundary line in Ohio. The Shawnees dismissed these statements and were at the forefront of demanding the Ohio River as the boundary between the United States and the Natives. It is hard to believe that the Shawnees ever thought that the Americans would agree to the Ohio River as the border. They must have realized that the United States would continue to send in forces to root out the Natives. By this point, the Shawnees probably believed that they were strong enough to hold off the American advances and make them retreat to the Ohio River. They played a dangerous game with their demands and would eventually lose the battle to a more well trained and disciplined American army.

The Shawnees who used to take a subservient position to the Six Nations ascended to take a firm lead in their dealings with the other Indian nations. The comments of Messquakinoe illustrate that the Six Nations had lost their place as the preeminent spokesmen of the Natives. Some saw the Iroquois as weak in their dealings with the United States government. This change in perceptions of the Six Nations began in the 1780s, but by 1792 it was all but complete. The American government viewed the Shawnee as one of the most intransigent of the hostile Indian nations. If the Shawnees influenced their brethren to continue to take up arms against the Americans, these groups would continue to fight until they were soundly defeated on the battlefield. Subjugation

¹⁶ Proceedings of a General Council of Indian Nations, September 30-October 9, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:483-501.

of the tribe could last for years and cause thousands of deaths. Despite these grim possibilities, a defeat at the hands of the Americans seemed highly unlikely to the Shawnees and the other recalcitrant nations at this time because of their recent successes. They negotiated from positions of strength rather than weakness in 1792.¹⁷

The Six Nations held a council meeting at Buffalo Creek on November 13, 1792. They reiterated what they told to the more resistant factions within the fragile confederacy and stated that they were only in contact with the United States “to procure peace”¹⁸ between the United States and the Indians. The Six Nations did not apologize for their actions and believed they operated this way in the best interests of all the nations of the coalition. They claimed that they had no ulterior motives for their actions. They lamented the fact that the Shawnees were upset with these actions, but they claimed that they were independent people that were not biased by either the British or the Americans. The Six Nations believed they had done everything in their power to ensure peace on the western borderlands. The choice for war or peace lay in the hands of those nations of the western portion of the confederacy as well as the United States government. This was a crucial juncture for all the nations living in the Ohio region.¹⁹

During the previous negotiations culminating in the Treaty of Fort Stanwix the Six Nations proved more than willing to cede land to the United States because it shifted American settlers away from them and towards the western Indians. The Six Nations

¹⁷ Proceedings of a General Council of Indian Nations, September 30-October 9, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:483-501.

¹⁸ Proceedings of a General Council of Indian Nations, September 30-October 9, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:509-16.

¹⁹ Proceedings of a General Council of Indian Nations, September 30-October 9, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:509-16.

sought to ensure that the flashpoint of activity continued to be in the western regions and away from their homelands in New York.²⁰ Another more sinister possibility is that the Six Nations wanted the Shawnees, Delawares, Miamis, et al. to continue their hostility against the Americans in the hopes that these nations thinned out from the fighting. If through the course of battle, these nations lost many of their best warriors, the Six Nations could pounce back into the Ohio region and reclaim their lost dominance which is what they so desperately wanted.

Knox responded to the Indian nations outlining the American government's diplomacy in 1793. He asserted, "We have heard your voice and received your Messages, through our good friends the Six Nations, appointing the time, when the leaves shall be full out the next Spring, to meet the commissioners of the United States."²¹ He stated that it would be impossible to expect peace on the borderlands as long as some of the wayward nations continued to act aggressively towards the Americans. The interesting thing about this communication is what it does not say. Nowhere in this dispatch does Knox mention anything about the United States removing its posts in the Ohio region. Knox approached diplomatic ground assuming the Americans had the power and ultimate control of the Ohio region.²²

Knox ordered Wayne to descend the Ohio River towards Fort Washington in April 1793. Knox hoped that Wayne would be able to carry out his mission by the first of August at the latest. The secretary of war wanted Wayne to construct a garrison at the

²⁰ Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 42-46.

²¹ Speech of H. Knox to the Indians, December 12, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:518-19.

²² Speech of H. Knox to the Indians, December 12, 1792, *MiHC*, 24:518-19.

Miami villages with a detachment of one thousand men to cover the grounds. Knox further wanted Wayne to continue to construct citadels in that region to increase American strength. As Wayne moved out from his departure point he was to establish posts every sixteen to twenty miles until he reached the Miami villages in western Ohio. He warned the general to be ever vigilant on his march northward, as Knox did not want a repeat of the Harmar and St. Clair campaigns. Knox further stated the enlistments of many of the soldiers expired that year and that all efforts needed to keep the best soldiers in the American fold. Expiring enlistments were a constant problem for the military and they hampered the efforts of every lead general during the Ohio Indian Wars.²³ Wayne decided to wait until April 29 to make his departure. On May 9, Wayne reported to Knox that he and his men arrived safely at their destination on May 5. He reported that he and his men encamped themselves a mile below Fort Washington with the Ohio River in their rear.²⁴

It was at approximately this time that Wayne received a stroke of fortune as Hamtramck recruited William Wells to support the general in his mission. Wells was born in 1770 in Pennsylvania and journeyed with his family at the age of nine to settle in Kentucky. After the death of his mother and father, Wells was adopted by a family friend. In 1784, Wells and a group of other youths were kidnapped by a group of Miami Indians and eventually Wells was adopted by a Miami chief. The young boy quickly became accustomed to the ways of the Miami Nation and began to participate in attacks on American villages. After some time, Wells became known by Little Turtle, the war

²³ Knox to Wayne, April 20, 1793, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 221-25.

²⁴ Wayne to Knox and Knox to Wayne, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 228-35.

commander of the Miamis. Wells eventually married Little Turtle's daughter Sweet Breeze and had five children together. While with the Miamis Wells had wide latitude in his travels and he corresponded often with the Americans. Eventually Wells' brother Samuel tried to persuade him to return to his family in Kentucky, but he resisted and remained with his new Miami clan.²⁵

Wells had several Indian family members taken prisoner during the Wilkinson raid during the summer of 1791 and this rallied him to want to serve in any future campaign to try and recover his relatives. He got his chance that fall and served as an important aide to Little Turtle during the St. Clair campaign and he proved himself on the field of battle. After the American defeat Wells worked hard to guarantee the release of his kinfolk. In March 1792, he went to visit Hamtramck at Vincennes to secure the release of these prisoners. At this point, Samuel returned and attempted to encourage his brother to return to his American roots. Ultimately, Wells decided to come back to Kentucky and live with his relatives because he believed the American culture allowed him the best opportunity for a comfortable life for him and his family.²⁶

A major problem for British-Indian relations occurred when war broke out between France and Great Britain in 1793. The British feared that either French or American forces might threaten Niagara, Detroit, or Michilimackinac. The English were pragmatic and realized that they did not need another avowed armed enemy on the North American outposts. Since the Revolution, Great Britain and the United States had yet again become firm trading partners and the merchants working for the home country did

²⁵ Paul A. Hutton, "William Wells: Frontier Scout and Indian Agent", *Indiana Magazine of History*, 74:3, 1978, 185-220.

²⁶ Hutton, "William Wells: Frontier Scout and Indian Agent", 185-220.

not want to lose that revenue as well. To protect their North American interests, the British still believed that their Indian allies were only useful as a boundary between American and British garrisons. Again, the Native needs were secondary again to the imperial British concerns. Great Britain never wanted an outright war with the United States over the Indian question and would do everything in their power to guarantee that it would not happen now. Now that the British were at war with France, they redoubled their efforts and did everything in their power to ensure that they would not engage in a military engagement with the United States while they fought what they believed to be a stronger military power in France.²⁷

At the end of July 1793, American, British, and Native American delegates assembled at the rapids of the Miami River for peace overtures. All the American delegates stated that they wanted was for the Natives to cede the lands legally given up by the various nations during the Treaty of Fort Harmar. The United States commissioners further contended that “it is impossible for us to make the River Ohio the boundary between your people & the people of the United States”²⁸ because the United States already sold land north of the Ohio River to Americans as part of the settler colonial project. The illegality of these sales was irrelevant to the United States representatives and they believed the Americans had every right to sell land that they believed was rightfully theirs. For peace on the borderlands to occur, the Natives were going to have to make concessions again to the American government. This was a common occurrence as rarely did the United States compromise with the Indians in

²⁷ Col. J.G. Simcoe to Maj. Gen. A. Clarke, May 31, 1793, *MiHC*, 24:540-44.

²⁸ Reply of the Commissioners of the United States to the Indians, July 31, 1793, *MiHC*, 24:579-85.

regards to land in the Ohio region. After the American officials waited impatiently for several weeks, the Indians finally responded to their proposals in the middle of August.²⁹

Not surprisingly, the Native response was terse at best. The Indian nations reiterated what they stated many times since the passage of the treaties during the 1780s. These Indian delegates saw these settlements at Forts Stanwix, McIntosh, and Harmar as deeds of cession rather than peace treaties. Furthermore, the Natives claimed that the Indian representatives that did agree to the contracts did so through fear because the Americans pressured them into signing. They reprimanded the Americans again for recommending agreements with only a few delegates who had no power to accept any proposal without the consent of the entire Indian confederacy. They reiterated, “that no bargain or sale of any part of these Indian Lands would be considered as valid or binding, unless agreed to by a General Council.”³⁰ In the end, the Indian representatives stated that the Ohio River needed to be the boundary between the United States and the Natives. If the Americans could not agree to this suggestion then this entire conference had been for naught.³¹

On August 16, the American commissioners responded to these latest Indian entreaties with a firm resolution of their own. These officials flatly stated “that it was now impossible to make the River Ohio the boundary between your lands & the lands of the United States. Your answer amounts to a declaration that you will agree to no other

²⁹ Reply of the Commissioners of the United States to the Indians, July 31, 1793, *MiHC*, 24:579-85.

³⁰ Reply of the Indians to the Commissioners of the United States, August 13, 1793, *MiHC*, 24: 587-92.

³¹ Reply of the Indians to the Commissioners of the United States, August 13, 1793, *MiHC*, 24: 587-92.

boundary but the Ohio. The negotiation (sic) is therefore at an end.”³² Even though the American representatives hastily cut off further deliberations, they hoped that the Indians realized that the United States government only wished for peace through capitulation to a superior people.³³ At the same time, the Americans sent off another dispatch to the Six Nations. The language informed the Six Nations that the United States had done everything in their power to make peace on the borderlands.³⁴

This whole “peace process” in the summer of 1793 was thus a failure. Neither the Indians nor the Americans would make concession because both sides were entrenched in their positions. From an Indian perspective, these meetings seemed like a way to placate the less aggressive factions within the Indian confederacy by appearing to give diplomacy a chance. However, groups such as the Shawnee and Miami Nations would in the end not listen to these peace overtures. The Shawnees played a major role in guiding the decision to demand that the Ohio River be the boundary between the Americans and Indians. They wanted to drive the Americans out of Ohio forever and really had no use for the peace proposals presented to them by individuals from the Six Nations. By this point, the Shawnees were not going to accept anything less than what they demanded since the 1780s, the Ohio River boundary. If the Shawnees had not become dominant before these conferences, the hardline results indicate that they were now one of the leaders of Indian policy in the Ohio region.

³² Commissioners of the United States to the Chiefs of the Indian Nations, August 16, 1793, *MiHC*, 24:592-93.

³³ Commissioners of the United States to the Chiefs of the Indian Nations, August 16, 1793, *MiHC*, 24:592-93.

³⁴ Commissioners of the United States to the Chiefs of the Six Nations, August 16, 1793, *MiHC*, 24:593-94.

On September 11, 1793, Wells stated that Wayne's forces might face at least 1,600 Indians, including members of the Shawnee and Miami Nations on the upcoming mission. He believed that the British were not willing to work towards a peace proposal and Wayne would need to move quickly or he would face a determined confederacy that wanted to destroy the American presence on the borderlands. The general became fascinated by the detailed report of Wells and he requested that the young man lead a group of scouts in the future engagement. Eventually, after guaranteeing the safety of his family Wells agreed and he helped select a band of twenty men that took direction only from Wayne. Among this group included William May, Robert McClellan, Nicholas Miller, and Christopher Miller. Only McClellan had not been taken prisoner by the Natives when he was younger.³⁵

All of these men spent considerable time interacting with various Indian groups and learned how they acted in many situations, especially in warfare. In addition, they were able to wear Indian clothing, converse like Natives, and make people believe that they were truly Indians. Because of this, these men travelled through the borderlands wreaking havoc while killing Native warriors and taking valuable prisoners. Also recruited by Wayne were Native scouts and spies from various Indian groups including seventeen Chickasaw and several Choctaw warriors. Once these operations began, the Indians became upset with the exploits of men such as Wells and May that they pleaded with Alexander McKee to help thwart their activities. The Natives were effectively used as scouts and spies to frustrate American military activities under Harmar and St. Clair. However, by commissioning Wells who learned many of the techniques of

³⁵ Hutton, "William Wells: Frontier Scout and Indian Agent", 185-220; Carter, *The Life and Times of Little Turtle*, 129-30.

reconnaissance and espionage while a member of the Miami Nation, Wayne slowly made these techniques a major weapon of his army which he would use to full advantage.³⁶

After a summer of drilling, the army was impatient to move out of the Cincinnati region. On October 7, 1793, Wayne and his men left and marched north. He reported to Knox on October 23 and complained bitterly “I have been much deceived by the Contractors upon this occasion, the deposit at Fort Jefferson not being more than one quarter part of what had been order’d (sic) at an early period, and their means of transport not half equal to the supply of the troops even at Fort Jefferson.”³⁷ Wayne should have anticipated the problems associated with the men supplying his troops. Supplies had been lacking in the previous two campaigns. However, unlike St. Clair and Harmar, Wayne addressed these problems in advance of his expedition in an effort to resolve them in a timely manner. Despite these major problems, he stated that “Notwithstanding this defect (upon the part of the Contractors) I do not despair of supporting the troops in our present position.”³⁸ Furthermore, he asserted that the Americans must continue into the heart of Indian country to strike fear into their enemies. The United States needed to finally show the true nature of its power and make the Indians sue for peace. Wayne showed brashness in this communication stating to the secretary of war that if his subordinates carried out his orders, the United States forces would not again meet with disaster on the borderlands.³⁹

³⁶ Hutton, “William Wells: Frontier Scout and Indian Agent”, 185-220; Carter, *The Life and Times of Little Turtle*, 129-30.

³⁷ Wayne to Knox, October 23, 1793, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 278-81.

³⁸ Wayne to Knox, October 23, 1793, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 278-81.

³⁹ Wayne to Knox, October 23, 1793, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 278-81.

At about the same time in October 1793 Wayne composed his letter to Knox, the Six Nations met in council at Buffalo Creek. They stated “About five years ago we agreed upon a line of Demarkation [sic], with the United States, which you know to be the Muskingum, and notwithstanding the various accidents that have occurred since, we will still adhere to that boundary.”⁴⁰ The Six Nations asserted “We think the United States will agree to that Line, which will shew [sic] that they act with that sincerity & justice, they always profess for the Indians.”⁴¹ The Six Nations were giving up land in Ohio in order to broker a type of peace. However, these concessions would not be accepted by the most recalcitrant nations such as the Shawnees and the Miamis who insisted on an Ohio River boundary.⁴²

In early November, Wayne constructed Fort Greenville, six miles north of Fort Jefferson, as a new headquarters for him and his men. He believed that this was the proper approach and asserted Knox that he was still within striking distance of the Indian villages in northwestern Ohio. Knox responded that he and the President approved of the decision to make a winter camp at Fort Greenville in the hopes that Wayne could soon strike at the heart of the Indian enemy. By this time, Knox regarded Wayne as a more competent leader than either Harmar or St. Clair. The language used by Knox suggests that he respected the judgment of his new leader.⁴³

In December 1793, Wayne ordered the construction of Fort Recovery on the site of St. Clair’s defeat two years prior. The general wanted to build this site for several

⁴⁰ Indian Council, October 10, 1793, *MiHC*, 24:615-17.

⁴¹ Indian Council, October 10, 1793, *MiHC*, 24:615-17.

⁴² Indian Council, October 10, 1793, *MiHC*, 24:615-17.

⁴³ Wayne to Knox and Knox to Wayne, November-December, 1793, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 281-91.

reasons. First, it allowed his men to be that much closer to the Indian enemy when the fighting started. It also offered the American army that much more protection when they ventured out onto the borderlands. The second, and more symbolic, reason for the construction of this citadel was Wayne's belief that by constructing this fort, the Americans could show the Indians that the Americans intended to gain victory in the field and this area no longer belonged to the Natives. This was a propitious move by Wayne, as some of his men were involved in the St. Clair campaign and longed to redeem themselves on the field of battle. By building this fortress, Wayne could give these men a morale boost and spur them into action again.⁴⁴

It became apparent that Knox appreciated the help the Six Nations offered in brokering peace on the borderlands. He asserted, "While your Father, the President, has observed with great pleasure the pains you have taken to effect a peace between [sic] the United States and the hostile Indians, he is, at the same time, very sorry that any circumstances should have prevented the accomplishment of a measure affecting the happiness of both parties."⁴⁵ Despite these accolades, Knox was unsure how well the Iroquois could rein in the hostile elements of the Indian confederacy. He stated that he would take up the matter of the revised boundary with the President, but that he could not and would not stop the American army from rooting out the hostile elements in Ohio. Knox believed the United States had done everything in its power to avert war, but the actions of the hostile nations caused them to have to defend themselves. Knox realized that the actions of the Six Nations were not going to amount to anything in the grand

⁴⁴ Wayne to Knox, January 8, 1794, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 297-98.

⁴⁵ Message from the Secretary of War to the Sachems, Chiefs, and Warriors, of the Six Nations, December 24, 1793, *ASP:IA*, 477-82.

scheme of events in Ohio. Both Knox and Wayne believed that there was going to be no alternative but war yet again.⁴⁶

Wayne communicated with the Indian nations on January 14, 1794 and reiterated the President's intention for peace with his Indian brothers. The general believed that the nations including the Delawares, Shawnees, Miamis, and Wyandots were so intent on continuing the warfare on the borderlands that they would never consent to peace. Wayne suggested as a way to show their good intentions was to deliver up every prisoner they held to the officer commanding at Fort Recovery before February 14th. In the meantime, the general offered his continued friendship and if the Natives were willing to release their captives, Wayne was willing to engage in further peace negotiations. The general wanted the Indians to allow his men to move on the borderlands and stated "In the meantime it is to be well & perfectly understood that the progress of this army is not to be retarded or molested in its advancing but shall be permitted to move peaceably & quietly with all its aperature (sic), provisions and stores & every article & thing necessary for holding the Treaty."⁴⁷ He made it a point to sign his letter from your friend and brother.⁴⁸ This communication contains aggressive language that would meet with a harsh rebuke from the Indians that read it. There is nothing positive about this message and it actually shows the hostile nature of the United States.

Wayne also corresponded with Knox in January 1794 and asserted, "I have the honor to Inform you that the Hostile Indians have sent in a flag with overtures of

⁴⁶ Message from the Secretary of War to the Sachems, Chiefs, and Warriors, of the Six Nations, December 24, 1793, *ASP:IA*, 477-82.

⁴⁷ Maj. Gen. Anthony Wayne to the Indians, January 14, 1794, *MiHC*, 24:629-31.

⁴⁸ Maj. Gen. Anthony Wayne to the Indians, January 14, 1794, *MiHC*, 24:629-31.

peace.”⁴⁹ The general questioned the true intentions of these messages and he was not sure whether this proposal was due to the fact the Natives had a general desire for peace or if they wanted to delay for time and gain further intelligence on American positions. With the Indian conference held the prior summer it was clear that the Natives were not intent on peace at this time. Wayne followed this letter up with a message in March whereby he told the secretary of war that he was convinced that the peace overtures of January were only an attempt to stall for more time to bolster their positions.⁵⁰

The Six Nations met again at Buffalo Creek on February 7, 1794 to discuss matters that were vital to this group of Natives. At this council, the Six Nations stated that had the Americans accepted their boundary from the previous October that peace would have ensued on the western borderlands. Had the Americans acknowledged the revised boundary, the Six Nations would have sent word to the hostile nations in the west to stop hostilities. The Six Nations accused the Americans of only bringing them half an answer to their border proposal which upset many of the Indians representing the Six Nations.⁵¹ It seems highly unlikely, however, that the more intransigent nations would have accepted the Six Nations boundary because that proposal gave up substantial territory in Ohio to the Americans. By this point, the Six Nations had lost much credibility with the other Native groups that wanted the Ohio River as the boundary. In

⁴⁹ Wayne to Knox, January-March, 1794, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 299-308.

⁵⁰ Wayne to Knox, January-March, 1794, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 299-308.

⁵¹ Proceedings of a Council of the Six Nation Indians, February 7, 1794, E. A. Cruikshank, *The Correspondence of Lieut. Governor John Graves Simcoe, with Allied Documents Relating to His Administration of the Government of Upper Canada*, (Toronto: The Society, 1923-31), 2:141-47.

many respects, the Six Nations were powerless to intervene in the affairs of the more hostile nations.⁵²

On March 26, Wayne commented to the Six Nations, “I have now told you every thing (sic) that has taken place & all that was said to and with the hostile Indians, since which I have not seen nor heard any thing (sic) further from them, except that they murder our People & steal our Horses whenever they have an opportunity, so that all prospect of peace is now done away, I have therefore every reason to believe that the only object the hostile Indians had in view was to Reconnoitre (sic) our Situation & to see our numbers & to gain time to collect their Warriors from their different hunting camps in order to fight us & continue the war.”⁵³ The language used in this letter gives the impression that Wayne believed there was no hope for peace on the borderlands. He did not seem to hold the Six Nations responsible for the actions of the other Indian groups and it almost seems as if the general convened these conferences as a courtesy to the Six Nations for whom he had a grudging respect. Wayne had to realize the members of the Six Nations could not stop the actions of the more hostile Indians and that he and his men would have to do battle yet again.⁵⁴

In April 1794, the Six Nations thought about American comments towards them and gave a response. Again, the Iroquois claimed that they were the representatives of peace on the borderlands since the conclusion of the Revolution. They stated that they actively attempted to adjust the boundary lines so that all parties were happy. Despite these claims, the Six Nations ultimately said that the possibility of peace rested with the

⁵² Proceedings of a Council Holden at Buffalo Creek, February 7, 1794, *ASP:IA*, 477-82.

⁵³ General Anthony Wayne’s Speech to the Six Nations, *MiHC*, 24:652-54.

⁵⁴ General Anthony Wayne’s Speech to the Six Nations, *MiHC*, 24:652-54.

Americans. It seems likely that Washington and Knox were only being courteous to the Iroquois delegates. They knew that the Six Nations could not prevent the western groups from taking up arms against the Americans yet again. The Americans were not going to settle for anything less than total submission by the unfriendly nations. The United States soon geared up for war again in the strongest fashion, but it was not a foregone conclusion they would have success.⁵⁵

At the beginning of June 1794 an American deserter found his way to the British and transmitted important information to McKee. He stated that Wayne was in the process of preparing his troops for armed battle that summer. He further asserted that the Americans employed Wells and May as scouts along with sixteen others that passed themselves off as Indians. Additionally, Wayne offered seventeen Chickasaw warriors who received forty dollars for each Indian scalp they brought in. A thousand dollar bounty was placed on the head of Simon Girty, an American captured by the Natives during the French and Indian war and later adopted by the Senecas. He proved adept at learning the customs of this group and by the American Revolution both the British and the Americans wanted to employ him to deal with issues on the borderlands. He first sided with the Americans, but by 1778, he abandoned this allegiance and took up arms with the British army. His ferocity on the battlefield earned him the enmity of many Americans and he continued to work for the British government following the conclusion of the American Revolution. The United States feared his skills at interacting and

⁵⁵ Reply of the Six Nations, April 21, 1794, *ASP:IA*, 481.

supplying the Natives and they saw him as a major contributor to the problems on the borderlands.⁵⁶

In June, many of the warriors from the Six Nations held council meetings again at Buffalo Creek. These men seemed anxious to maintain any kind of importance on the Ohio borderlands. The language used at these conferences suggested that the Six Nations realized they had little leverage when dealing with the United States. They stated, “We, the Six Nations now call upon you. We pay no attention to what has heretofore been done by Congress, their proceedings we consider as unjust, we wish for nothing but justice, and hope that it may take place.”⁵⁷ Rather than complain about the injustices done to them by the American government, the Six Nations boldly asserted that they were only worried about preserving peace on the borderlands. In return for their continued support, they claimed that they knew exactly which lands they wanted to keep and they asked the American commissioners to make it happen. In a rather deferential manner, they asked that the American representatives endeavor to get any squatters off their territory so that their people could live in perpetual peace.⁵⁸

General Chapin of the United States responded by stating, “You must be sensible that I am obliged to look to the interest both of the United States and the Indians, and consider myself accountable to both for whatever I do, and you may depend that when I return I will give you a just account of whatever takes place.”⁵⁹ This language suggests that Chapin realized that he should attend to the concerns of the Six Nations in order to

⁵⁶ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 73-76; Information from a Deserter, June 2, 1794, *MiHC* 20:356-57.

⁵⁷ Indian Council, June 18, 1794, *MiHC*, 24:662-66.

⁵⁸ Indian Council, June 18, 1794, *MiHC*, 24:662-66.

⁵⁹ Indian Council, June 18, 1794, *MiHC*, 24:662-66.

maintain them as American allies. The problem with this was that the United States government was highly unwilling to give any land to the Six Nations or any other Indian group. The Six Nations were in the middle of an untenable situation.⁶⁰

To aid the American effort in northwestern Ohio, throughout the spring and summer of 1794, more Chickasaw soldiers came north to fight with the Americans. These mercenaries wanted to profit as well as gain revenge on the Indian nations who had killed their warriors in conflicts past. When these combatants reached Fort Greenville, Wayne sent them out as scouts to gain information. Wayne stated if he were to receive additional Chickasaw warriors in the future, he would need good interpreters as none of these men spoke English. In June, about 75 Indian soldiers arrived with an interpreter and informed Wayne that several hundred more Chickasaws wanted to fight with the Americans if needed. The Indians requested that no whiskey be given to their men and Wayne complied by forbidding his men from supplying the Indians with liquor.⁶¹

At the end of June, several Chickasaw warriors and Wells' spies learned that there were many Indians moving against American positions. In addition, these warriors reported that there were many armed men along with the Indian attackers. Wayne believed that the enemy would strike Greenville, but the Indians moved to the west and prepared to attack Fort Recovery. On June 30, 1794, the Indians attempted to invade Fort Recovery and the Americans eventually repulsed them. For the next day, there was constant fighting between the two groups, but eventually the Indians retreated and the fort did not perish. He thought the British were overstepping their bounds and in his official

⁶⁰ Indian Council, June 18, 1794, *MiHC*, 24:662-66.

⁶¹ Gaff, *Bayonets in the Wilderness*, 218-25.

correspondence to Knox about the incident, it is apparent that the general wanted to take his fight to both the British and the Indians. He stated that in the very near future, it would be impossible for him and his men to distinguish between their “white” and “red” enemies.⁶²

When the Indians returned to their camps after the aborted mission, there was tumult as to why the Indians did not take the fort. Many of the Ohio Indian groups began to question whether they could mount an effective offensive against the Americans. Little Turtle went to Detroit to ask the British for outright military support and spoke to Colonel R.G. England about assistance in the form of British soldiers and cannons. If he received these items he could launch an attack again on Fort Recovery and hopefully decimate the American troops. The British refused this request because accepting it would lead to war between Great Britain and the United States. Little Turtle at that point realized without any further tangible assistance from the British, he and his soldiers would lose any battle with Wayne. He then wanted to broker a type of peace with the Americans because of this untenable situation. The problem for Little Turtle was at the same time he changed his mind and sponsored tranquility on the borderlands, the Shawnees took even more control of the Indian confederacy and two of their leaders, Blue Jacket and Captain Johnny, vaulted to the forefront of Native military leadership. They preached a direct and hopefully final confrontation with the Americans.⁶³

⁶² Wayne to Knox, July 7, 1794, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 345-49; Carter, *The Life and Times of Little Turtle*, 131.

⁶³ From Alexander McKee to Joseph Chew, July 7, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 310; From R.G. England to J.G. Simcoe, July 22, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 333-34.

The British representatives at Detroit sent out a circular letter on July 8 respecting Indian affairs. These men stated that “We are, thanks to thee (sic) Almighty, still in peace here, and I hope we may remain so; but the unfriendly, nay hostile disposition of our Neighbors, render its continuance extremely doubtful.”⁶⁴ The British resigned themselves to the fact that there was nothing that could stop the United States army from engaging their enemies yet again on the battlefield. The commissioners from Great Britain thought they had heavy fortifications in places such as Detroit, but even they could not tell what was going to happen next. They believed that the Americans were setting themselves up for disaster yet again on the front lines because they were poorly equipped and their Indian allies entrenched themselves well along the frontier posts.⁶⁵

On July 26, McKee wrote Simcoe and informed him that since the Indians were on the move to defend their homelands, they most likely would need more assistance from the British. “This must necessarily cause the consumption (sic) of a much greater Quantity of Provisions than has been usual, I think it proper therefore to apprise your Excellency thereof, that I may receive your commands should such issues be thought inexpedient, but without such supplies it will be impossible either for them or me to remain here.”⁶⁶ These essentials included the usual implements such as blankets, guns, rifles, and knives. McKee was confident that the Natives would be victorious and he informed Simcoe of the actions of the Indians that already moved out. He further stated that the selling of rum to the Natives on the front lines had deleterious effects and could

⁶⁴ Letter Respecting Indians and Advices from Detroit, July 8, 1794, *MiHC*, 24:683-84; Carter, *The Life and Times of Little Turtle*, 132-33.

⁶⁵ Letter Respecting Indians and Advices from Detroit, July 8, 1794, *MiHC*, 24:683-84; Carter, *The Life and Times of Little Turtle*, 132-33.

⁶⁶ Col. A. McKee to Lieut. Gov. J.G. Simcoe, July 26, 1794, *MiHC*, 24:696-98.

only spell the doom of the Indian nations preparing to engage Wayne who prepared to move his troops.⁶⁷

Charles Scott and his Kentucky militia arrived at Greenville on July 26. Wayne's troops and half of the 1,600 man contingent provided by Scott moved out on July 27 and began their advance into Indian country. The other half of his forces eventually caught up with Wayne and the remainder of the soldiers. In all, Wayne had 3,600 soldiers at his disposal which was a respectable fighting force. The general then sent Wells ahead to scout the enemy positions and he reported that Wayne's route should be unimpeded. This allowed a continuation of the march and the construction of forts along the way. By August 11, Wells received orders to reconnoiter Indian positions and to examine the strength of Fort Miami. Wells went out with several of his associates who dressed themselves as Indians and these men took a Shawnee prisoner. This man stated that over 1,000 Indians prepared to battle the Americans and that the British might or might not help their Indian allies. Wayne gathered that the Natives were low on supplies.⁶⁸

On August 13, Wayne sent another message to the Ohio Indians. He stated that he still desired harmony and he urged the Indians to send representatives for a peace conference. He stated that he did this so that the Native nations could gather enough goods to last them through the upcoming fall and winter. He stated that the possibility of peace rested solely with the Indian nations. It was up to them to determine whether Wayne's army should or should not attack. Wayne seemed overly confident of an

⁶⁷ Col. A. McKee to Lieut. Gov. J.G. Simcoe, July 26, 1794, *MiHC*, 24:696-98.

⁶⁸ From Alexander McKee to Joseph Chew, July 7, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 310; From R.G. England to J.G. Simcoe, July 22, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 333-34.

American victory and he asserted that he was trying to help the Indian nations rather than bury them. Wayne further warned the Indians not to rely on their British allies. The general believed that the British had neither the power nor the will to help their Native allies. This message sounds like a final warning before his attack was to commence.⁶⁹

Wayne wrote Knox on August 14 and asserted to the secretary of war that he constructed a new American fort deep in the heart of enemy country. He asserted that, “We are now employed in completing a strong stockade fort, with four good block houses, by way of bastions, at the confluence of Au Glaize and the Miamies (sic), which I have called *Defiance*.”⁷⁰ Now that this stronghold was finished, Wayne informed the secretary of war that he was in preparations to move his men for one final push against the enemy. This letter contains all the confidence of a man certain of victory on the field of battle. This seemed diametrically opposed to the communications sent by Harmar and St. Clair before their excursions against the Indians. He also claimed that he sent one last olive branch of peace to the Native warriors, but it was unlikely that these individuals would accept this offer.⁷¹

On August 14, the Ohio Indians gathered for an assembly to discuss how to engage the Americans. Little Turtle spoke first and stated that the Americans keep coming and coming no matter how many times he has been defeated on the field of battle. Little Turtle was prescient in his assessment of the situation and “perceived what was historically obvious – that the British commitment would fall far short of the massive

⁶⁹ From Anthony Wayne to the Western Indians, August 13, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 371-72; Carter, *The Life and Times of Little Turtle*, 133-34

⁷⁰ Letter of Major General Wayne to the Secretary of War, August 14, 1794, *ASP:IA*, 490.

⁷¹ Letter of Major General Wayne to the Secretary of War, August 14, 1794, *ASP:IA*, 490.

intervention required.”⁷² He allegedly further stated, “We have beaten the enemy twice under different commanders. We cannot expect the same good fortune to attend us always. The Americans are now lead by a chief who never sleeps. Like the blacksnake, the day and the night are alike to him for during all the time he has been marching on our villages, notwithstanding the watchfulness of our young men, we have not been able to surprise him. Think well of it. There is something whispers me, it would be prudent to listen to his offers of peace.”⁷³ A large amount of quiet greeted these statements suggesting that Little Turtle was in the minority with his opinions. Egushawa of the Ottawas may have responded to Little Turtle by claiming that the time was now to make war on the Americans. British officials including Simcoe believed that the true objective of Wayne’s campaign was the British posts including Detroit. Thus, the British, along with their Native allies, needed to be ready to defend their territory at all costs.⁷⁴

As the days progressed, Little Turtle reaffirmed his concerns about engaging the United States army. The Miami leader hesitated to battle the Americans because he did not believe the British would provide the support necessary for such an encounter. Little Turtle wanted the Natives to continue to parley with the Americans, but the Shawnees under the leadership of Blue Jacket dismissed his notions of continued negotiations. It is ironic that Little Turtle, who led his forces so well against Harmar and St. Clair, now was at the forefront of proposing peace alternatives. This was most likely due to his

⁷² Sword, *President Washington’s Indian War*, 289-92; Carter, *The Life and Times of Little Turtle*, 134.

⁷³ Sword, *President Washington’s Indian War*, 289-92; Carter, *The Life and Times of Little Turtle*, 134.

⁷⁴ Sword, *President Washington’s Indian War*, 289-92; Carter, *The Life and Times of Little Turtle*, 134.

realization that his people could no longer effectively wage war against the United States.⁷⁵

Despite the fact that the British never supplied their Native allies in the way that might have guaranteed success, British officials in Canada faced an even bigger problem in the summer of 1794. The British government at home was in the process of negotiating a treaty with the American emissary John Jay. Because of the delay in transatlantic communications, these administrators were receiving mixed messages as to what their next course of action should be in North America. They only received bits and pieces of the authorized policy which was that the officials in North America were to try and ensure a peaceful coexistence with the Americans. The British should not overtly try and start a war with the United States over Indian issues. It seems as though the government in Great Britain tried to guarantee peace in North America while the officials on the ground in Canada were perplexed as what to do next.⁷⁶

On August 20, the Battle of Fallen Timbers occurred along the Maumee River in northwestern Ohio which turned out to be a major American victory over the Native warriors assembled on this battlefield in western Ohio. The general later reported that he and his men advanced to their position on the Maumee River and began to scout the Indians who encamped themselves behind Fort Miami. On the morning of the 20th, Wayne and his men moved forward to engage the enemy. The general indicated that the Natives emplaced themselves firmly behind a fallen timber which allowed them to shield their troops from the onrushing Americans. Despite this, Wayne ordered a charge and the

⁷⁵ John Sugden, *Blue Jacket: Warrior of the Shawnees* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 172-76.

⁷⁶ Sugden, *Blue Jacket*, 172-76.

United States troops advanced a distance, but they needed to retreat as the Indians began to push against them.⁷⁷

When that occurred, the Americans reorganized themselves and tried to determine what to do next. Wayne stated that he then gave the order for some of his troops to advance head on to engage the adversary. However, the general also ordered other men to try and advance around the Natives and attack them from the rear. Because of this diversified onslaught the Americans were able to gain the advantage in the field rather swiftly and according to Wayne were able to defeat some of the Natives rather quickly. While this happened, the other Indians quickly retreated and allowed the Americans to gain complete victory. Wayne believed that the Natives had approximately two thousand warriors ready for battle, but less than half that number actually engaged in any fighting.⁷⁸

William Clark, who a decade later, would co-lead an exploration of the Louisiana Purchase territories, was a soldier for the United States army that day and gave a different account of the events. Many members of the army including Clark were unhappy with how Wayne conducted the campaign. Some believed it was possible that Clark worked together with General James Wilkinson to undermine the leadership of Wayne and then they would use their comments at a later date to criticize his leadership abilities. Clark stated that the American army attempted to make a push against the Native soldiers early in the morning, but they needed to retreat once the Indians counterattacked. After the Natives engaged the Americans they were able to hold off any advance and slowly began

⁷⁷ Wayne to Knox, August 28, 1794, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 351-55.

⁷⁸ Wayne to Knox, August 28, 1794, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 351-55.

to push the Indian warriors back. At this point, the Americans regained their sense of balance and attempted to drive out the Indian soldiers. Because many of the Native warriors were out of position, these defenses quickly broke down and the Indians began a retreat towards Fort Miami.⁷⁹

How was Wayne able to influence such a triumph in northwestern Ohio? Wayne was able to build up a disciplined set of regular troops augmented by the addition of 396 scouts and experienced mounted volunteers. Wayne employed a sense of waging a total war against his enemy. The way he did that was by attacking his enemy's most exposed areas including agricultural foodstuffs and noncombatant residents. In addition, Wayne needed to move in ways that the enemy did not expect. Unlike Harmar and St. Clair, Wayne came at the Indian villages through a roundabout way rather than directly attacking their villages. This was an effective military maneuver because it caused the Native defenders to have to scurry to protect their interests. When Harmar and St. Clair attacked, they came in a direct line which allowed the Indians to maintain a defensive advantage. On August 20, Wayne used his scouts and mounted volunteers as a shield while he ordered the bulk of his troops to attack the Natives. Surprisingly, the Indians tried to fight a pitched battle against the Americans who were better trained for this kind of battle and eventually the Americans overwhelmed their Indian adversaries with superior numbers of troops.⁸⁰

The Battle of Fallen Timbers was a stroke of excellent planning on the part of the United States military, as Wayne proved to be the right man to lead these troops into

⁷⁹ R.C. McGrane, "William Clark's Journal of General Wayne's Campaign", *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 1(3), 1914, 418-44.

⁸⁰ Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 193-203.

battle. His expert leadership allowed the American army to train much more diligently than they had previously and he demanded the utmost respect of his men which helped to allow him to gain victory on the battlefield. While the American army soundly defeated the Indians in northwestern Ohio that day, they were also the benefactors of much good fortune, some of their own making and some beyond their control. The schism that had always existed within the Indian confederacy finally crumbled on the Native warriors to the point where they could not defeat the American army once again. This rupture had been apparent since the time of Harmar's campaign, but the United States did not gain from it until August 1794. In 1794, the ancient distrust on the part of these Indian warriors worked against them to the point where they could not overcome their own disadvantages. Now that these warriors received defeat on the battlefield, they would have to make peace with Wayne and the Americans.

Finally, after over a decade of attempting to gain the indigenous lands the United States was on the verge of accomplishing their objective, firm control of the Ohio country. Wayne proved to be an excellent choice of implementing the "first way of war" in 1794. During the two years that he prepared his warriors for battle, he attempted to completely restructure how the American army would engage their antagonist. He instituted strict discipline and attempted to train his soldiers in how they could use counterinsurgency tactics to engage the Natives in western Ohio. As 1794 progressed, Wayne constructed a series of forts in western Ohio so that his supply chain would not be stretched too thin. By August 1794, after negotiations with the Natives had proven fruitless, Wayne then proceeded to implement another aspect of the "first way of war" as he and his men laid waste to Native homesteads and cornfields. This attempt at total

warfare proved to be very effective for the lead general as it demoralized the will of his antagonist. By the time of the Battle of Fallen Timbers, it seemed to be a foregone conclusion that the United States would emerge from this battle victorious.⁸¹

⁸¹ Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 199-204.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EXPECTED AFTERMATH

The defeat at Fallen Timbers was not surprising given the American ability to use their own form of counterinsurgency tactics whereby they attacked Native warriors along with Indian homesteads while destroying their valuable crops. However, this process took many years for the United States to finally implement. For approximately a decade, the United States attempted to control the situation on the borderlands and dictate to the Native populations how they would cede their lands to the Americans. However, these processes proved to be largely ineffective because the United States did not have the military force to back up their intimidations. From the mid-1780s to 1792 the Americans attempted to bargain from a position of strength that they did not possess. The United States continually tried to impose their will upon their Native adversary with no success as these Native groups continued to try and offset the American invasion of their homelands.¹

By 1794, Wayne's ability to implement the "first way of war" allowed for the American army to inflict heavy damage upon their Native adversary and decimate the Indians that fought against the United States.² The ideas of using the military to implement American settler colonialism had finally come to fruition. In hindsight, it is surprising that it took federal leaders so long to change American military tactics to the

¹ Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 70.

² Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 199-204

point that the United States would enjoy success on the battlefield. However, once Washington, Knox, and Congress allowed for these modifications it seemed to be only a matter of time before the American military would emerge victorious. Wayne's actions allowed for American success on the first try and he set the stage for American domination of the Ohio region.¹

The entire Ohio territory seemed to now be open for the possibility of future American settlement and the only question was how both sides would react to this armed conflict. It was guaranteed that the Americans were going to try and press their advantage while the Natives looked to their British allies for assistance after their military defeat. The outlook for the Natives shortly after the defeat at Fallen Timbers portended what was going to occur over the course of the next year. Having endured defeat on the battlefield at Fallen Timbers, the Natives looked to the British for assistance, but none came. On August 20, as Indians retreated towards the British stronghold at Fort Miami on the Maumee River, the British locked down the garrison to head off an attack by the Americans. The commandant, William Campbell, was aware that the Wayne's army defeated the Indians on the battlefield and noted that the Americans were, "now feeding their horses upon Colonel McKee's Island, and on this side showing themselves in small bodies very near to us, beating their drums and sounding their horns."²

Concerned about the nearness of the Americans to his base Campbell was also relieved that the battle had not occurred closer to the fort which may have compelled him to commit some of his troops to the fray leading to conflict with the United States.

¹ Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 193-203.

² Letter From William Campbell to R.G. England, August 20, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:395-96.

Campbell reported, “our situation will not long admit of silence between General Wayne and me. I delay on my part, any communication so long as there is a probability of the Indians again attacking him; but if I find that not likely to happen and that he shows himself in any force near to us and if he does not speak, I shall feel it my duty to do so. You will perceive by this that I still do not expect him to storm our Works.”³

The presence of the British at Fort Miami was a contentious issue between the Americans and the British for several months. In the beginning of 1794, Lord Dorchester sanctioned the construction of Fort Miami on the Maumee River in northwestern Ohio to protect the interests of Great Britain, which the Americans saw as an act of aggression. This action enraged the Americans as much as the refusal of the British to relinquish their garrisons at Niagara, Detroit, Michilimackinac, and Oswego because it struck many Americans as an unofficial declaration of war on the borderlands.⁴ The British did not believe the United States would opt for open warfare against them. However, they had not anticipated that their Indian allies would suffer such a crushing defeat from Wayne’s army. With the Indians now defeated and the Americans ebullient, Campbell had to consider that the United States troops might turn their guns on him and his men. He therefore determined to protect that garrison to preclude the possibility of Wayne overrunning his position.⁵

While Campbell operated as a loyal officer to the British Crown, the Natives, including Joseph Brant, exhibited outrage when the British locked down their stronghold.

³ Letter From William Campbell to R.G. England, August 20, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:395-96.

⁴ Bradford Perkins, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, Volume I, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 95-101.

⁵ Perkins, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, Volume I, 95-101.

Brant chided the British for abandoning their Native allies in their hour of need. Brant lamented that Great Britain built the garrison in the heart of Indian country “under pretense of giving refuge in case of necessity, but when that time came the gates were shut against them as enemies.”⁶ After the British troops closed the gates, the Natives moved out of the area and dispersed into the villages surrounding the citadel, confused and bewildered at the actions of their supposed British allies. Although McKee attempted to rally these troops, they declined to fight again because they believed it was not a prudent option.⁷

One Indian warrior specifically noted that Little Turtle had a premonition of disaster for the Natives if they did not offer a peace alternative to Wayne. He stated, “The Great Spirit was in the clouds, weeping over the folly of his red children,” he declared.⁸ This action by Campbell and his men was probably a smart tactical move for Great Britain, but it had lasting ramifications for Indian-British relations and soured the opinions of many of the Natives towards the British in the coming years as many of these warriors realized just how they could not really trust the British to assist them in their time of need.⁹

The Natives probably should have expected this occurrence as Great Britain acted as it had in the past in relation to its Native allies with no firm guarantees of military aid. At no time in the recent past since the conclusion of the Revolution had the British pledged to take up arms against the Americans over Indian issues because they sought to

⁶ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 306.

⁷ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 306.

⁸ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 306.

⁹ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 306.

avoid another war with the United States on the North American continent. The British repeatedly promised tangible support in the form of guns and other necessities, but never assured martial assistance. Now with the Indians soundly defeated and the Americans seeming in the ascendance, the British protected their own interests and left Indians in a desperate situation. For native peoples, this behavior was a repeat of what had happened numerous times in the past as their British allies proved time and time again that they would never supply their Indian allies with actual soldiers to engage the American army on the battlefield.¹⁰

Campbell watched the advance of Wayne's troops while an American deserter, James Johnson, gave information to the British regarding the American army. He claimed "that General Wayne's Army at present consists of about 1600 or 1700 Militia, whose time of service will be out the 10th Oct. next, and about the same number of State Troops, that it was a conversation among the men that they were coming against this Fort, but it was merely a matter of conversation without any certainty, as they were of different opinions."¹¹ Johnson also pointed out that the American supplies were still in good order and that the troops were in relatively good health, data that told Campbell that the Americans might be able to attack if they wanted, but he provided no substantive confirmation of whether they actually would.¹²

In a letter to R.G. England, Campbell pondered why the Americans were so close to his post. "I conceived it a duty I owed to my station, and indispensably necessary in support of the honor of the British Colours to desire to be informed upon what terms they

¹⁰ Statement of James Johnson, August 21, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:397-98.

¹¹ Statement of James Johnson, August 21, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:397-98.

¹² Statement of James Johnson, August 21, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:397-98.

approached so near to this Post.”¹³ The intentions of Wayne and his men puzzled him, and though on his guard he would not accept American aggression. “At the same time, if Any of his Troops wantonly Insults this Post, it shall not be with impunity.”¹⁴ Campbell reiterated his relief that the Indian defeat on the battlefield the previous day had not brought the British into open warfare with the Americans and he would continue to endeavor to keep it that way.¹⁵

Perplexed by the movements of the Americans, Campbell decided to talk with them, and sent a flag of truce towards Wayne. He “considered it a duty incumbent on me to address myself to Genl. Wayne on the subject, and this morning about 11 o’Clock, I sent out an officer with a Flag of Truce, and a short letter to say, that from so near an approach to this Post of an American Army, it became my duty to inform myself as soon as possible, in what light I was to view their making such near approaches to this garrison.”¹⁶ Wayne responded with threatening language and stated that he and his men could have taken the British fort if they wanted, but Wayne wanted to assess the situation and not begin troubles with Great Britain if avoidable. The American took an aggressive stance, but he had no intentions of attacking the British citadel without some type of further provocation on the part of the British which was also unlikely.¹⁷

¹³ From William Campbell to R.G. England, August 21, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2: 398-99.

¹⁴ From William Campbell to R.G. England, August 21, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2: 398-99.

¹⁵ From William Campbell to R.G. England, August 21, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2: 398-99.

¹⁶ From William Campbell to Alexander McKee, August 21, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:399.

¹⁷ From William Campbell to Alexander McKee, August 21, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:399.

The American leader finally responded to Campbell's question as to why the United States troops threatened the British fortification. Wayne announced,

I have received your letter of this date requiring of me the Motives which have moved the Army, under my Command to the position, they now occupy, far within the acknowledged Jurisdiction of the United States of America. Without questioning the Authority or the propriety Sir, of your interrogatory, I think I may without breach of decorum observe to you, that you were intitled (sic) to an Answer, the most full and satisfactory one was announced to you, from the Muzzels (sic) of my small Arms yesterday morning in the Action against the hoard of Savages in the vicinity of your Post, which terminated Gloriously to the American arms – but had it continued until the Indians &c were drove under the influence of the Posts and Guns you mention – they would not have much impeded the progress of the Victorious Army under my command, as no such Post was Established at the Commencement of the present War, between the Indians and the United States.¹⁸

Wayne's letter signaled that the United States believed it was the dominant power in the Ohio country. His claim was spurious at best and according to many of the Indians, the United States did not yet control this region. The British ceded these lands to the United States and the Americans attempted to keep this land through the contested peace treaties of the 1780s without the consent of all the Indian nations residing in the Ohio country.¹⁹

Another intriguing aspect of this correspondence is Wayne's claim that he had a right to attack the British fort because it did not exist at the beginning of the war between the Indian nations and the Americans. Because the British only recently completed construction on Fort Miami, it further exacerbated the problems on the borderlands and the Americans had the right to order its destruction. Anthony Wayne's defeat of the Indians was the first time since 1783 that the Americans had gained the advantage in the

¹⁸ Copy of a Letter from Major General Wayne to Major Campbell, August 21, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:406.

¹⁹ Copy of a Letter from Major General Wayne to Major Campbell, August 21, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:406.

field to the point that they could legitimately question the British presence and harass their fortresses. From a British perspective, they constructed Fort Miami to protect the interests of their country as well as their Indian allies, but they also believed the United States did not have the right to harass its occupants.

Although Wayne attempted to dictate the situation, he believed that Fort Miami presented logistical problems which prevented a full-scale American attack at that time. Furthermore, the Americans lacked supplies including artillery which might have allowed for a sustained siege of the citadel. However, the repeatedly aggressive attitude forwarded by Campbell made Wayne rethink his alternatives and he eventually decided to act in a belligerent manner as well. Eventually, the American general ordered enough provisions to last for several days and he debated making a full-scale assault on the British garrison. He learned from several sources, including a British deserter that the forces commanded by Campbell were rather small and exposed to a possible attack.²⁰

On August 22, Wayne ordered the destruction of any important assets in the vicinity of the British fort, including the storehouses belonging to McKee and other British traders. This was what the Americans usually did when they gained the advantage in the field and this time would be no different. Additionally, Wayne thought that he could launch an expedition close enough to the British stronghold as to insult the honor of Great Britain with or without engaging the troops at Fort Miami. As part of this process, Wayne took several armed units and began to scout the edge of the British fort. Eventually, Wayne rode alone towards the British positions and began to shout invectives

²⁰ Dwight L. Smith, ed., *From Greene Ville to Fallen Timbers: A Journal of the Wayne Campaign*, (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1952), 298-99.; Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 308-09

towards the British soldiers who wanted to shoot him. With this act of boldness, Wayne placed the burden of what to do next on the British commandant who also needed to carefully weigh his options.²¹

Campbell responded with a letter that was firm, yet allowed for a solution to the impasse if the Americans backed away from the fort. He did not want war with the Americans and offered to ignore the insults of an American army so close to British property if the Americans pulled back. He flatly stated, “Neither is it my wish to wage War with Individuals, but should you after this continue to approach my post, in the threatening manner you are at this moment doing, my indispensable Duty to my King and Country, and the honor of my profession will Oblige me to have recourse to those Measures, which thousands of either Nation may hereafter have Cause to regret, and which I solemnly appeal to God, I have used my utmost endeavours to avert.”²² The problem faced by the British commandant included the fact that he did not have the authority to launch a full-scale war with the United States at that point. He was in a very delicate situation with few positive alternatives. His best hope was to demonstrate the appearances of British strength even if he and his forces might have been undermanned in the case of an American assault on his position. His best hope was for Wayne to realize the possible futility of a direct assault on the British garrison and hopefully he and his men would eventually retreat.²³

²¹ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 308-09.

²² Copy of a Letter from Major Campbell to General Wayne, August 22, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:406-07.

²³ Copy of a Letter from Major Campbell to General Wayne, August 22, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:406-07.

At approximately the same time he wrote his dispatch to Wayne, Campbell also wrote to his superiors explaining his actions. "I would fain hope my conduct upon this occasion has been such as it ought – I have perhaps been more forbearing than an officer of higher Rank placed in my situation would have been but I considered my situation a very delicate one, and if I have erred, it has been on the safe side."²⁴ Had he acted hastily, rather than prudently, he noted, he could have started a war which the British did not want. As such, he was going to do everything in his power to avoid bloodshed. However, he warned if the Americans got too close to his encampment, he would engage the enemy.²⁵ In this same transmission, Campbell reported that several American deserters came into his camp and informed him that the Americans were low on supplies. Campbell claimed, "By his summoning the Post we are to expect an attack, yet still I think he will not be so rash. I have taken every precaution in my power to prevent a surprize [sic] and I think nothing else short of bringing Heavy Guns against it, and of which he has none, can possibly endanger the Post."²⁶ If the Americans were foolish enough to attack the garrison, Campbell and his men would make them regret that action. He further stated that he had not heard from the Indians since the engagement and he was not sure what they were doing at that point.²⁷

Wayne countered with a bold claim of his own that spelled out the American position in great detail. He asserted, "I, on my part, declare the same, and that the only cause I have to entertain a contrary idea at present, is the hostile Act that you are now in commission of, i.e. by recently taking post far within the well known and acknowledged

²⁴ Letter from Campbell, August 22, 1794, *MiHC*, 25:20-21.

²⁵ Letter from Campbell, August 22, 1794, *MiHC*, 25:20-21.

²⁶ Letter from Campbell, August 22, 1794, *MiHC*, 25:20-21.

²⁷ Letter from Campbell, August 22, 1794, *MiHC*, 25:20-21.

limits of the United States, and erecting a Fortification in the Heart of the settlements of the Indian Tribes now at war with the United States.”²⁸ Wayne demanded that Campbell withdraw his troops from Fort Miami to a post delineated in the Treaty of Paris in 1783. Wayne’s request reiterated what the Americans and the British agreed to in 1783 that Great Britain should evacuate from American soil. The British, however, believed they had a right to maintain their presence on United States soil until the Americans fulfilled other commitments in the Treaty of Paris.²⁹

Campbell refused Wayne’s demand to abandon the fort stating, “Having said this much, Sir, permit me to inform you, that I certainly will not abandon this Post, at the Summons of Any power whatever, until I receive Orders to that purpose from those I have the honor to serve under. I must still adhere to the purport of my letter this morning, to desire that your Army of Individuals belonging to it, will not approach within reach of my Cannon, without expecting the Consequences attending it.”³⁰ He warned the American general that if he and his men made an advance on the fort, Campbell needed to defend himself and there may be bloodshed. Campbell also contended that the fort that the British occupied had been there before the time period that Wayne specified in his previous letter.³¹

That same day, Wayne congratulated his men again for their valor on the battlefield. He believed that he and his men won a battle for the pride and glory of the

²⁸ From Wayne to Campbell, August 22, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:407.

²⁹ From Wayne to Campbell, August 22, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:407.

³⁰ Copy of a Letter from Campbell to Wayne, August 22, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:408.

³¹ Copy of a Letter from Campbell to Wayne, August 22, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:408.

United States. He asserted, “The Commander in Chief takes this opportunity to congratulate the Federal Army upon their Brilliant success in the action of the 20th Ins’t, against the whole Combined Force of the hostile savages, aided by a body of the Militia of Detroit, and Countenanced by the British Post and Garrison, close on their rear, beyond which the Fugitives fled, with disorder, precipitation and dismay – leaving their packs, provision, and plunder in their encampment in the rear of that post.”³² Wayne further upbraided the Natives when he stated,

The Indians to all appearances, having totally abandoned their Settlements quite to the mouth of the River, and their Villages and Cornfields being consumed and Destroyed in every direction, even under the influence of the Guns of Fort Miamis, facts, which must produce a conviction to the minds of the Savages that the British have neither the power or inclination to Afford them that protection which they had been taught to expect, but on the Contrary, a numerous Garrison, well supplied with Artillery have been compelled to remain tacit Spectators of the General conflagration round them and their Flag displayed at this post, insulted with impunity, to the disgrace of the British and to the honour of the American Arms.³³

The actions of Wayne and Campbell from August 20 to 23, 1794 illustrate an important point in American-British relations on the borderlands. Both sides valued the territory that comprised Ohio, but for different reasons. The British wanted to maintain a presence to forestall an American advance, and were willing to supply the Native Americans with just enough supplies so they would harass the United States settlements for the British and keep the Americans at bay. By supporting the Indians in repeatedly battling the United States, the British could keep their hands clean and still maintain a presence in Ohio. Great Britain wanted to avoid a war with the United States over the

³² General Order by Wayne, August 23, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:409-10.

³³ General Order by Wayne, August 23, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:409-10.

claims in the west, and now that they were fighting the French in Europe, the British were that much more inclined to maintain peace with the United States.³⁴

The United States valued the lands in Ohio as they looked to expand their burgeoning empire westward. They also did not want to engage the British as many members of the federal government knew that the American military was not strong enough to fight another war with Great Britain so soon after the conclusion of the Revolution. The United States had wanted the British to abandon their forts on American territory since 1783 yet they had not been able to displace them. Now that the United States vanquished one of their main adversaries on the western borderlands, they were no doubt going to look to extricate the British from American soil. Britain's war with France and the broadcasting of the Jay Treaty would change the course of events in the Ohio region as the Americans looked to show their power.

The British obviously worried about the American victory and how it affected their interactions with the Indians. This concern evidenced itself in a letter from Lieutenant Governor Simcoe to Lord Dorchester in which he told his superior that the Americans intended to meet the Six Nations and bring them a substantial amount of presents which the British provided for the indigenous peoples in the past. Simcoe stated, "I cannot but again observe to Your Lordship the necessity there is for the King's presents to be sent forward without a moment's loss of time."³⁵ Simcoe was well aware that relationships were dramatically shifting between the Indians and the Americans. For

³⁴ Letter from J.G. Simcoe to Lord Dorchester, August 24, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:417.

³⁵ Letter from J.G. Simcoe to Lord Dorchester, August 24, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:417.

the British to maintain any kind of cordial relationship with the Natives, they would need to redouble their efforts to supply them with basic necessities.³⁶

Campbell was also worried about how the American victory could alter the alliances on the western borderlands. He encouraged an apparent Indian plan to halt the American forces on their retreat. The British commander believed that the Natives, if properly motivated, could severely harass an American withdrawal. He further asked his superior for his blessing in how he handled the situation at Fort Miami. Campbell stated that “I shall be extremely anxious until I know that my conduct meets with your Excellency’s approbation. I considered my situation a very delicate one, and perhaps I had more forbearance than an Officer of higher rank, placed in my situation, might have thought necessary.”³⁷

Unfortunately for the British, the Indians declined to pursue the American troops on their retreat, and the few who tried were largely unsuccessful. As a consequence, Wayne began to inflate his victory in the field as a major American success and see the Indians as much less of a threat to the United States interests in Ohio. The American general believed that the Indians were “taught to dread” the might of the American military. After this, Wayne continually stated that he believed his campaign was near perfect and that the Indians received severe disabilities because of it. He engaged in total warfare and attacked his Indian adversaries where they were weakest including towns, cornfields, and civilians, which was unlike the methods employed by Harmar and St.

³⁶ Letter from J.G. Simcoe to Lord Dorchester, August 24, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:417.

³⁷ From William Campbell to J.G. Simcoe, August 24, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 2:417-18.

Clair. Also, Wayne had the ability to use Indian scouts and rangers in ways that were not available to Harmer and St. Clair which allowed him to achieve complete victory.³⁸

Interestingly, after the battle neither the Americans nor the British had good things to say about the Indians that fought against Wayne and his men. Wayne, writing to Knox on August 28, stated, "It is with infinite pleasure that I now announce to you the brilliant success of the Federal army under my command, in a general action with the combined force of the hostile Indians."³⁹ The Indians, he claimed, "abandoned themselves to flight, and dispersed with terror and dismay."⁴⁰ He described his encampment near Fort Miami, but upon withdrawing, he and his men laid waste to the entire area surrounding the battlefield. The general also stressed that he believed that the Indians might make one last assault upon the American soldiers. If this were to occur, Wayne promised that the American military would crush their adversary.⁴¹

The British were also critical in their assessments of the Indian warriors. R.G. England commented, "The Indians on this occasion have forfeited every pretension to a Warlike or Gallant Character. They behaved excessive ill in the Action at the Falls and afterwards fled in every direction, The few that formed any Body were stopped only by the Lake at Point au Chenes, Eighteen miles below Fort Miamis, where from every Information I have received their Panic was so great, that the appearance of fifty

³⁸ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 311.

³⁹ Letter from Major General Wayne to the Secretary of War, August 28, 1794, *ASP:IA*, 491.

⁴⁰ Letter from Major General Wayne to the Secretary of War, August 28, 1794, *ASP:IA*, 491.

⁴¹ Letter from Major General Wayne to the Secretary of War, August 28, 1794, *ASP:IA*, 491.

Americans would have totally routed them.”⁴² He further chastised the Natives for not making an advance upon the American army as they withdrew from Fort Miami.⁴³ These characterizations of the Indian combatants by both the Americans and the British tend to minimize their actual fighting capabilities as warriors. The Natives were proud soldiers stunned by their defeat at the hands of the United States on August 20. They entered that fray expecting similar results as they gained against Harmar and St. Clair, neither of whom was an expert on guerrilla warfare. They did not expect the Americans under the leadership of Wayne to attack them in a different manner and became surprised by the irregular skills shown by the United States soldiers. After the battle, these warriors retreated in great haste in order to save themselves from total annihilation.

Shortly after the conclusion of the skirmish, the British attempted to make sense of the situation. On September 5, Simcoe communicated with Lord Dorchester and asserted “I please myself that the conduct of Major Campbell in his very trying situation will meet with Your Lordship’s fullest approbation.”⁴⁴ He stated that the Americans acted in a belligerent manner and Campbell did all he could to prevent armed conflict with the Americans. He further stated that he believed that Wayne and his men would halt where they were and not launch another attack at either the British or the Indians. Simcoe asserted that if this were to occur, the power of the British military would be able to

⁴² From R.G. England to J.G. Simcoe, August 30, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:20-22.

⁴³ From R.G. England to J.G. Simcoe, August 30, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:20-22.

⁴⁴ From J.G. Simcoe to Lord Dorchester, September 5, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:40-44.

repulse any American offensive.⁴⁵ An interesting note about this communication is that Simcoe feared that the Americans might harass British possessions in Canada if they believed they had the advantage on the borderlands. Remembering the aborted American invasion of Canada during the Revolutionary War, the British feared that the Americans might attack Canada once again. While Simcoe does mention his Indian partners in this series of communications, the British government was more worried about protecting its own interests than those of their Indian allies.⁴⁶

As members of the British government reassessed their position, the Americans took the initiative in their dealings with the Indian nations. Wayne spoke to the western Indians on September 12, commanding them to make a firm and everlasting peace with the United States government in the best interests of all parties involved. He asserted that the Americans only wished for peace and happiness with their Indian brothers, not war and destruction, and averred that the British were corrupt and “had neither the power nor the inclination to protect you, you have severely experienced the truth of that assertion.”⁴⁷ Although the Americans defeated the Natives on the field of battle, Wayne held no enmities towards these individuals and he called on the Indians to seriously consider peace on the borderlands so they could put away all their ancient hostilities towards the United States government. These animosities served no purpose and only retarded true overtures of harmony. If the Natives were serious about peace, he called on them to exchange every prisoner they held for the detainees in American custody, an exchange

⁴⁵ From J.G. Simcoe to Lord Dorchester, September 5, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:40-44.

⁴⁶ From J.G. Simcoe to Lord Dorchester, September 5, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:40-44.

⁴⁷ From Anthony Wayne to the Western Indians, September 12, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:79-80.

that the American negotiators thought equitable, but might not have been seen as fair by the Indian nations. Wayne attempted to dictate the policies of any peace negotiations that would occur in the foreseeable future and he tried to drive a wedge between the Natives and their British allies which caused anger from the British representatives stationed in Canada.⁴⁸

Indians took American captives such as William Wells during this era for two major reasons. First, Natives often took detainees because they could be financially beneficial. The French governments often paid Indians handsomely to deliver prisoners to Canada while they engaged Britain in North America. The second motivation for taking prisoners was much more personal for many of the Native groups. Often, the Indians would take a captive and adopt them into their families to replace family members who died young or that were killed in battle. Some of these captives were forced to work grueling hours, but more were taken in to take the place of the person that perished and often they were given the name of the dead. These rituals were in place before Columbus came to the New World, but they accelerated after 1492 due to the devastation wrought by European diseases.⁴⁹

Because so many Indians perished from illnesses such as smallpox it was vital for these Native groups to replace them for the survival of the Indian tribes. Captivity was not problematic for all detainees as some people were able to enjoy liberties that they would not have experienced otherwise including indentured servants. For those that left

⁴⁸ From Anthony Wayne to the Western Indians, September 12, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:79-80.

⁴⁹ Gary L. Ebersole, *Captured by Texts: Puritan to Postmodern Images of Indian Captivity*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 1-10.

their new Indian homes and returned to the American culture, it was problematic to discard their Native identities because so many had been fully ingrained into Indian cultures. Because of these circumstances, the former captives often were not welcomed in their old homes and many of these people left their American families again and returned to their Indian homes.⁵⁰

Not surprisingly, the British responded to Wayne's invective with a sense of irritation. R.G. England stated that he received a communication from Captain Elliott stating that Wayne "has totally laid aside the cloak he may have availed himself of in his last address to the Indians, when he mentioned *the bad white men at the Foot of the Rapids*, by explicitly naming the British in the Address now forwarded."⁵¹ England believed that it was vital for the British government to do everything in its power to supply the Indian nations for the remainder of the year and into the following winter. Additionally, England called for Simcoe to send an interpreter to Fort Miami in case the Natives brought any intelligence about the movements of the American army and use the Natives to thwart any future attack by the United States soldiers on Fort Miami.⁵²

On September 20 Wayne briefed Knox on the status of his troops and informed him that he planned to construct a fort in the near future. Despite these relatively positive statements, the general lamented, "And I hope & trust that our late Victory will counterbalance the whole of those Unworthy Machinations, provided we can maintain the

⁵⁰ Ebersole, *Captured by Texts*, 1-10.

⁵¹ From R.G. England to J.G. Simcoe, September 16-17, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:96.

⁵¹ Wayne to Knox, September 20, 1794, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 355-58.

⁵² From R.G. England to J.G. Simcoe, September 16-17, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:96.

Ground we have acquired; against which there are two powerful obstacles – the necessary supplies & expirations of the terms of service for which the troops were enlisted (sic).”⁵³

Wayne asserted that if the US government could not figure out a way to reenlist these men, the gains made by the American army would be for naught by the following spring.⁵⁴

Simcoe visited Fort Miami in September and tried to make sense of the situation. He understood that had Wayne not retreated the previous month, “the shot would have been fired and would have been the signal for war which at this moment would have raged between Great Britain and America, for once begun I see no measures from the nature of the means by which it must have been carried on, of saying “stop” with any degree of effect.”⁵⁵ To illustrate this sentiment, Simcoe had nothing but good things to say about the British general when he exclaimed, “I look upon it therefore as most providential, and that Campbell’s conduct deserves the highest applause of his King and Country.”⁵⁶

While Simcoe visited Fort Miami, the Indians attempted to regain their bearings. At the end of September, Brant wrote to England lamenting the fact that his people were in desperate straits and that some of the British officials were not supplying his comrades with provisions. He was especially upset about “having had no corn or anything offered

⁵³ Wayne to Knox, September 20, 1794, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 355-58.

⁵⁴ Wayne to Knox, September 20, 1794, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 355-58.

⁵⁵ J.G. Simcoe’s Diary of Journey to the Miamis River, September 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:97-100.

⁵⁶ J.G. Simcoe’s Diary of Journey to the Miamis River, September 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:97-100.

us for our sustenance since we have been here.” Brant added, “our patience cannot hold out much longer, our situation being too discouraging, both on account of the neglect we are treated with by these people, as also for want of provisions, and in a very few days if I do not see some more hopes of doing something, I intend returning, for I find it would be impossible for me to undertake anything in the present situation of affairs. I therefore will leave it to the Indian Department, and hope they will go through with it so as not to ruin the Indians and country.”⁵⁷

Simcoe understood the feelings of the Natives and convened a meeting with them from October 11 to October 14. He attempted to reassure them that the British had always been their friends while the Americans constantly cheated them to gain their lands. He referred to the Treaty of Paris by stating, “At the moment of Peace however the United States shewed (sic) a different conduct to you & at the same time they did not fulfill the Articles of the Treaty of Peace in respect to the Subjects of the King, your Father.”⁵⁸ Although the lieutenant governor believed his words would placate the Natives, by this time, Simcoe’s words rang hollow to many of the Native Americans living in the Ohio region.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ From Joseph Brant to R.G. England, September 28, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:106-07.

⁵⁸ Lieutenant Governor Simcoe’s Reply to the Indian Nations, October 13, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:121-25; From J.G. Simcoe to the Duke of Portland, October 24, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:147-48; A Short Sketch of the Proceedings of the Council at the Big Rock, *ASP:IA*, 548-50.

⁵⁹ Lieutenant Governor Simcoe’s Reply to the Indian Nations, October 13, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:121-25; From J.G. Simcoe to the Duke of Portland, October 24, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:147-48; A Short Sketch of the Proceedings of the Council at the Big Rock, *ASP:IA*, 548-50.

Simcoe further stated that during the spring, a grand council should meet to demand that the Americans stay on the south side of the Ohio River, which they had no intention of doing. At the same time, they should give their lands on the northern side of the Ohio River to the British in a trust so they would have a reason to protect that territory. This proposal seemed like it had little chance of working as Great Britain did not want to be bothered at that point in protecting Indian possessions when the Indians just suffered defeat at the hands of the American army. To placate his Native allies, Simcoe and his associates attempted to bribe the Indians present with goods for the winter so that their people could survive.⁶⁰

Brant wanted the Indians to dupe the Americans with suggestions of peace and then attack them in full force the following spring or summer. This suggestion was also problematic as most of the Indian groups were still reeling from their defeat at Fallen Timbers. The British realized at this point that the Americans gained a clear advantage with their victory at Fallen Timbers and would now attempt to dictate policy in the Ohio region. This could have major ramifications for both the Natives and the British. It would be virtually impossible for them to supply the Indians in a manner that would satisfy their needs. They promised everything to the Natives, but eventually they fell short and left their Indian allies wanting more from the British.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Lieutenant Governor Simcoe's Reply to the Indian Nations, October 13, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:121-25; From J.G. Simcoe to the Duke of Portland, October 24, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:147-48; A Short Sketch of the Proceedings of the Council at the Big Rock, *ASP:IA*, 548-50.

⁶¹ Lieutenant Governor Simcoe's Reply to the Indian Nations, October 13, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:121-25; From J.G. Simcoe to the Duke of Portland, October 24, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:147-48; A Short Sketch of the Proceedings of the Council at the Big Rock, *ASP:IA*, 548-50.

This meeting between the Indians and the British underscores the efforts of two desperate entities. It is hard to determine who felt the sting of the Fallen Timbers campaign more, the British or the Indians. The idea of putting Indian lands into a trust so that the British could offer armed support the following spring is questionable. The British could promise aid to their Native allies, but since they had come through with little military support before, it is hard to fathom why the Indians would expect it now. In addition, the British could supply all the goods that they wanted, but there was never going to be anything more coming from the British than that.

Simcoe realized the tenuous situation the British faced in North America following Fallen Timbers. In a communication to the Duke of Portland on October 24, the lieutenant governor asserted that it would be unwise for the British to desert Fort Miami at that time. Although Wayne was in the process of increasing the American presence in that region, Simcoe realized the problems that would occur with the abandonment of the Fort Miami. If the British gave up their existence in that area, Simcoe warned, "I must represent to your Grace that so suspicious are the Indian Nations of Collusion between Great Britain and the United States, certainly increased by General Wayne's message that on our part 'there is neither power or Inclination to assist them' & by the circumstances of his insulting Conduct & Major Campbell's forbearance, that I cannot answer for the safety of the British inhabitants of this Province from an Indian Warfare, should the Post at the Miamis be withdrawn and that at Fort Defiance remain."⁶²

⁶² From J.G. Simcoe to the Duke of Portland, October 24, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:145-49.

Simcoe was in a delicate situation here and he realized how fragile the association with the Indian nations was on the borderlands. After their defeat at the hands of Wayne the Natives thought that they could retreat to the British barracks at Fort Miami. The British turned them away at this point because Major Campbell feared starting an all-out war with the United States. Now the British government threatened to totally abandon that garrison in the face of a further American onslaught. It is apparent that many of the members of the British government began to tire of the constant battles with the United States in North America and they realized that the Americans held a distinct advantage in the Ohio region and could attempt to dictate policy in that region.⁶³

Pickering met with many members of the Six Nations on October 25, 1794, but a British representative present at these meetings caused consternation for the American commissioner. There was some confusion on the part of Pickering as to why a British agent would attend these meetings. The American administrator stated, "By the remarks you have made, I find that you suppose me to be displeased, with the appearance of Mr. Johnston, a British Interpreter at the Council fire kindled by the U. States, you must have seen that displeasure in my countenance, for it is not easy for me to conceal my feelings, what I feel in my heart, appears on my face, but while you have discovered my dissatisfaction, you have wondered what can be the cause, you wonder why, the British and Americans, people of one colour, cannot sit side by side at a Treaty with the Indians."⁶⁴

⁶³ From J.G. Simcoe to the Duke of Portland, October 24, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:145-49.

⁶⁴ Speech of Col. Pickering at Council at Konondaugua, October 25, 1794, *MIHC*, 25:53-61.

He chastised the British agent by stating, “I will tell you why he did not come before, notwithstanding your invitation, he would have staid (sic) at home, for he saw the impropriety of intruding himself into the councils of the U. States he had not assurance, he had not impudence enough, to come without orders from his employers, he therefore waited ‘til Governor Simcoe arrived from the Westward, and as soon after as he received his orders, and instructions, then he came forward, I am warranted therefore in calling him a British Spy.”⁶⁵ The British agent probably tried to gauge the sentiments among the Natives at this point, but was not precisely a “spy.”⁶⁶

It was situations like this on the part of the British that ensured that the Americans and the Indian nations did not come to some kind of peace. Pickering chastised the British for not abandoning the forts on American soil agreed to during the Treaty of Paris, which angered many Americans because they believed the British were not following through on their promises from 1783 when the Treaty of Paris was passed to conclude the American Revolution. At the same meeting, Pickering goaded the Natives present into repudiating the British because he did not think that they would help the Indian nations. The American commissioner intimated that if the Six Nations wanted to keep the friendship of the United States, they should reject Great Britain as a collaborator and come under the protection of the United States. During the course of these entire meetings, Pickering was abrasive towards the Six Nations and he passed idle threats about the Indians maintaining an allegiance to Great Britain. He told the Natives

⁶⁵ Speech of Col. Pickering at Council at Konondaigua, October 25, 1794, *MIHC*, 25:53-61.

⁶⁶ Speech of Col. Pickering at Council at Konondaigua, October 25, 1794, *MIHC*, 25:53-61.

present that they were free to make whatever choice they wanted, but they should think hard about who they supported.⁶⁷

The actions of Pickering were typical of the sentiments put forth by American peace representatives of this era. Before this time, the statements of inherent power by the American commissioners seemed like useless tirades by the United States, as they held no real power in the Ohio region. However, with the victory at Fallen Timbers, the United States entered a new period where it actually wielded power on the borderlands. The language used by Pickering at these conferences was representative of how the United States would act in their interactions with the Native Americans living in the Ohio region for the remainder of the century. Either the Natives accepted what the United States had to offer them, or the Americans would push them aside as the continuing influx of settlers descended into the Ohio region.

The Americans and the British signed the definitive Jay Treaty in November 1794 after much negotiation between the United States and Great Britain. The first unit of this document stated that the United States and Great Britain formed a universal peace to maintain harmonious relations between the two countries. That was a rather vague statement, but it seemed to imply that the United States might relax its policy of neutrality and support the British war effort, if only tacitly. This portion of the agreement was bound to please the Federalists in the government while upsetting the Democratic-Republicans. The second article stated that the British agreed to withdraw all troops from United States territory by June 1, 1796. Section six addressed the issue of British

⁶⁷ Speech of Col. Pickering at Council at Konondaugua, October 25, 1794, *MiHC*, 25:53-61.

creditors that had not received payment for debts that still lingered from the American Revolution. To assist in this undertaking, the countries would appoint a five-man commission to resolve any problems that might occur.⁶⁸

Two representatives would be appointed by the British and two by the Americans. The fifth spokesperson would be chosen by the first four delegates. It was hoped that this bipartisan committee could come to terms with the investors that lost money to the United States. Other sections of this accord addressed issues such as trade and confiscation of property. United States vessels could carry on business with British ports in the East Indies and with British possessions in Europe. Trade between American vessels and the West Indies opened to small ships up to seventy tons burden. Great Britain gained most favored nation status in regards to customs, tonnage, and harbor dues. Enemy property, but only enemy property was open to seizure from neutral ships during a time of war. If the United States and Great Britain went to war again, the property of individuals was not to be confiscated and merchants could carry on trade even if there was war.⁶⁹

Jay followed up the official passage of the treaty by the narrow margin of precisely two-thirds in the Senate with another letter to Washington in which he stated that he was happy with the results of the compromise with Great Britain. He admitted that it had been a laborious process and he was happy to be done with the entire affair. He hoped that many Americans would embrace the treaty, but he understood that it would be very controversial. In order to reassure his commander in chief, Jay added, “I

⁶⁸ A.W. Ward & G.P. Gooch, eds., *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783-1919*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), 1:156-57.

⁶⁹ Ward & G.P. Gooch, eds., *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, 1:156-57.

am authorized by Lord Grenville to assure you in the most explicit terms that no instructions to stimulate or promote hostilities by the Indians against the United States, have been sent to the king's officers in Canada. I am preparing an official representation to him on this subject, and he will give me an official answer to it”⁷⁰

The following spring, Jay corresponded with the president and reiterated many of the things he stated before about how divisive the treaty might appear in the United States. He averred, “Your remarks relative to my negotiations are just and kind. I assure you nothing on my part has been wanting to render the conclusion of them as consonant as was possible to your expectations and wishes. Perfectly apprised both of my duty and responsibility I determined not to permit my judgment to be influenced by any considerations but those of public good under the direction of my instructions. *I knew and know that no attainable settlement or treaty would give universal satisfaction*; and I am far from expecting that the one I have signed will not administer occasion for calumny and detraction.”⁷¹ Many Americans living during that period believed that this treaty was an outright loss for the United States because the Americans could not get the British to stop harassing American ships that traded with the French as well as the inability to stop the British from impressing, or essentially kidnapping, American sailors.⁷²

⁷⁰ From John Jay to George Washington, November 19, 1794, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:187; United States Statutes at Large, 116-29.

⁷¹ From John Jay to George Washington, February 25, 1795, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:311.

⁷² From John Jay to George Washington, February 25, 1795, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 3:311.

These criticisms of Jay and his diplomacy seem to be rather harsh and somewhat unfounded because Jay did not operate from a position of strength when dealing with the British representatives. He knew that he could not wield military power against Great Britain and acted accordingly. This treaty enhanced the Americans' security especially as Spain responded the following year by concluding Pinckney's Treaty which opened the Mississippi River to American navigation. Spain had feared an Anglo-American alliance and moved accordingly to placate the rising American nation. Although many individuals at the time believed the Americans appeased the British, most notably with the favored nation clause, this compromise actually worked to the benefit of both nations and ensured that trade would continue between the countries. This was crucial for the fledgling American economy as they needed strong trading partners to increase the power of their own economy while they tried to reduce their national debt.⁷³

In addition, the clause that guaranteed the British would leave the posts on American soil was crucial for those Americans living on the western borderlands who lived in constant fear of attacks by the Indians and their British allies. These people had for years been battling Great Britain and her Indian allies with limited success and now they saw a possible end to their troubles. After Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers and the passage of the Jay Treaty, many people living in Ohio saw Jay's diplomatic efforts as an outright success because the British agreed to abandon their posts on American soil. How long it would take for the British to evacuate their forts was open to question. In sum, the Jay Treaty was a major blow to the Native Americans of the United States.⁷⁴

⁷³ Ward & Gooch, *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, 1:156-57.

⁷⁴ Ward & Gooch, *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, 1:156-57.

As the Jay Treaty neared ratification, on November 4, 1794, Wayne met with representatives of the Wyandot nation and told them, “I have listened with attention to the message sent; and am rejoiced that the Great Spirit has, at last, opened your hearts and ears to the voice of peace; but am sorry that the evil spirit has been busy in attempting to prevent you from accomplishing that desirable object. Yet, I hope and trust that your eyes are now opened, and you will no longer suffer yourselves to be imposed on by the bad advice of those interested men, who have so often deceived you, and betrayed you into error, by fair and plausible, but false promises, of assisting you to fight against the Fifteen Fires of the United States.”⁷⁵

He reprimanded the British for lying to their Indian collaborators and tried to bring these groups under the auspices of the United States. Furthermore, he asserted, “The enclosed copies of my speeches addressed to you and all the other hostile tribes of Indians, will best demonstrate the sincerity and wishes of my heart, and show the pains I have taken to bring about a happy peace, and prevent the further effusion of human blood.”⁷⁶ Wayne then went on to say that it had been six years since the Indian warriors concluded a peace treaty with the Americans in 1789. The American general wished that the stipulations presented at that conference would be the guiding light for any future treaties made between the United States and the Indian nations.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ The Speech of Major General Wayne to the Wyandots, November 4, 1794, *ASP:IA*, 528-29.

⁷⁶ The Speech of Major General Wayne to the Wyandots, November 4, 1794, *ASP:IA*, 528-29.

⁷⁷ The Speech of Major General Wayne to the Wyandots, November 4, 1794, *ASP:IA*, 528-29.

While it is true that Wayne was now dealing from a position of power, it is also ironic that this speech occurred at nearly the same time of the ratification of the Jay Treaty. While Wayne demanded that any peace negotiations use the Fort Harmar treaty as a baseline, not all of the Native groups agreed to this arrangement because of their inherent distrust of the United States government and the hopes of possible future resistance against American encroachment. It was going to be hard to convince many of these groups to relinquish that much territory in Ohio when they had been there for many years. Additionally, Wayne's statements would cause consternation among some of the Indian groups that never ratified the Fort Harmar treaty because of their inherent distrust of the United States.⁷⁸

As 1794 came to a close Knox communicated to Wayne that he was about to resign as secretary of war. He claimed, "I believe this will be the last letter you will receive from me while I am secretary of War. I have never attended to my private affairs, and I have a growing family. I must be more attentive, or an unpleasant old age will be stealing upon me."⁷⁹ After a lifetime of service to his country, Knox decided to retire from public office.⁸⁰ Washington replaced Knox with Timothy Pickering, who was one of the president's aides during the American Revolution. Wayne asserted that Pickering was a career diplomat who may not be the most forceful personality when dealing with the Indians. However, as time passed, Wayne gained a better understanding and respect for his new boss and the two men would work closely to create a peace agreement with

⁷⁸ Knox to Wayne, December 5, 1794, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 364-69.

⁷⁹ Knox to Wayne, December 5, 1794, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 364-69.

⁸⁰ Knox to Wayne, December 5, 1794, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 364-69.

the Indians that would stand the test of time and allow the United States to finally expand its growing settler population into Ohio.⁸¹

As 1795 commenced, the United States held the upper hand in the negotiations for the Ohio territory as a result of the decisive defeat of the Indian warriors at the Battle of Fallen Timbers. The American victory had shattered what remained of the Indian confederacy that attempted to band together to offset the advance of the Americans onto their homelands. Many Indian groups wanted to continue outright warfare with the United States because they believed it was vital to offset American expansion into the Northwest Territory. However, there were enough Natives that begrudgingly realized the Americans roundly defeated them on the battlefield, and the flood of settlers was too great to be stopped and they attempted to come to some kind of agreement with the Americans. These Indians would take the lead in treaty negotiations in 1795. Because of this, the more moderate Indians realized they needed to work hard to engage in settlement discussions with the United States whereby they could retain at least a portion of their homelands and hunting grounds.

⁸¹ Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 377-79.

CHAPTER IX

INDIAN TRAITORS?

While the Natives attempted to make the best situation possible following their defeat at Fallen Timbers, but were rebuffed by their British allies the Americans determined how they would wield their newfound power on the borderlands. Wayne proved to be a successful soldier and he was placed in charge of the treaty negotiations after the Battle of Fallen Timbers, though he had limited dealings with negotiations in the past. Because of his vital position at the head of the American delegation he needed to work in a tactful manner to obtain as much land as possible from the defeated Native warriors. Wayne's superiors including Washington and Pickering were going to press for as much Indian land as possible, but Wayne eventually realized that it was going to take skillful deliberations for the United States to gain as much as they wanted.

Although Wayne would approach the upcoming negotiations with caution he would have the opportunity to set the stage for complete American control of the Ohio region. That situation occurred because by 1795 his use of the "first way of war" allowed for the Americans to completely defeat the Native warriors of Ohio. In addition, the Native military leaders realized that they were never going to receive the assistance they needed from the British to offset American advances onto their lands. Because of this, they were forced to approach the upcoming treaty negotiations with the hopes of the

United States being magnanimous towards them. However, their previous dealings with the Americans should have forewarned them that this was not going to occur.¹

On January 1, 1795, Wayne met many of the Indian nations at Sandusky. He wanted to “thank the Great Spirit for opening your eyes and changing the Inclination of your Hearts from War to Peace and which otherwise would have terminated in your total extirpation. The pleasure you express upon hearing my voice and the promise you make, that you will tell your warriors to lay down their Hatchets and not to strike us any more is very pleasing to me. I will now on my part order my Warriors not to strike any of Your peaceable people, but to receive them with friendship and treat them with kindness and as a pledge of my peaceable disposition towards you and your people, I offer you a string of white wampum.”²

These words at these meetings seemed somewhat reassuring, but they actually signify a man that believed he held a distinct advantage over the defeated nations. Because he was a well-seasoned military man, Wayne realized the realities of the situation and understood that the fragile Indian confederacy was defeated. He knew that he conquered his Indian enemy through his own strengths as a military commander as well as some luck and it was at this point that he could offer harsh or lenient terms in the peace process. While previous speeches sounded as if he was going to be merciful towards his defeated adversary, Wayne actually would act as a harsh victor and would attempt to eliminate the perceived Indian menace once and for all by negotiating an agreement that would be very similar to the Treaty of Fort McIntosh. The Natives

¹ Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 193-203.

² General Wayne to All the Warriors at Sandusky, January 1, 1795, *MiHC*, 25:81-83.

assembled at this meeting realized that the Americans controlled the situation and most of the Indians were going to try and make the best peace possible even as some of their warriors wanted to continue the fight against American soldiers.

The Indian nations needed to make nearly all the concessions for tranquility on the borderlands. This fact had not changed since the conclusion of the Revolution as the United States believed it had a right to the lands in Ohio. Whether the Americans held an advantage or were struggling on the borderlands, they always expected the Natives to compromise while they attempted to impose their will. According to Wayne, the Natives should have been happy that the United States would not take all their land as punishment for engaging them militarily since 1790. The upcoming peace negotiations would largely determine the long-term fate of the Native American nations living in Ohio. Wayne further stated at this Sandusky meeting that President Washington “will order a Fort or fortification to be built at the foot of the Rapids of Sandusky on the reserved lands as soon as the season and circumstances will permit.”³

This garrison would allow the United States to dictate policy in northwestern Ohio. The United States believed that it should now attempt to set strategies for peace in Ohio. Second and less well stated in these correspondences, the United States wanted to give a demonstration of the might of the American military to both the British and any Indians that held out hope for a renewed attack on the United States. In order to impress his views upon the Natives gathered at Sandusky, Wayne also informed them that Hamtramck was in the process of engaging other Indian nations including the Miamis at a different location which would allow for a full-scale peace process in the upcoming year.

³ General Wayne to All the Warriors at Sandusky, January 1, 1795, *MiHC*, 25:81-83.

Wayne thus intimated that all of the Indians that engaged the Americans militarily now realized it was in their best interests to make a longstanding peace with the United States.⁴

They chided the British for their construction of Fort Miami as a prelude to war. The standoff between Wayne and Campbell showed that the Americans believed a British garrison in the Ohio country was tantamount to an undeclared state of war. The Americans did everything in their power to remove the British from that citadel. Now, as they prepared to engage the Natives in peace negotiations, they stated that the United States was going to build a stronghold in the same region. The problem with this was that the Americans did not have a firm claim to the lands in the Ohio territory yet. Since the Natives still viewed this as rightfully their territory, neither the British nor the Americans should have built a fort on Indian lands for fears of a possible attack by the other country's troops. While the Americans attempted to launch the peace process, the British weighed in on the situation.⁵

Some members of the Shawnee and Miami nations who pushed for a fight with the United States since the treaty making era of the 1780s probably wanted to continue to engage the Americans militarily. The problem that they faced was that Great Britain was unlikely to continue to support them with military goods after the Battle of Fallen Timbers. Great Britain was in a delicate position at this time on the borderlands because they conducted a European war with their longstanding rival France while they attempted to maintain their presence in North America. Because the Jay Treaty had been negotiated

⁴ General Wayne to All the Warriors at Sandusky, January 1, 1795, *MiHC*, 25:81-83.

⁵ Lord Dorchester to the Duke of Portland, January 1, 1795, *MiHC*, 25:83-84.

and was waiting ratification in the United States and Great Britain, there was much concern for many members of the British government stationed in Canada who were not entirely sure of what their next move should entail.⁶

Other Indian groups seen as less hostile were most likely tired of constant warfare and destruction of their crops. These groups would push for a resolution that would allow them to maintain as much of their territory as possible. Wayne reported on the first of his peace initiatives on January 24, 1795. He reported to Knox, “It’s with infinite (sic) pleasure that I now announce to you, the strong & pleasing prospect of a General Peace between the United States and all the late hostile tribes of Indians North West of the Ohio.”⁷ He believed that the upcoming peace process “promises fair to put an end to the further effusion of Human blood, between the Citizens of the United States, & the aborigines of America, & permit me to assure you that nothing has or shall be wanting upon my part to Establish a happy Honorable & Permanent peace; an event so much desired, & so long and ardently wished for by Government, & by all good men.”⁸

The general asserted that he would hold the peace meetings at Fort Greenville in western Ohio which was an American possession rather than at the Miami villages in northwestern Ohio lest any of the Indians were still inclined towards war. He asserted,

There are many strong reasons to give this place a preference to the Miami Villages! – the Uncertainty of a sufficient Number of troops, to give protection to the Convoys, or to inspire the Savages with respect for our force, so as to deter them from making any attempts upon our supplies or posts, shou’d those overtures for peace be only artifice, as suggested by *Tarhe*, this place cou’d be defended, by a small body of troops from the Citadel, against all the Indians in the

⁶ Wayne to Knox, January 24, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 379-85.

⁷ Wayne to Knox, January 24, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 379-85.

⁸ Wayne to Knox, January 24, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 379-85.

Wilderness – we shall at the same time have strong posts in their rear, well supplied with Artillery & Ammunition, so as to sustain a long siege – which wou'd not be the case, was the treaty to be held at the Miami Villages, because it might be artfully procrastinated by the Savages until our supplies wou'd begin to fail us – the Cattle wou'd be always in their power, & shou'd they prove Perfidious, we shou'd be placed in a very unpleasant situation.⁹

Wayne sought to hold the discussions on secure ground, in order to steer the negotiations in the American favor any insist that the Natives make many concessions to ensure peace and tranquility. If the conferences occurred at the Miami villages, the Americans would always be on the defensive for fear of a possible attack by renegade Natives that wanted nothing to do with the Americans or peace suggestions. These individuals could launch their own guerrilla raids to detract from the consultations or they could possibly receive sustenance from the British still ensconced nearby at Fort Detroit who might want to do everything in their power to subvert any peace negotiations.¹⁰

The next month, Wayne declared to Knox “I have now the honor to inform you that the infamous *Blue Jacket* with a Number of Chiefs & Warriors belonging to the Shawanoes (sic) & Delawares arrived at this place on the 7th. Instant bearing a *flag* & suing for peace. The whole of the late Hostile tribes have now come forward with overtures of peace, ‘their eyes & ears no longer closed, & the darkness with which they were so long surrounded has disappeared.’”¹¹ Wayne thus believed that only by the force of American arms was the United States able to influence a type of change in the Native populations towards working for peace. He claimed that it was in the best interests of each of the Indian nations to work with the United States towards a lasting peace on the borderlands. Wayne could not be sure that these formerly hostile nations including the

⁹ Wayne to Knox, January 24, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 379-85.

¹⁰ Wayne to Knox, January 24, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 379-85.

¹¹ Wayne to Knox, February 12, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 384-85.

Shawnees and Miamis were ready to put down the hatchet and work towards tranquility. It remained possible they only stalling for time in order that they could revamp their forces and engage the United States again on the field of battle?¹²

It seemed that some of these groups really did want to end the hostilities and come to some type of peace arrangement. Wayne was not totally convinced and despite his happiness over this perceived change of opinion, the general also commented to the secretary of war to be vigilant towards the true intentions of the Indians. Wayne himself still treaded lightly in regards to the real objectives of the Natives and he still wondered whether Blue Jacket was sincere with his statements. If he could believe the Indian chief, this gave legitimacy to the upcoming peace consultations because Blue Jacket had been at the forefront of Indian resistance during the Ohio Indian Wars. Wayne was rather proud of his accomplishments on the battlefield and he had no problem stating this to his superior.¹³

As Wayne attempted to begin the peace negotiations on the borderlands, many of the Indians asked their British allies what they expected of them now that they had been defeated on the battlefield. Many of these individuals were unsure what their next step should be and they hoped their British allies could provide answers to them. The Natives realized that they had been vanquished by Wayne and his men and they asked, “Why do you want us to abandon our place, do you want us to leave the Country open for our Enemies to take, O, Father dont advise us to such a thing, we are very well here we have plenty of everything, which is Meat and Drink, we are happy with our Situation, all that

¹² Wayne to Knox, February 12, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 384-85.

¹³ Wayne to Knox, February 12, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 384-85.

we want now is peace & that we hope to God we shall have soon if the evil Spirit doth not prevent.”¹⁴

By invoking Christian themes into this speech, the Natives attempted to show their British fathers that the two groups were very similar and mutual interests guided both entities towards a resolution of the issues on the borderlands. The Indians really did not want to leave their lands, but this communication allowed for the Natives to let the British decide what was best for the Indian nations. They stated if they were not required to give up their territories, they would be very happy to remain where they were and work towards peace with the United States. That seemed legitimate as most of these warriors resigned themselves to the prospects of peace even after they suffered defeat on the battlefield.¹⁵

Even though they made these remarks, the Indian nations were hesitant to give up too much of their lands to the Americans. Unfortunately for them, the British were in no position to offer them firm guidance at this point because they realized that the Natives were a defeated entity and that the United States would guide any peace conferences. Because the Jay Treaty was in the process of ratification, that also guided how the British treated their Native clients. In addition, Great Britain was preoccupied with the war with France which took up much of their time and did not allow for them to give the Indian situation as much attention as it might have deserved. By 1795, the Indians living in the United States had all but lost their firm ally in Great Britain.¹⁶

¹⁴ Indian Speech at Sandusky, February 6, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:392-93.

¹⁵ Indian Speech at Sandusky, February 6, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:392-93.

¹⁶ Indian Speech at Sandusky, February 6, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:392-93.

On February 11, Wayne forwarded the preliminary articles of peace agreed on at Greenville, Ohio. This was between the United States and the various Indian nations that took up hostilities at Fallen Timbers. The first article of this agreement stated that both sides would meet at Greenville, Ohio, by June 15 and “all the Prisoners now in possession of the United States and all such Prisoners now in possession of the Shawanoes, Delawares, and Miamis belonging to the United States of America of Every description shall be mutually delivered up and set at Liberty.”¹⁷ This was a sign of good faith for both sides and helped smooth out the process of negotiating peace. The second section of this pact stated that if any of the Indians became threatening to the Americans in the future, it was up to the other Natives to inform the United States officials so that the perpetrators could be brought to justice.¹⁸

Although these articles of peace were not the elements of an actual treaty, they set the tone for future discussions. Wayne wanted to show his former adversaries that he was magnanimous and allow for the Indians to come to him with any concerns they might have about the entire process. Again, Wayne believed that the Americans controlled the situation because of their resounding victory at Fallen Timbers. While Wayne professed a sense of harmony in northwestern Ohio, he understood that the federal officials in Philadelphia would expect him to make the best possible peace for the United States and crush any Indian confederacy once and for all. This would be a demanding mission for the general. The Indians reading these words had little choice but

¹⁷ Articles of Peace between Gen. Anthony Wayne and the Indians, February 11, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:393-94.

¹⁸ Articles of Peace between Gen. Anthony Wayne and the Indians, February 11, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:393-94.

to accept them and attempt to make the best peace possible as they appeared to be a defeated entity.¹⁹

For the Indians, the Shawnee chief Blue Jacket inscribed his name on this certificate, but when the Indian chief returned to his people, he faced harsh reprisals from many individuals who believed he went too far to accommodate the Americans. He attempted to smooth the situation by stating that it was in the best interests of the Indian nations to come to the United States for assistance now that the war was lost. He did not believe Great Britain could supply the Natives in a proper fashion and he stated that the Americans would allow the Indians to build a village at Fort Wayne while replanting their crops. A problem that the Indian commander faced was that some of the Shawnee Nation wanted nothing to do with reconciliation between the Indian nations and the United States.²⁰

An incident in May 1795 further contributed to the troubles faced by Blue Jacket in motivating these warriors to make peace. On May 14, a Shawnee band led by Pucksekaw received an attack by a group of American rangers under the leadership of Nathaniel Massie. The Indians needed to evacuate their encampment while in the process losing valuable items such as horses. After regaining their bearings, the Natives counterattacked American possessions and in July they killed several American settlers. These events soured many of the Shawnees from attending the upcoming Treaty of Greenville hence only 200 attended which comprised only one-fifth of the nation living

¹⁹ Articles of Peace between Gen. Anthony Wayne and the Indians, February 11, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:393-94.

²⁰ Sugden, *Blue Jacket: Warrior of the Shawnees*, 188-207.

in Ohio. Despite these problems, Blue Jacket pushed on to make the best peace possible for his people.²¹

These incidents show the delicate position that Blue Jacket encountered in the period between the end of the Battle of Fallen Timbers and the Treaty of Greenville. Whether or not his comrades agreed with his efforts at negotiation, one thing was certain, Blue Jacket was an influential Indian warrior and diplomat. Blue Jacket appeared to show his valor as he fought on the front lines in all three of the major battles of the Ohio Indian Wars. He fought valiantly alongside Little Turtle against Harmar and St. Clair while providing expert assistance on how to engage the American enemy. By 1794, Blue Jacket's reputation was on the rise and during the Battle of Fallen Timbers he led the Indian forces.²²

He repeatedly showed his valor on the field of battle, but at Fallen Timbers, in a matter of several hours, the Native forces retreated from the battlefield in a rout. Since that fateful day, historians excoriated Blue Jacket on many occasions. Many saw him as the man that caused the defeat of the Indians at the hands of the Americans and as such his reputation has received condemnation. However, it would not have mattered who led the Native forces at Fallen Timbers. The Americans were a much stronger adversary than they had been in 1790 and 1791 and took all the lessons from those defeats and used them to fight the Natives in northwestern Ohio. For the Natives, the lack of planning and foresight as well as a limited number of active warriors caused their defeat, not the lack of leadership skills of Blue Jacket. They very likely believed that they could defeat the

²¹ Sugden, *Blue Jacket: Warrior of the Shawnees*, 188-207.

²² Articles of Peace between Gen. Anthony Wayne and the Indians, February 11, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:393-94.

apparently weak Americans with only a moderate amount of men because they experienced success in the past. By February 1795, Blue Jacket resigned himself and his people to defeat and attempted to make the best peace possible for all involved.²³

In a communication to Pickering on March 8, Wayne stated to the new secretary of war that he was in contact with many of the major Indian groups of Ohio and they all agreed to peace. Matters seemed to moving in the right direction for the Americans as more and more Natives agreed to attend a peace conference. The general stated,

On the 12th. Ultimo I had the honor to transmit to the late Secretary of War a copy of the Preliminary articles enter'd into with the Shawanoes (sic), & Delawares in behalf of themselves & that part of the Miami Nation of Indians lately living in the Vicinity of Grand Glaize, for a Cessation of Hostilities – the liberation of Prisoners & for holding a treaty at this place, on or about the 15th of June next, - since which *Tarhe's* signal *flag* has arrived - & the Wyondots (sic) of Sandusky by their agent *Isaac Williams* have also entered into *formal* Preliminary Articles, a Copy of which I have now the honor to enclose, together with an open letter from a Mr. George McDougall (a Merchant of Detroit) to Alexr. McComb Esqr. Of New York, also a copy of a letter from Father *Edmond Burke*, to the Wyondots (sic) of Sandusky of the 29th. of January 1795.²⁴ ADD INFO

Wayne had already endeavored to bring Blue Jacket into the fold for a possible peace treaty. If he encouraged other members of the hostile Miami and Shawnee nations to treat with him for peace on the borderlands, he headed in the right direction towards a lasting peace in the Ohio region. During this same correspondence, Wayne also complained about supposed British intrigues against a possible treaty. He stated, “Indeed from every information thro’ a variety of channels the British agents are at this late hour Seting (sic) every engine at Work to prevent the proposed treaty.”²⁵ He emphasized that there were small bands of Indians still committing depredations at the behest of the

²³ Sugden, *Blue Jacket: Warrior of the Shawnees*, 172-80.

²⁴ Wayne to Pickering, March 8, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 386-93.

²⁵ Wayne to Pickering, March 8, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 386-93.

British. He further worried that many of the enlistments of his men would run out between that time and the opening of treaty negotiations. He called on the secretary of war to reinforce him with more men to protect American interests in the Ohio region. Action was unlikely as Pickering had few men in the regular army that he could give to his general.²⁶

It would take firm leadership on the part of Wayne to bring the Indians to the peace negotiations; however, Pickering believed that Wayne was the man to make a lasting armistice in the Ohio territory. The secretary of war pronounced to Wayne the official terms of amity that Washington advanced. The president wanted “To gratify the usual expectation of Indians assembling for the purposes of treaty and thereby facilitate the negotiation (sic), it is thought best to provide and forward a quantity of Goods. These will amount to at least twenty five thousand dollars, but are to be delivered only in case of a successful treaty: except such small portions of them as humanity may call for pending the negotiation (sic). The residue are to be delivered to them as one of the conditions for their final relinquishment of the lands which the treat shall comprehend.”²⁷

This allowed Wayne the ability to gain leverage in the negotiations by threatening to hold back necessities if the Natives balked at any of the terms of a ceasefire agreement. For the lands that the Natives relinquished, Wayne received orders to pay them a sum of not more than ten-thousand dollars annually. Washington wanted the general to forward the boundary line agreed upon at the Treaty of Fort Harmar which partitioned a substantial amount of the territory to the Americans. By doing this, it would allow the

²⁶ Wayne to Pickering, March 8, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 386-93.

²⁷ Pickering to Wayne, April 8, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 393-403.

United States to be the foremost power in Ohio. It took six years of brutal fighting, but the United States was going to impose its will on the Native American nations of the United States. If they wanted to be subservient children to the United States government who only had their best interests at heart, that was to their advantage. If the Indians wanted to continue depredations, the American government would do everything in its power to crush them.²⁸

Pickering admitted that he questioned the Six Nations the previous autumn about their land transactions in Ohio and they claimed that these cessions of land were satisfactory to all of the Indian groups. However, when Pickering further questioned the Six Nations about giving land to the United States, the Iroquois stated that “the four most hostile tribes denied their right to it.”²⁹ The secretary of war then claimed that he realized that whatever claim the Six Nations had to land west of the Allegheny Mountains, they had given up that right to the western nations long ago. Furthermore, Pickering stated, “The relinquishment of the Country, therefore to the United States by the Six nations I consider as affording us but the shadow of a title to it.”³⁰

These comments suggest that members of the federal government, including the secretary of war, were covering all of their bases. Every member of the Washington administration knew long before 1795 that the Six Nations did not have the authority to cede any lands to the United States government without the explicit permission of the Indian confederacy. Pickering’s comments to Wayne are self-interested and they hide the true intentions of the American government to gain as much land with as little trouble as

²⁸ Pickering to Wayne, April 8, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 393-403.

²⁹ Pickering to Wayne, April 8, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 393-403.

³⁰ Pickering to Wayne, April 8, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 393-403.

possible. These statements indicate a desire to place the blame for many of the troubles on the borderlands on the Six Nations. Since the Six Nations misled the American government, it would make the American commissioners at any peace treaty have to work that much harder to gain the lands in Ohio that the Americans believed were rightfully theirs.

Additionally, Pickering surmised that the reasons some of the chiefs of the Western nations had not ascribed to the treaties at Fort McIntosh, Fort Miami, and Fort Harmar occurred for several reasons. First, “the Chiefs who treated were not an adequate representation of the Nations to whom the lands belonged.”³¹ This had been a major sticking point for the larger confederacy during the entire period since the end of the Revolution. Many of the members of the nations in Ohio felt that smaller groups did not have the right to give land to the United States. These leaders believed that only the larger confederation could agree to sign over lands to the United States. Because of this sentiment, these documents had received condemnation among the larger part of the assembled confederacy.³²

Second, the western nations felt “That they were *compelled by threats* to subscribe to some of the treaties.”³³ This statement is undoubtedly true as the United States repeatedly used all sorts of threats and intimidation to ensure that some of the Natives would sign the peace treaties forfeiting their lands. By bullying and badgering smaller bands of these groups, the Americans ensured that they would get signatures on their documents. It should not have come as a shock to any member of the American

³¹ Pickering to Wayne, April 8, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 393-403.

³² Pickering to Wayne, April 8, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 393-403.

³³ Pickering to Wayne, April 8, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 393-403.

government that the majority of the western Indians felt this way. Time and again during the treaty making process of the 1780s, many of these groups stated their discomfort with ceding so much of their ancestral homelands. Also, they frequently stated that they could not understand why the Americans could not respect the Ohio River boundary so that both groups could live in peace. Third, the western nations asserted, “That the claim of the United States to the full property of the Indians lands, under colour of the treaty of 1783, with Great Britain, was unfounded and unjust.”³⁴

Pickering mandated to Wayne, “To prevent a repetition of such complaints you will use every practicable means to obtain a full representation of all the nations claiming property in the lands in question.”³⁵ Furthermore, the secretary of war demanded, “And to obviate future doubts it may be expedient to get lists of all the principal and other Chiefs of each nation, to ascertain who are absent, and whether those present may be fairly considered as an adequate representation of their nation.”³⁶ The secretary of war realized how important these future peace negotiations would be if the United States expected to expand their borders westward into the Ohio region and beyond. Therefore, he implored his lead general to take every precaution to make sure that these negotiations went smoothly.³⁷

Over the next several months, Pickering reiterated the official American policy in regards to a peace treaty. The secretary of war stated, “In your letter of the 24. Of January you mention the wish of the Indians to hold the treaty at the Miami Villages: The

³⁴ Pickering to Wayne, April 8, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 393-403.

³⁵ Pickering to Wayne, April 8, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 393-403.

³⁶ Pickering to Wayne, April 8, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 393-403.

³⁷ Pickering to Wayne, April 8, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 393-403.

reasons for your declining this are invincible. In addition to those you mention the probability of obtaining a more advantageous peace, at least with more facility, is a consideration of some consequence in favour of holding the treaty at Greenville.”³⁸ The secretary of war also wanted to begin these meetings in June, but told Wayne to be patient and wait until July if necessary. The instructions of Pickering are not surprising. Although the United States gained a remarkable victory the previous year at Fallen Timbers, all of the Indian nations did not want to interact with the Americans. If the meetings were at the Miami villages, there was a high probability that many of the groups that still wanted to engage the Americans militarily would attempt to ambush any peace commissioners. By holding these conferences at Greenville, the Americans could better attempt to control the area.³⁹

Wayne eventually came to the conclusion that Blue Jacket was sincere in his desire to conclude an equitable agreement for all the parties involved on the borderlands. He further claimed to Pickering that the British endeavored to prevent a treaty from occurring between the United States and the Indian nations because it would hurt their interests in North America. He stated, “I believe it will not be in the power of all the British emissaries to prevent our treaty, from taking place at or about the time proposed, the Indians say ‘they have lost all confidence in the British since the 20th. of August, Because they remained idle spectators & saw their best & bravest Chiefs & Warriors slaughtered before their faces, & under the Muzzles of their great Guns without

³⁸ Pickering to Wayne, April-May 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 404-15.

³⁹ Pickering to Wayne, April-May 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 404-15.

attempting to assist them – hence they consider the British not only liars – but also Cowards.”⁴⁰

Wayne was probably exaggerating the truth with these statements. The Indians were no doubt furious at the British for not assisting them during the Battle of Fallen Timbers, but it was unlikely they would dismiss them as allies for many of the Natives still trusted the British more than the Americans. Wayne also communicated his feelings about the proposed boundary line between the Americans and the Natives by claiming that the groups would be too near each other which would do harm to the common good. He proposed maintaining a type of buffer zone that would allow the individuals living on the borderlands to remain out of each other’s way. The general believed this kind of barrier would allow for improved relations and he asserted that the lands in this region should not be sold to American investors for the foreseeable future. The idea of a neutral zone between the Americans and the Indians had been proposed by others, but it was not a realistic option.⁴¹

At the end of May, Pickering addressed an issue that had bedeviled Indian-American relations for years. That question related to supplying the Natives with alcohol during treaty negotiations. He asserted, “One very great inconvenience I have uniformly found to arise in my conferences with the Indians from their getting too much liquor. I have always had the misfortune to meet them at places where white settlers could supply and where I had no power to restrain them. Drunkenness among the Chiefs puts an entire stop to business: and a small degree of intoxication besides equally delaying business

⁴⁰ Wayne to Pickering, May 15, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 415-19.

⁴¹ Wayne to Pickering, May 15, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 415-19.

renders them impertinent insolent and vexatious. At the army you can regulate the issues of liquor at your pleasure; and thus conduct your negotiations (sic) with much more expedition and vastly greater satisfaction.”⁴²

The secretary of war realized that no legitimate negotiations that would bring about a lasting peace could occur if the Americans repeatedly intoxicated the Natives in which they would be dealing. Although the Americans benefitted greatly from inebriating the Indians in the past, Pickering understood that an overabundance of alcohol was not proper for this situation. It was up to Wayne at that point to make sure that all parties came to the meetings sober and stayed that way for the duration of the conferences. This would prove to be difficult as there were most likely going to be unscrupulous traders that would appear at these conferences in order to ply the Natives with alcohol.⁴³

On June 17, which was the same day that Wayne began his introductory remarks to the assembled Natives at Greenville, Pickering corresponded with Wayne to inform him of several important factors. First, the secretary of war alluded to the fact that “The Senate are in session to consider of the treaty negotiated (sic) by Mr. Jay with the British Government. As far as I hear several days more will elapse before they decide upon it; and they have already been sitting since the 8th; whence it is presumable that some of the articles present difficulties which are subjects of much discussion. I cannot however but believe that ultimately the treaty will be approved.”⁴⁴ The secretary of war lauded Jay and his efforts with Great Britain and he believed that this accord was beneficial to the

⁴² Pickering to Wayne, May 30, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 421-23.

⁴³ Pickering to Wayne, May 30, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 421-23.

⁴⁴ Pickering to Wayne, June 17, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 423-24.

United States. Despite this faith in the ratification of the Jay Treaty which would provide the United States with some substantial gains against British in North America, the secretary of war warned Wayne that the agreement may not pass through the halls of the federal government in Philadelphia. Pickering stated in very plain language, “At all events, I deem it very important to have the treaty with the Western Indians brought to a speedy conclusion: for if by any possibility the treaty with Great Britain should not be approved, we may well expect a renewal of the endeavours of the British Agents in Canada, and with redoubled zeal, to prevent a pacification with the Indians.”⁴⁵

Would Great Britain attempt to rile up the Native Americans yet again if the United States government did not ratify the Jay Treaty? There is no definite answer to this question but it appears that the British tired of the situation. Had they believed in the possibilities of the Indians launching a unified confederacy to engage the Americans in the Ohio region, they most likely would not have agreed to abandon their American posts. Now that the Indians met with defeat at Fallen Timbers, the British government carefully reassessed their situation on the western borderlands of the United States. They would continue to supply their Indian collaborators with the vital necessities of life, but with much more reservation than they had in the past.

Pickering also mentioned on the same day that the general needed to be aware of incursions by both Americans and Natives against each other in that region. He warned that the British would use depredations committed by the Americans as ammunition in their interactions with the Indians. Furthermore, the secretary of war commented that he was aware of several of the Native groups sending emissaries to the discussions with the

⁴⁵ Pickering to Wayne, June 17, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 423-24.

Americans. He boldly stated, “those that are now at this place appear to [be] perfectly satisfied & anxious for a permanent peace.”⁴⁶ He reminded the general to do everything in his power to make his Indian guests feel welcome upon their arrival.⁴⁷

While Pickering corresponded with Wayne, several of the Indian nations began to assemble at Greenville. New Corn, one of the elderly Indian chiefs, spoke to the assembled group. He stated that he and his men threw off the yoke of the British and now viewed the Americans as their only true friends. He asserted that he and his associates came to these meetings with an open heart and he wished that the Americans to supply his hungry people as the British did in the past. It is impossible to gauge the true sentiments of New Corn, but he attempted to replace one imperial power with another. By 1795, the Indian groups faced disenchantment with the repeated promises of British aid and after the Battle of Fallen Timbers, many of the Indians faced the reality of dealing with the Americans in the Ohio region. If that was the case, individuals such as New Corn wanted to be well stocked in merchandise whether they truly regarded the Americans as their allies or not. New Corn exhibited pragmatism in his dealings with Wayne.⁴⁸

Whether they dealt with the United States, France, or Great Britain, the Indians always had their best interests at heart even if they told the Europeans and Americans something totally different. The Natives had centuries of dealing with these colonial powers and learned how to manipulate the situation for their own advantage. They

⁴⁶ Pickering to Wayne, June 17, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 427-29.

⁴⁷ Pickering to Wayne, June 17, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 427-29.

⁴⁸ Extract of a Letter from Anthony Wayne to the Secretary of War, June 17, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 564.

understood that the European and American powers were untrustworthy and they attempted to repeatedly play off one colonial power against the other. While at Greenville, the Natives would not accomplish this mission to the fullest extent, but they could still attempt to act in a way that would satisfy some of their needs without losing their pride. As Wayne bargained with the Natives, Pickering was in constant contact with his lead general. At the end of June, in a series of letters, he informed Wayne that the Jay Treaty was quickly nearing ratification by the Senate.⁴⁹

He asserted, “The Senate have given their consent and advice to the President, to ratify the treaty, on condition that there be added an article to suspend the operation of so much of the 12th article as respects the mode of carrying on trade with the British West India Islands.”⁵⁰ Because of this addendum, many of the legislators in the United States were willing to ratify the agreement with Great Britain. All that appeared to stand in the way was to wait for both sides to agree on the changes to the wording of the treaty. Although it sounded like this accord might settle itself within the foreseeable future, there were still problems to attend to on the part of the Americans. Pickering pointed out members of the Senate that disagreed with ratification “are freely handing it about, and probably it will soon be in the news-papers, where a sketch has already appeared, as you will see by the inclosed (sic); but whether correct or otherwise I cannot say.”⁵¹

⁴⁹ Pickering to Wayne, June 27-30, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 429-36.

⁵⁰ Pickering to Wayne, June 27-30, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 429-36.

⁵¹ Pickering to Wayne, June 27-30, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 429-36.

This continued source of news about the proposed Jay Treaty was vital for Wayne as he prepared to continue his deliberations with the Native Americans assembled at Greenville. A major part of this proposed agreement would include the British evacuating their forts on American soil. If this were to occur, Great Britain would not be able to supply the Natives as easily if warfare continued against the United States on American soil. With this piece of information that the Indians most likely did not know in as great detail, Wayne had a major bargaining chip to use in his negotiations with the Native Americans assembled at Greenville. Although he could not guarantee the passage of this accord, he could act like the Americans and British were about to endorse the settlement.

The opening conferences that would eventually lead to the Treaty of Greenville began in June 1795. Wayne addressed the congregation stating,

The Great Spirit has favored us with a clear sky and a refreshing breeze for the happy occasion. The ground on which this council house stands is unstained with blood, and is as pure as the heart of General Washington, the great chief of America, and of his great council – as pure as my heart – which now wishes for nothing so much as peace and brotherly love.” New Corn, a Potawatomie chief, spoke to the congregation affirming his undying allegiance to the United States. He affirmed, “I have come here on the good work of peace; no other motive could have induced me to undertake so long a journey as I have now performed, in my advanced age and infirm state of health. I come from Lake Michigan. I hope, after our treaty, you will exchange our old medals, and supply us with General Washington’s. My young men will no longer listen to the former; they wish for the latter. They have thrown off the British, and henceforth will view the Americans as their only true friends. We come with a good heart, and hope you will supply us with provision.”⁵²

On June 30, Le Gris, a Miami chief, reaffirmed the comments of New Corn and stated, “that the Miamies were united with him in friendly sentiments and wishes for

⁵² Extract of a Letter from Anthony Wayne to the Secretary of War, June 30, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 564-65.

peace.”⁵³ He requested that Wayne provide him and his men with some wine to show their friendship. He also appealed for mutton and pork occasionally to feed his men. Wayne responded by assuring Le Gris and his men of their safety while at the conferences. He stated that he had no pork to give to the Indian warriors, but he would be glad to give each chief a sheep for their use. Wayne finished by claiming that he wished all of the Indian warriors to be happy and contented while at Greenville.⁵⁴

The statements of both New Corn and Le Gris seemed to be indicative of the mood of many of the Indian nations and provide a clue as to what the hostile and less intransigent nations professed to the American general. Both men pledged their unyielding desire for peace on the borderlands. However, there also appears to be an ulterior motive for both of these individuals to make these comments. New Corn and Le Gris not so subtly asked for the United States to provide the Indian peoples with provisions. These are the same tactics that the Indians used when they applied to the British for assistance. New Corn and Le Gris made significant promises for tranquility on the borderlands as long as their people received provisions throughout the remainder of that year and into the future.

As the various Indian groups continued to gather at Greenville, Wayne feted these factions and stated that the Americans wanted to conclude a fair treaty with the nations assembled. Wayne agreed not to start the official treaty proceedings until the Shawnees and Wyandots arrived. Despite this assertion, Wayne officially opened the peace

⁵³ Extract of a Letter from Anthony Wayne to the Secretary of War, June 30, 1795, *ASP:IA* 564-65.

⁵⁴ Extract of a Letter from Anthony Wayne to the Secretary of War, June 30, 1795, *ASP:IA* 564-65.

proceedings on July 15 before all the Shawnee and Wyandot representatives arrived. Wayne informed the Natives present that the upcoming treaty was similar to agreements reached at the Treaty of Fort Harmar in 1789. He believed that settlement occurred with the best of intentions on the part of the American delegates. At this point, Wayne gave the Indian delegates two to three days to mull over the previous agreement. The wants of the general could not have come as a true surprise to the Native delegates who knew exactly what the Americans coveted, but it was shrewd to give them time to contemplate the intentions of Wayne as it made him appear magnanimous in the face of the Indian defeat.⁵⁵

On July 18, Little Turtle rose and spoke to the congregation. He stated to Wayne and the other Americans, "I suppose it to be your wish that peace should take place, throughout the world. When we hear you say so, we will be prepared to answer you. You have told me that the present treaty should be founded upon that of Muskingum. I beg leave to observe to you, that the treaty was effected altogether by the Six Nations, who seduced some of our young men to attend it, together with a few of the Chippewas, Wyandots, Ottawas, Delawares, and Pattawatamies. I beg leave to tell you, that I am entirely ignorant of what was done at that treaty. I hope those who held it may give you their opinion, whether or not it was agreeable to them."⁵⁶ Little Turtle knew what was agreed on, but he was using stalling tactics to try and gain as much as possible from Wayne.

⁵⁵ John A. Murphy, ed., *The Greenville Peace Treaty: The Actual Speeches of the Council*, (Wapakoneta, OH: R. Sutton & Co, 1882), 9-11.

⁵⁶ Little Turtle's Address at the Treaty of Greenville, July 18, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 567.

On the same day, Blue Jacket and his congregation of thirteen other Shawnees arrived at the conference. The appearance of Little Turtle and Blue Jacket at these conferences lent credibility to these meetings. The Shawnee chief claimed, “When I came here last winter, I did not mean to deceive you; what I promised you, I did intend to perform. My wish to conclude a firm peace with you, being sincere, my uneasiness has been great, that my people have not come forward so soon as you would wish, or might expect; but you must not be discouraged by these unfavorable appearances. Some of our chiefs and warriors are here; more will arrive in a few days. You must not, however, expect to see a great number; yet, notwithstanding, our nation will be well represented. Our hearts are open, and void of deceit.”⁵⁷

The ability of Wayne to negotiate with two of the warriors that defeated Harmar and St. Clair showed all involved, both American and Indian, that these conventions were to proceed with what appeared to be a just representation of Native Americans. The fact that these two men showed up to these tribunal conferences suggests that the Indians of Ohio realized that future armed resistance against the United States was largely futile at that point. By 1795, it was readily apparent to leaders such as Blue Jacket and Little Turtle that the Indian nations residing in Ohio were a defeated people and they tried to convince Wayne that their peoples needed to be taken care of even if the Americans took over much of the territory that comprised Ohio. Both of these Indian leaders would press Wayne to an extent about taking care of their peoples, but in the end they resigned themselves to the fact that they could only ask for so much from the American general.

⁵⁷ Blue Jacket’s Address at the Treaty of Greenville, July 18-19, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 568

On July 19, Blue Jacket spoke in private with Wayne and informed him that Alexander McKee chastised him because he sided with the United States. The British official stated that “he was very sorry (sic) to find I had acted with such little regard for my people; that he ascribed my strange conduct to the instigations of some evil spirit, who had lead me astray from the plain good road, and put me in the path which led towards the Americans. ‘The commission you received from Johnston,’ said he ‘was not given you to carry to the Americans. I am grieved to find that you have taken it to them. It was with much regret I learned that you had deserted your friends, who always caressed you, and treated you as a great man. You have deranged, by your imprudent conduct, all our plans for protecting the Indians, and keeping them with us. They have always looked up to you for advice and direction in war, and you have now broke the strong ties which held them all together, under your and our direction. You must now be viewed as the enemy of your people, and the other Indians whom you are seducing into the snares the Americans have formed for their ruin; and the massacre and destruction of these people by the Americans must be laid to your charge.’”⁵⁸ McKee was harsh in his assessment, as Little Turtle was only trying to maintain a sense of calm among his people. Little Turtle realized defeat on the battlefield and he only hoped now to make the best peace possible to leave his nation with some semblance of respect.⁵⁹

The short interaction between Blue Jacket and Wayne told of the mood on the borderlands in July 1795. Blue Jacket informed Wayne that he wanted to make peace for the good of the Indian nations, but he insisted the Americans did not cheat him and his people. Blue Jacket, one of the most unyielding warriors opposing the Americans on the

⁵⁸ Blue Jacket’s Address to General Wayne, July 19, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 568.

⁵⁹ Blue Jacket’s Address to General Wayne, July 19, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 568.

battlefield, now resigned himself to defeat. He wanted to make friends with the Americans to assure that his people received assistance from the United States for the long-term. By this time, McKee and the other British officials in Canada knew the terms of the Jay Treaty. Despite this, he disparaged Blue Jacket for making overtures of peace with the Americans. Why did McKee act this way? It seems as though some of the British representatives in Canada were not too pleased about making peace with the United States and losing their Indian buffer in the west. These men may have been fearful about losing their jobs or an American invasion of Canada.

On July 24, Wayne stated, "I will now inform you who it was who gave us these lands, in the first instance; it was your fathers the British, who did not discover that care for your interest which you ought to have experienced."⁶⁰ In addition, he asserted, "Here you perceive that all the country, south of the great lakes, has been given up to America; but the United States never intended to take that advantage of you, which the British placed in their hands; they wish you to enjoy your just rights, without interruption, and to promote your happiness."⁶¹ This language signified that the United States was only interested in taking the lands they gained from previous treaties and would not completely push the Natives off their hunting grounds in northwestern Ohio. The problem with this logic was that American settlers would push into Ohio in droves after this treaty and would eventually cause hardships for the Indians that still resided in Ohio. The number of American settlers in Ohio increased from 5,000 in 1796 to 230,000 by

⁶⁰ General Wayne's Speech at the Treaty of Greenville, July 24, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 562-84.

⁶¹ General Wayne's Speech at the Treaty of Greenville, July 24, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 562-84.

1810.⁶² The settler colonial spirit would not be satisfied until all of the Natives removed themselves from the fertile territories in Ohio.

The general tried to show the Natives present that the peace accord agreed to by the British and the Americans was the utmost legal contract in regards to the lands in the Ohio region. Next, Wayne read parts of the Jay Treaty and maintained, “By this solemn agreement, they promise to retire from Michilimackinac, fort St. Clair, Detroit, Niagara, and all other places on this side of the lakes, in ten moons from this period, and leave the same to the full and quiet possession of the United States.”⁶³ The general then insisted, “Having now explained those matters to you, and informed you of all things I judged necessary for your information, we have nothing to do but to bury the hatchet, and draw a veil over past misfortunes.”⁶⁴ Now that the United States controlled the forts on American soil, they were the utmost power in the region. It was inherent for the Natives to begin to see the United States as their only true benefactor.

Despite any friendly assertions from Little Turtle to Wayne, he continued to be a champion of the rights of his people throughout the rest of the talks. He repeatedly stated that he was unsure of which lands the Indians ceded to the Americans through the Treaty of Fort Harmar as he had not been present at that tribunal. This may have been a stalling tactic, but it was more likely an attempt to garner the best agreement possible for his people. On July 29, he further stated, “This line takes in the greater and best part of your brothers’ hunting ground, therefore, your younger brothers are of opinion, you take too

⁶² Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 70-71.

⁶³ General Wayne’s Communication at the Treaty of Greenville, July 24, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 562-84.

⁶⁴ General Wayne’s Communication at the Treaty of Greenville, July 24, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 562-84.

much of their lands away, and confine the hunting of our young men within limits too contracted.”⁶⁵ Little Turtle believed it was his duty as a proud Indian warrior to try and preserve these lands for future generations. He urged his Indian brethren to think long and hard about the terms of the agreement and he wanted a unanimous decision from all the nations involved.⁶⁶

This would guarantee that any decision made by the Indian nations present at Greenville had the consent by the majority of the Indian nations. In addition, it guaranteed that these agreements were valid and not open to interpretation by Natives at a later date. The next day, Little Turtle rose again and stated, “Here are papers which have been given to me by General Washington, the great chief of the United States. He told me they should protect us in the possession of our lands, and that no white person should interrupt us in the enjoyment of our hunting grounds, or be permitted to purchase any of our towns or lands from us; that he would place traders among us, who would deal fairly.”⁶⁷

The Miami chief championed the rights of his people throughout the entire tribunal, but many of his statements seemed to be falling on deaf ears. There were too many Natives present who seemed to be tiring of the lengthy proceedings and they wanted to make a deal with the Americans. Because of this changing landscape, many of the speeches of Little Turtle were for naught. By invoking the name of President Washington, he probably hoped to stall Wayne for as long as possible to make sure he could keep the lands that he believed were rightfully Indian. However, the tenor of these

⁶⁵ Little Turtle’s Address at the Treaty of Greenville, July 30, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 577-78.

⁶⁶ Little Turtle’s Address at the Treaty of Greenville, July 30, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 577-78.

⁶⁷ Little Turtle’s Address at the Treaty of Greenville, July 30, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 577-78.

meetings shifted by this point and Little Turtle was working against the realities of the situation.⁶⁸

Wayne responded by attempting to repudiate Little Turtle's theories. He stated, "Younger Brothers, the Miamies: I have listened to you with attention; and have heard your observations upon the general boundary line proposed by me, as well as upon the proposed reservations. If my ears did not deceive me, I have heard all the other nations give their assent to the general boundary line, and to the reservations, generally."⁶⁹

Wayne further assented that if the border between the United States and the Indian nations followed the mandates of the Miami nation, it would cause great consternation as it would be hard to follow for both the Natives and the Americans. He claimed that the border proposed by the United States was the most feasible for all to follow.⁷⁰

Wayne believed that the United States government was not trying to take what was not rightfully theirs and they were being generous with what he proposed. In addition, he promised that the Americans would never try and prevent the Indians from hunting on United States territory as long as they did so peaceably. Wayne then spoke and stated that the Great Father, the United States, only had the best of intention for their children, the Native Americans of Ohio.⁷¹ As the negotiations extended into their second month, many of the Indians present accepted the realities of the situation as they were not going to be able to keep most of their lands in the Ohio region. Blue Jacket asserted, "You now see that all the chiefs and warriors around you have joined in the good work of

⁶⁸ Little Turtle's Address at the Treaty of Greenville, July 30, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 577-78..

⁶⁹ General Wayne's Speech at the Treaty of Greenville, July 30, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 577-78.

⁷⁰ General Wayne's Speech at the Treaty of Greenville, July 30, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 577-78.

⁷¹ General Wayne's Speech at the Treaty of Greenville, July 30, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 577-78.

peace, which is now accomplished. We now request you to inform our elder brother, General Washington, of it; and of the cheerful unanimity which has marked their determinations.”⁷²

Twelve years of continued pressure by the United States using settler colonial tactics on the indigenous nations of Ohio finally produced almost near complete control of the Ohio country by the Americans. When the Treaty of Paris was first ratified in 1783, the United States attempted to dictate policy on the borderlands using the “right of conquest” model whereby the Indians of Ohio would be required to cede some of their lands through treaty negotiations to the United States as a result of supporting the British during the Revolution and losing the war on the battlefield. The problem with this reasoning as pointed out by many of the Native groups was that the United States never conquered them in battle and they were not a defeated entity. This policy proved to be an unmitigated disaster for the United States and they could not completely overwhelm all of the Indian nations of Ohio.

At approximately the same time, the American government received pressure from its borderlands residents, including squatters and land speculators, who clamored for protection from the possibility of continued Indian attacks. After repeated incidents between the American settlers and the Indians in Ohio the United States government reacted to this pressure and sent their troops onto to the borderlands to defeat the Natives in battle which was a strategic mistake for the American government. Two defeats of the American army encouraged the federal government to reconsider battlefield tactics and

⁷² Blue Jacket and General Wayne’s Speeches at the Treaty of Greenville, August 2, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 578-84.

eventually Wayne was able to use “total warfare” methods and defeat the Natives at Fallen Timbers in 1794.

By the beginning of August 1795 it was apparent that the United States was going to receive just about everything they wanted in the upcoming peace treaty because they held the upper hand in the negotiations. Wayne proved to be a skilled mediator and despite any minor protestations on the part of Indians such as Little Turtle and Blue Jacket, they like most of the other Indians present at Greenville realized that the treaty was going to strip them of much of their ancestral homelands in Ohio and relegate them to the northwest quadrant of the territory where the farming was much more problematic because of the infertile soil in the region. The only thing that remained for the Native groups was to officially sign the document that would change their lives forever and open up the Northwest Territory for continued American settlement.

CHAPTER X

A REMARKABLE LAND GRAB

American settler colonialism culminated in the Ohio territory with the passage of the Treaty of Greenville in August 1795. For over a decade the United States cajoled and intimidated the Natives living in Ohio to cede their lands to the expanding American empire, but once this treaty was signed the United States gained firm control over most of the lands in the Ohio territory. As these processes proved ineffective the United States sent in their untrained military to remove the Natives living in the territory that the Americans coveted. When the first two of these military expeditions resulted in abject failure for the United States federal military leaders determined to change how the American army would engage their formidable adversary on the borderlands. With some modification of United States military policy the Americans were more successful under the leadership of Wayne who eventually defeated the assembled Indian warriors at Fallen Timbers in August 1794. Once this victory was assured on the battlefield the United States firmly controlled the Ohio region. What remained to be seen was how the American officials would treat their conquered Native opponents through peace negotiations.

On August 3, 1795, the Indian chiefs assembled signed the Treaty of Greenville. The first two sections of this treaty were basic to any peace agreement and allowed the United States to dictate the terms. The Americans claimed that peace occurred and was

perpetual meaning that both sides were responsible for maintaining these conditions. The Americans gave the Indians ninety days to release their captives to the commanding officer at Greenville, Fort Wayne, or Fort Defiance. Until this occurred, ten Native chiefs would remain as prisoners of war at Greenville.¹



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Figure 1. Treaty of Greenville.²

¹ Treaty of Peace between the United States and Indians, August 3, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:410-16.

² George Brown Tindall, *America: A Narrative History, Sixth Edition*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 1-100.

Article three of this document set forth the new demarcation line in Ohio. This boundary was similar to the one forwarded at Fort Harmar. The border began at the mouth of the Cuyahoga River in what is now Cleveland, Ohio. It ran southward to the southern portion of the Cuyahoga River in present-day Akron, Ohio. It crossed the portage between the Cuyahoga and Tuscarawas Rivers and proceeded southward to a point north of Fort Laurens in modern Tuscarawas County, Ohio. At that juncture, the line proceeded in a southwestern direction to the modern Ohio-Indiana state line. In addition, “The said Indian Tribes do hereby cede & relinquish for ever all their claims to the Lands lying Eastwardly & Southward of the General Boundary Line now described.”³ This treaty gave the United States control of three-quarters of Ohio’s arable lands and required the Natives to confine themselves to the western portion of the territory.⁴

Article four of this settlement stated that the United States would “now deliver to the said Indian Tribes a quantity of goods to the value of Twenty Thousand Dollars, the receipt whereof they do hereby acknowledge & henceforward every year for ever the United States will deliver at some convenient place northward of the River Ohio, like useful goods, suitable to the circumstances of the Indians of the value of Nine Thousand five hundred Dollars.”⁵ The nations who would receive these annual presents included the Wyandots, Shawnees, Delawares, and Miamis. The American government offered the Indian nations the opportunity to take their annuity in the form of domesticated animals, husbandry implements, and other necessities to maintain their homesteads. The

³ Treaty of Peace between the United States and Indians, August 3, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:410-16.

⁴ Treaty of Peace between the United States and Indians, August 3, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:410-16.

⁵ Treaty of Peace between the United States and Indians, August 3, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:410-16.

American officials finally realized that hard currency was of little value to many of the Native nations.⁶

The fifth section of this treaty asserted that the Indian nations shall enjoy unmolested use of the lands within their domain without interference from the United States. If the Natives living on those lands ever decided to sell their property, they “are to be sold only to the United States, and until such sale the United States will protect all the said Indian Tribes in the quiet enjoyment of their lands against all citizens of the United States & against all other white persons, who intrude upon the same.”⁷ In addition, the Indians acknowledged themselves to be under the protection of the American government only. They would cease their efforts to negotiate with the British for their defense. The United States administration was the father and the Indian nations were the obedient children.⁸

Article six stated “If any citizen of the United States or any other white person or persons shall presume to settle upon the Lands now relinquished by the United States, such citizen or other person shall be out of the protection of the United States & the Indian Tribe on whose Land the settlement may be made may drive off the settler or punish him in such manner as they shall think fit.”⁹ The government realized that these individuals could cause great damage to both the United States and the Indian nations

⁶ Treaty of Peace between the United States and Indians, August 3, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:410-16.

⁷ Treaty of Peace between the United States and Indians, August 3, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:410-16.

⁸ Treaty of Peace between the United States and Indians, August 3, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:410-16.

⁹ Treaty of Peace between the United States and Indians, August 3, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:410-16.

residing on this terrain. This provision encouraged Indian acquiescence to the treaty. In August 1795, not all of the Indians wanted to make peace with the United States. There were still enough displeased Natives living on the borderlands in Ohio that they could have caused further problems for the Americans. An American squatter invasion of lands of the Natives might easily ignite further warfare. Wayne and the other commissioners realized this and did not want to fuel renewed conflict.¹⁰

The seventh section of this accord affirmed, “The said Tribes of Indians parties to this Treaty shall be at liberty to hunt within the territory & Lands which they have now ceded to the United States without hindrance or molestation, so long as they demean themselves peaceably & offer no injury to the people of the United States.”¹¹ If the United States ever wanted the Native Americans to accept them as their new father, they would have to do everything in their power to make the lives of the Indians that much easier. If that included hunting on American territory, the Americans were willing to make that concession.¹²

The eighth stipulation of this contract claimed, “Trade shall be opened with the said Indian Tribes & they do hereby respectively engage to afford protection to such persons with their property as shall be duly licensed to reside among them.”¹³ If an American abused this privilege, they would lose their license and would face even more

¹⁰ Treaty of Peace between the United States and Indians, August 3, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:410-16.

¹¹ Treaty of Peace between the United States and Indians, August 3, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:410-16.

¹² Treaty of Peace between the United States and Indians, August 3, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:410-16.

¹³ Treaty of Peace between the United States and Indians, August 3, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:410-16.

severe penalties. The United States government realized how important trade would still be with the Indian nations. Even though these individuals were defeated peoples, they still had valuable merchandise such as furs and other durable goods that the Americans coveted. Trading with the Natives could still be a lucrative proposition for the American traders and this portion of the treaty attempted to make some guidelines for future exchanges in the Ohio region.¹⁴

The ninth portion of this agreement asserted, “Lest the firm piece (sic) and friendship now established should be interrupted by the misconduct of individuals, the United States and the said Indian Tribes agree that for injuries done by individuals on either side, no private revenge or retaliation shall take place.”¹⁵ This provision was specifically designed to ensure that there would not be a repeat of the violence that permeated the western United States at the end of the eighteenth century. If an injury occurred to an Indian, they were to report it to the president or the superintendent appointed by him as the United States endeavored to make the Natives into an ally that the Americans could begin to assimilate into everyday life on the borderlands.¹⁶

Article ten stated, “All other Treaties heretofore made between the United States and the said Indian Tribes or any of them since the Treaty of 1783, between the United States and Great Britain that come within the purview of this Treaty shall henceforth

¹⁴ Treaty of Peace between the United States and Indians, August 3, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:410-16.

¹⁵ Treaty of Peace between the United States and Indians, August 3, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:410-16.

¹⁶ Treaty of Peace between the United States and Indians, August 3, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:410-16.

cease and become void.”¹⁷ In essence, the United States gained all that it wanted in the Ohio region. The passage of this section of the agreement was almost anticlimactic in that there was nothing more for the Americans to do to get what they wanted in respect to the treaty making process of the 1780s and 1790s. For the Natives, it was the final realization that their homelands would never belong to them again. This section of the agreement did not apply to the other states such as New York and Pennsylvania, as the Treaty of Fort Stanwix still remained in place.¹⁸

The treaty reflected Wayne’s success on the battlefield and his command of his troops was markedly different than that seen by Harmar or St. Clair. He used all of the advantages available to him including Indian scouts and rangers to allow the United States to achieve victory at Fallen Timbers. He believed that once the Battle of Fallen Timbers occurred, the Natives realized that they had no choice but to make peace with the Americans. After this encounter, the Indians understood that there was nothing they could do to stop the American onslaught into their territories. Even if the British had let the Natives into Fort Miami after the Battle of Fallen Timbers, it would not have mattered because the British were too weak at this garrison to prevent the United States soldiers from marching at will through northwestern Ohio. An often unnoticed aspect of this entire period was the utter destruction wreaked by Wayne and his men on the surrounding countryside after the conclusion of the battle.¹⁹

¹⁷ Treaty of Peace between the United States and Indians, August 3, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:410-16.

¹⁸ Treaty of Peace between the United States and Indians, August 3, 1795, *MiHC*, 20:410-16.

¹⁹ Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 199-203.

At this time, Wayne and his men burned villages and cornfields and tried to show the Natives who the true military power in Ohio was at that time. By doing this, the Americans dictated the terms of the eventual peace process. The message was received by the Natives who were tired of repeated British promises to assist them in their time of need and these individuals determined to enter the treaty making process by relying solely on their own abilities. Wayne was the right man for the American army in 1794 because he understood about the importance of total warfare. Rather than using the methods employed by his predecessors, he tried to use a type of total warfare that would strike fear into the hearts of his enemies. His greatest strength was the ability to strike at the Indian communities where they were the most vulnerable including settlements, cornfields, and civilians. By launching total warfare, he weakened the abilities of the Native warriors to defend their communities.²⁰

On August 9, Wayne sent a letter to Pickering in which he stated, "It is with infinite pleasure I now inform you, that a treaty of peace between the United States of America & all the late hostile tribes of Indians North West of the Ohio, was Unanimously & Voluntarily agreed to, & cheerfully (sic) signed by all the *Sachams* (sic) & *War Chiefs* of the respective Nations, on the 3rd & exchanged on the 7th."²¹ He failed to go into detail about how laborious these proceedings actually were for over a month and how much effort had been required to convince many of the Natives that the Treaty of Greenville was in their best interests. Wayne also failed to mention the questions raised by some of the Indian leaders including Little Turtle which could have derailed the entire process.

²⁰ Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 199-203.

²¹ Wayne to Pickering, August 9, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 442-45.

He asserted that all the chiefs and sachems optimistically signed the document which was only partially true as many of these individuals still had reservations about the process even after its completion. The language used by Wayne in this message suggests that the general was relieved to finish the meetings and wished to be done with the entire affair. His comments led one to believe that he thought this peace treaty would be lasting and that the Natives would provide little, if any resistance, to American settlements.²²

On August 12, Little Turtle informed Wayne that he “was fully convinced that the treaty was wisely and benevolently calculated to promote the mutual interest, and insure (sic) the permanent happiness of the Indians, and their Father, the Americans.; so it was his determined resolution to adhere religiously to its stipulations.”²³ He further asserted that in the early stages of the peace negotiations, he was unaware of the liberal nature of what the Indians gave to the Americans at the previous treaty negotiations. As such, he felt obliged to speak on behalf of his brothers and beseeched the American government not to think badly of him.²⁴

He now claimed that he had no problems with the contract signed at Greenville. He suggested the name of several traders that he wished might work with the Indians in the Ohio region to maintain good relations between the United States and the Natives. He would now do everything in his power to ensure a continued friendship on the part of the Native Americans and the United States government. Again, Little Turtle showed the wisdom of his diplomatic skills as he told the Americans what they wanted to hear.

²² Wayne to Pickering, August 9, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 442-45.

²³ Little Turtle Conference with Anthony Wayne, August 12, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 583.

²⁴ Little Turtle Conference with Anthony Wayne, August 12, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 583.

Although Little Turtle worked for years to fight off the Americans, he now realized that he and his allies had no other choice but to sign the peace treaty offered by Wayne because of their weakened position.²⁵

Little Turtle, who questioned many of the provisions of the Treaty of Greenville, remained loyal to the United States until he died during the War of 1812. By this point, however, the younger warriors such as Tecumseh saw him as a relic of a bygone era. Most notably, Little Turtle worked to keep his people from the alcohol so readily supplied by the Americans. He stated: "This liquor that they introduce into our country is more to be feared than the gun and tomahawk." He further stated, "More of us have died since the Treaty of Greenville than we lost by the years of war before, and it is all owing to the introduction of liquor among us."²⁶ The fate of his Miami brethren was a tragic tale in American history. These people faced devastation by alcohol related deaths and smallpox so that their numbers fell to only 300 to 500 people by the early 1900s.²⁷

The Treaty of Greenville was the culmination of decades of an unscrupulous British policy towards their Native allies. After the defeat at Fallen Timbers, many of the Natives began to search out Wayne to propose some kind of peace because they believed themselves to be a defeated entity. Men such as McKee worked feverishly to prevent this from happening because it could cause a rupture in British-Indian relations on the borderlands. This concern masked a deeper betrayal among the employees of the British Crown. The agents of Great Britain repeatedly used the Indians in Ohio to forward their own diplomatic aims as the British wanted to maintain their presence on the American

²⁵ Little Turtle Conference with Anthony Wayne, August 12, 1795, *ASP:IA*, 583.

²⁶ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 334-35.

²⁷ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 334-35.

borderlands. By repeatedly making promises of more and more aid to their Native cohorts, the British government set the Indians up for failure. During this entire era, the British officials knew that they engaged in duplicitous actions and often feared for their own lives if the Indians possibly turned on them. Once the Treaty of Greenville became reality, these agents needed to reconsider how they were going to supply their Native collaborators especially after these nations ceded much of Ohio's land to the United States.²⁸

Soon after the Treaty of Greenville, Simcoe spoke to the Six Nations at Fort Erie during on August 28. He hoped that the Six Nations would continue in a firm alliance with the government of Great Britain and he railed against Pickering's criticisms of the British government the previous year. He stated that the reason the British did not evacuate the American forts was because the United States did not honor aspects of the Treaty of Paris. The "King has retained the posts ever since, and will retain them, until the United States perform their promises."²⁹ He further stated that the British did not desire a war with the United States and he promised continued English support to their Native allies.³⁰

The Six Nations replied to Simcoe the following day. They stated, "We are happy to hear that the long friendship which has subsisted between our Father's subjects and us, is now renewed, we doubt not but that it will continue as hitherto. It also gives us great

²⁸ Larry L. Nelson, *A Man of Distinction Among Them: Alexander McKee and the Ohio Country Frontier, 1754-1799*, (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 1999), 149-77.

²⁹ Lt. Gov. Simcoe's Speech to the Six Nations, August 28, 1795, *MiHC*, 25:94-100.

³⁰ Lt. Gov. Simcoe's Speech to the Six Nations, August 28, 1795, *MiHC*, 25:94-100.

satisfaction to hear that our Father's bounty will be continued to us."³¹ Although they appreciated the support of the British, they claimed they feared disposing of their lands to the Americans unless Great Britain increased the amount of assistance provided to the Indian nations. The Six Nations lamented, "Since the War between the British and the Americans was concluded we found ourselves getting poorer than ever, many of our young men & warriors were killed in that war, whose widows and children were left destitute of any support except our Father's bounty, which of late has been less sufficient for their support than formerly, the reason is, that from the number of whites settling round us the game has decreased and our situation become more distressed. We are fearful that we should be under the necessity of disposing of some part of our land unless it was possible that the King's bounty could be encreased (sic) to us."³²

This was a not too subtle request of the British to increase the amount of provisions supplied to the Natives or they would be in a very bad situation which could cause the Americans to run roughshod over Indian lands in Ohio and the rest of the western regions of the United States. The Six Nations still perhaps foolishly believed that Great Britain would supply them with the necessities of life. The Six Nations also complained, "It hurts the feelings of the Six Nations to hear of the Treaty which our Western Brethren have made with the American General Wayne."³³ The Six Nations had

³¹ Reply of the Six Nations to His Excellency Governor Simcoe's Speech, August 29, 1795, *MiHC*, 25:101-02.

³² Reply of the Six Nations to His Excellency Governor Simcoe's Speech, August 29, 1795, *MiHC*, 25:101-02.

³³ Reply of the Six Nations to His Excellency Governor Simcoe's Speech, August 29, 1795, *MiHC*, 25:101-02.

been at the forefront of treaty negotiations since the 1780s regarding land that was for the most part not rightfully theirs to give up.³⁴

In the months following the conclusion of the peace negotiations at Greenville, members of the American federal government worked to make sure that the treaty received implementation. Pickering corresponded with Wayne on September 18 and told the general that he finally received news that Wayne concluded peace negotiations with the Indians in August.³⁵ Two days later, Wayne told Pickering that as he concluded the peace treaty, he encountered many problems beyond his control. He saved special criticism for the British Indian department who he accused of doing everything to prevent a treaty from occurring. He made a special mention to the Secretary of War, “You will perceive that this Treaty in every part is framed agreeably to the principles of the instructions with which I as honor’d & that ‘while it guards & secures the just interests & reasonable Claims of the United States, it also Manifests, towards the Indian tribes, all that liberality and Humanity of which the United States were desirous of exhibiting the most convincing proofs.’”³⁶ Wayne attempted to show his superior that he was a faithful representative of the United States government. He wanted to continue his employment by the government in some official capacity and this letter was his way to show how well he followed orders.³⁷

³⁴ Reply of the Six Nations to His Excellency Governor Simcoe’s Speech, August 29, 1795, *MiHC*, 25:101-02.

³⁵ Pickering to Wayne, September 18, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 455-56.

³⁶ Wayne to Pickering, September 20, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 460-62.

³⁷ Wayne to Pickering, September 20, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 460-62.

Pickering responded on October 3, 1795 and told the general that he “sent the copy of the treaty you have made with the Indians to the President: the terms of it I am persuaded will be highly satisfactory to him.”³⁸ He also stated, “The only thing to be apprehended is that the want of a more full representation of some of the tribes may hereafter furnish a pretence for depredations.”³⁹ Pickering stated that this was only a minor oversight and if the Americans took possession of the posts in the United States occupied by the British, it would be a negligible setback. Pickering ordered Wayne to disband the main force from Greenville due to the costs of maintaining that post. Wayne was to return with the body of his force to the Ohio River region and leave a detachment at Greenville in case further troubles arose.⁴⁰

Wayne sent a communication two days later in which he raised concerns that the “British are Vigilantly employ’d in repairing & strengthening the fortifications at the foot of the rapids of the Miamis, Detroit &c &c & have stopt (sic) the water communication of the Miamis of the lake, which was open for traders of every description until a few days since.”⁴¹ While this was not yet a direct violation of any treaty, Wayne saw it as a hostile move. He further claimed that McKee recently returned from Montreal to Detroit with a large quantity of goods to be dispersed among the various Indian nations. This should not have surprised him as the British were going to do everything in their power to undercut the Americans while trying to supply the Natives. These acts, along with

³⁸ Pickering to Wayne, October 3, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 462-64.

³⁹ Pickering to Wayne, October 3, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 462-64.

⁴⁰ Pickering to Wayne, October 3, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 462-64.

⁴¹ Wayne to Pickering, October 5, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 464-66.

Spanish incursions east of the Mississippi River raised great concern for the general and Wayne also asked for increased provisions for his men should he have to take the field of battle yet again.⁴²

Wayne communicated with the secretary of war on November 9 and claimed that moving his troops at that time sent the wrong message to the Indians. He stated if the Americans moved out of Greenville at that time, the British agents would tell the Natives that the United States had given up all hope of maintaining the posts in Ohio. In addition, the general believed that “The opinion now sported by the British at Detroit is – ‘that the posts will not be surrender’d up – as the treaty was not ratified in toto, & that a War between the United States & great (sic) Britain wou’d probably take place in the spring’”.⁴³ As such, he requested to Pickering that he and his men not leave Greenville before the first of April 1796. This was a shrewd move on the part of Wayne as he realized that his newfound victory was tenuous at best in hostile terrain on the part of the Indians that wanted no part of the Treaty of Greenville.⁴⁴

At approximately the same time as Wayne made his comments to Pickering, the Spanish government attempted to appease the United States over matters related to the southwestern portion of the lands ceded in the Treaty of Paris in 1783. The Spanish feared that the United States and Great Britain would ally themselves after the passage of the Jay Treaty and attack Spanish interests. This was unlikely, but the Spanish saw

⁴² Wayne to Pickering, October 5, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 464-66.

⁴³ Wayne to Pickering, November 9, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 468-70.

⁴⁴ Wayne to Pickering, November 9, 1795, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 468-70.

themselves in an untenable position and as a result they panicked and brokered a treaty with the Americans that proved beneficial to the interests of the United States in the areas near the Mississippi River. The American agent to Spain, Thomas Pinckney, signed the Treaty of San Lorenzo, or Pinckney's Treaty, in October 1795. The terms of this treaty stated that the Spanish recognized the boundaries claimed by the Americans in the Treaty of Paris in 1783. Additionally, this treaty allowed American access to the Mississippi River and the right to store goods in New Orleans for three years without duties imposed on them. This agreement was a major prize for the United States because it opened up much of the region surrounding the Mississippi River to American settlement. This was a further blow to the Indians living in the regions west of the Appalachian Mountains. Slowly but surely the United States began to assert its own sense of self-importance and squeezed the Natives further and further west.⁴⁵

Whether most Americans knew it at the time, Jay's Treaty and Pinckney's Treaty allowed the United States the ability to expand their rapidly increasing empire westward. With the British threat reduced in the west and the Spanish in the southwest, the door was open for the Americans and their residents to increase their holdings in the lands ceded to them in the Treaty of Paris. This would have a direct effect on the Native Americans living throughout the United States. As the American domain expanded and there was less of a threat from European powers to intercede, the Native Americans became much less relevant. As the eighteenth century ended and the nineteenth century began, the United States held sway over the lands that previously claimed by other European

⁴⁵ George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 80-81.

powers. In Ohio, the United States quickly looked to gain the lands held by the Native Americans following the Treaty of Greenville.⁴⁶

The Americans were not happy with maintaining the status quo and they wanted to gain all the lands possible in Ohio for American settlers. The first thing needed was to evacuate the British from their posts on American soil. Some of the members of the British government continued to lament the terms of the Jay Treaty. Simcoe wrote to Lord Dorchester at the end of December and stated that “It appears to me there can be little doubt, but that the withdrawing of the King’s Forces will destroy all confidence on the King’s Power among the Indian Nations.”⁴⁷ He further stated that after his interactions with Joseph Brant he became convinced that it was getting harder and harder for the British to regulate and moderate the views of the different Indian chiefs. These are some damning comments from a well-respected member of the British government in Canada. It seems readily apparent that many of the members of the Canadian government were hesitant to follow through on the terms of the Jay Treaty. So, even though the Jay Treaty received censure from many Americans, it received a different kind of rebuke from English officials. No one in either country seemed to be happy with the results of this agreement.⁴⁸

As both the Americans and the British complained about the results of the Jay Treaty the man that negotiated this agreement had opinions of his own. On May 1, 1796,

⁴⁶ From J.G. Simcoe to Lord Dorchester, December 22, 1795, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 4:164-65.

⁴⁷ From J.G. Simcoe to Lord Dorchester, December 22, 1795, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 4:164-65.

⁴⁸ From J.G. Simcoe to Lord Dorchester, December 22, 1795, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 4:164-65.

Jay wrote to Lord Grenville and stated that despite the criticisms of this pact, he believed “The treaty will go into operation and be supported by a great majority of the people; a majority comprising the greater part of the men most distinguished by talents, worth, and weight.”⁴⁹ The poorer sections of the country could complain all they wanted, but as long as those with money appreciated the treaty, Jay was happy. Although he respected the rights of people to make judgments on the settlement, he claimed that he and the British representatives worked hard on this pact in order to restore a sense of amity between the two countries. There was no intention by either side to make an agreement which would harm the other.⁵⁰

Whether members of the higher levels of the British government were fully in agreement with the treaty, these men soon attempted to make a smooth transition from British to American control at places such as Niagara, Detroit, and Michilimackinac. Dorchester claimed, “I must observe that the late open & liberal conduct of the Executive Government of the United States, evinces a sincere intention of carrying the Treaty fully into effect; and there is every reason to believe that where doubts or difficulties shall arise they will be amicably decided in the way prescribed by the Treaty, by means of commissioners”.⁵¹ Men such as Dorchester realized that the treaty was a reality and that they needed to make the best of the situation.⁵²

On June 27, Wayne reported to the new secretary of war James McHenry that the passage of the Jay Treaty irritated French bureaucrats as well because that broke the

⁴⁹ From John Jay to Lord Grenville, May 1, 1796, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 4:253-54.

⁵⁰ From John Jay to Lord Grenville, May 1, 1796, Cruikshank, *Simcoe Papers*, 4:253-54.

⁵¹ Lord Dorchester to Lt. Gov. J.G. Simcoe, June 13, 1796, *MiHC*, 25:124-25.

⁵² Lord Dorchester to Lt. Gov. J.G. Simcoe, June 13, 1796, *MiHC*, 25:124-25.

Treaty of Alliance passed by the French and the Americans in 1778. He asserted, “That the Treaty with Great Britain, had irritated the French Directory – that orders were already eventually given to Capture every American Vessel bound to or from a British port.”⁵³ The French also accused the president of being timid in his dealings with Great Britain. France also threatened to bring Spain in on these dealings by getting that country to refuse free navigation of the Mississippi River in direct violation of Pinckney’s Treaty.⁵⁴

On July 11 Wayne sent a letter to McHenry in which he stated, “I have the honor & pleasure to announce to you, that the Troops of the United States are by this period in peaceable possession of the posts of Detroit & Miamis; & that the polite & friendly manner, in which the Evacuation has taken place (a particular account of which you will see in the enclosed copies of letters from Colo England & Capt DeButts) is truly worthy of British Officers & does honor to them & the Nation to which they belong.”⁵⁵ While this may have seemed like a small move, it had huge ramifications for the British, the Indians, and the Americans. For the British, this symbolized an eventual loss of control on the western American borderlands. While the British government in London was more concerned about events in Europe, the commissioners in Canada lamented a loss of power and prestige as they understood the ramifications of the recent events on the borderlands. While they still had firm control of British Canada, any support they would give their Native American allies would now come from a country that had lost some

⁵³ Wayne to McHenry, June 27, 1796, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 489-91.

⁵⁴ Wayne to McHenry, June 27, 1796, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 489-91.

⁵⁵ Wayne to McHenry, July 11, 1796, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 498-99.

power in North America. While Great Britain remained a preeminent power in the world, the loss of the American forts was a direct blow to British prestige.⁵⁶

Because the Americans would soon take unconditional authority over that fort as well, McHenry told Wayne that “if Miamis is not absolutely essential as a place of depot, and link in the chain of communication and defence, that it should be left ungarrisoned”.⁵⁷ Furthermore, if Wayne needed to use it as a depot, it should contain as few American soldiers as possible. The eventual complete abandonment of Fort Miami by the British was an absolute signal to the Native Americans that the United States was now in control over most of Ohio. The desertion of these posts by the British had to be a demoralizing blow to any of the Indians that still held out hope of reclaiming their lost lands. What happened next for the damaged Indian confederacy was unclear. The Americans moved swiftly in the years after the Greenville treaty through unscrupulous means to remove the Indians from their lands in northwestern Ohio.⁵⁸

Wayne wrote to McHenry after the Americans took control of Fort Miami and stated that he was in need of more provisions for these borderland outposts. A request from a general for more provisions was nothing new, but what was unusual about this letter was the fact that Wayne wrote it stating that part of these provisions needed to go to the Indians that besieged the Americans at these posts. From the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, the Natives had almost always gone to the British when they needed supplies. Now that the United States was in control of the American posts, the Indians came to Wayne and his men for subsistence. Along with the passage of treaties and the

⁵⁶ Wayne to McHenry, July 11, 1796, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 498-99.

⁵⁷ McHenry to Wayne, July 16, 1796, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 499-500.

⁵⁸ McHenry to Wayne, July 16, 1796, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 499-500.

evacuation of forts, these provisions reinforced Indian dependence on United States to help their families live in times of food shortage. This is not to say the Indians would not still go to Canada for British help, but American aid signaled a new type of interaction in Ohio. The Americans learned the best way to keep the possibility open of the Native groups allying with them was to provide them with provisions especially as winter approached. Whether or not the majority of the Indians would trust the Americans enough to come to them for assistance was questionable.⁵⁹

On September 20, 1796 Wayne stated to McHenry, “Permit me now Sir Officially to announce to you the complete possession of all the posts on the American side of the line of Demarcation Agreeably to Treaty VIZ Michilimackinac, Detroit, Miamis, Niagara & Oswego with their dependencies inclusive, which have all been surrender’d up to the Troops of the United States, by the respective British Commandants, in the most polite, friendly & accommodating manner; - without any injury or damage – other than what time has made.”⁶⁰ In addition, he informed the secretary of war of the ruinous state that Detroit was in and how much money he believed it would take to repair that garrison. Despite the costs involved, Wayne thought that it was vital for the Americans to repair the fort at Detroit and make it an American stronghold.⁶¹

Wayne stated on October 3 in his letter to McHenry that several of the Indian chiefs that signed the Treaty of Greenville including Blue Jacket were on their way to Philadelphia to meet with Washington. Interestingly enough, “The *Little Turtle* a Miamia

⁵⁹ Wayne to McHenry, July 22, 1796, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 501-04

⁶⁰ Wayne to McHenry, September 20, 1796, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 525-29.

⁶¹ Wayne to McHenry, September 20, 1796, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 525-29.

(sic) Chief who also claims that honor, & who is his rival for fame and power - & said to be daily gaining ground with the Wabash Indians – refuses or declines to proceed in Company with *Blue Jacket*.”⁶² Little Turtle’s refusal to join Blue Jacket suggests that there was still a strong difference of opinion among the Natives as to how to proceed diplomatically. It is almost as if these men made their way to the seat of the federal government as some kind of novelty.⁶³

Wayne’s last official correspondence to McHenry was on November 12, 1796. In that letter, he stated that he planned to make his winter headquarters at Pittsburgh. Before this occurred, he made a trip to Presque Isle, arriving on November 18. At this location, Wayne suffered a recurrence of gout. He languished at Presque Isle for several weeks and then died on December 15, 1796. The commanding general of America’s first decisive victory over the Native Americans was now dead, with the future of its Indian inhabitants still in doubt. Wayne gained an enormous victory on the battlefield and at the conference table even though he was not a trained diplomat. The question remained what would happen next to the Indians living in northwestern Ohio.⁶⁴

Now that the United States gained concessions from the British and the Spanish, they believed they were the dominant power in North America and had the ability to expand their empire. How would the United States attempt to parcel out these new lands in Ohio? Following the Treaty of Greenville, Americans rushed into Ohio in staggering

⁶² Wayne to McHenry, October 3, 1796, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 532-33.

⁶³ Wayne to McHenry, October 3, 1796, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 532-33.

⁶⁴ Wayne to McHenry, November 12, 1796, Knopf, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms*, 544-46.

numbers. In 1796, there were 5,000 Americans living in Ohio. By 1800, there were 45,365 pioneers living in this territory. What this massive influx of American settlers suggests is that these people were not gaining land on the Eastern Seaboard. America was growing quickly in its western and southwestern regions and people clamored for land.⁶⁵

In Ohio, people bought land in the southern and eastern portions of the state at a furious level. This was not enough to satisfy the needs of the American residents of this state and what occurred was a push for more lands in Ohio. The people standing in the way of this occurring were the Native Americans living in the western portions of the state. The American government would work to take these lands from the Ohio Indians in the same dubious fashion that they had done previously. Over the next several decades, the United States would try all sorts of measures to gain the lands given to the Natives in 1795.⁶⁶

One of the first land deals to involve the territory of Ohio was in relation to the state of Connecticut and her western land claims. In 1786, Connecticut surrendered her western land claims to Congress after an intense debate. This had been a contentious issue as many of the new states were hesitant to give up their vast tracts of land to a federal government that many of Americans did not trust. The individual states believed that the federal government, as structured under the Articles of Confederation, would not and could not help them ameliorate their financial debts. As part of this deal, however, Connecticut retained a tract of land that ran west from the Pennsylvania border to central

⁶⁵ Barbara Alice Mann, *George Washington's War on Native America* (Westport, CN: Praeger, 2005), 195-97.

⁶⁶ Mann, *George Washington's War on Native America*, 195-97.

Ohio. Connecticut called this area the Western Reserve and their officials estimated this encompassed approximately 3 million acres. This vast tract of territory allowed the state of Connecticut to attempt to make a profit by selling these lands to individual corporations that could pay substantial sums of money to the state to help them eliminate some of their financial obligations.⁶⁷

The ability of Connecticut to maintain this amount of arable land was crucial as the government under the Articles of Confederation did not give the federal government the power to tax the states to raise revenue. As such, it was up to the individual states to raise revenue to pay off any debts they incurred during the Revolution. The state of Connecticut eventually sold all but the western parts of this territory to a group of speculators known as the Connecticut Land Company. The western 500,000 acres of this new territory was placed in reserve for Connecticut residents that suffered financial losses during the Revolution and became known as the “Firelands”.⁶⁸ This problem with the Firelands was that the United States could not enter this area without violating the spirit of the Treaty of Greenville. There would be wrangling over the next decade as to how to make the Firelands open to American settlement. United States leaders eventually worked to dispossess the Natives of the lands not given to them in the Treaty of Greenville through their usual mode of high pressure land negotiations.⁶⁹

This would occur in the near future, but by selling the eastern sections of this land tract to the Connecticut Land Company, the state enabled itself to operate from a position

⁶⁷ George W. Knepper, *Ohio and its People* (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 2003), 48-51, 80-84.

⁶⁸ Knepper, *Ohio and its People*, 48-49; 80-81; 102.

⁶⁹ Knepper, *Ohio and its People*, 48-49; 80-81; 102.

of strength rather than weakness and they enabled themselves to work out of their debt. This company began to survey the lands east of the Cuyahoga River in 1796 led by General Moses Cleaveland and the Connecticut Reserve, or Western Reserve, began to attract some settlers shortly thereafter. The corporation only surveyed lands east of the Cuyahoga River since the lands west of the Cuyahoga were Indian regions beyond the boundary line of the Treaty of Greenville and were technically Indian domains. The corporation plotted its possessions in an unbending arrangement, but its communities were only five-miles-square as compared to the six-mile-design used by the Congress in the Seven Ranges. Ultimately, evaluators planned a settlement on the east side of the Cuyahoga River and named it Cleveland after the lead inspector of the Connecticut Land Company. Eventually, this region would attract settlers, but it would take time before this region became densely populated.⁷⁰

At the same time as the Connecticut Western Reserve became a part of the American landscape, Congress attempted to pass laws to split the remaining lands in eastern and southern Ohio. Many living in New England feared losing their population if settlers found land in Ohio relatively cheap. Those living in Ohio wanted low prices for the land so that individual investors could buy it up. An act, passed in 1796, established 2.5 million acres of land south of the Western Reserve. This area of land was the United States Military Tract. The area allowed surveyors to examine the land in five-mile-square townships and veterans of the Revolution purchased land. The territory continued to modify the sale of land until Ohio reached statehood in 1803. What the Connecticut Western Reserve and the United States Military Tract suggest is the American

⁷⁰ Knepper, *Ohio and its People*, 48-49; 80-81; 102.

government was serious about parceling out the lands in Ohio they received in the Treaty of Greenville. Although sales of these new lands lagged for a time after 1796, the history of the American government showed that it would only be a matter of time before the United States would attempt to wrest the lands in northwestern Ohio from the Indians.⁷¹

As the Americans made their plans for the continued settlement of Ohio, the British attempted to recover from the abandonment of their posts on American soil. The officials in Canada were in an unwinnable situation as they tried to maintain the power of the British Empire in the United States. On January 20, 1797, McKee wrote to John Johnson and stated, “During a long period of difficulties among the Indian Tribes and pending the evacuation of the Posts and those parts of the Indian Country from whence their sustenance was generally drawn, the humanity & Policy of Great Britain through the Commander in Chief Lord Dorchester directed their distress to be relieved as well in Provisions as in an extra allowance of Cloathing (sic), until they shall be enabled to plant for their own support.”⁷²

McKee realized that if the British wanted to maintain a presence among the Natives, they would need to continue to contribute to the well-being of the Indians by providing them with the necessities of life. McKee informed Johnson that while the British relinquished their posts, they did not abandon their Indian comrades. McKee believed, “The calamities & the circumstances of the Indians has been such as to call for a great additional expence (sic), such as provisions over & above the customary allowance for the post of Detroit the additional establishment of the Department and in

⁷¹ Knepper, *Ohio and its People*, 81-94.

⁷² Col. Alexander McKee to Sir John Johnson, January 20, 1797, *MiHC*, 20:497-99.

taking into Pay the additional & temporary Interpreters.”⁷³ In addition, McKee asserted that additional funds employ interpreters. The British employed these people so that the United States could not use them in their dealings with the Native Americans. He believed that all of these measures, while an extra drain on the British economy, would have long lasting favorable consequences for Great Britain. McKee thought that each of these measures would guarantee that each of the Indian nations would maintain their loyalties to the British while not interacting as much with the Americans on the borderlands.⁷⁴

Two days later, McKee conferred with Captain James Green. He reiterated many of the same things he told to Johnson. He affirmed, “With regard to the consumption of provisions by the Indians, it is necessary I should state for His Excellency’s information that Ninety six thousand Rations & 3500 Bushels of Corn, have been the usual allowance of the Post for Indians Passing & repassing And that an extraordinary allowance has been promised & granted ever since they were driven from their Country.”⁷⁵ These measures were a necessity after the conclusion of the Treaty of Greenville because many of the Indian nations were living under dire circumstances and may not have survived without continued British support.⁷⁶ McKee urged the government to provide more sustenance in these trying times for the Natives. Despite his endeavors, it became readily apparent that the British government tired of repeatedly providing for the Natives living in the United States. At the end of 1797, a report went to the commander in chief that outlined the procedures of giving necessities to the Natives. This dispatch stated in regards to the

⁷³ Col. Alexander McKee to Sir John Johnson, January 20, 1797, *MiHC*, 20:497-99.

⁷⁴ Col. Alexander McKee to Sir John Johnson, January 20, 1797, *MiHC*, 20:497-99.

⁷⁵ Col. Alexander McKee to Capt. James Green, January 22, 1797, *MiHC*, 20:499-501.

⁷⁶ Col. Alexander McKee to Capt. James Green, January 22, 1797, *MiHC*, 20:499-501.

supplying of presents that the Indians were “to be encouraged to depart immediately after to prevent the disposing of their presents & to save the expence of feeding them.”⁷⁷

The years after the passage of the Treaty of Greenville marked an era of an uneasy armistice between the Americans and the Indians. As the United States attempted to expand their landholdings during this era some of the Native groups began to reconsider the pact they made with the Americans in 1795. In June 1799, there were rumblings that many of the western Indians were organizing an armed resistance to American encroachments onto the lands they ceded through the Treaty of Greenville. However, by August of that year the Shawnee Nation informed the Americans that they were willing to abide by the mandates of the Treaty of Greenville and were not inclined to make war against the Americans.⁷⁸

When Thomas Jefferson ascended to the presidency of the United States in 1801, he and his advisors commenced a determined procedure to gain more Indian territories through direct pressure on the Native groups still living east of the Mississippi River. Jefferson believed that the Natives would relinquish their territories to the United States government when American settlers needed more room to expand their landholdings. The President also assumed that the Indians of the western borderlands would hopefully continue to attempt to assimilate into American society and adopt American farm-holding ideals that he believed would be beneficial for each of these Indian groups. If the Natives were unwilling to adjust to American agricultural ideals, dealers working for the United States government would push the Native groups into a negative financial situation so

⁷⁷ Col. Alexander McKee to Capt. James Green, January 22, 1797, *MiHC*, 20:499-501.

⁷⁸ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 313-18.

that they would have no choice but to sell off their properties to pay off the debts that they incurred from American traders.⁷⁹

While Jefferson attempted to assimilate the Indians into American society, he also commanded William Henry Harrison, the governor of the Indiana Territory, to attempt to gain more territories from the western Indians through additional land settlements. Harrison followed his orders and between 1802 and 1809 he was able to procure much of the current states of Indiana and Illinois from the various Indian nations through treaty negotiations. Many of these Native groups became increasingly frustrated at what they perceived as the continued duplicitous nature of American conferences, but they were losing their territories anyway. Eventually, the American government attempted to wrest the remaining lands of the Connecticut Western Reserve from the Indian nations.⁸⁰

In 1805 the federal government had a plan in place to gain the Firelands region of the Connecticut Western Reserve for the United States. On April 2 of that year, Henry Dearborn, the secretary of war, appointed Charles Jouett as a federal commissioner to confer with the Wyandots, Ottawas, Chippewas, and other nations in order to attempt to persuade them to cede these lands to the United States. Dearborn informed Jouett that the United States would offer no more than two cents per acre in these dealings. At the same time, Dearborn wanted Jouett to negotiate for even more land west of the Firelands all the way to the Maumee River in northwestern Ohio.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 313-18.

⁸⁰ Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier*, 313-18.

⁸¹ Knepper, *Ohio and its People*, 48-49; 80-81; 102.

On July 4, 1805, through the Treaty of Fort Industry, the Indians surrendered the land of the Western Reserve west of the Cuyahoga River and south to the Greenville Treaty line. Section one of this agreement stated, “The said Indian nations do again acknowledge themselves and all their tribes, to be in friendship with, and under the protection of the United States.”⁸² Item two asserted, “The boundary line between the United States, and the nations aforesaid, shall in future be a meridian line drawn north and south, through a boundary to be erected on the south shore of lake (sic) Erie, one hundred and twenty miles due west of the west boundary line of the state of Pennsylvania, extending north until it intersects the boundary line of the United States, and extending south it intersects a line heretofore established by the treaty of Grenville.”⁸³

Article four of this document predetermined that each of the nations that agreed to this treaty received a yearly annuity for their conformity with this contract.⁸⁴ An interesting note to this contract was that the Connecticut Land Company paid a portion of that yearly stipend. This is not surprising that the United States reacquired this since that company obtained immense profits by selling off these lands. The American government stated, “The said Indian nations, parties to this treaty, shall be at liberty to fish and hunt within the territory and lands which they have now ceded to the United States, so long as they shall demean themselves peaceably.”⁸⁵

⁸² Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, 2:77-78.

⁸³ Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, 2:77-78.

⁸⁴ Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, 2:77-78.

⁸⁵ Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, 2:77-78.

By 1805, the majority of the state of Ohio was firmly in the hands of the United States. At this point, Thomas Jefferson was president and he played a crucial role in the continued dispossession of Native lands in the first part of the nineteenth century. During his time in office, he professed an ideal of wanting to assimilate and acculturate the Indians into the American political system which would have been impossible at that point. His official statements belied his ideals of settler colonialism which were at the heart of an agrarian society whereby it was vital to procure more and more valuable land for American farmers as the United States tried to continue to grow as a world power. Although the Indians were allowed to reside on territories in the northwestern quadrant of the state, they were continually pushed off their lands by the greed of American settlers in the first decades of the nineteenth century. By 1830, this push would result in the passage of the Indian Removal Act which removed all Natives living east of the Mississippi River to the west side of that waterway. The initial stages of settler colonialism concluded at that point and laid the foundation for dispossessing the Indians for the upcoming era of American history.⁸⁶

After the passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830, the indigenous peoples living east of the Mississippi River were forced to move west of that waterway. This removed a major obstacle for American growth in the eastern half of the United States as the American empire continued to grow. For the remainder of the nineteenth century, the United States would take the lessons they learned from their initial interactions with the indigenous peoples of Ohio and apply them as the American empire continued to move westward to the Pacific Ocean. Time and again, the United States would covet land in

⁸⁶ Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 67.

areas such as the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains and they would work to dispossess the indigenous peoples of their lands in these regions through means such as the continuation of the “first way of war” and the implementation of the reservation system.⁸⁷

By the end of the nineteenth century, the United States accomplished their objectives of controlling what now comprises the contiguous forty-eight states of the American Union. This process of procuring land occurred over the course of a century as the Americans attempted to expand their domains at the expense of the indigenous populations of the ever shifting western borderlands from Ohio to the Pacific Ocean. Settler colonialism in the United States began at the end of the eighteenth century as the Americans attempted to wrest control of the Ohio country from the Natives living in this region. After some missteps along the way that included two disastrous military defeats and fraudulent treaties, the United States learned their lessons from what occurred in Ohio during the 1780s and 1790s and started to use more strategic military means to gain what they wanted, which was an increase in American landholdings. As the nineteenth century progressed the United States had perfected ways of displacing Indians from their homelands.

⁸⁷ Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 67; Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 193-203. .

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

This dissertation discusses the centrality of the Ohio Indian Wars to American history and explains that under the drives of settler colonialism Ohio became a crucial battleground in the history of American Indian removal. Settler colonialism refers to a history in which settlers drove indigenous populations from the land to construct their own ethnic and religious communities. Racial hierarchy – the depiction of Native peoples as savage and inferior – inhered in settler colonialism. Settler societies include Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Australia, South Africa, and the United States among others. Unlike Australia, where settlers deemed the continent uninhabited despite the presence of “aborigines,” the United States recognized the existence of Indian tribes and therefore sought to secure indigenous lands by means of lawful treaties.¹

This dissertation argues that American covetousness for land in Ohio represented a distinctive form of settler colonialism in the years directly after the American Revolution. This is because the American drive to gain the lands comprising Ohio was the first chance for the burgeoning United States government to expand their domains westward while at the same time dispossessing the Indians of their homelands. While the British had practiced their own forms of settler colonialism for over a century on the

¹ Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 1-22

North American mainland, the time period from 1783 to 1805 provided the United States with an initial opportunity to claim the lands they received from the British through the Treaty of Paris in 1783. Despite the original goals of American settler colonialism in the 1780s it took many years for the United States to truly implement their policies and gain the advantage in their negotiations with the Indian nations that resided in Ohio and ultimately dispossess these individuals of their lands.

Other historians such as Andrew R.L. Cayton in *The Frontier Republic*, John Grenier in *The First Way of War*, and Wiley Sword in *President Washington's Indian War* researched in detail many of the political and military aspects that occurred during the Ohio Indian Wars. These scholars give a comprehensive description of this time period by examining issues such as military strategy, troop deployment, and the friction between regular and military soldiers. However, no one has gone into great detail how settler colonialism specifically manifested itself in Ohio during this era of American history and how after not being able to seize lands through treaties the American army resorted to force to achieve the objectives mandated by the federal government.

In order to examine how the federal government engaged in settler colonialism requires a more critical look at the diplomatic, military, and political sources from this era. This includes an analytical look at the actions of national leaders during this time period including President George Washington, Secretary of War Henry Knox, and the Governor of the Northwest Territory, Arthur St. Clair. Each of these men committed crucial mistakes as the Americans tried to remove the indigenous populations from their territories. Only after the United States suffered two disastrous military defeats under the leadership of General Josiah Harmar and St. Clair were Washington and Knox, along

with Congress, willing to admit the errors of these first military campaigns. By restructuring the federal military, the American government allowed itself the possibility of success on the battlefield and eventually Anthony Wayne would use the advantages the United States possessed to engage in the “first way of war.”¹

Placing this dissertation among the work of these other scholars allows for a fuller examination of the concept of settler colonialism in the region of Ohio which was the testing ground for American federal Indian policy at the end of the eighteenth century. Ohio’s strategic location was crucial as the United States attempted to expand their expanding empire. If the United States could gain a firm grasp of the territory comprising Ohio they would be better able to expand their domains westward further into the American continent starting with the Northwest Territory which also included the territories of Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin. The Americans believed they gained these territories legitimately from Great Britain through the Treaty of Paris in 1783, but many of the indigenous groups in Ohio disagreed with this assessment.

Settler colonialism had a long history in North America as the British and then the Americans attempted to remove the Natives from their homes over the course of several centuries. From 1607 through the conclusion of the American Revolution, the British who controlled the vast majority of the North American continent for a century-and-a-half used their own methods to confiscate Indian territories. After the initial settlements at Jamestown and Plymouth proved to be profitable more and more settlers came from Great Britain in order to start new lives in America. The problem with this was that the Natives who already resided on the North American mainland were often unwilling to

¹ Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 193-203.

give up their territories to the British and this caused conflict between the Indian nations and the British who continually looked to increase their landholdings.

By the time of the American Revolution, most of the Indian nations sided with the British against the Americans as they believed that the British government treated them moderately better than the Americans who desired their lands. Once the war concluded, Great Britain ceded lands to the United States that stretched from the Allegheny Mountains to the Mississippi River. This infuriated the Natives that allied themselves with the British because they believed Great Britain had no right to relinquish territories that were not technically theirs to give up. The Indian groups would now have to deal with the land-hungry Americans who would stop at nothing to gain more and more territory on the western borderlands for themselves.

After the American Revolution, American federal officials claimed that the United States was a victorious power over both the British and the Indian nations that supported Great Britain during the conflict. The problem with this reasoning was the Americans never defeated their Native adversary on the western borderlands and more often than not, they lost the battles they engaged in throughout this region. Despite this, the United States tried to dictate policy on the borderlands with the “right of conquest” approach to negotiations with the Indians. This plan stated that because the vast majority of the Indian nations fought with the British on the battlefield, they were now a defeated entity. As a result, the Americans could now dictate that the Natives needed to relinquish some of their territory without monetary compensation as a consequence of supporting the British during the war.

The overconfidence displayed by the American government in the years directly following the Revolution would create tensions between the United States and many of the Indian nations that lived in Ohio. The “right of conquest” approach reflected the larger strategy of settler colonialism which the American practiced after 1783. The negotiations of these treaties would constitute American land policy towards the indigenous populations of Ohio during the 1780s. However, this process became problematic as larger Native groups, including the Shawnee and Miami Nations resented the fact that the Americans discussed these agreements with smaller bands of tribes who did not represent the larger Indian confederacy of the western borderlands. Because of that, these more intransigent groups refused to consider these agreements as valid and they endeavored to keep the American settlers south of the Ohio River. However, the unwillingness of the various Indian nations to engage in discussions for their lands proved detrimental to the American government who then decided to send in their untrained military to remove these Natives. Initially, the United States suffered disastrous consequences when they sent in their soldiers to the borderlands, but eventually found success and were able to displace the Indians from their homelands.²

At the same time the American representatives discussed land cessions with the Indians using the “right of conquest” approach as part of settler colonialism, the United States government also had to deal with the presence of squatters, or illegal settlers, who determined that they would claim land for themselves in Ohio and practice their own forms of settler colonialism. After a series of repeated military engagements to remove these individuals, the Confederation Congress realized it would be virtually impossible to

² Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism*, 1-22

eradicate their landholdings. The trespassers presented a logistical problem for the federal government under the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution as these governmental entities wanted legitimate speculators to sell off lands to other investors.

Eventually, the Confederation Congress realized it would be impossible to physically remove the squatters from Ohio and by 1787, the American government sent troops to Ohio because of repeated Indian attacks on all American settlers in the region. Even though the speculators and squatters did not trust the actions of the other group, by the end of the 1780s they banded together and worked to try and remove the Natives from Ohio with the assistance of federal troops. This was not successful as the Indians continued their attacks on Americans living in Ohio and Kentucky which caused great consternation for the American residents. At the same time, militia members in this region continued to harass the Indians of the borderlands which further muddled the untenable situation. Many borderland inhabitants continued to press their government, now under the leadership of Washington and Knox, for assistance in removing the Indian “menace” in Ohio.

By 1790, the new government under the auspices of the Constitution which included Washington, Knox, and St. Clair heard the pleas of their borderland residents and realized that their treaty negotiations might not work in removing the Indians from the Ohio lands. Because of this, the federal leaders made the fateful decision to send in their untrained and untested military to engage the Natives in battle and hopefully remove them from their homelands. Under the leadership of Harmar and St. Clair, the American army met with disastrous defeats partly because of the unwillingness to use

counterinsurgency tactics to engage their enemy who used their own forms of guerrilla tactics to defeat the American armies.

Eventually, Washington and Knox, along with Congressional leaders realized that changes needed to occur within the American military structure in order for the United States to gain the advantage on the battlefield. Wayne was chosen to lead the American military and when he took control of the troops in 1792 vast changes were made to improve the chances for the United States to have military success. Wayne was a disciplinarian with his soldiers in order to establish his command over his them. In addition, he implemented more rigid training criterions for his troops whereby his men would be expected to follow strict standards in order to form a more effective fighting force. After several years, in 1794, Wayne moved with his troops towards their ultimate confrontation with the Native soldiers in western Ohio. Along the way, he would use Native scouts and spies to give him an accurate assessment of the enemy's movements on the borderlands. In addition, Wayne engaged in what became known as the "first way of war" whereby he and his men set fire to valuable Native crops as well as their homesteads. He also constructed a series of forts throughout western Ohio so that his supply chain would be much shorter which would allow him to reinforce his troops much easier than that which occurred for Harmar or St. Clair.³

Once the Americans were successful at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794 they needed to make the peace with the Indian nations. The resultant Treaty of Greenville allowed the Americans to procure the majority of the territory of Ohio and when that occurred settlement to the region increased dramatically. After the passage of the Treaty

³ Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 193-203.

of Greenville in 1795, Americans moved into Ohio in droves at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries as they tried to populate the region. Over the course of the next decade, many of the Indian leaders that were prominent in battling the United States to maintain control of their homesteads resigned themselves to the fact that they were a defeated entity and tried to make the best peace possible with the Americans. The United States saw the Treaty of Greenville as justification for their continued push through the remainder of the Northwest Territory during the early nineteenth century.

Even after the United States started to gain a firmer control of the Northwest Territory in the early nineteenth century the Americans were still not satisfied as they continued to try and expand on their burgeoning “empire.” Another major push for indigenous lands occurred with the passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830. This law stated that the Natives living east of the Mississippi River would be forced to move to the west of that waterway to what was perceived at that time as inhospitable territory. However, by the 1840s, the ideas of “Manifest Destiny” took root in the United States which indicated that the Americans had a right to expand their landholdings from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Because of this mindset the United States endeavored to remove the Indians from their lands yet again. This was done for the remainder of the nineteenth century through methods including the establishment of the reservation system and outright warfare against Native groups. By the end of the nineteenth century the United States had gained their objective and had firm control of what comprises the contiguous forty-eight states of the American Union.

Despite this momentous achievement, Andrew R.L. Cayton states that “neither American popular culture nor American history has attached much significance to the

Wars for the Great Lakes” and that most American citizens ignore these events.⁴ Cayton specifically points out the reception to St. Clair’s defeat in 1791 to illustrate his point about the irrelevance many prominent Americans placed on these unfortunate events. Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson believed the disaster would provoke a “great sensation”⁵ in the national capital of Philadelphia, but it really did not. More Americans were concerned with foreign events at that time than they were about what was happening in the Ohio Valley and the news of St. Clair’s military rout slowly faded into relative obscurity in most of the United States.

Cayton directly challenges the notion that these events were inconsequential. He asserts that between the 1750s and the 1810s the events of the Great Lakes Wars had serious repercussions for many individuals on the North American continent. For the Natives, their defeats in these wars and the abandonment of them by their British allies after the War of 1812 signaled doom. The original French settlements at places such as Vincennes, Kaskaskia, and Detroit were by this time period controlled by the United States. Any remaining French residents in American territory also became marginalized with United States society. For the British and the Canadians, the American victory now meant that the border between the United States and Canada was on the northern, not the southern areas of the Great Lakes.⁶

The events of the Great Lakes region during this era were actually crucial in shaping the future expansionistic tendencies of the United States during the entire

⁴ Andrew R.L. Cayton, “The Meanings of the Wars for the Great Lakes,” appears in *The Sixty Years War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814*, David Curtis Skaggs and Larry L. Nelson, eds., (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001), 373-90.

⁵ Cayton, “The Meanings of the Wars for the Great Lakes,” 373-90.

⁶ Cayton, “The Meanings of the Wars for the Great Lakes,” 373-90.

nineteenth century as the Americans attempted to expand their domains to the Pacific Ocean. Once the Natives were dispossessed of their lands in the Great Lakes region, the American government worked feverishly to strip the Indians of their territories stretching to the Mississippi River in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Eventually, the United States was successful in their endeavors and was able to relegate the Indians living east of the Mississippi River to the west of that waterway in the 1830s.⁷

Future research on this topic could focus in more detail how the settler colonialism of the late eighteenth century in the United States affected settler colonialism later in the nineteenth century because even after the Americans dispossessed the Indians of their lands east of the Mississippi River in the 1830s, they still longed for the Native lands west of that waterway. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the United States moved their settlements rapidly onto the Great Plains and beyond which caused further consternation for the Indian groups in these regions. The actions of the American government in the second half of the nineteenth century illustrated that the presidents and Congress learned how to effectively deprive the Indians of their territories in regions such as the Great Plains. The hesitant and disjointed nature of the settler colonialism of the 1780s and 1790s was not apparent by the middle of the nineteenth century as national leaders became proficient at gaining the valuable Native territories at a fraction of their overall cost.

⁷ Cayton, "The Meanings of the Wars for the Great Lakes," 373-90.

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