**Ohio Country: Its Indian World and Impact on the United States**

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Article 1

**Introduction**

The Ohio country, in the 1600s-1800s, was a major focus of British, French, colonial Pennsylvanians and Virginians, and the Iroquois Nation. They claimed overlapping ownership, and fought each other in support of their claim. The British and French claimed the Ohio country by right of discovery. Colonial Pennsylvanians had a substantial trade arrangement with the Ohio Indians. Colonial Virginians, through the Royal Proclamation by the King of England, considered Ohio country to be within the boundary of Virginia. The Iroquois Nation claimed authority over the Ohio Indians by defeating several tribes during the Beaver Wars.

**Shawnees**

Ohio country was named after the Ohio River. Ohio is a Seneca name, which means *Good River*. The Shawnees called the Ohio River *Mosopelea-sepe* – Big Turkey River, or *Kiskepila-sepe* – Eagle River. Ohio country was the Shawnees’ traditional homeland. It is believed Shawnees, which means *southerners*, descended from a people known as the Fort Ancient Culture, who lived in the Ohio Valley from about 1400-1650. Starting in 1640, the Iroquois Nation began a campaign, known as the Beaver Wars, during which they fought various Indian tribes to gain access to fur-bearing animals to support their trading interests. The Iroquois Nation primarily traded with the British, and drove the Shawnees, with strong ties to French traders, out of the Ohio River Valley. The Iroquois Nation consisted of six Indian tribes (originally five) - Senecas, Cayugas, Onondagas, Tuscaroras, Oniedas, and Mohawks, and occupied land in present-day New York. The Shawnees relocated to Alabama, Georgia, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. The Treaty of Grande Paix de Montrèal (French for *The Great Peace of Montreal*) in 1701 ended the Iroquois Nation campaign in the Ohio country, paving the way for the Shawnees to return to the Ohio country.

Shawnees comprised five tribes as follows (there are many different spellings depending on the author, and the names shown are just a sample of some of the spellings):

* Mekoche (Mequachake)
* Hathawekela
* Pekowi (Piqua)
* Kispoko
* Chillicothe

These tribes were bound by a common language, culture, a sense of identity, and the right of each division to exercise certain responsibilities on behalf of all the tribes. The Shawnee language derived from the Algonquian family of languages, common around the Great Lakes. As often found among all North American tribes, the Shawnees formed autonomous villages with their own chiefs, and never truly united under centralized leadership. There were, however, two common threads: membership was patrilineal and clans were attached to the given name of a Shawnee. A clan was symbolized by an animal, such as a panther or a turtle. Furthermore, the clans were exogamous, meaning each person took a sexual partner outside of their own clan.

The Iroquois Nation claimed control over the Ohio country, but the Iroquois Nation was unable to unite on many matters of policy, and by the 1730s, Ohio country was essentially a refuge from the Iroquois Nation for numerous tribes who claimed exclusive rights to the Ohio country. Ohio country distance also weakened military effectiveness of the Iroquois Nation, and the Shawnees developed their own economic network with traders from Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Shawnees began reoccupying the Ohio River Valley in the 1730s, and in 1738 founded Lower Shawnee Town at the mouth of the Scioto River. In 1758, Shawnees moved up the Scioto River Valley to establish Upper Shawnee Town, or Chillicothe, a little north of present-day Chillicothe, Ohio, which got its name from the Shawnee settlement of the same name. Shawnees further migrated west in the 1760s, and established towns on the Little Miami and Mad Rivers, and a town by Pickawillany, a former Miami town, near present-day Piqua, Ohio. Pickawillany is the English pronunciation derived from the Shawnee word for the Miamis, meaning f*oreigner*. Chillicothe, though, was the center of Shawnee activity.

Shawnees believed spirits existed in all living things, actions of the elements, in the sun, moon, and stars, and in places. The Shawnees had different spirits, but the most powerful spirit was Waashaa Monetoo, *Great and Good Spirit*. Shawnees believed that Waashaa Monetoo re-created the world and re-populated the earth after its destruction in a flood, after listening to the request of an old woman, the sole human survivor. The Shawnees worshipped the old woman, Waupoathee, and called her grandmother. The Shawnees believed Waupoathee assisted Waashaa Monetoo in supervising the Shawnees, and made herself visible to those on earth as the moon.

Shawnees believed they were Waashaa Monetoo’s special people, and were the first humans Waashaa Monetoo re-introduced on earth. Waashaa Monetoo gave the Shawnees a portion of his own heart, and a sacred bundle of objects to help the Shawnees summon spiritual assistance on important occasions. The sacred medicine bundle existed in the custody of the Chillicothes or Mekoches, accommodated in its own lodge, guarded by appointed keepers, and consulted by holy men. The Mekoches further believed they were the first Shawnees, and being the first humans, made them chief of all Indian tribes. The Shawnees addressed the Delawares as grandfathers, the Iroquois and Wyandots as uncles or elder brothers, and all other tribes as younger brothers, with the exception of the Kickapoos, whom they called first brothers. The Kickapoos spoke a language similar to the Shawnee language.

Shawnees believed one or more things befell them, and once the Ohio country was reoccupied, Waashaa Monetoo would once again smile upon them, and protect them, as long as they remained in the Ohio country. Some Shawnees believed that their reduced numbers displeased Waashaa Monetoo, while others believed it was because their central core was broken apart, with Shawnees living in present day Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and Pennsylvania. Some blamed their separation from the Kickapoos, a tribe they once knew as a part of their own, for Waashaa Monetoo’s displeasure. Finally, some blamed Shawnee corruption. Reunification of Shawnees in the Ohio country, therefore, offered redemption.

**Ohio Country Indian Culture**

Wyandots were the second major tribe to re-occupy Ohio country, and settled in northern Ohio about the same time the Shawnees migrated to the Scioto River Valley. Lenni Lenape, known by the English name *Delawares*, were the third major tribe to migrate to the Ohio country. These Ohio Indian tribes had their own traditional culture, but their culture evolved as they became dependent on the technology provided by the English and French traders. Europeans desired the skins and furs of beaver, deer, otter, bear, and muskrat for their clothing and apparel, and the Ohio country initially had plentiful game in which to satisfy the trade in skins and furs in exchange for guns, iron, hoes, axes, knives, wool blankets, shirts, dresses, coats, needles, thread, and cooking pots. As a result, the Ohio country Indians lost much of their self-sufficiency.

Traditional Indian culture suffered significantly with the introduction of liquor that the traders liberally provided to the Indians to gain a trading advantage or steal from the Indians. The Moravians, a religious Christian group from present-day Saxony, Germany, began settling in Pennsylvania in 1735, and attempted to impose their agricultural lifestyle on the Indians, in addition to converting the Indians to their religious beliefs. Thomas Jefferson believed the only way to civilize the Indians was to teach them how to live off the land by farming.

**England and Virginia’s Claim to the Ohio Country**

The King of England claimed the land in North America by right of discovery, and granted an enormous swath of territory to Virginia as far as the California Sea, wherever that was. The colonial government of Virginia then doled out grants of land, which speculators, surveyors, and settlers divided into parcels and property. Indian people were dispossessed, and their rights to occupancy extinguished by war, deeds, and treaties.

The Ohio country was considered in the boundary of Virginia, as set forth by the English royal charter, which was not conveyed to the Iroquois Nation during negotiations leading to the Treaty of Lancaster, enacted in 1744. The Iroquois Nation ceded their claims to the Shenandoah Valley and the claims of other tribes for whom they claimed to speak, claiming dominion over land where Iroquois war parties once ranged. All subsequent treaties were based on the royal charter without regard to the original occupants of the Ohio country.

**France’s Claim to the Ohio Country**

Renè-Robert Cavelier, sieur de La Salle claimed in 1682 the entire Mississippi River drainage basin by right of discovery, and named it Louisiana. France saw the Ohio River as the vital link between their colonies in Canada and the lower Mississippi Valley. France, through its governor of New France, the comte de La Galissonière, in 1749, reasserted its right to the Ohio country by dispatching Captain Pierre-Joseph de Cèloron de Blainville from Montreal with 200 Canadians and 30 Indians into the Ohio country. New France extended from present day Newfoundland to the Canadian Prairies, and from the Hudson Bay to the Gulf of Mexico, including all the Great Lakes. Captain Pierre-Joseph de Cèloron de Blainville’s mission was to nail to trees a series of tin or copper plaques bearing the French royal arms, and burying in the ground lead plates inscribed with the French claim. In addition, the mission was to assess the English threat, and impress the Indians with the show of force.

**French and Indian War**

The French and Indian War pitted the colonies of British America against those of New France, with each side supported by military units from their parent country, and Indians of North America. The war began in 1754, and ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1763. The prelude to the French and Indian War commenced with the French building a chain of forts to protect the water route along the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers. The first fort, Presque Isle, at present-day Erie, Pennsylvania, was completed in May 1753.

Lieutenant Governor Robert Dinwiddie of Virginia successfully obtained permission to build British fortifications in response to the French forts. Dinwiddie wrote a letter in August 1753 demanding that France withdraw its forts and claims in the Ohio country. George Washington was only 21, volunteered, and was entrusted with delivering the letter to the French officer commanding at Fort LeBoeuf. Fort LeBoeuf was located on French Creek, in the drainage area of the Ohio River, in present-day Waterford, Pennsylvania. Fort LeBoeuf was part of a line that included Fort Preque Isle, Fort Machault, and Fort Duquesne.

The French commander at Fort LeBoeuf was Legardeur de Saint-Pierre. Washington delivered the letter, and Saint-Pierre answered by giving Washington a sealed envelope addressed to Dinwiddie. Saint-Pierre’s letter stated that he was not the right person for Dinwiddie to address his demands. The correct person was the governor of Canada, the Marquis Duquesne, and Saint-Pierre stated he would forward the letter to Duquesne. In addition, Saint-Pierre stated that he was obliged to follow the orders given him, and thus, would not abandon the Ohio country. The letter was cordial, and Saint-Pierre provided Washington with provisions for his return trip to Virginia.

Dinwiddie responded by raising a Virginia Regiment of 300 volunteers, commanded by Colonel Joshua Fry, for the purpose of securing the forks of the Ohio River. The forks of the Ohio River are located in present-day Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and is where the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers come together to form the Ohio River. Washington requested, and was appointed, second in command, and was given the rank of lieutenant colonel. Washington was ordered to proceed with an advance portion of the regiment and aid William Trent in establishing the fort. Colonel Fry was to follow with troops to both reinforce the fort and expel the French from Virginia’s Ohio country.

William Trent, and his second-in-command, Edward Ward, began building the fort on February 17, 1754. The fort was short lived, because on April 17, 1754, Captain Claude-Pierre Pècaudy de Contrecoeur, the new commander of Fort LeBoeuf, arrived with an overpowering force causing Ward to abandon the fort (Trent was away at the time gathering provisions). The French tore down the fort and in its place built Fort Duquesne, which became France’s center of operations and Indian relations in the area. Ward, in his retreat, ran into Washington at Wills Creek (present-day Cumberland, Maryland) where Washington was camped on his way to garrison the fort Ward just abandoned. Washington then moved his regiment to Great Meadows (about 18 miles east of present-day Uniontown, Pennsylvania near Farmington, Pennsylvania) on May 24, 1754, and established a base camp.

The Iroquois Nation still presented itself as having authority over the Indians in the Ohio country. The central council of the Iroquois Nation was located at Onondaga, near present-day Syracuse, New York. The central council designated agents, called half-kings by the English, to represent the council in towns located away from Onondaga, and to negotiate on behalf of the Iroquois Nation, with final approval coming from Onondaga. Two chiefs were appointed as agents to the Ohio country: Tanaghrisson, a Seneca, and Scaroaudy, an Oneida. Tanaghrisson was the agent for the Ohio Delawares and Mingoes. Scaroaudy, also known as Monacatootha, was the agent for the Ohio Shawnees.

Contrecoeur, on May 23, 1754, dispatched Ensign Joseph Coulon de Villiers, sieur de Jumonville, along with 35 soldiers, to see what Washington was doing, and to demand they withdraw from French territory. Christopher Gist arrived on May 27, 1754, and informed Washington that the French were inquiring about Tanaghrisson. Washington used this opportunity to lie to the small band of Indians in the camp, telling them that the French intended to kill Tanaghrisson, which convinced the Indians to follow Washington to Fort Duquesne. A runner from Tanaghrisson informed Washington that a party of 50 French soldiers was in the area, and requested Washington immediately meet up with Tanaghrisson at his camp. Washington then left with 40 men, meeting up with Tanaghrisson and his 12 warriors. They decided to jointly attack the French. They pushed through the night, and found the French camp at dawn on May 28, 1754.

The events that happened next are not exactly clear, especially because Washington uncharacteristically provided little detail in his reports. Nevertheless, the result of the events was the catalyst for the French and Indian War. Washington only had the word of Tanaghrisson that the French were going to attack Tanaghrisson’s party. Washington had zero experience in leading any men in combat. Tanaghrisson was older, and in effect, took command of the party. They attacked the surprised French. Scarouady stated that the Indians did most of the fighting and most of the damage. Most, if not all French soldiers, were killed by the Indians’ tomahawks. The French taken prisoner insisted that they were sent by Contrecoeur to present Washington with a summons to withdraw or bear the responsibility of any following hostilities, and asked for a ceasefire.

There are differing reports on what happened next. One report had Jumonville captured, and as Jumonville tried to present the summons, Tanaghrisson killed him in cold blood. Another report indicated that Tanaghrisson came upon the wounded Jumonville and tomahawked him to death. What is not disputed is that Tanaghrisson washed his hands in Jumonville’s brains.

This was the only victory credited to Washington during the French and Indian War, and yet, this victory was a result of Tanaghrisson’s leadership. It was Tanaghrisson who prodded Washington into the attacking Jumonville, now known as the Battle of Jumonville Glen, and it was Tanaghrisson who ended any chance of reconciliation between France and England. Tanaghrisson maneuvered the inexperienced Washington into attacking an enemy that was not looking for a fight, and was not even officially an enemy. The governors of Virginia and New France blamed Tanaghrisson for the assault. Governor Duquesne ordered Contrecoeur to find a way to have Tanaghrisson killed by Indians so as not to implicate France in the killing, however, Tanaghrisson died of suspected pneumonia in October 1754.

The French and Indian War was about control over the Ohio country. It had nothing to do with protecting Indian lands. The British enjoyed a considerable advantage in the form of trade goods, which enabled them to gain political alliances with the Indians. The French, however, had significant military power, in which British General Braddock’s defeat in his attack on Fort Duquesne, clearly demonstrated to the Ohio Indians. The Ohio Indians, faced with the task of choosing between French muskets and British trade goods, were loyal to the French throughout the French and Indian War.

The French kept the bulk of their military forces on the New York frontier and the Saint Lawrence River to protect Canada from invasion. At the same time, the French encouraged, and equipped, their Indian allies to wage guerilla warfare on the western frontiers of the British colonies to divert British energies and resources from the north and demoralize the backcountry inhabitants to push for peace. Raiding Indian parties from Ohio wreaked havoc on the backcountry of Virginia and Pennsylvania. This was not a united front; instead, the Indian tribes fought for their own individual interests, despite Scarouady’s attempt to limit the involvement of the Iroquois Nation

By the end of 1756, Indian raiders killed more than 1,000 colonial settlers and soldiers. One-third of the men in Virginia’s army, commanded by Washington, were lost during Washington’s 18 months in command. The British focus of the war shifted to the north after Braddock’s defeat, and left Virginia to defend its own frontiers. Most Virginians had little interest in Ohio lands and the Ohio Company land speculation schemes. They resented being called upon to supply men and money for a rich man’s fight. Furthermore, Dinwiddie had to keep part of his forces close to home to guard against unrest among African slaves.

The French and Indian War did not officially end until the Treaty of Paris in 1763, but the war in Ohio was basically over by 1758. Ohio Indians fought for control of their land, and with the French driven out of Ohio, the Ohio Indians and the British enacted the Treaty of Easton in 1758. The British told the Indians that they merely wanted to drive away the French, rather than seize Indian lands. Instead, the British appropriated the lands west of the Ohio River and assumed management of Indian affairs in the Ohio country. The British considered the Ohio Indians as defeated, and thus, their subjects.

**Pontiac’s Rebellion**

The end of the French and Indian War created a no-win situation for the Indians. The Indians needed the return of the British traders. The British traders wanted furs and skins, but the Indians were in no position to provide the furs and skins because their powder and lead were depleted, and their guns were in disrepair. Furthermore, the British only allowed the traders to operate at British military posts to force Indians, particularly, the Shawnees, to return their captives and stop stealing horses from the traders. The Indians, on the other hand, would not release the captives until the return of normal trade. The Indians believed that once the captives were returned, the British would attack the Indians, destroy their villages, and seize their land.

 Traders routinely provided gifts to the Indians, and the Indians expected the gifts as a normal part of trade relations. The British wanted to end this practice because the British felt gifts fostered dependence and laziness. Trade reemerged, but the excessive use of whiskey caused a significant rift between the Indians and the traders, and lack of supplies and high prices hindered relations. In addition, the British removed knives, razors, tomahawks, gunpowder, flints, and guns from the approved list for the traders, increasingly angering the Indians.

In 1762, crop failure, famine, and smallpox swept the Ohio River Valley. When Ohio Indians sought aid from the British, they met rejection. Death was constant. The military strength of the Ohio Indians was diminished, and the French were no longer a counterweight to British pressure. This gave rise to a spiritual renewal led by Neolin, a Delaware prophet. Neolin preached that the misfortunes and hardships of the Indians resulted from their rejection of the past. The British were concerned because this new spiritualism affected the fur and skin trade, and the missionary work among the Ohio Indians.

The final straw came when the Indians learned the contents of the Treaty of Paris, that transferred all French claims in North America to the British. The Ohio Indians insisted that France had no right to give away North America, and the Ohio Indians were never conquered by any nation. As a result, in May 1763, the Ottawas attacked Detroit, led by Pontiac, an Ottawa war chief. Other attacks quickly followed across the western frontier. The rebellion ended in a stalemate in 1766. The Indians were unable to drive away the British, and the British were unable to conquer the Indians.

The result of Pontiac’s Rebellion was the Royal Proclamation of 1763, in which Great Britain drew a boundary line between the British colonies along the Atlantic seaboard and the Indian lands west of the Allegheny ridge. The proclamation attempted to gain British control of the west, in part by requiring the licensing of traders, and restricting trading to posts in order to control pricing and limit the use of liquor in the exchange process. The proclamation failed because white settlers and traders aggressively pushed into the Ohio country and prevented accommodation between the British and Ohio Indians.

**Lord Dunmore’s War**

The British were no longer the threat to Ohio Indians; instead, the greatest threat was now the relentlessly westward moving Americans. Virginia settlers were the worst. They hated Indians, and preferred their extermination in the Ohio Valley. One Virginian who desired as much Ohio land as possible was George Washington. Washington, independently, and with others, manipulated, schemed, lied, and misled in order to acquire Ohio country land. Washington acquired large amounts of Indian land as a way of elevating his status in society.

The Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768 set in motion a land rush, and Washington redoubled his efforts to acquire land. The treaty between the British and Iroquois Nation ceded all title of land claimed by the Iroquois Nation east and south of the Ohio River. The Shawnees, Delawares, and Mingos, who never accepted that the Iroquois Nation spoke for them, represented them, or had any legal right to negotiate on their behalf, lost title to their lands east and south of the Ohio River.

The result was a great explosion of white settlers into the Ohio and Kentucky (District of Kentucky, a part of Virginia, not achieving statehood until 1792). In 1769, Daniel Boone led a hunting and exploring party into the Indians’ territory. The party killed a substantial amount of game, saving only the furs and hides, and letting the meat rot. Boone was captured and forced to lead the Shawnees to the individual camps of his men. The Shawnees confiscated, or destroyed, the pelts, guns, ammunition, horses, and all other property. Boone and the captives were then sent home. The Shawnees gave each man two pairs of moccasins, a doeskin for patch leather, a little trading gun, and a few loads of powder, so the men would not starve to death on their way back to their settlements. The Shawnees warned the men never to return.

Return they did, along with countless other parties. These frontiersmen under Boone, considered their treatment under the Shawnees as an outrage. They recognized no exclusive Shawnee claim to the land. White frontiersmen and land speculators invaded the Shawnee country, slaughtered the game, and surveyed the land. Settlers followed, erecting cabins and fences. Boone also returned in 1770 and 1771, when he was again captured and released unharmed.

The standard approach and philosophy of the white man was that Indians simply had no rights. Indians were savages and would savagely resist. The white man believed and pursued a policy of savagely beating down the Indians. This meant that some whites, and all of the Indians, would be destroyed in the process, but civilization, as defined by the whites, would prevail.

Virginians now claimed land at will along the Ohio River without respect for law, treaties, or property rights of the Indians. Lord Dunmore, the Governor of Virginia, was powerless to stop the Americans from settling on Indian land. In the spring of 1774, a posse of drunken frontier militia murdered 13 women and children on Yellow Creek, at present-day Steubenville, Ohio. Included in the murdered group was the family of a Mingo chief, Tachnechdorus, better known as John Logan. Logan’s pregnant sister was strung up by her wrists and sliced open, impaling the unborn baby on a stake. Dunmore took no action against the murderers. The murders served his interests in sparking a war that opened Shawnee lands for the taking.

Pennsylvania accused Virginia of instigating the impending war as a way to assert Virginia’s claim on the Ohio River against Pennsylvania. An Indian war provided justification for grabbing Indian land, would send squatters scurrying east to safety, and leave the land open for wealthy speculators to amass large holdings. Logan took his revenge by killing settlers, and then declared his vengeance satisfied. Virginia had other plans, and declared war on the Shawnees.

William Crawford and Dunmore led 500 men down the Ohio River to attack the Shawnee towns in the Scioto Valley. Andrew Lewis, with another force, descended the Kanawha River. Chief Cornstalk and 600-1,000 Shawnees prepared for battle. They made their stand against Lewis’s army at the junction of the Kanawha and Ohio Rivers (near present-day Point Pleasant, West Virginia), the area where Washington intended to plant his settlements. The Battle of Point Pleasant took place on October 10, 1774. The Shawnees inflicted more casualties than they sustained, but were driven back after a long and hard-fought engagement. Dunmore pursued the Shawnees up the Hocking Valley toward the Shawnee villages on the Pickaway Plains. Lewis crossed the Ohio River and struck and burned several Shawnee villages. Peace was negotiated, and the Shawnees agreed to give up their hunting rights in Kentucky, abide by the Treaty of Stanwix, concur with British trade regulations, return all white captives, and not harass boats on the Ohio River.

**American Revolutionary War (1775-1783)**

Cornstalk, the leader of the Shawnees at the Battle of Point Pleasant, and White Eyes, the leader of the Turtle Clan of the Delawares, advocated for neutrality, but more militant Shawnees and Mingoes saw the revolution as a good opportunity to use British arms, provisions, and expel the Americans from Kentucky. Thus, a split occurred among Ohio Indians. Some of the Mekoches, the followers of Cornstalk and Kishshinottisthee, the head civil chief of the Shawnees, whom the English called Hardman, moved with a few Pekowis to the Tuscarawas River, where they joined neutral Delawares. Most of the remaining Shawnees abandoned the Scioto River Valley and traveled to the valleys of the Little and Great Miami Rivers.

Neutrality did not offer security. In November 1777, Cornstalk was massacred with one of his sons by a crowd of American militiamen inside Fort Randolph (located at Point Pleasant, West Virginia). Americans killed White Eyes in 1778. A horrific massacre occurred on March 8 1782, at the Moravian missionary village of Gnadenhutten, Ohio, where 96 Christian Delawares were murdered by U.S. militiamen from Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvanians accused the Delawares of raiding their settlements, divided them by sex, bound their hands, and placed them in separate houses. The Pennsylvanians took the Delawares in groups of 2-3 to the two cabins that served as slaughter houses, made them kneel, and smashed their skulls with a cooper’s mallet. The Pennsylvanians then set fire to the two houses. The United States was unable to provision friendly Indians, or protect them from either their enemies or Indian-hating frontiersmen. Consequently, neutral Shawnees and Delawares rejoined their hostile kinsmen.

The Shawnees mostly fought to protect the Ohio country and their hunting grounds in Kentucky. In June 1780, the British led an expedition into Kentucky with 1,000 men. Shawnees were defeated in two different locations, and 350 people were taken prisoners. Counterattacks were always an issue for the Shawnees. In August 1780, George Rogers Clark led 1,000 men in attacking and destroying Old Chillicothe (near present-day Xenia), losing their crops and many of their possessions. Clark continued following the retreating Shawnees, and fought the Shawnees in their villages around Mad River. Clark withdrew after two days, but the Shawnees’ crops were destroyed, and the ammunition needed for the fall hunt was exhausted. The Shawnees reached out to Detroit for relief.

The Shawnees managed to kill 860 Kentuckians between 1776-1782, but the continued emigration of new settlers into Kentucky placed the Shawnees at a significant shortage of warriors to defend their Ohio country. The 1783 Treaty of Paris gave control of the Ohio country to the Americans. The Americans considered the Indians conquered, and held no legal right to the Ohio country. Three subsequent conquest treaties solidified this arrangement.

**Years Leading up to the War of 1812**

The Americans did not live up to all its obligations under the treaty, so the British kept some of its posts on the American side of the boundary dictated by the treaty. The British maintained some of the posts for 13 years, and used them to issues presents and supplies to the Indians. The British needed the Indians to protect its Canadian colonies, and maintain the fur trade. The British, however, did not want to become a part of a war between the Indians and the United States, so the British advised the Indians to peacefully pursue their rights.

The Iroquois Nation was forced to give up their claim to the Ohio country at Fort Stanwix in 1784. In 1785 at Fort McIntosh in Pennsylvania, the Wyandots, Delawares, Ottawas, and Ojibwas were forced to cede a huge portion of southern and eastern Ohio, including the Shawnee homeland. The final conquest treaty took place at Fort Finney at the mouth of the Great Miami River (near present-day Cincinnati, Ohio). The treaty was signed on January 31, 1786, between the United States and some Shawnee leaders led by Moluntha, and ceded some parts of the Ohio country. Most Ohio Indians repudiated the agreement, and Mingoes, Cherokees, Delawares, and Shawnees prepared for a new war.

**Treaty of Greenville**

The Treaty of Paris in 1783 gave rights to the area northwest of the Ohio River and south of the Great Lakes to the United States. Native Americans who claimed or occupied the land were not a party to the treaty. The United States organized the area in the Land Ordinance of 1785, and negotiated treaties. A loose confederation of Native Americans around the Great Lakes region organized to oppose the terms of the treaty.

George Washington, in his first term as President of the United States, launched two major campaigns to subdue the confederacy. The first was the Harmar campaign in 1790, resulting in a significant victory for the confederacy. Washington then authorized Major General “Mad” Anthony Wayne to subdue the confederacy, which occurred at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, near present day Toledo, Ohio. The Indians were routed and retreated to Fort Miami, a British fort on the Maumee River. The commander, Major William Campbell, refused to open the gates to provide sanctuary to the Indians. Campbell felt he could not defend the fort against the superiority of Wayne’s forces.

The Battle of Fallen Timbers was not a major defeat for the Indians. The problem, however, was that the Indians were driven from their home, and had to depend upon British charity to survive the winter. The Indians ultimately signed the Treaty of Greenville in August 1795. As a result, the Indians lost the southern, eastern, and central sections of Ohio, comprising two-thirds of the state. The Shawnees and Delawares lost their hunting lands and some sites of their villages. Tecumthè (often, and incorrectly spelled, Tecumseh; the è is silent), now a major war and civil chief of the Shawnees, took his band to present-day Anderson, Indiana, and lived there for the next eight years.

**War of 1812**

The decade following the Treaty of Greenville was frustrating for the Shawnees. They refused to be settled farmers, and alcoholism became problematic. Arising from this situation became a new, and final Indian confederacy, conceived and led by Tecumthè, in part from the transformation of his brother, Lalawethika. Lalawethika was often drunk, and had bouts of depression. In April 1805, he fell into a trance, and awoke with a vision of personal redemption, and tribal renaissance. Lalawethika (the Noise Maker) now became Tenskwatawa (The Open Door), and was referred to as the Prophet.

The Prophet emphasized personal holiness and avoidance of such evils as Indian fighting among themselves, dishonesty, and sexual promiscuity. The Prophet preached a doctrine designed to purify his followers, and deliver all Indian converts from doom. The goal was to cast off white mens’ ways. His credibility soared, though dishonestly, when he predicted a solar eclipse, which he learned from a group of scientists who traveled to the mid-West to observe the event.

The Prophet moved his followers to a new village in Indiana territory, and named it Prophetstown. As the population swelled, the Governor of the Indiana territory, William Henry Harrison, became alarmed. Tecumthè visited Harrison in Vincennes, and told Harrison bluntly that Tecumthè was the leader of all Indian tribes, would execute any chiefs who engaged in land sales without permission of all, and demanded that Harrison restore the Indians’ lands. While Tecumthè was away some time later, Harrison led troops into battle that destroyed Prophetstown.

Tecumthè and the Prophet attempted to cultivate ties with the Americans and British, ultimately siding with the British when the war broke out. They both participated in an attack with the British at Fort Meigs, located on the Maumee River at present-day Perrysburg, Ohio. Harrison’s counterattack pushed the British and Indian allies into Canada. The American troops overtook the British-Indian force near Moraviantown on October 5, 1813, in which Tecumthè was killed (Battle of the Thames). Soldiers scalped and stripped Tecumthè s corpse. Skin was torn from his body to convert into razor strops.

Tecumthè predicted his death. Prior to the battle, Tecumthè gathered his chiefs and told them he would not survive the battle. He gave his British sword to a chief with the instruction to give it to his only son when his son became a great warrior.

**Epilogue**

Tecumthè, through his powerful leadership, ingenuity, and bravery brought together a confederation of Indians, who spoke different languages, had different interests, and jealousies existed among some tribes, attempted to fight for what every Indian desired – the right to live on their homeland and maintain their tribal lifestyle, culture, and way of life. What Tecumthè accomplished was never again achieved, though many Plains chiefs beginning in the mid-1800s, fought as hard and brave for the same purpose, such as Red Cloud, Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and Geromino.

As clearly shown throughout the history of the colonies and the United States, the Indians were lied to, cheated, misled, and treaties were willfully violated, by such revered men in the history of the United States that include George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, William Henry Harrison, and Daniel Boone. The white man simply saw Indians as savages who deserved killing on sight. The last removal of Indians from Ohio occurred with the Wyandots in 1843. There are no Indian reservations in Ohio, and no federally recognized tribes in Ohio. The Shawnees today are composed of three branches in Oklahoma: a) Loyal Shawnee; b) Absentee-Shawnee; and c) Eastern Shawnee.

**References**

The information provided within is recorded history, and numerous books and articles, often overlapping with the same information, were written about the Ohio country Indians struggle to maintain their homeland. Several books and articles were researched for this paper, but the following offer the most extensive information, and are recommended for further reading.

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