**The Selling of Shawnee Land**

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**Introduction**

The Ohio country (Ohio Valley region, in which the Ohio River flows through present-day Ohio, West Virginia, Indiana, Illinois, and Kentucky) 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.

The land belonged to the indigenous people, and no foreign nation had any right to claim the land as their own. This, however, did not matter to the settlers, explorers, frontiersmen, and land speculators. They were willing to eliminate whole civilizations of the indigenous people occupying what eventually became the United States for the sole purpose of possessing their land. This trend of extermination became common in the 20th century as the United States seized military and economic control of the world, capping 500 years of European colonialism and imperialism.Thomas Jefferson was its architect, and Andrew Jackson was the implementer of the final solution for the Indigenous peoples east of the Mississippi. In 1792, Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson claimed that the Doctrine of Discovery was international law applicable to the newly established United States. In 1823, the U.S. Supreme Court held that the Doctrine of Discovery was also the law of the United States. Andrew Jackson, as its implementer, signed the Indian Removal Act, in which 60,000 indigenous people, or those that actually survived, were forcibly relocated to Indian Territory between 1830-1850.

What is the Doctrine of Discovery? In the late 15th century, the pope provided a series of papal bulls, which were official documents or edicts, that gave European nations title to the land they discovered, while at the same time, the indigenous people occupying the lands lost their natural right to the land once the Europeans arrived and claimed it.The key to the land theft was economic dependency. The European settlers and Euro-American colonial powers created a power structure in which the indigenous peoples’ survival were contingent upon trade (imbalanced against them), goods, influence (often pitting indigenous nations against each other), and controlled them indirectly as protectorates, with Christian missionaries and alcohol. These English settlers considered the indigenous populations as children of Satan and servants of the devil who deserved to be killed.The European settlers, Euro-American colonial powers, and eventually the United States committed genocide against the indigenous people through the 21st century. This entailed torture, terror, sexual abuse, massacres, systematic military occupations, removal of Indigenous peoples from their ancestral territories, and removal of indigenous children to military-like boarding schools.

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**Shawnees**

The Ohio River Valley was home to many indigenous people, with much of the land making up present-day Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Indiana, occupied primarily by 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 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 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.

After England defeated France, in what is known as the Seven Years War, or in America as the French and Indian War (1756-1773), with England gaining titled to Canada, Louisiana, and Florida, England issued the Royal Proclamation of October 1763. This proclamation defined the Appalachian Mountains as the boundary line between the Indian lands and colonial settlements. The proclamation specifically stated that only representatives of England, who acted in open council with Indian nations, could negotiate transfers of Indian lands. As happened throughout the course of Indian nations in what is now the United States, any proclamation or treaty was a farce that was never abided by the issuer, whether it was England or the eventual United States.

Settlers and speculators regarded the land west of the Appalachian Mountains as the fruits of a hard-won victory over the French and the Indians (many Indian nations backed the French, while some backed the British). These settlers and speculators resented and ignored the proclamation. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Patrick Henry were Virginia land speculators that felt the proclamation interfered with their ability to profit from Indian lands, and as a result, considered the proclamation as an act of tyranny necessitating resistance, or completely evading the proclamation. George Washington told his friend and business associate that the proclamation was no more than a temporary expedient to quiet the minds of the Indians, and one that must fall in a few years. Washington desired as much Ohio land as possible, and 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 onslaught of settlers and land speculators in the Indian lands brought together the English Indian agent, Sir William Johnson, and delegates from the Iroquois Confederation for new negotiations held at Fort Stanwix, in what is now Rome, NY, in October and November 1768. The Iroquois Confederation agreed to cede land south of the Mohawk and Ohio Rivers, and extending west as far as the Tennessee River, and the Treaty of Fort Stanwix was signed on November 5, 1768. England was not pleased with what Johnson negotiated, but it stood, and shifted the boundary line from the Appalachian Mountains westward making the Ohio River the new dividing line.

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, Lenape (Delawares), and Seneca-Cayuga (derogatorily referred to as 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 Valley and Kentucky (District of Kentucky, a part of Virginia, not achieving statehood until 1792).

The Iroquois Confederation acted in their own best interest, without regard for any of the Indigenous nations living in the land they just ceded to England. The problem, however, is that none of the Indigenous nations were present at Fort Stanwix, and more importantly, there were no Shawnee representatives. The Iroquois Confederation gave up land in most of present-day Kentucky and West Virginia, which were the traditional hunting grounds of the Shawnee. The Iroquois Confederation claimed dominion over the land due to their victories over the tribes in that area during the 17th century. England felt it was better to deal with the Iroquois Confederation than to deal with the individual Indigenous nations. The treaty resulted in open season for frontiersmen, settlers, and land speculators. This was further compounded by the Cherokees agreeing to a new southern boundary line via the Treaty of Hard Labor in 1768, and renegotiated and pushed farther west with the Treaty of Lochaber in 1770. The treaties sold land in present-day Kentucky, again, the traditional hunting land of the Shawnees.

The Iroquois Confederation lost their leadership role among all former western Indigenous nations, and England forfeited their role as fathers. The Shawnees referred to England as “fathers”. They considered a father as one who cares for them, provides for them, and protects them. The Shawnee chief Red Hawk admonished the Iroquois Confederation as having no authority to sell the land, just as the Shawnees had no right to sell the land. The land was given to the Native Americans by the Creator, to live and cultivate, and there was no such thing as ownership. Red Hawk told the Iroquois Confederation that the Shawnees had always listened to the confederation when their advice was good, but the Confederation no longer held power over the Shawnees.

The selling of the traditional hunting grounds of the Shawnees led to a stepped-up effort by the Shawnees to build a coalition of Indian nations independent of Iroquois Confederation influence, and British authority, playing a significant role in the Shawnees’ relentless resistance against the swelling of land speculators, frontiersmen, and settlers, culminating in the defeat of the Indian confederation, established by Tecumthè, at the Battle of the Thames.

**Daniel Boone**

Daniel Boone was a frontiersmen popularized by the Disney movie and TV show in the 1950s/1960s featuring him, though those born in the 1970s or later conceivably never heard of him. Boone, more than any other, played a significant role in pushing the Shawnees out of Kentucky. Boone is credited with the establishment of Boonesborough in Kentucky, opening up settlement, and eventual statehood. Boone was relentless in leading hunting parties and settlers into Kentucky, despite his capture many times by Shawnees. He entered Kentucky for the first time in 1769 hunting in the northern part during the summer with the frontier trader John Findley and 6 men. The party killed a substantial amount of game, saving only the furs and hides, and letting the meat rot.

The Shawnees caught up with them in the fall. The Shawnees killed one man, and

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 with a very strong warning and admonishment, basically telling them to go home and never return. The Shawnees told them if the men ever ventured back to Kentucky, they would experience the severe sting of the wasps and yellow jackets. The Shawnees, did however, give 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.

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. 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.

Boone sneaked back in Kentucky the next spring (1760), and made it back home without detection. Boone sold his farm in North Carolina in 1763, and led 5 families and 40 single men through the Cumberland Gap towards Kentucky. The Shawnees and Cherokees confronted Boone and party before they made it out of the mountains. They drove off all the livestock, and killed 6 people including Boone’s oldest son, James.

Boonesborough was already established in Kentucky when Boone and a party of 26 men were surprised at the salt springs on the Licking River in 1778. The Shawnee chief Black Fish was leading a war party into Kentucky headed for the settlement of Boonesborough. Boone and party were caught completely off guard in a snowstorm, and surrendered. Black Fish took them to Chillicothe, a Shawnee town in present-day southeastern Ohio. Boone was forced to run a gauntlet between two lines of people hitting him with clubs and sticks, and survived, becoming adopted by Black Fish to replace a dead son. Boone and party were kindly treated, but nevertheless, most eventually escaped. Boone made it back to Boonesborough, and helped organize its defenses. Some members of Boonesborough suspected that Boone surrendered the entire party to save his own skin, and was too friendly with the Shawnees, though, a militia court-martial vindicated his conduct.

The Shawnee chiefs Black Hoof and Blue Jacket, along with warriors from several tribes, attacked Bryan’s Station at present-day Lexington, KY, and then ambushed a Kentucky contingent at the Blue Licks on the Licking River. Daniel Boone was with them and urged caution, but Hugh McGary, an Indian-hating loudmouth who had lost relatives to Indians, spurred the contingent on with taunts of cowardice. The contingent ran into a trap, and 70 men were killed, including another of Boone’s sons, Israel.

**What Became of the Shawnees**

The Indian confederation established by Tecumthè, who is considered by many historians as the greatest Indian whoever lived due to his ability to bring together a coalition of different indigenous nations speaking many different languages, for the purpose of stopping the onslaught of those invading indigenous nations’ lands, fell apart with his death at the battle of Thames. William Henry Harrison, who commanded the U.S. troops at the battle, considered Tecumthè as the “Moses” of the Indian movement, and no one was able to fill the void. Many Shawnees then migrated west.

There were only 800 Shawnees living in Ohio in 1819, primarily around Wapakoneta. The Quakers opened a missionary there, but felt the Shawnees were unable to comprehend and accept Christianity because the Shawnees were not sufficiently acquainted with the arts of civilized life. The Shawnees remained bitterly opposed to Christianity as God gave the Shawnees their own religion, just like he gave white people their own religion.

Tecumthè’s brother, Tenskwatawa, also known as “The Prophet”, was the spiritual leader that played a major role in Tecumthè’s ability to establish his Indian coalition, led a band to Ontario, Canada, and then moved to Michigan in 1824. Many Shawnees moved west in the 18th century forming settlements along Apple Creek near Cape Giardeau in Missouri and on the Merrimack River near St. Louis, Missouri. Some Shawnees joined their relatives in Missouri following the War of 1812, numbering 1,200. William Clark, of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, became the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and made a treaty with the Missouri Shawnees in November 1825, giving them a reservation in Kansas. The reservation was meant to serve all Shawnees. Tenskwatawa led about 250 Shawnees out of Wapakoneta in the fall of 1826, reaching the Shawnee reservation in Kansas in the spring of 1828. Those still living in Ohio tried to adopt to a white lifestyle farming and raising livestock, but believed that improving the land would only encourage whites to take it from them. The Quakers assured them that the U.S. Government would not stoop so low as to break their promise, but President Andrew Jackson did stoop so low. President Andrew Jackson did not invent the policy of evicting eastern Indians from their homeland, and relocate them west of the Mississippi River, but he did more than anyone else to see that it was implemented in May 1830.

The Shawnees and Senecas living at Lewistown, Ohio, signed a treaty on July 20, 1831, ceding their tiny reservation in Ohio for 60,000 acres in northeastern Oklahoma, and the Shawnees living in Wapakoneta and Hog Creek signed a treaty ceding their lands in Ohio in return for 100,000 acres in eastern Kansas. Black Hoof, whom Tecumthè and Tenskwatawa vilified for selling out, refused to leave Ohio, and died there in 1832. He was the last Shawnee chief to fight against the Americans, and John Perry now became chief of the Ohio Shawnees.

Many Shawnees who migrated to Missouri continued migrating at times to Arkansas, Louisiana, and eastern Texas. Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1822, and over 1,000 Shawnees settled south of the Red River. Mexico drew up a temporary contract in 1824 granting land to each individual family, which also included other tribes, such as the Delawares, that also migrated with the Shawnees. Texas won its independence from Mexico in 1836, and its first president, Sam Houston, was a strong advocate for the Indians in Texas, but unfortunately, his successor, Mirabeau Lamar, pursued a relentless policy of cleansing Texas of its Indian population. The Shawnees signed a treaty in 1839 agreeing to leave Texas, with the majority of them moving to an area on the Canadian River in Oklahoma. They formed the nucleus of the modern-day Absentee Shawnees, a title given to the Shawnees not residing on the Shawnee reservation in Kansas when it was organized into a U.S. territory in 1854. The remaining Shawnees left Texas in 1859.

The Kansas territory became open land for white settlement, forcing the Shawnees to give up much of the land promised to them. Inevitably, the Shawnees were forcibly removed from the Kansas Territory to Indian Territory between 1864-1871. Most of the Shawnees from Kansas moved to the Cherokee reservation in 1869, and were incorporated with the Cherokee Nation in 1872, becoming known as the Cherokee Shawnees, or Loyal Shawnees due to their pro-Union sentiments during the Civil War. The Absentee Shawnees settled with the Potawatomis. The Shawnees that moved west with the Senecas from Lewistown, Ohio in 1832, separated from the Senecas in 1867, and became known as the Eastern Shawnees.

**Epilogue**

Shawnees originally comprised five branches 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 branches no longer exist. The constant migration to Missouri, Texas, Kansas, and the eventual settlement in Oklahoma, broke up the branches. Today, rather than branches, the Shawnees are identified by the migrations they took at various times. The Shawnees are identified as:

Loyal Shawnees (those who migrated to Kansas)

Absentee Shawnees (those who migrated to Texas)

Eastern Shawnees (those who migrated from Lewistown with the Senecas)

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**About The Author**

Robert (Bobby) Anderson has more Native American (Indigenous) DNA than any other world population (see below). Born and raised in a white culture, he does not claim any cultural affiliation with the three Indigenous U.S. recognized nations that make up his Indigenous DNA. As he grew older, and is often the case, he started asking questions about his background. He was always told his maternal grandfather was Indigenous, though what nation was never revealed, and now anyone with any knowledge, are deceased. His maternal grandfather, born in Inez, Kentucky, the traditional hunting grounds of the Shawnee, passed away when Bobby was 5 years old, and he has zero remembrance of his grandfather, as his grandmother picked up her 9 children, and moved to Columbus, Ohio, leaving behind her husband, when his mother-to-be was still a child. There is a picture of Bobby sitting on his grandfather’s lap, and it is quite obvious that his grandfather has all the facial characteristics of an indigenous people.

Perhaps it was meant to be, but Ed McGaa, an Oglala Sioux, was the catalyst for Bobby setting up Native Buffalo Spirit, and eventually exploring his Indigenous roots. This led to a DNA test with DNA Consultants, the only DNA company in the world that has a Native American database. The results indicate that, for illustrative purposes only, since percentages are not provided by the company, that Bobby has about 48% Shawnee DNA, 2.5% Chippewa, and .5% Mdewakanton Sioux. This puts him over 50% Indigenous or Native American. Furthermore, he has equal Maya DNA as he does Shawnee (the rest is .99% European, and .01% Filipino). The United States recognizes over 500 Indigenous nations as Native American within the boundaries of the United States, but Maya, Inca, and Aztec are Native Americans as they are descendants of the people living in the Americas (North, Central, and South) before 1492, but the United States lumps them together as Hispanic. The United States does not recognize the Indigenous people of its territories, such as the Tainos of Puerto Rico. Consequently, when adding Maya to the 3 Indigenous nations recognized by the United States, Bobby has about 96% Indigenous DNA.

Based on his DNA composition, Bobby is identifying as basically half Shawnee, half Maya. Most Indigenous people take no issue with this, but there are some who think that a person must be 100%, or raised in the culture, to claim Native American. This presents a huge problem, as every Indigenous nation has its own requirements for tribal enrollment, with Cherokee having the most lenient membership requirement, and thus, there is no universal reconciliation for those who are recognized with a very small blood line compared to those who have a very high blood line. Bobby knows a lot of Cherokee proud to be Cherokee, but grew up the same as him, in a white culture. The point is that it does not matter. They have the blood line, and are thus, Native American. In conclusion, an Indigenous Plains Indian stated to Bobby: “So you’re Native American. It doesn’t mean anything”. Well, it does mean something to Bobby. It gives him an identity, and a reason to explore, particularly, Shawnee history and culture.

**DNA Consultants**

Hi Robert,

Wow! You got Shawnee enrolled at #2! That is amazing! We seldom see anyone that matches any enrolled population that high. And you have a lot of other Native matches as well. Much more than most get.

We cannot give you a percentage, but your Shawnee is at least as strong as your NA Choles (of Mayan stock) since they are ranking #1 & #2.

How our tests work: a scientist tests a reference population for the unique genetic markers for that population from any other in a research study (the N reference # which might take 40 or 4,000 people before it is discovered), so this research accounts for admixture. They publish this information in forensic databases we match your unique genetic profile to. We are analyzing some 100 ancestral lines all at once (like mother's father's mother), so we can't really tell you exactly where you got a match from or the exact strength of any match as we do not know if it was from your ggg grandmother or your great grandfather. All we can you tell you is that these are very strong matches out of some 550 world pops you could have matched and means you have ancestors from these tribes and tribal regions within the last few generations.

To discover where you got a match from, I would suggest, if available, having a parent take the same test. If your mother does not get a match to Shawnee, for instance, you got it from your father (etc. with your other matches).

You can also upgrade and discover more with the mid-upgrade to the NA DNA Plus (on sale through the 17th for $119 or when not on sale you can use a forever 10% discount code dnaplus for $134.10 ).

<https://dnaconsultants.com/product/our-tests/mid-upgrade/>

You might also consider doing professional genealogy (perhaps to locate your most recent Shawnee ancestor). If interested, please contact Sue at suel@dnaconsultants.com before ordering.

<https://dnaconsultants.com/?s=genealogy+services>

Sincerely,

*Teresa*

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