

# ELMORE BARCE

THE LAND OF  
THE MIAMIS

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**Barce E.**

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# **The Land of the Miamis / An Account of the Struggle to Secure Possession of the Northwest from the End of the Revolution until 1812**

## **PREFACE**

In presenting this book to the general public, it is the intention of the author to present a connected story of the winning of the Northwest, including the Indian wars during the presidency of General Washington, following this with an account of the Harrison-Tecumseh conflict in the early part of the nineteenth century, ending with the Battle of Tippecanoe.

The story embraces all of the early efforts of the Republic of the United States to take possession of the Northwest Territory, acquired from Great Britain by the Treaty of 1783 closing the Revolutionary War. The whole western country was a wilderness filled with savage tribes of great ferocity, and they resisted every effort of the government to advance its outposts. Back of them stood the agents of England who had retained the western posts of Detroit, Niagara, Oswego, Michillimacinac and other places in order to command the lucrative fur trade, and who looked upon the advance of the American traders and settlers with jealousy and alarm. They encouraged the savages in their resistance, furnished them with arms and ammunition, and at times covertly aided them with troops and armed forces. In other words, this is a part of that great tale of the winning of the west.

We are well aware that there is a very respectable school of historians who insist that the British took no part in opposing the American advance, but the cold and indisputable facts of history, the words of Washington himself, contradict this view. England never gave up the idea of retrieving her lost possessions in the western country until the close of the War of 1812.

An attempt has also been made in this work to present some of the great natural advantages of the Northwest; its wealth of furs and peltries, and its easy means of communication with the British posts. The leading tribes inhabiting its vast domain, the Indian leaders controlling the movements of the warriors, and the respective schemes of Brant and Tecumseh to form an Indian confederacy to drive the white man back across the Ohio, are all dwelt upon.

The writer is confessedly partial to the western frontiersmen. The part that the Kentuckians played in the conquest of the Northwest is set forth at some length. The foresight of Washington and Jefferson, the heroism of Logan, Kenton, Boone and Scott and their followers, play a conspicuous part. The people of the eastern states looked with some disdain upon the struggles of the western world. They gave but scanty support to the government in its attempts to subdue the Indian tribes, voted arms and supplies with great reluctance, and condemned the borderers as savages and barbarians. There is no attempt to condemn the eastern people for their shortsightedness in this regard, but after all, that is the term exactly applicable. The West was won despite their discouragement, and the empire beyond the mountains was conquered notwithstanding their opposition.

William Henry Harrison has been condemned without mercy. Much of this hostile criticism has proceeded from his political enemies. They have distorted the plain facts of history in order to present the arguments of faction. Harrison was the greatest man in the western world after George Rogers Clark. The revelations of history justify his suspicion of the British. The people of the West were alone undeceived. The General was always popular west of the Alleghenies and justly so. Tecumseh and the Prophet were, after all is said, the paid agents of the English government, and received their

inspiration from Detroit. Jefferson knew all these facts well, and so wrote to John Adams. Jefferson's heart beat for the western people, and throughout the whole conflict he stood stoutly on the side of Harrison.

We recognize the fact that we have done but poorly. Out of the great mass of broken and disconnected material, however, we have attempted to arrange a connected whole. We submit the volume with many misgivings and pray the indulgence of the reading public. We have endeavored at all times to quote nothing that we did not deem authentic, and have presented no fact that is not based on written records.

We desire to express our appreciation of the valuable help afforded by the State Library people at Indianapolis, by Prof. Logan Esarey of Indiana University, who kindly loaned us the original Harrison letters, and by Ray Jones and Don Heaton of Fowler, Indiana, who were untiring in their efforts to give us all the assistance within their power.

*E. B.*

## CHAPTER I

### A BRIEF RETROSPECT

– *A general view of the Indian Wars of the Early Northwest.*

The memories of the early prairies, filled with vast stretches of waving grasses, made beautiful by an endless profusion of wild flowers, and dotted here and there with pleasant groves, are ineffaceable. For the boy who, barefooted and care-free, ranged over these plains, in search of adventure, they always possessed an inexpressible charm and attraction. These grassy savannas have now passed away forever. Glorious as they were, a greater marvel has been wrought by the untiring hand of man. Where the wild flowers bloomed, great fields of grain ripen, and vast gardens of wheat and corn, interspersed with beautiful towns and villages, greet the eye of the traveler. "The prairies of Illinois and Indiana were born of water, and preserved by fire for the children of civilized men, who have come and taken possession of them."

In the last half of the eighteenth century, great herds of buffalo grazed here, attracting thither the wandering bands of the Potawatomi, who came from the lakes of the north. Gradually these hardy warriors and horse tribes drove back the Miamis to the shores of the Wabash, and took possession of all that vast plain, extending east of the Illinois river, and north of the Wabash into the present confines of the state of Michigan. Their squaws cultivated corn, peas, beans, squashes and pumpkins, but the savage bands lived mostly on the fruits of the chase. Their hunting trails extended from grove to grove, and from lake to river.

Reliable Indian tradition informs us that about the year 1790, the herds of bison disappeared from the plains east of the Mississippi. The deer and the raccoon remained for some years later, but from the time of the disappearance of the buffalo, the power of the tribes was on the wane. The advance of the paleface and the curtailment of the supply of game, marked the beginning of the savage decline. The constant complaint of the tribes to General William Henry Harrison, the first military governor of Indiana, was the lack of both game and peltries.

From the first the Indians of the Northwest were pro-British. Following the revolutionary war they accepted the overtures of England's agents and traders, and the end of the long trail was always at Detroit. The motives of these agents were purely mercenary. They were trespassers on the American side of the line, for England had agreed to surrender all the posts within the new territory by the treaty of 1783. The thing coveted was the trade in beaver, deer and raccoon skins. In order that this might be done, the Americans must be kept south of the Ohio. The tribes were taught to regard the crossing of the Alleghenies as a direct attempt to dispossess them of their native soil. To excite their savage hatred and jealousy it was pointed out that a constant stream of keel-boats, loaded with men, women, children and cattle, were descending the Ohio; that Kentucky's population was multiplying by thousands, and that the restless swarm of settlers and land hunters, if not driven back, would soon fill the whole earth. Driven as they were by rage and fear, all attempts at treaty with these savages were in vain. The Miamis, the Potawatomi and the Shawnees lifted the hatchet, and rushed to the attack of both keel-boats and settlements.

The wars that followed in the administration of George Washington are well known. Back of them all stood the sinister figure of the English trader. Harmar was defeated at Miamitown, now Fort Wayne; St. Clair's army was annihilated on the head waters of the Wabash. For a time the government seemed prostrate, and all attempts to conquer the savages in their native woods, futile. But finally General Anthony Wayne, the hero of Stony Point, was sent to the west. He was a fine disciplinarian and a fearless fighter. At the battle of Fallen Timbers, in 1794, he broke the power of the northwestern Indian confederacy, and in the following year forced the tribes into the Treaty of Greenville.

On July 11th, 1796, the British, under the terms of Jay's Treaty, evacuated the post of Detroit, and it passed into the hands of its rightful owners, the American people. Well had it been for the red men, if, with this passing of the British, all further communication with the agents of Great Britain had ceased. Already had the tribes acquired a rich legacy of hate. Their long intercourse and alliance with the English; their terrible inroads with fire and tomahawk, on the settlements of Kentucky; their shocking barbarities along the Ohio, had enraged the hearts of all fighting men south of that river. But the British in retiring from American soil had passed over to Malden, near the mouth of the Detroit river. Communication with the tribes of the northwest was still kept up, and strenuous efforts made to monopolize their trade. At last came Tecumseh and the Prophet, preaching a regeneration of the tribes, and a renewal of the contest for the possession of the lands northwest of the Ohio. All past treaties were to be disregarded as impositions and frauds, and the advance of the paleface permanently checked. The joy of the British agents knew no bounds. Disregarding all the dictates of conscience and even the welfare of the tribes themselves, they whispered in the ears of the Wyandots of Sandusky and began to furnish ammunition and rifles. As a result of this fatal policy the breach between the United States and the Indian confederates was measurably widened. The end was Tippecanoe, and the eternal enmity of the hunters and riflemen of southern Indiana and Kentucky who followed General Harrison on that day. One of the ghastly sights of that sanguinary struggle, was the scalping by the white men of the Indian slain, and the division of their scalps among the soldiers after they had been cut into strips. These bloody trophies were carried back to the settlements along the Ohio and Wabash to satisfy the hatred of all those who had lost women and children in the many savage forays of the past.

With the death of Tecumseh at the battle of the Thames and the termination of British influence in the west, the tribes soon surrendered up their ancient demesne, and most of them were removed beyond the Mississippi. The most populous of all the tribes north of the Wabash were the roving Potawatomi, and their final expulsion from the old hunting grounds occurred under the direction of Colonel Abel C. Pepper and General John Tipton, the latter a hero of the Battle of Tippecanoe, and later appointed as Indian commissioner. At that time the remnants of the scattered bands from north of the Wabash amounted to only one thousand souls of all ages and sexes. The party under military escort passed eight or nine miles west of the city of Lafayette, probably over the level land east of the present site of Otterbein, Indiana.

Thus vanished the red men. In their day, however, they had been the undoubted lords of the plain, following their long trails in single file over the great prairies, and camping with their dogs, women and children in the pleasant groves and along the many streams. They were savages, and have left no enduring temple or lofty fane behind them, but their names still cling to many streams, groves and towns, and a few facts gleaned from their history cannot fail to be of interest to us, who inherit their ancient patrimony.

## CHAPTER II

# WHAT THE VIRGINIANS GAVE US

– *A topographical description of the country north of the Ohio at the close of the Revolutionary War.*

In the early councils of the Republic the stalwart sons of Virginia exercised a preponderating influence. As men of broad national conceptions, who were unafraid to strike a decisive blow in the interests of freedom, they were unexcelled. Saratoga had already been won, but at the back door of the newborn states was a line of British posts in the valleys of the Wabash and Mississippi and at Detroit, that stood ready to pour forth a horde of naked savages on the frontier settlements of the west and bring murder and destruction to the aid of England's cause. In December, 1777, George Rogers Clark came from Kentucky. He laid before Patrick Henry, the governor of Virginia, a bold plan for the reduction of these posts and the removal of the red menace. Into his councils the governor called George Wythe, George Mason and Thomas Jefferson. An expedition was then and there set on foot that gave the nation its first federal domain for the erection of new republican states. With a lot of worthless paper money in his pocket, and about one hundred and seventy-five hunting shirt men from Virginia and Kentucky, Clark marched across the prairies of southern Illinois, and captured Kaskaskia. Later he took Vincennes. Thus by the cool enterprise and daring of this brave man, he laid the foundation for the subsequent negotiations of 1783, that gave the northwest territory to the United States of America.

The country thus conquered covered more than two hundred and forty-four thousand square miles of the earth's surface, and comprised what are now the states of Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin. Within its confines were boundless plains and prairies filled with grass; immense forests of oak, hickory, walnut, pine, beech and fir; enormous hidden treasures of coal, iron and copper. Add to all these natural resources, a fertile soil, a temperate climate, and unlimited facilities for commerce and trade, and no field was ever presented to the hand and genius of man, better adapted to form the homes and habitations of a free and enterprising people. This was known and appreciated by the noble minds of Washington and Jefferson, even at that day, and they above all other men of their times, saw most clearly the great vision of the future.

At the close of the revolution, however, only a few scattered posts, separated by hundreds of miles, were to be found. Detroit, Michillimacinac, Vincennes, Kaskaskia and a few minor trading points, told the whole tale. Kentucky could boast of a few thousands, maintaining themselves by dauntless courage and nerves of steel against British and Indians, but all north of the Ohio was practically an unbroken wilderness, inhabited by the fiercest bands of savages then in existence, with the possible exception of the Iroquois.

Over this territory, and to gain control of these tribes, England and France had waged a long and bitter conflict, and the gage of battle had been the monopoly of the fur trade. The welfare of the savages was regarded but little; they were the pawns in the game. The great end to be acquired was the disposal of their rich peltries. No country was more easily accessible to the early voyageurs and French fur traders. It was bounded on the north and northeast by the chain of the Great Lakes, on the south by the Ohio, and on the west by the Mississippi. The heads of the rivers and streams that flowed into these great watercourses and lakes were connected by short portages, so that the Indian trapper or hunter could carry his canoe for a few miles and pass from the waters that led to Lake Michigan or Lake Erie, into the streams that fed the Mississippi or the Ohio. The headwaters of the Muskingum and its tributaries interlocked with those of the Cuyahoga; the headwaters of the Scioto with those of the Sandusky; the headwaters of the Great Miami with those of the Wabash and the St. Marys. In northern Indiana another remarkable system of portages appeared. The canoes of

the traders were carried some eight or ten miles from the little Wabash to the Maumee, placing the command of the whole Wabash country in the hands of the Detroit merchants. The sources of the Tippecanoe were connected by portages with the waters of the St. Joseph of Lake Michigan, and a like connection existed between the waters of the Tippecanoe and the waters of the Kankakee. These portages were, as General Harrison observes, "much used by the Indians and sometimes by traders." LaSalle passed from Lake Michigan to the waters of the St. Joseph, thence up that river to a portage of three miles in what is now St. Joseph county, Indiana, thence by said portage to the headwaters of the Kankakee, and down that river to the Illinois. At the post of Chicago the traders crossed from Lake Michigan by a very short portage into the headwaters of the Illinois, and General Harrison says that in the spring, the boats with their loading "passed freely from one to the other." In Michigan the heads of the streams that flowed into Lake Huron interlocked with the heads of those that went down to Lake Michigan. In Wisconsin, the voyageurs passed from Green bay up the Fox river to Lake Winnebago, thence by the Fox again to the portage between the Fox and Wisconsin, thence down the Wisconsin river to the Mississippi. Through this important channel of trade passed nine-tenths of the goods that supplied the Indians above the Illinois river and those in upper Louisiana.

This great network of lakes, rivers and portages was in turn connected by the waterways of the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence, with the great head and center of all the fur trade of the western world, the city of Montreal.

The only practicable means of communication was by the canoe. Most of the territory of the northwest, being, as General Harrison observes, "remarkably flat, the roads were necessarily bad in winter, and in the summer the immense prairies to the west and north of this, produced such a multitude of flies as to render it impossible to make use of pack horses." Bogs, marshes and sloughs in endless number added to the difficulties of travel. Hence it was, that the power that commanded the lakes and water courses of the northwest, commanded at the same time all the fur trade and the Indian tribes in the interior. France forever lost this control to Great Britain at the peace of 1763, closing the French and Indian war, and at the close of the revolution it passed to us by the definitive treaty of 1783.

The importance of the posts of Detroit and Michillimacinae, forming the chief connecting links between the northwest and the city of Montreal, now fully appears. First in importance was Detroit. It commanded all the valuable beaver country of northern Ohio and Indiana, southern Michigan, and of the rivers entering Lakes Erie and Huron. The trade coming from the Cuyahoga, the Sandusky, the tributaries of the Miami and Scioto, the Wabash and the Maumee, all centered here. The French traders, and after them the British, did a vast and flourishing business with the savages, trading them brandy, guns, ammunition, blankets, vermilion and worthless trinkets for furs of the highest value. The significance of the old trading posts at Miamitown (Fort Wayne), Petit Piconne (Tippecanoe), Ouiatenon, and Vincennes, as feeders for this Detroit market by way of the Wabash and Maumee valleys, is also made plain. A glimpse of the activities at Miamitown (Fort Wayne), in the winter of 1789-1790, while it was still under the domination of the British, shows the Miamis, Shawnees and Potawatomi coming in with otter, beaver, bear skins and other peltry, the presence of a lot of unscrupulous, cheating French traders, who were generally drunk when assembled together, and who took every advantage of each other, and of the destitute savages with whom they were trading. At that time the French half-breeds (and traders) of the names of Jean Cannehous, Jacque Dumay, Jean Coustan and others were trading with the Indians at Petit Piconne, or Tippecanoe, and all this trade was routed through by way of the Wabash, the portage at Miamitown, and the Maumee, to Detroit. The traders at Ouiatenon, who undoubtedly enjoyed the advantage of the Beaver lake trade in northwestern Indiana, by way of the Potawatomi trail from the Wabash to Lake Michigan, were also in direct communication with the merchants of Detroit, and depended upon them. It is interesting to observe in passing, that the rendezvous of the French traders at the Petit Piconne (termed by General Charles Scott, as Keth-tip-e-ca-nunk), was broken up by a detachment of Kentucky mounted

volunteers under General James Wilkinson, in the summer of 1791, and utterly destroyed. One who accompanied the expedition stated that there were then one hundred and twenty houses at this place, eighty of which were shingled; that the best houses belonged to French traders; and that the gardens and improvements around the place were delightful; that there was a tavern located there, with cellars, a bar, and public and private rooms. Thus far had the fur trade advanced in the old days.

## CHAPTER III

### THE BEAVER TRADE

*– A description of the wealth in furs of this section at the close of the Revolutionary War and the reasons of the struggle for its control.*

Perhaps no country ever held forth greater allurements to savage huntsmen and French voyageurs than the territory acquired by Clark's conquest. Its rivers and lakes teemed with edible fish; its great forests abounded with deer, elk, bears and raccoons; its vast plains and prairies were filled with herds of buffalo that existed up almost to the close of the eighteenth century; every swamp and morass was filled with countless thousands of geese, ducks, swan and cranes, and rodents like the beaver and other animals furnished the red man with the warmest of raiment in the coldest winter.

To give some idea of the vast wealth of this domain in fur-bearing animals alone, it may be taken into account that in the year 1818 the American Fur Company, under the control of John Jacob Astor, with headquarters at Mackinaw, had in its employ about four hundred clerks and traders, together with about two thousand French voyageurs, who roamed all the rivers and lakes of the Indian country from the British dominions on the north, to as far west as the Missouri river. Astor had established a great fur business in direct competition with the British Northwest Company and commanded attention in both London and China. The "outfits" of this company had trading posts on the Illinois, and all its tributaries; on the Muskegon, Grand, Kalamazoo and other rivers in Michigan; on the line of the old Potawatomi trail from the Wabash country to post Chicago, and in the neighborhood of the Beaver lake region in northern Indiana, and at many other points. The furs handled by them consisted of the marten (sable), mink, musk-rat, raccoon, lynx, wildcat, fox, wolverine, badger, otter, beaver, bears and deer, of which the most valuable were those of the silver-gray fox and the marten. The value of these furs mounted into the hundreds of thousands of dollars and they were originally all consigned to New York. For these interesting observations history lovers are indebted to the autobiography of the late Gurdon S. Hubbard of Chicago, who was, in his youth, in the employ of Astor, and who later in his lifetime conducted a trading post at Bunkum, now Iroquois, in Iroquois County, Illinois. It has been estimated that in the days of England's control of Canada and of all the northwest territory, that more than half in value of all the furs exported "came from countries within the new boundaries of the United States," that is, from the district north and west of the Ohio river.

Of all the fur-bearers, the most interesting were the beavers. How much these industrious gnawers had to do with the French and Indian wars and the rivalry between England and France for the control of their domain north of the Ohio, is not generally appreciated. An animal that could be instrumental in part, in bringing about an armed conflict between the two greatest powers of that day, should not be entirely eliminated from history.

At the time of Braddock's defeat, Colonel James Smith, then a boy, was captured by what seems to have been a party of the Caughnawaga Indians, some of whom lived along the rivers and streams in northern Ohio. He lived among the savages for some years and was adopted into one of their families. Later in life, he left a written account of many of his experiences, and among other things he tells us some interesting things concerning the beavers. "Beavers," says Caleb Atwater, an Ohio historian, "were once here in large numbers on the high lands at the heads of the rivers, but with those who caught them, they have long since disappeared from among us." Before the Revolution, and for some years afterward, they were caught by the Indians in great numbers. Smith had a valuable friend among the Indians by the name of Tecaughretanego. He was quite a philosopher in his way, but he was rather inclined to believe, like most of his fellows, that geese turned to beavers and snakes to raccoons. He told Smith of a certain pond where he knew all the beavers were frequently killed during a hunting season, but they were just as thick again on the following winter. There was seemingly no

water communication with this pond, and beavers did not travel by land. Therefore it must be that the geese that alighted here in great numbers during the fall, turned to beavers, and for proof of this assertion the Indian called Smith's attention to their palmated hind feet. The boy suggested that there might be subterranean passages leading to this pond, whereby the beavers could gain access to it, but Tecaughretanego was not entirely convinced.

In conversation with his Indian friend Smith happened to say that beavers caught fish. The Indian laughed at him, and told him that beavers ate flesh of no kind, but lived on the bark of trees, roots, and other growing things. "I asked him," said Smith, "if the beaver was an amphibious animal, or if it could live under water? He said that the beaver was a kind of subterraneous water animal, that lives in or near the water, but they were no more amphibious than the ducks and geese were – which was constantly proven to be the case, as all the beavers that are caught in steel traps are drowned, provided the trap be heavy enough to keep them under water. As the beaver does not eat fish, I inquired of Tecaughretanego why the beavers made such large dams? He said they were of use to them in various respects, both for their safety and food. For their safety, as by raising the water over the mouths of their holes, or subterraneous lodging places, they could not be easily found; and as the beaver feeds chiefly on the barks of trees, by raising the water over the banks, they can cut down saplings for bark to feed upon, without going out much upon the land; and when they are obliged to go out upon land for this food they frequently are caught by the wolves. As the beaver can run upon land but little faster than a water tortoise, and is no fighting animal, if they are any distance from the water they become an easy prey to their enemies."

The Indians caught great numbers of beavers by hunting and trapping. In the winter time when they found the beavers in their houses, they first broke up all the thin ice around about, and then by breaking into the houses, drove the beavers into the water. Being soon forced to come to the surface to take the air, the Indians commonly reached in and caught them by the hind legs, dragged them out on the ice and tomahawked them. Not only were the furs and skins utilized, but the flesh as well. Smith describes the meat as being a "delicious fare." In the days before the savages were corrupted by the French and English traders, they possessed a wonderful skill in dressing the skins of the buffalo, the bear and the beaver. Beaver and raccoon skin blankets were made "pliant, warm and durable." Says Heckewelder, the Moravian missionary, "They sew together as many of these skins as are necessary, carefully setting the hair or fur all the same way, so that the blanket or covering be smooth, and the rain do not penetrate, but run off."

In the later days, however, the beaver proved to be more of a curse than a blessing. The Indian then wore the European blanket, and bartered his valuable furs away for whiskey and brandy. The riotous scenes of drunkenness, debauchery and murder became unspeakable. To Detroit the Indians swarmed from the shores of Erie and all the rivers in the interior. Hunting for weeks and months and enduring privation, suffering and toil, they came in at last with their women and children to buy rifles, ammunition and clothing. Here mingled the Miami, the Potawatomi, the Ottawa and the Wyandot; a motley gathering of all the tribes. In the end the result was always the same, and always pitiful. The traders came with the lure of fire water, and when they departed the Indians were left drunken and destitute and often with death, disease and wounds in their midst.

Smith gives a vivid description of one of their orgies at Detroit as follows: "At length a trader came to town (the Indian camp) with French brandy. We purchased a keg of it, and held a council about who was to get drunk, and who was to keep sober. I was invited to get drunk, but I refused the proposal. Then they told me I must be one of those who were to take care of the drunken people. I did not like this, but of the two evils I chose that which I thought was the least, and fell in with those who were to conceal the arms, and keep every dangerous weapon we could out of their way, and endeavor, if possible, to keep the drinking club from killing each other, which was a very hard task. Several times we hazarded our lives, and got ourselves hurt, in preventing them from slaying each other. Before they had finished the keg, near one-third of the town was introduced to this drinking

club; they could not pay their part, as they had already disposed of all their skins; but they made no odds, all were welcome to drink."

"When they were done with the keg, they applied to the traders, and procured a kettle full of brandy at a time, which they divided out with a large wooden spoon – and so they went on and on and never quit whilst they had a single beaver skin. When the trader had got all our beaver, he moved off to the Ottawa town, about a mile above the Wyandot town."

"When the brandy was gone, and the drinking club sober, they appeared much dejected. Some of them were crippled, others badly wounded. A number of the fine new shirts were torn, and several blankets burned. A number of squaws were also in this club, and neglected their corn planting."

"We could now hear the effects of the brandy in the Ottawa town. They were singing and yelling in the most hideous manner, both night and day; but their frolic ended worse than ours; five Ottawas were killed, and a great many wounded."

The marshes, lakes, rivers and small streams of northern Ohio and Indiana, and of the whole of Michigan and Wisconsin, abounded with the homes and habitations of the beavers. Behind them, as a memorial of their old days, they have left the names of creeks, towns, townships and even counties. The beaver lake region of northern Indiana has a Beaver "lake," a Beaver "township," a Beaver "creek," a Beaver "city," and a Beaverville to its credit. The history of Vigo and Parke counties, Indiana, by Beckwith, Chapter Twenty, at page 208, recites that beavers existed along all the small lakes and lesser river courses in northern Indiana. They were plentiful in Dekalb, Marshall, Elkhart, Cass. White and Steuben. It is well known that their dams existed in large numbers in Newton and Jasper, and in practically all the Indiana counties north of the Wabash river.

The above regions, with their wealth of peltries, England meant to hold as long as possible against the American advance, and she succeeded in doing so for twelve long years after the Revolution had closed.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PRAIRIE AND THE BUFFALO

– *The buffalo as the main food supply of the Indians.*

To describe all the wonders in the interior of the northwest would be a serious, if not an impossible task. The Grand Prairie, however, stands alone. It was one of the marvels of creation, resembling the ocean as nothing else did, making men who saw, never forget.

On Sunday, the third day of November, 1811, General Harrison's army, with scouts in front, and wagons lumbering along between the flanks, crossed the Big Vermilion river, in Vermilion County, Indiana, traversed Sand Prairie and the woods to the north of it, and in the afternoon of the same day caught their first glimpse of the Grand Prairie, in Warren County, then wet with the cold November rains. That night they camped in Round Grove, near the present town of Sloan, marched eighteen miles across the prairie the next day, and camped on the east bank of Pine creek, just north of the old site of Brier's Mills. To the most of them, the sight must have been both novel and grand; if they could have known then that the vast undulating plain before them stretched westward in unbroken grandeur, a distance of two hundred and fifty miles to the Mississippi river at Quincy; that these vast possessions in a few short years would pass from the control of the savage tribes that roamed over them, and would become the future great granaries of the world, producing enough cereals to feed an empire, what must have been their thoughts?

The magnitude of this great plain, now teeming with thousands of homes and farms, is seldom realized. Draw a straight line west from old Fort Vincennes to the Mississippi, and practically all north of it, to the Wisconsin line, is the Grand Prairie. "Westward of the Wabash, except occasional tracts of timbered lands in northern Indiana and fringes of forest growth along the intervening water courses, the prairies stretch westward continuously across Indiana, and the whole of Illinois to the Mississippi. Taking the line of the Wabash railway, which crosses Illinois in its greatest breadth, and beginning in Indiana, where the railway leaves the timber, west of the Wabash near Marshfield (in Warren County), the prairie extends to Quincy, a distance of more than two hundred and fifty miles, and its continuity the entire way is only broken by four strips of timber along four streams running at right angles with the route of the railway, namely, the timber on the Vermilion river between Danville and the Indiana state line; the Sangamon, seventy miles west of Danville, near Decatur; the Sangamon again a few miles east of Springfield, and the Illinois river at Meredosia, and all the timber at the crossing of these several streams, if put together, would not aggregate fifteen miles, against the two hundred and fifty miles of prairie. Taking a north and south direction and parallel with the drainage of the rivers, one could start near Ashley, on the Illinois Central railway, in Washington county, and going northward, nearly on an air line, keeping on the divide between Kaskaskia and Little Wabash, the Sangamon and the Vermilion, the Iroquois and the Vermilion of the Illinois, crossing the latter stream between the mouths of the Fox and DuPage, and travel through to the state of Wisconsin, a distance of nearly three hundred miles, without encountering five miles of timber during the whole journey."

All that portion of Indiana lying north and west of the Wabash, is essentially a part of the Grand Prairie. "Of the twenty-seven counties in Indiana, lying wholly or partially west and north of the Wabash, twelve are prairie, seven are mixed prairies, barrens and timber, the barrens and prairie predominating. In five, the barrens, with the prairies, are nearly equal to the timber, while only three of the counties can be characterized as heavily timbered. And wherever timber does occur in these twenty-seven counties, it is found in localities favorable to its protection against the ravages of fire, by the proximity of intervening lakes, marshes or watercourses." On the Indiana side, the most pronounced of the tracts of prairie occur in western Warren, Benton, southern and central Newton,

southern Jasper, and western White and Tippecanoe. Benton was originally covered with a great pampas of blue-stem, high as a horse's head, interspersed here and there with swamps of willows and bull grass, while only narrow fringes of timber along the creeks, and some five or six groves of timber and woodland, widely scattered, served as land marks to the early traveler.

Those who early observed and explored the grassy savannas of Indiana and Illinois, always maintained that they were kept denuded of trees and forests by the action of the great prairie fires. Among those who have supported this theory are the Hon. James Hall, author of "The West," published in Cincinnati in 1848; the Hon. John Reynolds, former governor of the state of Illinois, and the Hon. John D. Caton, a late judge of the Supreme Court of Illinois. Caton's observations on this subject are so interesting and ingenious that we cannot refrain from making the following quotation:

"The cause of the absence of trees on the upland prairies is the problem most important to the agricultural interests of our state, and it is the inquiry which alone I propose to consider, but cannot resist the remark that wherever we do find timber throughout the broad field of prairie, it is always in or near the humid portions of it, as along the margins of streams, or upon or near the springy uplands. Many most luxurious growths are found in the highest portions of the uplands, but always in the neighborhood of water. For a remarkable example, I may refer to the great chain of groves extending from and including the Au Sable grove on the east and Holderman's grove on the west, in Kendall county, occupying the high divide between the waters of the Illinois and the Fox rivers. In and around all the groves flowing springs abound, and some of them are separated by marshes, to the borders of which the great trees approach, as if the forests were ready to seize upon each yard of ground as soon as it is elevated above the swamps. Indeed, all our groves seem to be located where the water is so disposed as to protect them, to a greater or less extent, from the prairie fire, although not so situated as to irrigate them. If the head waters of the streams on the prairies are most frequently without timber, as soon as they have attained sufficient volume to impede the progress of fires, with very few exceptions, we find forests on their borders, becoming broader and more vigorous as the magnitude of the streams increase. It is manifest that the lands located on the borders of streams which the fire cannot pass, are only exposed to one-half the fires to which they would be exposed, but for such protection. This tends to show, at least, that if but one-half the fires that have occurred had been kindled, the arboraceous growth could have withstood their destructive influences, and the whole surface of what is now prairie would be forest. Another confirmatory fact, patent to all observers, is, that the prevailing winds upon the prairies, especially in the autumn, are from the west, and these give direction to the fires. Consequently, the lands on the westerly sides of the streams are the most exposed to the fires, and, as might be expected, we find much the most timber on the easterly sides of the streams."

Local observation in Benton County, Indiana, which is purely prairie throughout, would seem to confirm the judge's view. Parish grove, on the old Chicago road, was filled with springs, and a rather large spring on the west side of the grove, supplied water for the horses of the emigrants and travelers who took this route to the northwest in the early 40's. Besides this, the grove was situated on rather high uplands, where the growth of grass would be much shorter than on the adjoining plain. It is probable that this spring on the west side, and the springy nature of the highlands back of it, kept the ground moist and the vegetation green, and these facts, coupled with the fact that the grass as it approached the uplands, would grow shorter, probably retarded and checked the prairie fires from the southwest, and gave rise to the wonderfully diversified and luxuriant growth of trees that was the wonder of the early settler. Sugar grove, seven miles to the northwest of Parish grove, and a stopping place on the old Chicago road, lay mostly within the point or headland caused by the juncture of Sugar Creek from the northeast, and Mud Creek from the southeast. Scarcely a tree is on the southwestern bank of Mud creek, but where it widens on the south side of the grove, it protected the growth of the forest on the northern side. Turkey Foot grove, east and south of Earl Park, formerly had a lake and depression both on the south and west sides of it. Hickory Grove, just west of Fowler, in the early

days, had a lake or pond on the south and west. The timber that skirted the banks of Pine creek, was heaviest on the eastern side. The headwaters of Sugar, Pine and Mud creeks, being small and narrow, were entirely devoid of trees on their banks, but as they flowed on and acquired strength and volume, a skirt of forest appeared.

The Grand Prairie, the home of the ancient Illinois tribe, the Sacs and Foxes, the Kickapoos, and the prairie Potawatomi, was also the home of the buffalo, or wild cow of America. No story either of the northwest or its Indian tribes would be complete without mention of the bison. Think of the sight that Brigadier General Harmar saw on the early prairies of Illinois, when marching from Vincennes to Kaskaskia, in November 1787! With him the Miami chief, Pachan (Pecan) and a comrade, killing wild game for the soldiers; before him stretching the vastness of the prairie, "like the ocean, as far as the eye can see, the view terminated by the horizon;" here and there the herds of deer and buffalo far in the distance.

For centuries before the advent of the white man the buffalo herds roamed the plain. The savage, with no weapon in his hands, save rudely chipped pieces of stone, was unable to reduce their numbers. With the coming of firearms and the rifle the buffalo passed rapidly away.

In the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth centuries the buffalo ranged as far east as western New York and Pennsylvania, and as far south as Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia. Father Marquette, in his explorations, declared that the prairies along the Illinois river were "covered with buffalos." Father Hennepin, in writing of northern Illinois, between Chicago and the Illinois river, asserted that "There must be an innumerable quantity of wild bulls in this country, since the earth is covered with their horns. \* \* \* They follow one another, so that you may see a drove of them for about a league together. Their ways are beaten, as are our great roads, and no herb grows therein."

Of the presence of large numbers of buffalo, that resorted to the salty licks of Kentucky, we have frequent mention by both Humphrey Marshall and Mann Butler, the early historians of that state. In the year 1755, Colonel James Smith mentions the killing of several buffalo by the Indians at a lick in Ohio, somewhere between the Muskingum, the Ohio and the Scioto. At this lick the Indians made about a half bushel of salt in their brass kettles. He asserts that about this lick there were clear, open woods, and that there were great roads leading to the same, made by the buffalo, that appeared like wagon roads. The wild cattle had evidently been attracted thither by the mineral salts in the water. In the early morning of June 13, 1765, George Croghan, an Indian agent sent out by William Johnson, of New York, to report to the English government conditions in the west, coming into view of one of the fine large meadows bordering on the western banks of the Wabash, saw in the distance herds of buffalo eating the grass, and describes the land as filled with buffalo, deer and bears in "great plenty." On the 18th and 19th of the same month, he traveled through what he terms as a "prodigious large meadow, called the Pyankeshaw's Hunting Ground," and describes it as well watered and full of buffalo, deer, bears, and all kinds of wild game. He was still in the lower Wabash region. On the 20th and 21st of June he was traveling north along the Wabash in the vicinity of the Vermilion river in Vermilion county, and states that game existed plentifully, and that one could kill in a half hour as much as was needed. He spoke, evidently, of the large variety of game before mentioned. The whole of the prairie of Illinois, filled with an abundant growth of the richest grasses, and all the savannas north of the Wabash in Indiana, that really constituted an extension of the Grand Prairie, were particularly suited to the range of the wild herds, and were the last grounds deserted by them previous to their withdrawal west, and across the Mississippi.

The economical value of the herds of buffalo to the Indian tribes of the northwest may be gathered from the uses to which they were afterwards put by the tribes of the western plains. "The body of the buffalo yielded fresh meat, of which thousands of tons were consumed; dried meat, prepared in summer for winter use; pemmican (also prepared in summer) of meat, fat and berries; tallow, made up into large balls or sacks, and kept in store; marrow, preserved in bladders; and tongues, dried and smoked, and eaten as a delicacy. The skin of the buffalo yielded a robe, dressed

with the hair on, for clothing and bedding; a hide, dressed without the hair, which made a tepee cover, when a number were sewn together; boats, when sewn together in a green state, over a wooden frame work; shields, from the thickest portions, as rawhide; clothing of many kinds; bags for use in traveling; coffins, or winding sheets for the dead, etc. Other portions utilized were sinews, which furnished fibre for ropes, thread, bowstrings, snow shoe webs, etc.; hair, which was sometimes made into belts and ornaments; "buffalo chips," which formed a valuable and highly prized fuel; bones, from which many articles of use and ornament were made; horns, which were made into spoons, drinking vessels, etc." The Rev. John Heckewelder, in speaking of the skill of the Delawares of Ohio, in dressing and curing buffalo hides, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, says that they cured them so that they became quite soft and supple, and so that they would last for many years without wearing out.

All at once, and near the beginning of the last decade of the eighteenth century, the buffalo herds east of the Mississippi, suddenly disappeared. George Wilson, in his history of Dubois County, Indiana, says that, "toward the close of the eighteenth century a very cold winter, continuing several months, froze all vegetable growth, starved the noble animals, and the herds never regained their loss." This statement is borne out by the testimony of the famous Potawatomi chieftain Shaugbena, of northern Illinois, who says that the trade in buffalo robes east of the Mississippi ceased in about the year 1790; that when a youth he joined in the chase of buffalos on the prairies, but while he was still young, they all disappeared from the country. "A big snow, about five feet deep, fell, and froze so hard on the top that people walked on it, causing the buffalo to perish by starvation. Next spring a few buffalo, poor and haggard in appearance, were seen going westward, and as they approached the carcasses of dead ones, lying here and there on the prairies, they would stop, commence pawing and lowing, then start off again in a lope for the west." It is true that Brigadier-General Josiah Harmar, in marching from Vincennes to Kaskaskia, in 1787, gives a striking account of the early prairies, "like the ocean, as far as the eye can see, the view terminated by the horizon," and describes the country as excellent for grazing, and abounding with deer and buffalo. Pachan, or Pecan, a famous Miami chieftain from Miami town, and an Indian comrade, supplied the military party with buffalo and deer meat on the march out, and on the return. Notwithstanding these facts, the story of the terrible winter and the deep snow as told by Shaugbena seems authentic, and while scattered remnants of the great herds may still have existed for some time afterward, the great droves stretching "for above a league together," were seen no more.

The great snowfall was the culminating tragedy. In order to secure whiskey and brandy the horse tribes of the prairies had slaughtered thousands, and bartered away their robes and hides. What distinguishes the savage from civilized man is, that the savage takes no heed of the morrow. To satisfy his present passions and appetites he will sacrifice every hope of the future. He no longer cures the skins and clothes his nakedness. He thinks no longer of husbanding his supply of meat and game. He robs the plain, and despoils every stream and river, and then becomes a drunken beggar in the frontier towns, crying for alms. The same thing that happened on the plains of Illinois at the close of eighteenth, took place on the plains west of the Mississippi in the last half of the nineteenth century. The giant herds melted away before the remorseless killings of the still hunters and savages, who threw away a meat supply worth millions of dollars in a mad chase for gain and plunder, and no one took a more prominent part in that killing than the Indian himself.

"When the snow fall was unusually heavy," says William T. Hornaday, "and lay for a long time on the ground, the buffalos fast for days together, and sometimes even weeks. If a warm day came, and thawed the upper surface of the snow, sufficiently for succeeding cold to freeze it into a crust, the outlook for the bison began to be serious. A man can travel over a crust through which the hoofs of a ponderous bison cut like chisels and leave him floundering belly-deep. It was at such times that the Indians hunted him on snow-shoes, and drove their spears into his vitals as he wallowed helplessly in the drifts. Then the wolves grew fat upon the victims which they, also, slaughtered without effort."

This is probably an accurate description of what took place east of the Mississippi river about the year 1790, and left the bones of the herds to bleach on the prairies.

However the facts may be, it is certain that at the opening of the nineteenth century the buffalo were practically extinguished in the territory of the northwest. A few scattered animals may have remained here and there upon the prairies, but the old herds, whose progenitors were seen by Croghan were forever gone. In the month of December, 1799, Judge Jacob Burnet was traveling overland on horseback from Cincinnati to Vincennes on professional business, and while at some point north and west of the falls of the Ohio, he and his companions surprised a small herd of eight or ten buffalos, that were seeking shelter behind the top of a fallen beech tree on the line of an old "trace," during a snow storm. This is one of the last accounts given of any buffalos in Indiana. On August 18th and August 27th, 1804, Governor William Henry Harrison, as Indian agent for the United States government, bought a large tract of land in southern Indiana, between the Wabash and the Ohio rivers, from the Delaware and Piankeshaw tribes. The right to make this purchase was disputed by Captain William Wells, the Indian agent at Fort Wayne, and by the Little Turtle, claiming to represent the Miami, and it was claimed among other things, that the lands bought were frequented as a hunting ground by both the Miami and Potawatomi, and that they went there to hunt buffalo. The truth of this statement was denied by Governor Harrison, who said that not an animal of that kind "had been seen within that tract for several years."

Traces of the old buffalo wallows are occasionally met with, even to this day. The great animals "rolled successively in the same hole, and each carried away a coat of mud," which, baking in the sun, served to protect them against the great swarm of flies, gnats and insects that infested the marshes and prairies of that early time. One of these wallows, in a perfect state of preservation, exists in the northwest quarter of section thirty, in township twenty-five north, range six west, in Benton County, Indiana. It is several yards in diameter, hollowed out to a depth of four or five feet, and its periphery is almost an exact circle. It is situated on a rather high, springy knoll, commanding a view of the surrounding plain for several miles. A great number of Indian arrow heads have been picked up in the immediate vicinity, showing that the Indians had previously resorted thither in search of game.

## CHAPTER V

### THE WABASH AND THE MAUMEE

– *Chief line of communication with the tribes of the Early Northwest. The heart of the Miami Country.*

To give a detailed description of the many beautiful rivers, valleys and forests of the northwest at the opening of the last century, would be difficult. It was, as before mentioned, a vast domain, well watered and fertile, and containing some of the best lands in the possession of the federal government. Two rivers, however, assume such historical importance, as to merit a more particular mention. Along their courses two Indian confederacies were organized under the spur of British influence, to oppose the advance of the infant republic of the United States. These two rivers were the Wabash and the Maumee, both leading to the principal center of the fur trade of the northwest, the town of Detroit.

The valley of the Wabash, famed in song and story, and rich in Indian legend, is now filled with fields of corn and prosperous cities. At the close of the Revolution, the great stream swept through an unbroken wilderness of oak, maple and sycamore from its source to the old French settlement of Vincennes. Its bluffs, now adorned with the habitations of a peaceful people, then presented the wild and rugged beauty of pristine days; its terraces, stretching back to the prairies of the north and west, were crowned with forests *primaeval*; while naked Miamis, Weas and Potawatomi in canoes of bark, rounded its graceful courses to the waters of the Ohio.

For one who has ridden over the hills to the west and south of Purdue University, and viewed the gorgeous panorama of the Wea plain, or who has glimpsed in the perspective the wooded hills of Warren and Vermilion from the bluffs on the eastern side of the river, it is not hard to understand why the red man loved the Wabash. An observer who saw it in the early part of the last century pens this picture: "Its green banks were lined with the richest verdure. Wild flowers intermingled with the tall grass that nodded in the passing breeze. Nature seemed clothed in her bridal robe. Blossoms of the wild plum, hawthorn and red-bud, made the air redolent." Speaking of the summer, he says: "The wide, fertile bottom lands of the Wabash, in many places presented one continuous orchard of wild plum and crab-apple bushes, over-spread with arbors of the different varieties of the woods grape, wild hops and honeysuckle, fantastically wreathed together. One bush, or cluster of bushes, often presenting the crimson plum, the yellow crab-apple, the blue luscious grape, festoons of matured wild hops, mingled with the red berries of the clambering sweet-briar, that bound them all lovingly together."

Through all this wild and luxurious wilderness of vines, grasses and flowers flitted the honey bee, called by the Indians, "the white man's fly," storing his golden burden in the hollow trunks of the trees. While on the march from Vincennes, in the last days of September, 1811, Captain Spier Spencer's Yellow Jackets found three bee trees in an hour and spent the evening in cutting them down. They were rewarded by a find of ten gallons of rich honey.

The great river itself now passed between high precipitous bluffs, crowned with oak, sugar, walnut and hickory, or swept out with long graceful curves into the lowlands and bottoms, receiving at frequent intervals the waters of clear, sparkling springs and brooks that leaped down from rocky gorges and hillsides, or being joined by the currents of some creek or inlet that in its turn swept back through forest, glade and glen to sun-lit groves and meadows of blue grass.

Everywhere the waters of the great stream were clear and pellucid. The plow-share of civilization had not as yet turned up the earth, nor the filth and sewerage of cities been discharged into the current. In places the gravelly bottom could be seen at a great depth and the forms of fishes of great size reposing at ease. "Schools of fishes – salmon, bass, red-horse and pike – swam close along the shore, catching at the bottoms of the red-bud and plum that floated on the surface of the

water, which was so clear that myriads of the finny tribe could be seen darting hither and thither amidst the limpid element, turning up their silvery sides as they sped out into deeper water."

The whole valley of the Wabash abounded with deer, and their tiny hoofs wrought foot paths through every hollow and glen. The small prairies bordered with shady groves, the patches of blue-grass, and the sweet waters of the springs, were great attractions. The banks of the Mississinewa, Wild Cat, Pine Creek, Vermilion, and other tributaries, were formerly noted hunting grounds. George Croghan, who described the Wabash as running through "one of the finest countries in the world," mentions the deer as existing in great numbers. On the march of General Harrison's men to Tippecanoe, the killing of deer was an every day occurrence, and at times the frightened animals passed directly in front of the line of march. Raccoons were also very plentiful. On a fur trading expedition conducted by a French trader named La Fontaine, from the old Miamitown (Fort Wayne), in the winter of 1789-90, he succeeded in picking up about eighty deer skins and about five hundred raccoon skins in less than thirty days. He descended the Wabash and "turned into the woods" toward the White River, there bartering with the Indians for their peltries.

As to wild game, the whole valley was abundantly supplied. In the spring time, great numbers of wild ducks, geese and brant were found in all the ponds and marshes; in the woody ground the wild turkey, the pheasant and the quail. At times, the sun was actually darkened by the flight of wild pigeons, while the prairie chicken was found in all the open tracts and grass lands.

The bottom lands of this river, were noted for their fertility. The annual inundations always left a rich deposit of silt. This silt produced excellent maize, potatoes, beans, pumpkins, squashes, cucumbers and melons. These, according to Heckewelder, were important items of the Indian food supply.

To the Indian we are indebted for ash-cake, hoecake, succotash, samp, hominy and many other productions made from the Indian maize. The Miamis of the Wabash, with a favorable climate and a superior soil, produced a famous corn with a finer skin and "a meal much whiter" than that raised by other tribes. How far the cultivation of this cereal had progressed is not now fully appreciated. In the expedition of General James Wilkinson against the Wabash Indians in 1791, he is said to have destroyed over two hundred acres of corn in the milk at Kenapacomaqua, or the Eel river towns, alone, and to have cut down a total of four hundred and thirty acres of corn in the whole campaign. In General Harmar's campaign against Miamitown in the year 1790, nearly twenty thousand bushels of corn in the ear were destroyed. On the next day after the battle of Tippecanoe the dragoons of Harrison's army set fire to the Prophets Town, and burned it to the ground. Judge Isaac Naylor says that they found there large quantities of corn, beans and peas, and General John Tipton relates that the commissary loaded six wagons with corn and "Burnt what was estimated at two thousand bushel."

Of the many other natural advantages of this great valley, much might be written. Wheat and tobacco, the latter of a fine grade, were growing at Vincennes in 1765, when Croghan passed through there. Wild hemp was abundant in the lowlands. The delicious pecan flourished, and walnuts, hazelnuts and hickory nuts were found in great plenty. The sugar maple existed everywhere, and the Indians, who were the original sugar makers of the world, made large quantities of this toothsome article. In addition to this the whole valley was filled with wild fruits and berries, such as blackberries, dewberries, raspberries, gooseberries, and the luscious wild strawberry, that grew everywhere in the open spaces and far out on the bordering prairies.

This sketch of the Wabash and its wonderful possibilities may not be more aptly closed, than by appending hereto the description of Thomas Hutchins, the first geographer of the United States. It appears in his "Topographical Description," and mention is made of the connection of the Wabash by a portage with the waters of Lake Erie; the value of the fur trade at Ouiatenon and Vincennes, and many other points of vital interest.

"The Wabash, is a beautiful river, with high and upright banks, less subject to overflow than any other river (the Ohio excepted) in this part of America. It discharges itself into the Ohio, one thousand

twenty-two miles below Fort Pitt, in latitude thirty-seven degrees, forty-one minutes. At its mouth, it is two hundred and seventy yards wide; is navigable to Ouiatenon (four hundred twelve miles) in the spring, summer, and autumn with bateaux and barges, drawing about three feet of water. From thence, on account of a rocky bottom, and shoal water, large canoes are chiefly employed, except when the river is swelled with rains, at which time, it may be ascended with boats, such as I have just described (197 miles further) to the Miami carrying place, which is nine miles from the Miami village (Author's note: Miamitown or Fort Wayne), and this is situated on a river of the same name (Author's note: The Maumee was formerly called "Miami of the Lake"), that runs into the southwest part of Lake Erie. The stream of the Wabash, is generally gentle to Fort Ouiatenon, and nowhere obstructed with falls, but is by several rapids, both above and below that post, some of which are pretty considerable. There is also a part of the river for about three miles, and thirty miles from the carrying place, where the channel is so narrow, that it is necessary to make use of setting poles instead of oars. The land on this river is remarkably fertile, and several parts of it are natural meadows, of great extent, covered with fine long grass. The timber is large, and in such variety, that almost all the different kinds growing upon the Ohio, and its branches (But with a greater proportion of black and white mulberry trees), may be found. A silver mine has been discovered about 28 miles above Ouiatenon, on the northern side of the Wabash, and probably others may be found hereafter. The Wabash abounds with salt springs, and any quantity of salt may be made from them, in the manner now done at the Saline in the Illinois country. The hills are replenished with the best coal, and there is plenty of lime and freestone, blue, yellow and white clay, for glass works and pottery."

"Two French settlements are established on the Wabash, called Post Vincent and Ouiatenon; the first is 150 miles, and the other 262 miles from its mouth. The former is on the eastern side of the river, and consists of sixty settlers and their families. They raise corn, wheat and tobacco of an extraordinary good quality, superior, it is said, to that produced in Virginia. They have a fine breed of horses (Brought originally by the Indians from the Spanish settlements on the western side of the Mississippi), and large flocks of swine and black cattle. The settlers deal with the natives for furs and deer skins, to the amount of about 5,000 pounds annually. Hemp of good texture grows spontaneously in the lowlands of the Wabash, as do grapes in the greatest abundance, having a black, thin skin, and of which the inhabitants in the autumn, make a sufficient quantity (for their own consumption) of well-tasted red wine. Hops, large and good, are found in many places, and the lands are particularly adapted to the culture of rice. All European fruits, apples, peaches, pears, cherries, currants, gooseberries, melons, etc., thrive well both here and in the country bordering on the river Ohio."

"Ouiatenon (Author's note: Just below Lafayette), is a small stockaded fort on the western side of the Wabash, in which about a dozen families reside. The neighboring Indians are the Kickapoos, Musquitons, Pyankeshaws, and a principal part of the Ouiatenons. The whole of these tribes consists, it is supposed, of about one thousand warriors. The fertility of soil, and the diversity of timber in this country, are the same as in the vicinity of Post Vincent. The annual amount of skins and furs obtained at Ouiatenon is about 8,000 pounds. By the river Wabash, the inhabitants of Detroit move to the southern parts of Ohio, and the Illinois country. Their route is by the Miami river (Maumee) to a carrying place (Author's note: Miamitown or Fort Wayne), which, as before stated, is nine miles to the Wabash, when this river is raised with freshies; but at other seasons, the distance is from eighteen to thirty miles, including the portage. The whole of the latter is through a level country. Carts are usually employed in transporting boats and merchandise, from the Miami to the Wabash river."

No less wonderful was the valley of the Maumee, directly on the great trade route between the Wabash and the post of Detroit. Croghan, who was a good judge of land, and made careful observations, found the Ottawas and Wyandots here in 1765, the land of great richness, and game very plentiful. It was a region greatly beloved by the Indian tribes, and the scene after the revolution, of many grand councils of the northwestern confederacy. In a letter of General Anthony Wayne, written in 1794, he asserts that: "The margins of these beautiful rivers, the Miamis of the Lake (Maumee),

and the Au Glaize (A southern tributary), appear like one continued village for a number of miles, both above and below this place, Grand Glaize, nor have I ever before beheld such immense fields of corn in any part of America, from Canada to Florida."

After General Wayne's army had defeated the Indians at the battle of Fallen Timbers on this river in 1794, they spent many days after that conflict in destroying the fields of grain. One who marched with the army, in August of the above year, describes Indian corn fields extending for four or five miles along the Au Glaize, and estimated that there were one thousand acres of growing corn. The whole valley of the Maumee from its mouth to Fort Wayne, is described as being full of immense corn fields, large vegetable patches, and old apple trees, and it is related that Wayne's army, while constructing Fort Defiance for a period of eight days, "obtained their bread and vegetables from the corn fields and potato patches surrounding the fort."

Is it any wonder that along these wonderful basins should be located the seats of power of the Miami Indians, the leaders of the western confederacy that opposed the claims of the United States to the lands north of the Ohio; that from the close of the Revolutionary war until Wayne's victory in 1794, the principal contest was over the possession of the Miami village, now Fort Wayne, which controlled the trade in both the Wabash and the Maumee Valleys, and that President George Washington, consummate strategist that he was, foresaw at once in 1789, the first year of his presidency, that the possession of the great carrying place at Miamitown would probably command the whole northwest and put an end to the Indian wars?

## CHAPTER VI

# THE TRIBES OF THE NORTHWEST

– *A description of the seven tribes of savages who opposed the advance of settlement in the Northwest. Their location. Kekionga, the seat of Miami power.*

We have now to consider those Indian tribes and confederacies, which at the close of the Revolutionary war, inhabited the northwest territory.

Chief among them were the Wyandots, Miamis, Shawnees, Delawares, Ottawas, Chippewas and Potawatomi. These were the seven tribes known in after years as the "western confederacy," who fought so long and bitterly against the government of the United States, and who were at last conquered by the arms and genius of General Anthony Wayne in the year 1794.

The Ottawas, Chippewas and Potawatomi formed a sort of loose confederacy known as the Three Fires, and Massas, a Chippewa chief, so referred to them at the Treaty of Greenville.

The Miamis, the most powerful of the confederates, were subdivided into the Eel Rivers, the Weas, and the Piankeshaws. The Kickapoos, a small tribe which lived on the Sangamon, and the Vermilion of the Wabash, were associated generally with the Potawatomi, and were always the allies of the English. The Winnebagoes of Wisconsin were of the linguistic family of the Sioux; were generally associated with the confederates against the Americans, and many of their distinguished warriors fought against General Harrison at Tippecanoe. The decadent tribes known in early times as the Illinois, did not play a conspicuous part in the history of the northwest.

While the limits of the various tribes may not be fixed with precision, and the boundary lines were often confused, still there were well recognized portions of the northwest that were under the exclusive control of certain nations, and these nations were extremely jealous of their rights, as shown by the anger and resentment of the Miamis at what they termed as the encroachment of the Potawatomi at the Treaty of Fort Wayne, in 1809.

The Wyandots, for instance, were the incontestable owners of the country between the Cuyahoga and the Au Glaize, in the present state of Ohio, their dominion extending as far south as the divide between the waters of the Sandusky river and the Scioto, and embracing the southern shore of Lake Erie from Maumee Bay, to the mouth of the Cuyahoga. Large numbers of them were also along the northern shores of Lake Erie, in Canada. Their territory at one time probably extended much farther south toward the Ohio, touching the lands of the Miamis on the west, but certainly embracing parts of the Muskingum country, to which they had invited the ancient Delawares, respectfully addressed by them as "grandfathers." Intermingled with the Wyandots south and west of Lake Erie were scattered bands of Ottawas, but they were tenants of the soil by sufferance, and not as of right.

The Miamis have been described by General William Henry Harrison as the most extensive landowners in the northwest. He stands on record as saying that: "Their territory embraced all of Ohio, west of the Scioto; all of Indiana, and that part of Illinois, south of the Fox river and Wisconsin, on which frontier they were intermingled with the Kickapoos and some other small tribes." Harrison may have been right as to the ancient and original bounds of this tribe, but Little Turtle, their most famous chieftain, said at the Treaty of Greenville, in 1795: "It is well known by all my brothers present, that my fore-father kindled the first fire at Detroit; from thence, he extended his lines to the head-water of Scioto; from thence, to its mouth; from thence, down the Ohio, to the mouth of the Wabash, and from thence to Chicago, on Lake Michigan." The truth is, that the ancient demesne of the Miamis was much curtailed by the irruption of three tribes from the north in about the year 1765, the Sacs and Foxes, the Kickapoos and the Potawatomi, who conquered the old remnants of the Illinois tribes in the buffalo prairies and divided the country among themselves.

Says Hiram Beckwith, in speaking of the Potawatomi: "Always on friendly terms with the Kickapoos, with whom they lived in mixed villages, they joined the latter and the Sacs and Foxes in the exterminating war upon the Illinois tribes, and afterwards obtained their allotment of the despoiled domain." The Potawatomi advancing by sheer force of numbers, rather than by conquest, finally appropriated a large part of the lands in the present state of Indiana, north of the Wabash, commingling with the Kickapoos at the south and west, and advancing their camps as far down as Pine creek. The Miamis were loud in their remonstrances against this trespassing, and denounced the Potawatomi as squatters, "never having had any lands of their own, and being mere intruders upon the prior estate of others," but the Potawatomi were not dispossessed and were afterwards parties to all treaties with the United States government for the sale and disposal of said lands. The Miamis also lost a part of their lands on the lower west side of the Wabash to the Kickapoos. Pressing eastward from the neighborhood of Peoria, the Kickapoos established themselves on the Vermilion, where they had a village on both sides of that river at its confluence with the main stream. They were, says Beckwith, "Greatly attached to the Vermilion and its tributaries, and Governor Harrison found it a difficult task to reconcile them to ceding it away."

To the last, however, the Miamis remained the undisputed lords and masters of most of the territory watered by the two Miamis of the Ohio, and by the Wabash and its tributaries down to the Ohio. The great head and center of their power was at Kekionga (now Fort Wayne), always referred to by President Washington as "the Miami Village." It was a pleasant situation in the heart of the great northwest, at the junction where the swift flowing St. Joseph and the more gentle stream of the Saint Marys, formed the headwaters of the Maumee. On the eastern side of the St. Joseph was the town of Pecan, a head chief of the Miami, and the same savage who had supplied deer and buffalo meat for Brigadier General Harmar on his mission to Kaskaskia in 1787. Pecan was an uncle of the famous chief, Peshewah, or Jean Baptiste Richardville, who after the death of Little Turtle in 1812, became the head chief of the Miami tribe, and was reputed to be the richest Indian in North America. The southern end of this town was near the point of juncture of the St. Marys and St. Joseph, and the village extended north along what is now known as Lakeside, in the present city of Fort Wayne, a pleasant drive revealing at times the rippling waters of the river to the west. To the south of this village lay the Indian gardens, and east of the gardens the extensive corn fields and meadows. On the northern side of the town more corn fields were found, and north and west of it extended the forests. The banks of the Maumee just below the junction, and south of this old village, are quite high and steep, and along the northern side now runs the beautiful avenue known as Edgewater. Traveling down Edgewater to the eastward one comes to a great boulder with a brass tablet on it. You are at Harmar's Ford, and at the exact point where the regulars crossed the river just after sunrise of October 22nd, 1790, to attack the Indians. Here it was that Major John Wyllys fell leading the charge. Along the southern bank of the Maumee the ground is elevated and crowning these elevations were the forests again. It was through these forests that Hardin's forces approached the fatal battlefield.

On the western bank of the St. Joseph was a mixed village of French and Indians known as LeGris' Town, and it in turn was surrounded by more corn fields. LeGris was also an important chief of the Miamis, and named in Henry Hay's journal as a brother-in-law of the Little Turtle. He signed the treaty of Greenville under the Indian name of Na-goh-quan-gogh. Directly south of this village ran the St. Marys, and to the west of it was a small wooded creek known as Spy Run.

To these villages in August, 1765, came George Croghan on his way to Detroit. He describes the carrying-place between the Wabash and the Maumee systems to be about nine miles in length, "but not above half that length in freshes." He reported navigation for bateaux and canoes between the carrying place and Ouiatenon as very difficult during the dry season of the year on account of many rapids and rifts; but during the high-water time the journey could be easily made in three days. He says the distance by water was two hundred forty miles and by land about two hundred ten. Within a mile of Miamitown he was met by a delegation of the Miami chiefs and immediately after his

entrance into the village the British flag was raised. He describes the villages as consisting of about forty or fifty cabins, besides nine or ten French houses. He entertained no very high opinion of the French and describes them as refugees from Detroit, spiring up the Indians against the English. He describes the surrounding country as pleasant, well watered, and having a rich soil.

Recently another account of these villages has been given to the world by the publication of the diary of one Henry Hay, who, as a representative of certain merchants and traders of Detroit, visited these villages in the winter of 1789-1790, while they were still under the influence of the British agents at Detroit, although the soil was within the jurisdiction of the United States government. It was then one of the most important trading places for the Indian tribes in the northwest, and in close proximity to the great council grounds of the northwestern Indian confederacy in the valley of the Maumee. Le Gris, was there, and Jean Baptiste Richardville, then a youth; also the Little Turtle himself, about to become the most famous and wily strategist of his day and time.

Let there be no mistaken glamour cast about this scene. Already the disintegration of the Indian power was setting in. The traders among them, both English and French, seem to have been a depraved, drunken crew, trying to get all they could "by foul play or otherwise," and traducing each other's goods by the circulation of evil reports. Hay says, "I cannot term it in a better manner than calling it a rascally scrambling trade." Winter came on and the leading chiefs and their followers went into the woods to kill game. They had nothing in reserve to live upon, and in a hard season their women and children would have suffered. The French residents here seem to have been a gay, rollicking set, playing flutes and fiddles, dancing and playing cards, and generally going home drunk from every social gathering. The few English among them were no better, and we have the edifying spectacle of one giving away his daughter to another over a bottle of rum. The mightiest chieftains, including Le Gris, did not scruple to beg for whiskey, and parties of warriors were arriving from the Ohio river and Kentucky, with the scalps of white men dangling at their belts.

There was still a considerable activity at this place, however, in the fur trade, and the English thought it well worth holding. Raccoon, deer, bear, beaver, and otter skins were being brought in, although the season was not favorable during which Hay sojourned there on account of it being an open winter. Constant communication was kept up with Detroit on the one hand and the Petit Piconne (Tippecanoe) and Ouiatenon on the other. La Fontaine, Antoine LaSalle, and other famous French traders of that day were doing a thriving business in the lower Indian country.

That these Miami villages were also of great strategical value from the military standpoint, and that this fact was well known to President Washington, has already been mentioned. The French early established themselves there, and later the English, and when the Americans after the Revolution took dominion over the northwest and found it necessary to conquer the tribes of the Wabash and their allies, one of the first moves of the United States government was to attack the villages at this place, break up the line of their communication with the British at Detroit, and overawe the Miamis by the establishment of a strong military post.

To the last, the Miamis clung to their old carrying place. Wayne insisted at the peace with the Miamis and their allies, at Greenville, Ohio, in 1795, that a tract six miles square around the newly established post at Fort Wayne should be ceded to the United States, together with "one piece two miles square on the Wabash river, at the end of the portage from the Miami of the Lake (Maumee), and about eight miles westward from Fort Wayne." This proposal was stoutly resisted by the Little Turtle, who among other things said: "The next place you pointed to, was the Little River, and you said you wanted two miles square at that place. This is a request that our fathers, the French or British, never made of us; it was always ours. This carrying place has heretofore proved, in a great degree, the subsistence of your younger brothers. That place has brought to us in the course of one day, the amount of one hundred dollars. Let us both own this place and enjoy in common the advantage it affords." Despite this argument, however, Wayne prevailed, and the control of Kekionga and the portage passed to the Federal government; that ancient Kekionga described by Little Turtle as "the

Miami village, that glorious gate, which your younger brothers had the happiness to own, and through which all the good words of our chiefs had to pass from the north to the south, and from the east to the west."

Returning to the Potawatomi, it will be seen that this tribe, which originally came from the neighborhood of Green Bay, was probably from about the middle of the eighteenth century, in possession of most of the country from the Milwaukee river in Wisconsin, around the south shore of Lake Michigan, to Grand River, "extending southward over a large part of northern Illinois, east across Michigan to Lake Erie, and south in Indiana to the Wabash." The Sun, or Keesass, a Potawatomi of the Wabash, said at the treaty of Greenville, that his tribe was composed of three divisions; that of the river Huron, in Michigan, that of the St. Joseph of Lake Michigan, and the bands of the Wabash. In the year 1765, George Croghan, Indian agent of the British government, found the Potawatomi in villages on the north side of the Wabash at Ouiatenon, with a Kickapoo village in close proximity, while the Weas had a village on the south side of the river. This would indicate that the Potawatomi had already pushed the Miami tribe south of the Wabash at this place and had taken possession of the country.

Far away to the north and on both shores of Lake Superior, dwelt the Chippewas or Ojibways, famed for their physical strength and prowess and living in their conical wigwams, with poles stuck in the ground in a circle and covered over with birch bark and grass mats. The Jesuit Fathers early found them in possession of the Sault Ste. Marie, and when General Wayne at the treaty of Greenville, reserved the post of Michillimacinae, and certain lands on the main between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, Mash-i-pinash-i-wish, one of the principal Chippewa chieftains, voluntarily made the United States a present of the Island De Bois Blanc, at the eastern entrance of the straits of Mackinac, for their use and accommodation, and was highly complimented by the general for his generous gift. A reference to the maps of Thomas G. Bradford, of 1838, shows the whole upper peninsular of Michigan in the possession of the Chippewas, as well as the whole southern and western shores of Lake Superior, and a large portion of northern Wisconsin. One of their principal sources of food supply was wild rice, and the presence of this cereal, together with the plentiful supply of fish, probably accounts for their numbers and strength. In the beginning of the eighteenth century, they expelled the Foxes from northern Wisconsin, and later drove the fierce fighting Sioux beyond the Mississippi. They were the undisputed masters of a very extensive domain and held it with a strong and powerful hand. One of their chiefs proudly said to Wayne: "Your brothers' present, of the three fires, are gratified in seeing and hearing you; those who are at home will not experience that pleasure, until you come and live among us; you will then learn our title to that land." Though far removed from the theatre of the wars of the northwest, they, together with the Ottawas, early came under the British influence, and resisted the efforts of the United States to subdue the Miamis and their confederate tribes, fighting with the allies against General Harmar at the Miami towns, against St. Clair on the headwaters of the Wabash and against Anthony Wayne at Fallen Timbers on the 20th of August, 1794.

The rudest of all the tribes of the northwest were the Ottawas, those expert canoemen of the Great Lakes, known to the French as the "traders," because they carried on a large trade and commerce between the other tribes. They seem to have had their original home on Mantoulin Island, in Lake Huron, and on the north and south shores of the Georgian Bay. Driven by terror of the Iroquois to the region west of Lake Michigan, they later returned to the vicinity of L'Arbe Croche, near the lower end of Lake Michigan, and from thence spread out in all directions. Consulting Bradford's map of 1838 again, the Ottawas are found in the whole northern end of the lower Michigan peninsula. Ottawa county, at the mouth of Grand river, would seem to indicate that at one time, their towns must have existed in that vicinity, and in fact their possessions are said to have extended as far down the eastern shore of Lake Michigan as the St. Joseph. To the south and east of these points "their villages alternated with those of their old allies, the Hurons, now called Wyandots, along the shore

of Lake Erie from Detroit to the vicinity of Beaver creek, in Pennsylvania." They were parties with the Wyandots and Delawares and other tribes to the treaty of Fort Harmar, Ohio, at the mouth of Muskingum, in 1789, whereby the Wyandots ceded large tracts of land in the southern part of that state to the United States government, and were granted in turn the possession and occupancy of certain lands to the south of Lake Erie. The Ottawa title to any land in southern Ohio, however, is exceedingly doubtful, and they were probably admitted as parties to the above treaty in deference to their acknowledged overlords, the Wyandots. Their long intercourse with the latter tribe, in the present state of Ohio, who were probably the most chivalrous, brave and intelligent of all the tribes, seems to have softened their manners and rendered them less ferocious than formerly. Like the Chippewas, their warriors were of fine physical mould, and Colonel William Stanley Hatch, an early historian of Ohio, in writing of the Shawnees, embraces the following reference to the Ottawas: "As I knew them, (i. e., the Shawnees), they were truly noble specimens of their race, universally of fine athletic forms, and light complexioned, none more so, and none appeared their equal, unless it was their tribal relatives, the Ottawas, who adjoined them. The warriors of these tribes were the finest looking Indians I ever saw, and were truly noble specimens of the human family." The leading warriors and chieftains of their tribe, however, were great lovers of strong liquor, and Pontiac, the greatest of all the Ottawas, was assassinated shortly after a drunken carousal, and while he was singing the grand medicine songs of his race.

But the wandering Ishmaelites of all the northwest tribes were the Shawnees. Cruel, crafty and treacherous, and allied always with the English, they took a leading part in all the ravages and depredations on the frontiers of Pennsylvania and Virginia during the revolution and led expedition after expedition against the infant settlements of Kentucky, from the period of the first pioneers in 1775, until Wayne's victory in 1794. These were the Indians who kept Boone in captivity, made Simon Kenton run the gauntlet, stole thousands of horses in Kentucky, and who for years attacked the flatboats and keel boats that floated down the Ohio, torturing their captives by burning at the stake.

General William Henry Harrison, in speaking of the migrations of this tribe, says: "No fact, in relation to the Indian tribes, who have resided on the northwest frontier for a century past, is better known, than that the Shawnees came from Florida and Georgia about the middle of the eighteenth century. They passed through Kentucky (along the Cumberland river) on their way to the Ohio. But that their passage was rather a rapid one, is proved by these circumstances. Black Hoof, their late principal chief (With whom I had been acquainted since the treaty of Greenville), was born in Florida, before the removal of his tribe. He died at Wapocconata, in this state, only three or four years ago. As I do not know his age, at the time of his leaving Florida, nor at his death, I am not able to fix with precision the date of emigration. But it is well known that they were at the town which still bears their name on the Ohio (Shawneetown, Ill.), a few miles below the mouth of the Wabash, some time before the commencement of the Revolutionary war; that they remained there some years before they removed to the Scioto, where they were found by Governor Dunmore, in the year 1774. That their removal from Florida was a matter of necessity, and their progress from thence, a flight, rather than a deliberate march, is evident from their appearance, when they presented themselves upon the Ohio, and claimed the protection of the Miamis. They are represented by the chiefs of the latter, as well as those of the Delawares, as supplicants for protection, not against the Iroquois, but against the Creeks and Seminoles, or some other southern tribes, who had driven them from Florida, and they are said to have been literally *sans provat et sans culottes*."

Later writers have mentioned that while they originally dwelt in the south, that one division of the tribe lived in South Carolina, while another and more numerous division lived along the Cumberland river, and had a large village near the present site of Nashville. The Cumberland river was known on the early maps preceding the Revolution as the Shawnee river, while the Tennessee was called the Cherokee river. This Cumberland division is said to have become engaged in war with

both the Cherokees and Chickasaws, and to have fled to the north to receive the protection of the powerful nations of the Wabash.

Notwithstanding the magnanimous conduct of the Miamis, however, they, together with the Wyandots of Ohio, always regarded the Shawnees with suspicion and as trouble makers. The great chief of the Miamis told Antoine Gamelin at Kekionga, in April, 1790, when Gamelin was sent by the government to pacify the Wabash Indians, that the Miamis had incurred a bad name on account of mischief done along the Ohio, but that this was the work of the Shawnees, who, he said, had "a bad heart," and were the "perturbators of all the nations." To the articles of the treaty at Fort Harmar, in 1789, the following is appended: "That the Wyandots have laid claim to the lands that were granted to the Shawnees, (these lands were along the Miami, in Ohio), at the treaty held at the Miami, and have declared, that as the Shawnees have been so restless, and caused so much trouble, both to them and to the United States, if they will not now be at peace, they will dispossess them, and take the country into their own hands; for that country is theirs of right, and the Shawnees are only living upon it by their permission."

From the recital of the above facts, it is evident that the Shawnees could never justly claim the ownership of any of the lands north of the Ohio. That, far from being the rightful sovereigns of the soil, they came to the valleys of the Miamis and Wyandots as refugees from a devastating war, and as supplicants for mercy and protection. This is recognized by the Quaker, Henry Harvey, who was partial to them, and for many years dwelt among them as a missionary. Harvey says that from the accounts of the various treaties to which they were parties, "they had been disinherited altogether, as far as related to the ownership of land anywhere." Yet from the lips of the most famous of all the Shawnees, came the false but specious reasoning that none of the tribes of the northwest, not even the Miamis who had received and sheltered them, had a right to alienate any of their lands without the common consent of all. "That no single tribe had the right to sell; that the power to sell was not vested in their chiefs, but must be the act of the warriors in council assembled of all the tribes, as the land belonged to all – no portion of it to any single tribe." This doctrine of communistic ownership was advocated by Tecumseh in the face of all the conquests of the Iroquois, in the face of the claim of the Wyandots to much of the domain of the present state of Ohio, and in the face of all of Little Turtle's claims to the Maumee and the Wabash valleys, founded on long and undisputed occupancy and possession. It never had any authority, either in fact or in history, and moreover, lacked the great and saving grace of originality. For if any Indian was the author of the doctrine that no single tribe of Indians had the power to alienate their soil, without the consent of all the other tribes, the first Indian to clearly state that proposition was Joseph Brant of the Mohawk nation, and Brant was clearly inspired by the British, at the hands of whom he was a pensioner.

The savage warriors of the northwest were not formidable in numbers, but they were terrible in their ferocity, their knowledge of woodcraft, and their cunning strategy. General Harrison says that for a decade prior to the treaty of Greenville, the allied tribes could not at any time have brought into the field over three thousand warriors. This statement is corroborated by Colonel James Smith, who had an intimate knowledge of the Wyandots and other tribes, and who says: "I am of the opinion that from Braddock's war, until the present time (1799), there never was more than three thousand Indians at any time, in arms against us, west of Fort Pitt, and frequently not half that number."

Constant warfare with the colonies and the Kentucky and Virginia hunting shirt men had greatly reduced their numbers, but above all the terrible ravages of smallpox, the insidious effects flowing from the use of intoxicants, and the spread of venereal disorders among them, which latter diseases they had no means of combating, had carried away thousands and reduced the ranks of their valiant armies.

Woe to the general, however, who lightly estimated their fighting qualities, or thought that these "rude and undisciplined" savages, as they were sometimes called, could be met and overpowered by the tactics of the armies of Europe or America! They were, says Harrison, "a body of the finest light

troops in the world," and this opinion is corroborated by Theodore Roosevelt, who had some first hand knowledge of Indian fighters. The Wyandots and Miamis, especially, as well as other western bands, taught the males of their tribes the arts of war from their earliest youth. When old enough to bear arms, they were disciplined to act in concert, to obey punctually all commands of their war chiefs, and cheerfully unite to put them into immediate execution. Each warrior was taught to observe carefully the motion of his right hand companion, so as to communicate any sudden movement or command from the right to the left, Thus advancing in perfect accord, they could march stealthily and abreast through the thick woods and underbrush, in scattered order, without losing the conformation of their ranks or creating disorder. These maneuvers could be executed slowly or as fast as the warriors could run. They were also disciplined to form a circle, a semi-circle or a hollow square. They used the circle to surround their enemies, the semi-circle if the enemy had a stream on one side or in the rear, and the hollow square in case of sudden attack, when they were in danger of being surrounded. By forming a square and taking to trees, they put their faces to the enemy in every direction and lessened the danger of being shot from behind objects on either side.

The principal sachem of the village was seldom the war chief in charge of an expedition. War chiefs were selected with an eye solely to their skill and ability; to entrust the care and direction of an army to an inexperienced leader was unheard of. One man, however, was never trusted with the absolute command of an army. A general council of the principal officers was held, and a plan concerted for an attack. Such a council was held before the battle of Fallen Timbers, in which Blue Jacket, of the Shawnees, Little Turtle of the Miamis, and other celebrated leaders participated. The plan thus concerted in the council was scrupulously carried out. It was the duty of the war chief to animate his warriors by speeches and orations before the battle. During the battle he directed their movements by pre-arranged signals or a shout or yell, and thus ordered the advance or retreat. The warriors who crept through the long grass of the swamp lands at Tippecanoe to attack the army of Harrison, were directed by the rattling of dried deer hoofs.

It was a part of the tactics practiced by the war chiefs to inflict the greatest possible damage upon the enemy, with the loss of as few of their own men as possible. They were never to bring on an attack without some considerable advantage, "or without what appeared to them the sure prospect of victory," If, after commencing an engagement, it became apparent that they could not win the conflict without a great sacrifice of men, they generally abandoned it, and waited for a more favorable opportunity. This was not the result of cowardice, for Harrison says that their bravery and valor were unquestioned. It may have been largely the result of a savage superstition not to force the decrees of Fate. Says Harrison: "It may be fairly considered as having its source in that particular temperament of mind, which they often manifested, of not pressing fortune under any sinister circumstances, but patiently waiting until the chances of a successful issue appeared to be favorable." When the Great Spirit was not angry, he would again favor his children. One tribe among the warriors of the Northwest, however, were taught from their earliest youth never to retreat; to regard "submission to an enemy as the lowest degradation," and to "consider anything that had the appearance of an acknowledgment of the superiority of an enemy as disgraceful." These were the Wyandots, the acknowledged superiors in the northwestern confederacy. "In the battle of the Miami Rapids of thirteen chiefs of that tribe, who were present, only one survived, and he badly wounded."

The well known policy of the savages to ambush or outflank their enemies was well known to Washington. He warned St. Clair of this terrible danger in the Indian country, but his advice went unheeded. A pre-concerted attack might occur on the front ranks of an advancing column, and almost immediately spread to the flanks. This occurred at Braddock's defeat. The glittering army of redcoats, so much admired by Washington, with drums beating and flags flying, forded the Monongahela and ascended the banks of the river between two hidden ravines. Suddenly they were greeted by a terrible fire on the front ranks, which almost immediately spread to the right flank, and then followed a horrible massacre of huddled troops, who fired volleys of musketry at an invisible foe, and then

miserably perished. When St. Clair started his ill-fated march upon the Miami towns in 1791, his movements were observed every instant of time by the silent scouts and runners of the Miamis. Camping on the banks of the upper Wabash, and foolishly posting his militia far in the front, he suddenly saw them driven back in confusion upon his regulars, his lines broken by attacks on both flanks, and his artillery silenced to the last gun. The attack was so well planned, so sudden and so furious, that nothing remained but precipitate and disastrous retreat. Out of an army consisting of fourteen hundred men and eighty-six officers, eight hundred and ninety men and sixteen officers were killed and wounded. St. Clair believed that he had been "overpowered by numbers," and so reported to the government. "It was alleged by the officers," says Judge Burnet, "that the Indians far outnumbered the American troops. That conclusion was drawn, in part, from the fact that they outflanked and attacked the American lines with great force, and at the same time on every side." The truth is, that St. Clair was completely outwitted by the admirable cunning and strategy of Little Turtle, the Miami, who concerted the plan of attack, and directed its operation. Nor is it at all likely that the Indians had a superior force. They often attacked superior numbers, if they enjoyed the better fighting position, or could take advantage of an ambush or surprise. A very respectable authority, who has the endorsement of historians, says: "There was an army of Indians composed of Miamis, Potawatomis, Ottowas, Chippewas, Wyandots, Delawares, Shawnees, and a few Mingoes and Cherokees, amounting in all to eleven hundred and thirty-three, that attacked and defeated General St. Clair on the 4th of November, 1791. Each nation was commanded by their own chiefs, all of whom were governed by the Little Turtle, who made the arrangements for the action, and commenced the attack with the Miamis, who were under his immediate command. The Indians had thirty killed and died with their wounds the day of the action and fifty wounded."

Of such formidable mould, were the redmen of the northwest, who went into battle stripped to the skin, and with bodies painted with horrible stripes of vermilion. So disastrous had been the result of their victories over the armies of Harmar and St. Clair, and so illy equipped with men, money and supplies was the infant government of the United States, that immediately prior to the campaign of General Anthony Wayne, a military conference was held between President Washington, General Knox, Secretary of War, and General Wayne, to devise a system of military tactics that should thereafter control in the conduct of all wars against the Indians of the northwest.

The development of this system of tactics has been outlined by General William Henry Harrison, who was an aide to Wayne, in a personal letter to Mann Butler, one of the historians of Kentucky.

It was determined that in all future contests with the tribes, that the troops employed should, when in the Indian country, be marched in such manner as that the order of march could be immediately converted, by simple evolution, into an order of battle. In other words, that the troops while actually in the line of march, could be almost instantly formed in lines of battle. This was to prevent any sudden or unexpected attack, and this was always liable to occur in the thickly wooded country. The troops were also taught to march in open formation, each file to be more than an arm's length from those on the right and left. The old European system of fighting men shoulder to shoulder was entirely impracticable in a wilderness of woods, for it invited too great a slaughter, interfered with the movement of the troops, and shortened the lines. The great object of the Indian tactics was always to flank their enemy, therefore an extension of the lines was highly desirable when entering into action. "In fighting Indians, there was no shock to be given or received, and a very open order was therefore attended with two very great advantages; it more than doubled the length of the lines, and in charging, which was an essential part of the system, it gave more facility to get through the obstacles which an action in the woods presented."

A system was also developed whereby, in case the Indians attempted to flank the enemy, they were met by a succession of fresh troops coming from the rear to extend the lines. When encamped, the troops were to assume the form of a hollow square, with the baggage and cavalry, and sometimes

the light infantry and riflemen, in the center. A rampart of logs was to be placed around the camp, to prevent a sudden night attack, and to give the troops time to get under arms, but this rampart was not intended as a means of defense in daylight. "To defeat Indians by regular troops, the charge must be relied upon; the fatality of a contest at long shot, with their accurate aim and facility of covering themselves, was mournfully exhibited in the defeats of Braddock and St. Clair. General Wayne used no patrols, no picket guards. In Indian warfare they would always be cut off; and if that were not the case, they would afford no additional security to the army, as Indians do not require roads to enable them to advance upon an enemy. For the same reason (that they would be killed or taken), patrols were rejected, and reliance for safety was entirely placed upon keeping the army always ready for action. In connection with this system for constant preparation, there was only a chain of sentinels around the camps, furnished by the camp guards, who were placed within supporting distance."

The outline and adoption of this system of tactics shows that both Washington and Anthony Wayne were fully aware of the dangerous nature of their savage adversaries; that they had a wholesome respect for both their woodcraft and military discipline, and that they regarded the conquest of the western wilderness as a task requiring great circumspection and military genius.

## CHAPTER VII REAL SAVAGES

– *The savage painted in his true colors from the standpoint of the frontiersman.*

The poets and philosophers who dwelt in security far from the frontier posts of danger, have been much disposed in the past to extol the virtues of the savage and bewail his misfortunes, at the expense of the rugged pioneer who had to face his tomahawk and furnish victims for his mad vengeance. They went into rhapsodies when speaking of the "poor Indian," assuming that in his primitive state, before he was corrupted by contact with the manners and customs of the white man, he represented all that was pure, good and simple, and that only after the European came, did this child of nature take on that ferocity and savagery that made his name the terror of the wilderness. They said that he was cruelly and unjustly despoiled of his lands and possessions; driven like a wild beast before the face of the settlements, and by fraud and force deprived of every right that he had enjoyed. These philosophers, while thus impeaching civilization, were always ready to condemn what they termed as the "rude frontiersmen," the men who originally made it possible that the land might be inhabited, the soil brought to a state of cultivation, and the arts and sciences brought to bear upon the wild forces of nature. They were especially severe in their animadversions upon the Kentuckians. They denounced their raids upon the Indian towns and villages along the Scioto and the Wabash as barbarous and uncalled for. They pointed to the fact that the Kentuckians pursued the Indians with a fierce and relentless hatred, using the scalping knife, and burning down their cabins and corn fields, forgetting at the same time the thousands of Kentuckians cruelly slain, the carrying away into captivity of pregnant women and innocent children, and the horrible tortures oftentimes inflicted on the aged and the helpless.

It must never be forgotten that despite his stoicism in facing danger, his skill in battle, his power to endure privation, and his undoubted valor and bravery, that the Indian was a savage, and entertained the thoughts of a savage. Toward those who, like the French, pampered his appetites and indulged his passions to secure his trade, he entertained no malice. The lazy, fiddling Canadians who dwelt in Kaskaskia and Vincennes, had no ambition to absorb the soil or build up a great commonwealth. The little land they required to raise their corn, their vines and their onions on, aroused no savage jealousies. But from the first moment that the Americans came through the gaps and passes of the Blue Ridge, and swept down the waters of the Ohio, with their women and children, their horses and cattle, the savage scented danger. These men were not traders; they came to set up their cabins and to build homes. The wild dwellers in the wilderness must be tamed or swept back. Conflict was inevitable; war certain. On the one hand was a grim determination to advance civilization; on the other, just as grim a determination to resist it. The savage, employing the same arts in his wars with the white man as he did in his wars with his fellow savage, used stealth and cunning, the ambuscade, the scalping knife, and the tomahawk, and tortured his victims at the stake. A terrible hatred was engendered, that meant death and extermination. In the sanguinary struggles that followed, many outrages were no doubt perpetrated by lawless white men upon the Indians. Such men as Lewis Wetzel are no credit to a race. But there is no sufficient ground either for the exaltation of the savage, or the condemnation of men like Boone, Kenton, Hardin and Scott, who stoutly fought in the vanguard of civilization. It was a war for supremacy between white man and red, and the fittest survived. The wild hunters of the forest and river, gave way to farmers and woodsmen, who made the clearings, built their cabins, and laid the foundation for the future greatness of the west. The passing of the tribes was a tragedy, but it would have been a deeper tragedy still, had savagery prevailed.

Among the Indians of the northwest there was one tribe that attained a considerable fame. In all their forays into Kentucky and Virginia the Wyandots fought with the most fearless bravery

and the most disciplined skill. Their conduct at the battle of Estel's Station met with many words of praise from Mann Butler, the Kentucky historian. It was well known among the settlements that the Wyandots treated their captives with consideration, and that they seldom resorted to torture by fire. Though few in numbers, they acquired the acknowledged supremacy in the confederation of the northwest, were intrusted by Wayne at the treaty of Greenville with the custody of the great belt, the symbol of peace and union, and were given the principal copy of the treaty of peace. Between the Wyandot and the Ottawa, however, and the Wyandot and the Potawatomi, there was a striking divergence. If the Wyandot represented the highest order of intelligence among the savages of the northwest, the Potawatomi represented one of the lowest. He was dark, cruel, treacherous and unattractive, and proved a willing tool for murder and assassination in the hands of the English. There was no place on earth for the chivalrous Kentuckian and the treacherous Potawatomi to dwell in peace together, and the imparting of some idea of the true nature of this Indian will now engage our attention.

When the Dutchman put flint-locks and powder into the hands of the Iroquois, one of the tribes that he drove around the head of the great lakes was the Potawatomi. Where did they come from? The Jesuit Relation says, from the western shores of Lake Huron, and the Jesuit Fathers knew more about the Algonquin tribes of Canada and the west than all others. All accounts confirm that they were of the same family as the Chippewas and Ottawas. From the head of Lakes Huron and Michigan they were forced to the west and then driven to the south. In 1670 it is known that a portion of them were on the islands in the mouth of Green bay. They were then moving southward, probably impelled by the fierce fighting Sioux, whom Colonel Roosevelt so appropriately named the "horse Indians," of the west. At the close of the seventeenth century they were on the Milwaukee river, in the vicinity of Chicago, and on the St. Joseph river in southern Michigan. They had gone entirely around the northern, western and southern sides of Lake Michigan, and were now headed in the direction of their original habitations.

According to Hiram W. Beckwith, the Potawatomi were the most populous tribe between the lakes and the Ohio, the Wabash and the Mississippi. Their debouch upon the plains of the Illinois has already been mentioned. This was about the year 1765. The confederacy among them, the Kickapoos and the Sacs and Foxes, resulted in the extermination of the old Illinois tribes, and after that extermination, the Kickapoos took possession of the country around Peoria and along the Vermilion river, the Potawatomi of eastern and northern Illinois, while the Sacs and Foxes went farther to the west. After the treaty of Greenville in 1795, the Potawatomi rapidly absorbed the ancient domain of the Miamis in northern Indiana, swiftly pressing them back to the Wabash, and usurping the major portion of the small lake region in the north end of the state. They had now become so haughty and insolent in their conduct as to refer to the Miamis as "their younger brothers," and the Miamis, by reason of their long wars, their commingling with the traders, and their acquisition of degenerate habits, were unable to drive them back. In 1810 and 1811, Tecumseh and the one-eyed Prophet were eagerly seeking an alliance with their treacherous chiefs. A demand was made upon Tecumseh for the surrender of certain Potawatomi murderers and horse thieves who had invaded the Missouri region and committed depredations, but Tecumseh replied that he was unable to apprehend them, and that they had escaped to the Illinois country. The Potawatomi were now living in mixed villages west of the present sites of Logansport and Lafayette, and the southern limits of their domain extended as far down the Wabash as the outlet of Pine creek across the river from the present city of Attica.

The Potawatomi loved the remoteness and seclusion of the great prairie, and many of their divisions have been known as the "prairie" tribes. They seem to have lived for the most part in separate, roving bands, which divided "according to the abundance or scarcity of game, or the emergencies of war." Encouraged by the English, they joined in the terrible expeditions of the Shawnees and Miamis against the keel-boats on the Ohio, and against the settlements of Kentucky. They were inveterate horse-thieves. Riding for long distances across plain and prairie, through forests

and across rivers, they suddenly swooped down on some isolated frontier cabin, perhaps murdering its helpless and defenseless inmates, taking away a child or a young girl, killing cattle or riding away the horses and disappearing in the wilderness as suddenly as they emerged from it. In the later days of Tecumseh's time, these parties of marauders generally consisted of from four or five, to twenty. They were still striking the white settlements of Kentucky, and even penetrated as far west as the outposts on the Missouri river. Their retreat after attack was made with the swiftness of the wind. Pursuit, if not made immediately, was futile. Traveling day and night, the murderous riders were lost in the great prairies and wildernesses of the north, and the Prophet was a sure protector. The savage chief, Turkey Foot, for whom two groves were named, in Benton and Newton Counties, Indiana, stealing horses in far away Missouri, murdered three or four of his pursuers and made good his escape to the great plains and swamps between the Wabash and Lake Michigan.

There was nothing romantic about the Potawatomi. They were real savages, and known to the French-Canadians as "Les Poux," or those who have lice, from which it may be inferred that they were not generally of cleanly habits. In general appearance they did not compare favorably with the Kickapoos of the Vermilion river. The Kickapoo warriors were generally tall and sinewy, while the Potawatomi were shorter and more thickly set, very dark and squalid. Numbers of the women of the Kickapoos were described as being lithe, "and many of them by no means lacking in beauty." The Potawatomi women were inclined to greasiness and obesity. The Potawatomi had little regard for their women. Polygamy was common among them when visited by the early missionaries. The warriors were always gamblers, playing heavily at their moccasin games and lacrosse.

Nothing, however, revealed their savage nature so well as their rapid decline under the influence of whiskey. As we shall see hereafter, one of the great motives that impelled their attacks on the flat boats of the Ohio river, was their desire not only for plunder, but for rum. The boats generally contained a liberal supply. Nothing was more common than drunkenness after the greedy and avaricious traders of the Wabash got into their midst and bartered them brandy for their most valuable peltries. Potawatomi were found camping about Vincennes in great numbers and trading everything of value for liquor. In General Harrison's day, he endeavored time and time again to stop this nefarious traffic. On all occasions when treaties were to be made, or council fires kindled, he issued proclamations prohibiting the sale of liquor to the Indians. These proclamations were inserted in the *Western Sun*, at Vincennes, on more than one occasion, but they were unavailing. The temptation of a huge profit was too strong. Carousals and orgies took place when the Indians were under the influence of "fire-water." Fights and murders were frequent. At the last, whiskey destroyed the last vestige of virtue in their women, and valor in their warriors.

After the crushing of the Prophet in 1811, and the destruction of British influence in the northwest, consequent upon the war of 1812, the decline of the Potawatomi was swift and appalling. The terrible ravages of "fire-water" played no inconsiderable part. Many of their principal chieftains became notorious drunkards reeling along the streets of frontier posts and towns and boasting of their former prowess. Even the renowned Topenebee, the last principal chief of the tribe of the river St. Joseph was no exception. Reproached by General Lewis Cass, because he did not remain sober and care for his people, he answered: "Father, we do not care for the land, nor the money, nor the goods; what we want is whiskey! Give us whiskey!" The example set by the chiefs was not neglected by their followers.

Nothing can better illustrate the shocking savagery and depravity of some of their last chieftains, after the tribe had been contaminated by the effect of strong liquors, than the story of Wabunsee, principal war chief of the prairie band of Potawatomi residing on the Kankakee river in Illinois, and in his early days one of the renowned and daring warriors of his tribe. When General Harrison marched with his regulars and Indiana and Kentucky militia, on the way to the battlefield of Tippecanoe, he ascended the Wabash river, erecting Fort Harrison, near the present site of Terre Haute, and christening it on Sunday, the 27th day of October, 1811. From here, the army marched

up the east bank of the river, crossing the deep water near the present site of Montezuma, Indiana, and erecting a block house on the west bank, about three miles below the mouth of the Vermilion river, for a base of supplies. Corn and provisions for the army were taken in boats and pirogues from Fort Harrison up the river, and unloaded at this block house. On Saturday, the 2nd day of November, John Tipton recorded in his diary that, "this evening a man came from the Garrison (Fort Harrison) said last night his boat was fired on – one man that was asleep killed dead." Beckwith records that the dare-devil "Wabunsee, the Looking-Glass, principal war chief of the prairie bands of Potawatomis, residing on the Kankakee river, in Illinois, distinguished himself, the last of October, 1811, by leaping aboard of one of Governor Harrison's supply boats, loaded with corn, as it was ascending the Wabash, five miles above Terre Haute, and killing a man, and making his escape ashore without injury." Allowing a slight discrepancy in dates, this was probably the same incident referred to by John Tipton, and taking into consideration that the boats were probably guarded by armed men, this was certainly a daring and adventurous feat.

Yet it is recorded of this chief, that he always carried about with him two scalps in a buckskin pouch, "taken from the heads of soldiers in the war of 1812, and when under the influence of liquor he would exhibit them, going through the motions of obtaining those trophies." Schoolcraft, whose attention was especially drawn towards this chieftain on account of his drunken ferocity, and who paints him as one of the worst of many bad savages of his day, says: "He often freely indulged in liquor; and when excited, exhibited the flushed visage of a demon. On one occasion, two of his wives, or rather female slaves, had a dispute. One of them went, in her excited state of feeling, to Wabunsee, and told him that the other ill-treated his children. He ordered the accused to come before him. He told her to lie down on her back on the ground. He then directed the other (her accuser) to take a tomahawk and dispatch her. She instantly split open her skull. "There," said the savage, "let the crows eat her." He left her unburied, but was afterwards persuaded to direct the murderess to bury her. She dug the grave so shallow, that the wolves pulled out her body that night, and partly devoured it."

The cold, cruel treachery of this tribe is without a parallel, save in the single instance of the Shawnees. It has been admitted by Shaubena, one of their best chiefs, that most of the depredations on the frontier settlements in Illinois during the Black Hawk war, were committed by the Potawatomi. The cowardly and brutal massacre at Chicago, August 15, 1812, was the work principally of the Potawatomi, "and their several bands from the Illinois and Kankakee rivers; those from the St. Joseph of the lake, and the St. Joseph of the Maumee, and those of the Wabash and its tributaries were all represented in the despicable act." In that massacre, Captain William Wells, the brother-in-law of Little Turtle, was killed when he was trying to protect the soldiers and refugees. He was discovered afterwards, terribly mutilated. His body lay in one place, his head in another, while his arms and legs were scattered about over the prairie. The warriors of this tribe, stripped to the skin, except breech-cloth and moccasins, and with bodies painted with red stripes, went into battle with the rage of madmen and demons and committed every excess known to human cruelty.

Looking at the Potawatomi in the true light, and stripped of all that false coloring with which he has been painted, and the facts remains that he was every inch a wild and untamed barbarian. And while we must admire him for his native strength, his wonderful endurance through the famine and cold of the northern winters, and his agility and ingenuity in the chase or on the warpath, it is not any wonder that the children of that time, as Judge James Hall relates, "learned to hate the Indian and to speak of him as an enemy. From the cradle they listened continually to horrid tales of savage violence, and became familiar with narratives of aboriginal cunning and ferocity." Nor is it any wonder that when General Harrison crossed the Wabash at Montezuma and gave an order to the advance guard to shoot every Indian at sight, that the rough frontiersman, John Tipton, entered in his diary, "Fine News!"

## CHAPTER VIII

### OUR INDIAN POLICY

– *The Indian right of occupancy recognized through the liberal policy of Washington and Jefferson.*

By the terms of the definitive treaty of 1783, concluding the war of the revolution the territory northwest of the river Ohio passed forever from the jurisdiction of the British government, over to the new born states of the United States. By the first article of that treaty, the thirteen former colonies were acknowledged to be free, sovereign and independent powers, and Great Britain not only relinquished all her rights to the government, but to the "proprietary and territorial rights of the same, and every part thereof." At the time of that treaty, the northwest territory was occupied by a number of powerful and warlike tribes of savages, yet no reservation of any kind was made in their favor by the English negotiators. The Iroquois confederacy of New York, and more particularly the Mohawks, had stood out stoutly on the side of the king, but they were wholly forgotten in the articles of peace. Of this action, Joseph Brant, the Mohawk leader, in his communications with Lord Sidney, in 1786, most bitterly complained, expressing his astonishment "that such firm friends and allies could be so neglected by a nation remarkable for its honor and glory." Yet if Brant had been better acquainted with the policy and usage of European nations, he would have known that England had granted away not only the sovereignty, but the very soil of the territory itself, subject only to the Indian rights of occupancy. In all the ancient grants of the crown to the duke of York, Lord Clarendon and others, there passed "the soil as well as the right of dominion to the grantee." France, while adopting a liberal policy toward the savages of the new world, claimed the absolute right of ownership to the land, based on first discovery. Spain maintained a like claim. The war for supremacy in the Saint Lawrence, the Mississippi and the Ohio valleys between Great Britain and France, terminating in the peace of 1763, was a war waged for the control of lands and territory, notwithstanding the occupancy of the Indian tribes. If a country acquired either by conquest or prior discovery, is filled with a people attached to the soil, and having fixed pursuits and habitations, the opinion of mankind would seem to require that the lands and possessions of the occupants should not be disturbed, but if the domain discovered or conquered is filled with a race of savages who make no use of the land, save for the purpose of hunting over it, a different solution must of necessity result. There can be no admixture of races where the one is civilized and the other barbarous. The barbarian must either lose his savagery and be assimilated, or he must recede. The North American Indian was not only brave, but fierce. In the wilds and fastnesses of his native land, he refused to become either a subject or a slave. No law of the European could be formulated for his control; he obeyed only the laws of nature under which he roamed in freedom. He knew nothing of fee or seisin, or the laws of conveyancing, as his white brother knew it. He knew only that the rivers and the forests were there, and that he gained his subsistence from them. With him, the strongest and the fiercest had the right to rule; the right to hunt the buffalo and elk. The European put fire arms into the hands of the Iroquois warrior, and that warrior at once made himself master of all north of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi, without regard to the prior claims of other tribes. To expect that a savage of this nature could be dealt with under the ordinary forms and conventions of organized society, was to expect the impossible. To him, the appearance of a surveyor or a log cabin was an immediate challenge to his possession. Today he might be brought to make a treaty, but on the morrow he was filled with a jealous hate again, and was ready to burn and destroy. On the other hand, to leave him in the full possession of his country was, as Chief Justice Marshall said: "To leave the country a wilderness." To stop on the borderland of savagery and advance no further, meant the retrogression of civilization. The European idea of ownership was founded on user. The inevitable consequence was, that the conqueror or discoverer in the new world claimed the ultimate

fee in the soil, and the tribes receding, as they inevitably did, this fee ripened into present enjoyment. When Great Britain, therefore, owing to the conquests of George Rogers Clark, surrendered up to the United States her jurisdiction and control over the territory north and west of the Ohio river, she did, according to the precedent and usage established by all the civilized nations of that day, pass to her grantee or grantees, the ultimate absolute title to the land itself, notwithstanding its savage occupants, and the right to deal with these occupants thenceforward became a part of the domestic policy of the new republic, with which England and her agents had nothing to do. "It has never been doubted," says Chief Justice Marshall, "that either the United States, or the several states, had a clear title to all the lands within the boundary lines described in the treaty, subject only, to the Indian right of occupancy, and that the exclusive power to extinguish that right was vested in that government which might constitutionally exercise it." These facts should be kept in mind when one comes to consider the equivocal course that England afterwards pursued.

But how were the savage wards occupying these lands, and thus suddenly coming under the guardianship of the republic, to be dealt with? Were they to be evicted by force and arms, and their possessory rights entirely disregarded, or were their claims as occupants to be gradually and legitimately extinguished by treaty and purchase, as the frontiers of the white man advanced? In other words, was the seisin in fee on the part of the states, or the United States, to be at once asserted and enforced, to the absolute and immediate exclusion of the tribes from the lands they occupied, or was a policy of justice and equity to prevail, and the ultimate right to the soil set up, only after the most diligent effort to ameliorate the condition of the dependent red man had been employed? The answer to this question had soon to be formulated, for on March 1st, 1784, Thomas Jefferson, Samuel Hardy, Arthur Lee and James Monroe, delegates in the Continental Congress on the part of the State of Virginia, in pursuance of the magnanimous policy of her statesmen, executed a deed of cession to the United States, of all her claim and right to the territory northwest of the Ohio, the same to be used as a common fund "for the use and benefit of such of the United States as have become, or shall become, members of the confederation or federal alliance of the states." The only reservations made were of a tract of land not to exceed one hundred and fifty thousand acres to be allowed and granted to General George Rogers Clark, his officers and soldiers, who had conquered Kaskaskia, Vincennes, and the western British posts under the authority of Virginia, said tract being afterwards located on the Indiana side of the Ohio, adjacent to the falls of that river, and known as the "Illinois Grant," and a further tract to be laid off between the rivers Scioto and Little Miami, in case certain lands reserved to the continental troops of Virginia upon the waters of the Cumberland, "should, from the North Carolina line, bearing in further upon the Cumberland lands than was expected," prove to be deficient for that purpose. The cession of Virginia was preceded by that of New York on the first day of March, 1781, and followed by that of Massachusetts, on the 19th day of April, 1785, and that of Connecticut on the 14th of September, 1786, and thus the immense domain now comprising the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin, with the exception of the reservations of Virginia, and a small reservation of the state of Connecticut in northeastern Ohio, passed over to the general government, before the adoption of the federal constitution, and before George Washington, the first president of the United States, was sworn into office, on the 30th day of April, 1789.

But the wisdom and the broad national views of the leading Virginia law-makers and statesmen, had already, in great measure, pointed the way to the Indian policy to be pursued by Washington and his successors. No state, either under the old confederation or the new constitution, presented such a formidable array of talent and statecraft as Virginia. Washington, Jefferson, John Marshall, and Madison, stood pre-eminent, but there was also Edmund Randolph, Patrick Henry, James Monroe, George Mason, William Grayson and Richard Henry Lee.

Washington had always taken a deep and abiding interest in the western country. In 1770 he had made a trip down the Ohio in company with his friends, Doctor Craik and William Crawford. The distance from Pittsburgh to the mouth of the Great Kanawha was two hundred and sixty-five

miles. The trip was made by canoes and was rather hazardous, as none of Washington's party were acquainted with the navigation of the river. The party made frequent examinations of the land along the way and Washington was wonderfully impressed with the future prospects of the country. Arriving at the mouth of the Great Kanawha, he ascended that river for a distance of fourteen miles, hunting by the way, as the land was plentifully stocked with buffalo, deer, turkeys and other wild game. He also made critical observations of the soil here, with a view to future acquisitions. The whole country below Pittsburgh at that time, was wild and uninhabited, save by the Indian tribes.

At the close of the revolution the minds of Washington, Jefferson and other leading Virginians were filled with the grand project of developing and colonizing the west, and binding it to the union by the indissoluble ties of a common interest. There was nothing of the narrow spirit of provincialism about these men. Their thoughts went beyond the limited confines of a single state or section, and embraced the nation. They entertained none of those jealousies which distinguish the small from the great. On the contrary, they looked upon the mighty trans-montane domain with its many watercourses, its rich soil, and its temperate climate, as a rich field for experimentation in the erection of new and free republics. The deed of cession of Virginia had provided: "That the territory so ceded shall be laid out and formed into new states, containing a suitable extent of territory, not less than one hundred, nor more than one hundred fifty miles square, or as near thereto as circumstances will admit: and that the states so formed should be distinct republican states, and admitted members of the federal union, having the same rights of sovereignty, freedom, and independence, as the other states." If this great public domain, thus dedicated to the whole nation, and under the control of its supreme legislative body, the continental congress, could be filled up with a conglomerate population from all the states, factions and sectional jealousies would disappear, and at the same time the original states would be more closely knit together by the bonds of their common interest in the new federal territory.

But there was one great obstacle to the realization of these hopes, and that was the difficulty of opening up any means of communication with this western empire. The mountain ranges stood as barriers in the way, unless the headwaters of such rivers as the Potomac and the James, could be connected by canals and portages with the headwaters of the Ohio and its tributaries. If this could be accomplished, and if the headwaters of the Miami, Scioto and Muskingum, could be connected in turn with those of the Cuyahoga, the Maumee and the Wabash, then all was well, for this would furnish an outlet for the commerce of the west through the ports and cities of the Atlantic seaboard. There were other and highly important political questions that engaged Washington's attention at this time, and they were as follows: The English dominion of Canada bordered this northwest territory on the north. The British, contrary to the stipulations of the treaty of peace of 1783, had retained the posts of Detroit, Niagara and Oswego, to command the valuable fur trade of the northwest, and the Indian tribes engaged therein, and in addition they also enjoyed a complete monopoly of all trading vessels on the Great Lakes. To the south and west of this northwest territory lay the Spanish possessions, and the Spanish were attempting to bar the settlers of Kentucky from the use of the Mississippi for the purposes of trade. In other words, they were closing the market of New Orleans against the Kentuckians. But suppose that either or both of these powers, who were then extremely jealous of the growth and expansion of the new republic, should hold forth commercial advantages and inducements to the western people? What then would be the result? What then the prospect of binding any new states to be formed out of this western territory in the interest of the federal union?

With all these great questions revolving in his mind, we see the father of his country again on horseback in the year 1784, traversing six hundred and eighty miles of mountain wilderness in Pennsylvania and Virginia and examining the headwaters of the inland streams. He made every inquiry possible, touching the western country, examined every traveler and explorer who claimed to have any knowledge of its watercourses and routes of travel, and after spending thirty-three days of fatiguing travel in the saddle, he returned to his home and made a report of his observations to Governor Harrison of Virginia. His remarks on the western country are so highly interesting and

important, and manifest such a deep and profound interest in the future welfare of the western world, as to call for the following quotations:

"I need not remark to you that the flanks and rear of the United States are possessed by great powers, and formidable ones, too; nor how necessary it is to apply the cement of interest to bind all parts of the Union together by indissoluble bonds, especially that part of it, which lies immediately west of us, with the middle states. For what ties, let me ask, should we have upon these people? How entirely unconnected with them shall we be, and what troubles may we not apprehend, if the Spaniards on their right, and Great Britain on their left, instead of throwing stumbling-blocks in their way, as they now do, should hold out lures for their trade and alliance? What, when they get strength, which will be sooner than most people conceive (from the emigration of foreigners, who will have no particular predilection towards us, as well as from the removal of our own citizens), will be the consequence of their having formed close connections with both or either of those powers, in a commercial way? It needs not, in my opinion, the gift of prophecy to foretell."

"The western states (I speak now from my own observation) stand as it were upon a pivot. The touch of a feather will turn them any way. They have looked down the Mississippi, until the Spaniards, very impolitically, I think, for themselves, threw difficulties in their way; and they look that way for no other reason, than because they could glide gently down the stream; without considering, perhaps, the difficulties of the voyage back again, and the time necessary to perform it in; and because they have no other means of coming to us, but by long land transportations and unimproved roads. These causes have hitherto checked the industry of the present settlers; for except the demand for provisions, occasioned by the increase of population, and a little flour, which the necessities of the Spaniards compel them to buy, they have no incitements to labor. But smooth the road, and make easy the way for them, and then see what an influx of articles will be poured upon us; how amazingly our exports will be increased by them, and how amply we shall be compensated for any trouble and expense we may encounter to effect it."

"A combination of circumstances makes the present conjuncture more favorable for Virginia, than for any other state in the union, to fix these matters. The jealous and untoward disposition of the Spaniards on the one hand, and the private views of some individuals, coinciding with the general policy of the court of Great Britain, on the other, to retain as long as possible the posts of Detroit, Niagara, and Oswego (which though done under the letter of the treaty, is certainly an infraction of the spirit of it, and injurious to the Union) may be improved to the greatest advantage by this state, if she would open the avenues to the trade of that country, and embrace the present moment to establish it. It only wants a beginning. The western inhabitants would do their part towards its execution. Weak as they are, they would meet us at least half-way, rather than be driven into the arms of foreigners, or be made dependent upon them; which would eventually either bring on a separation of them from us, or a war between the United States and one or other of those powers, most probably the Spaniards."

These remarks coming from the pen of Washington aroused intense interest in Virginia. He did not stop there. On the fourteenth of December, 1784, we see him calling the attention of the president of the old continental congress to these affairs. He urged, "that congress should have the western waters well explored, their capacities for navigation ascertained as far as the communications between Lake Erie and the Wabash, and between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi, and a complete and perfect map made of the country at least as far west as the Miamis, which run into the Ohio and Lake Erie," and he pointed out the Miami village as the place for a very important post for the Union. The expense attending such an undertaking could not be great; the advantages would be unbounded. "Nature," he said, "has made such a display of her bounty in these regions that the more the country is explored the more it will rise in estimation. The spirit of emigration is great; people have got impatient; and, though you cannot stop the road, it is yet in your power to mark the way. A little while and you will not be able to do either." Such were the enlightened and fatherly hopes that

Washington thus early entertained of the great west and its struggling pioneers, who were trying to carve out their destinies in a remote wilderness.

No less enlightened were the views of Jefferson. He may be said in truth to be the father of the northwest. When a member of the legislature of Virginia, he had promoted the expedition under George Rogers Clark, which resulted in the conquest of the northwest, and its subsequent cession to the United States under the treaty of 1783. As governor of Virginia he had taken part in its cession to the general government on March first, 1784. "On that same day," says Bancroft, "before the deed could be recorded and enrolled among the acts of the United States, Jefferson, as chairman of a committee, presented a plan for the temporary government of the western territory from the southern boundary of the United States in the latitude of thirty-one degrees to the Lake of the Woods. It is still preserved in the national archives in his own handwriting, and is as completely his own work as the Declaration of Independence." As the profoundest advocate of human rights of his day or time, freeing himself from the narrow spirit of sectionalism, and despising human slavery and its contamination of the institutions of a free people, he proposed the ultimate establishment of ten new states in the territory northwest of the Ohio, a republican form of government for each of them, and no property qualification for either the electors or the elected. "Following an impulse of his own mind," he proposed the everlasting dedication of the northwest to free men and free labor, by providing that after the year 1800 there should be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any of them. While Jefferson's plan for the exclusion of slavery was stricken from the ordinance, his noble ideas of freedom were afterwards fully and completely incorporated in the final Ordinance of 1787, whereby "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, in the said territory, otherwise than in the punishment of crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted," should ever be permitted. This ordinance, through the predominating influence of Virginia and her statesmen, was passed by the vote of Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Delaware, New Jersey, New York and Massachusetts, and afterwards ratified by the legislature of Virginia who had to consent thereto to give it full force.

It is at once apparent that these statesmen and patriots who looked forward to the establishment of free republics in the western domain, based on free labor and equal rights, would never consent that the foundation of these new republics should be laid in blood. The outrages perpetrated on the frontiers of New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia, and on the infant settlements of Kentucky, during the revolution, and all at the instigation of the British, had left behind them a loud cry for vengeance. In fact similar outrages were still taking place daily. The claim was made that under the treaty of peace with Great Britain, that no reservation had been made in favor of any of the Indian tribes, or in favor of their claims to any of the lands they occupied; that under the treaty the absolute fee in all the Indian lands within the limits of the United States had passed to the several states such as Virginia, who had a legitimate claim to them, and later by cession of these states to the general government, and that congress "had the right to assign, or retain such portions as they should judge proper;" that the Indian tribes, having aided Great Britain in her attempt to subjugate her former colonies, and having committed innumerable murders, arsons and scalpings on the exposed frontiers, should now be required to pay the penalty for their crimes; that their lands and hunting grounds should stand forfeit to the government, and they be expelled therefrom. In other words, it was asserted that the government should turn a harsh and stern countenance towards all these savage marauders and drive them by force, if need be, from the public lands.

Towards all these arguments in favor of a hard and uncompromising attitude toward the savage tribes, both Washington and Jefferson turned a deaf ear. They assumed a high plane of mercy and forgiveness towards the red man that must ever redound to their glory. On August 7th, 1789, in a message to the senate of the United States, Washington said: "While the measures of government ought to be calculated to protect its citizens from all injury and violence, a due regard should be extended to those Indian tribes whose happiness, in the course of events, so materially depends upon

the national justice and humanity of the United States." These sentiments were reflected in his course of action from the first day of peace with Great Britain. He, together with General Philip Schuyler, said, "that with regard to these children of the forest, a veil should be drawn over the past, and that they should be taught that their true interest and safety must henceforth depend upon the cultivation of amicable relations with the United States." He took the high ground that peace should be at once granted to the several tribes, and treaties entered into with them, assigning them certain lands and possessions, within the limits of which they should not be molested. To avoid national dishonor, he advocated the purchase of all lands occupied by the various Indian tribes as the advance of the settlements should seem to require, thus fully recognizing the Indian right of occupancy. He utterly rejected all ideas of conquest, and as he commanded a powerful influence over all the better minds of that day, his counsels prevailed.

To those who have read Jefferson's speeches to the Little Turtle, the Miamis, Potawatomi and Delawares in the year 1808, near the close of his second administration, the broad humanitarianism and fatherly benevolence of the third president is at once apparent. In those addresses he laments the "destructive use of spirituous liquors," the wasting away of the tribes as a consequence thereof, and directs the attention of their chieftains to "temperance, peace and agriculture," as a means of restoring their former numbers, and establishing them firmly in the ways of peace. "Tell this, therefore, to your people on your return home. Assure them that no change will ever take place in our dispositions toward them. Deliver to them my adieux, and my prayers to the Great Spirit for their happiness. Tell them that during my administration I have held their hand fast in mine; that I will put it into the hand of their new father, who will hold it as I have done." Jefferson demanded always that the strictest justice should be done toward the tribes, and carrying forward his ideas in his first ordinance of 1784, for the government of the northwest territory, he inserted a provision that no land was to be taken up until it had been first purchased from the Indian tribes and offered for sale through the regular agencies of the government.

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