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The land beyond the mountains: The Trans-Appalachian frontier and the formation of Appalachian identity

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The Land Beyond the Mountains: The Trans-Appalachian Frontier and the Formation of Appalachian Identity

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Dedicated to my Mother, Father, and Sister, who have always been by my side in my hours of despair and my hours of triumph.
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Abstract

The field of Appalachian history often discusses the existence of an identity quintessential to Appalachia. In the opinion of many scholars, this identity, typically characterized as a sense of “otherness” compared to the rest of the nation, dates back to the post-Civil War period when the authors from outside the region began to write about the people of the mountains as inherently different and strange compared to other regions of the United States. However, the sense of otherness in Appalachia dates far before this period and even predates the establishment of the United States as a sovereign nation. Combining present scholarship on Appalachia with frontier methodology, this thesis analyzes how the trans-Appalachian frontier period before the American Revolution establishes a sense of otherness in the region. Due to the pre-existing identities of early settlers, conflicts in the regions, and geographic characteristics of the Appalachian regions, the frontier experience in Appalachia formed an identity of otherness compared to the outside regions. This sense of otherness has driven popular ideas of what Appalachia and the people who live there are, normally in a negative light. Using frontier methodology, this work seeks to understand the foundations of Appalachian otherness and to answer the question as to where these popular notions came from.
Introduction

In 2016, Appalachia became “Trump Country.” The mountains, valleys, riverbeds, and foothills that make up this large region of America supposedly found a semblance of forlorn hope in the Republican presidential candidate and eventual victor. As scholars, experts, journalists, and pundits attempted to understand why the people of this region found solace in the New York billionaire, the answer to many in the mountain regions was simple: his message made sense to them. While Democratic challenger Hillary Clinton held the message of hope and pride in the American system, Trump took the opposite approach by explaining that the system was broken and that he was the one who could fix it. In Appalachia, the system is broken and the signs of this exist everywhere. When people began to look into the mountainous region, the scene was one of poverty and crisis. In the rural areas, the picturesque mountains often show signs of the once strong but not crippled natural gas and coal industries, the poverty marked by dilapidated houses and once bustling mining or railroad centers now degraded to ghost towns. In the urban areas, homelessness, crime, and a wave of opioid addiction plague the towns alongside the frail industries that are still left. A look at the people in the area shows a reflection of the society. Many are living in poverty, facing medical problems, drug addiction, and fear of unemployment. Many turn to the multitude churches in the region for a sense of hope, praying for a much-needed miracle, seeking comfort in the only way they know how. This is the modern Appalachia, the Appalachia in dire need of

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1 Rick Hampson, “RFK’s visit to Appalachia, 50 years later: How Kennedy country became Trump country” from USA Today, Feb. 12, 2018. https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2018/02/12/rfks-visit-appalachia-50-years-later-how-kennedy-country-became-trump-country/310267002/. This is just one of many journal articles describing Appalachia as Trump Country.
help. All of these factors and more play into the desperate need for change in the region, but could one person be enough to change the real problems Appalachia faces?

It became the goal of many of the pundits, journalists and the like to attempt to explain how this area remains so complex. Experts found the causes of the dilapidated state of the mountain south all throughout the history of the region, but all fell short in full grasping the complexity of the region. Enter J.D. Vance, the successful venture capitalist, talking head, and author from Middletown, Ohio. Vance wrote a book in 2016 that became the answer that many sought to explain Appalachia. In his 2016 book, *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*, Vance used his own autobiography of a family stricken with poverty, drug and alcohol addiction, and physical abuse to discuss the complex culture of Appalachia. Vance found that the main problem Appalachia faced was a lack of work ethic and hillbilly culture rather than dependence on the coal industry, a topic many others who write on the subject see as central to understanding the Appalachian question. Vance’s solution was the practice of tough love and a newfound understanding of the value of personal responsibility. In short, Vance saw the problems of Appalachia as unique to the region and largely due to the culture of the people within, formed over generations.²

Vance’s book became a widespread success. Both American conservatives and liberals found the book intriguing and valid given the political issues of the region supporting Donald Trump for president. However, one thing that lacks in Vance’s discussion of Appalachia is the greater history of the region. Vance is no historian, so to

judge him for using his own story for a justification of his thesis may be too harsh, but the history of Appalachia does discuss that the problems in the region are just a small part of the complexity of the area. In short, Vance’s discussion of Appalachia, when cast into the great historiography of literature on Appalachia, provides little solid analysis to explain a problem that is much older than appears.

What many in more recent years attempted to do, Vance included, was explain the identity of Appalachians. Appalachians have a unique identity compared to other regions of America that may further explain the complex problems. The first scholar to really explain this identity was Henry D. Shapiro and his groundbreaking monograph *Appalachia on Our Mind*. In this, Shapiro proclaimed Appalachia to be a socially constructed idea rather than a geographic region.³ Shapiro looked to a sense of “otherness” as a means of analyzing the relationship between Appalachia and the rest of the nation. Shapiro proclaimed that Appalachian people faced a “cognitive dissonance.” He said, “‘Cognitive dissonance’ is the name of the situation familiar to people both privately and professionally, as students of history, in which a particular conception of reality and reality as perceived do not seem to agree.”⁴ Shapiro argued that Appalachia was predominantly the product of outsiders, specifically northern authors, using the peculiarity of Appalachian people and building it into an identity of otherness. Shapiro held that there were several ways this Appalachian otherness became an identity and that its foundation came from certain perceptions and conceptions of reality. One such “mode of action” was that “Dissonance may be resolved by explanatory systems, as when the

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⁴ Henry D. Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind*, xvi.
alleged ‘peculiarity’ of mountain life was described as products of the region’s isolation from the rest of the nation or the particular ethnic or cultural heritage of the region’s original settlers.” Shapiro’s work demonstrates that the development of Appalachia in a modern sense of American consciousness comes from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, the statement above mentions that dissonance came from an already established sense of otherness, or specifically Appalachianness, in the region's time as a frontier.

In 1863, then President Abraham Lincoln reportedly told Oliver Howard, a Maine general, when pointing to the Cumberland Gap: “I want you to do something for those mountain people who have been shut out of the world all these years. I know them. If I live, I will do all I can to aid, and between us, perhaps we can do the justice they deserve.” Lincoln, a Kentuckian himself, knew the people of the region as well as recognizes the difference in people to the west of the Appalachian Mountains. This displays that sense of Appalachian otherness and explains that it existed before the period of Shapiro’s focus. Where then did the otherness come from? Moreover, what exactly is this identity?

In this case, Appalachian identity is an original thought. If one were to speak to an Appalachian about their identity as a member of Appalachia, the characteristics would be generally positive. These would include such characteristics as familial, love of place, self-reliant, independent, proud, kind, modesty, and possibly many other such noble

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5 Shapiro, Appalachia on Our Mind, xvi-xvii.
characteristics. If one was to ask someone on the outside to discuss Appalachian characteristics, the answers could be somewhat different. To the outsider, Appalachian characteristics could include backwardness, disdain for authority, uneducated, ignorant, reactionary, unwilling to change, and much more less than favorable characteristics. These differences of opinion in traits display the dichotomy between those in and out of Appalachia. Foundational traits of Appalachian identity for this paper though are more apropos to the time of settlement, yet do share commonality with modern descriptions. At the time, the identity that came from the frontier was a desire to be self-reliant but the inability to do so, familial/communal, geographic determinism, prone to violence, suspect if not disdainful to distant authority and hierarchy, egalitarian, and, perhaps most of all, in search of personal safety and security. It was these traits that drew the would-be frontiersmen to the backcountry of the colonies and these traits pushed them into the Appalachian region as well. Many of these characteristics still have foundations in Appalachia and contribute to the aforementioned problems seen in the modern era and throughout history. If Frederick Jackson Turner’s idea of the significance of the frontier on the creation of sections is to be believed, the settlers bring a form of these traits but evolve into something very different due to the frontier experience. As mentioned previously, Shapiro found that the geographic isolation and the identities of the earliest settlers might have acted as the foundations for Appalachian otherness. In order to analyze the connection between Appalachian otherness and the trans-Appalachian

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7 Many of these characteristics are taken from Loyal Jones, *Appalachian Values* (Ashland: The Jesse Stuart Foundation, 1994), 51-114.
frontier, a certain brand of frontier methodology mixed with an understanding of identity could help determine the impact of the frontier on the creation of this identity.

When discussing the American frontier, any historian must first discuss Frederick Jackson Turner, the aptly named father of frontier history. In the Turnerian mind, the frontier was the series of foundational periods of quintessentially American traits such as democracy, egalitarianism, individualism, and wastefulness. The frontier to Turner was a fluid region stretching across the North American continent, triumphantly stretching American ideals across a wild and untamed frontier. Later on, Turner expanded this thought by explaining that the frontier period contributed to the establishment of distinct, cultural and geographic regions of the United States. In this work, Turner established that the frontier created regions based on a similar culture that differed from others, such as the North and the South pre-Civil War or the West and the East throughout western expansion. These cultural regions included much smaller regions such as Appalachia, who had their own geographic and cultural categorization. In his mind, Turner saw sections both as solidified state lines as well as capable of crossing state lines. In a way, Turner sought to refocus his preceding statements on the frontier and to be more specific as far as how the frontier shapes these sections. This part of Turner’s work, however less popular than his work on the general frontier in American history, remains an important

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contribution to sections or regions of the United States and in understanding how they form and evolve.

Despite the importance of Turner, his ideas and scholarships are quite outdated and inherently flawed with the bias of his time. Historians such as Frederick Jackson Turner recognize the venture west into Appalachia as the beginnings of the trans-continental frontier experience, creating sections that, in turn, affect the way American identity and regional identity form. This is also the period where the popular memory of the frontier begins to form. As romantic it is to think of free, independent, noble frontiersmen traversing a wild, unknown land, this picture of the frontier experience in Appalachia is far from fact. The romanticized version of the frontier starts in this period, but once delving into the real history of the establishment of settlement in Appalachia, a drastically different and less romantic picture begins to form.

By the 1820s, the process of Americans creating a cultural identity for themselves was still ongoing. When it came to the arts, American artists attempted to break from the European influences that carried over to the new Republic from before the Revolution. In order to do this, some artists looked at American identity as a source of influence. In order to do this, artists looked to the history of events on the continent in order to build a sense of national identity. Authors were particularly good at depicting historical events in a way that separated Americans from their English predecessors. Of all authors who did this, one of the most effective was James Fenimore Cooper. In 1826, Cooper published the novel *The Last of the Mohicans*. In this, Cooper told the story of Natty Bumppo, a frontiersman, scout, and ranger fighting the French and their Native American allies in the French and Indian War. Bumppo, often referred to in the book as “the Scout,”
personified the spirit of the frontiersman. He was free, wild, unsatisfied, and untrusting of the ways of established urban centers of the colonies. He befriended and even held familial ties with friendly Native Americans while fighting others who endangered his friends and fellow citizens. Bumppo became a symbol of America’s independent spirit set in a time when the Americas were still colonies. Cooper told the story of a changing identity. He employed the use of myth to portray a historical sense of changing identity and national characteristics.

Paintings also became a source of explaining popular memory as well as national spirit in the early to mid-19th century. The Hudson River School specifically dedicated itself to portraying America’s landscapes as wild, free, and natural. Focusing on landscapes, the painters of the Hudson school did their best to pull such emotions from their audience. Some painters, such as George Caleb Bingham, went as far as to include a story to their scene. In order to create such emotion from stories, painters would include real, historical actors in these settings to add depth their story. Now, not only were these paintings displaying the scenery and geography of America, but also a national character that brought forth the same emotions of freedom and independence.

In fairness to Frederick Jackson Turner, whose history legitimized these triumphant myths, the myth of the frontier seems to be alive far before he put pen to paper to analyze the frontier’s impact on American history. These sorts of stories even found their way into the Draper Manuscripts with many of the papers collected on Boone
were actually stories told by letter and newspaper clippings from the early to mid-19th century.\textsuperscript{10}

Figure 1. George Caleb Bingham, \textit{Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers through the Cumberland Gap}, oil on canvas, 1851-1852. Kemper Art Museum.

Confronting prominent myths is no new feat for the historian of Appalachia. Shapiro’s work dealt with the creation of the mythos of Appalachian identity and historians such as Patricia Limerick dealt with dispelling the myths of the American frontier. Thus, the Appalachian frontier should be no exception to the presence of triumphant stories. The

\textsuperscript{10}The Boone Papers, Lyman C. Draper Papers, James Madison University.
question then is what is the myth? What is the reality? Most importantly, what does this dichotomy say for the creation of Appalachian identity?

The myth of the Appalachian frontier greatly comes from such depictions of Boone. Daniel Boone appears in both legend and historiography as the epitome of western settlement. Clad in buckskin with a rifle on his shoulder as he ventures into an empty and untamed wilderness, Boone and his longhunter persona became the mythos of the American frontiersman as he triumphantly faced peril as he ventured west in search of lands to expand the American empire in search of safety and security. This thesis will debunk this myth and exchange it with the true narrative of Appalachian settlement as others have done to the Turnerian thought as a whole.

One such historian that faced Turner is Patricia Nelson Limerick; whose 1987 book *Legacy of Conquest* redefined the American frontier. Limerick defines the frontier as “Frontier, then, is an unsubtle concept in a subtle world.” Though Limerick’s focus was on the western region of the United States and Appalachia is not mentioned in her work, a similar framework could apply. Limerick felt the study of the American West would be more effectively done through the eyes of the West as a region rather than a frontier. Skeptical of the subjective nature of the definition of the term “frontier,” Limerick thought it best to study the West as a region rather than a frontier. This work, despite the usage of the term frontier, serves a similar purpose as it surveys the development of the Appalachian region when the first settlement begins.

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Though Limerick makes a valid point in her critique of the term, her concern with the definition deals not with the concept of the frontier period but rather as to when it closes. The closing of a frontier is exactly like the opening of the frontier, a lengthy process that has not set date nor cannot undergo such organized analyzation. Instead, the frontier must be viewed as a long-term process of expanded, trans-continental colonization where Anglo-American society clashes with Native American society. With viewing the frontier and transcontinental colonization, a method often used by historians, the long-lasting effects show that, though at some point the frontier closed, the frontier still dominates the way regions coincide with the rest of America as well as how America coincides with the rest of the world. In this work, the frontier is the beginnings of Anglo-American clashes with Native Americans and the process, which has had long-lasting effects on the creation of region still alive today.

This work does not seek to claim Shapiro, Turner, or Limerick are incorrect in their findings. In fact, the goal is to do quite the opposite. This work seems to explain the gap left by Shapiro, by analyzing the sense of otherness he found northern authors capitalized on in their post-Civil War writings. By updating Turner and revamping his ideas in a more present light, there is a more complete and nuanced understanding of the significance of the frontier, specifically the Appalachian frontier. Limerick’s work may be undergoing the least amount of changes as her focus is far different but her ideas and methods exist within this work in a different region.

In order to understand the trans-Appalachian frontier and the identity created there, the narrative must first begin before Appalachian sees its first white settler. Identity does not exist in a vacuum. When the first settlers arrived across the mountains, they
carried with them an identity that existed beforehand, carved from their previous experiences. Chapter one analyzes the first settlers into the colonial backcountry who eventually migrate to Appalachia. By analyzing how the backwoods evolved their European identities, the first form of identity evolution takes place. The event that greatly changes the identity of backwoodsmen is the French and Indian War, a conflict that thrust backwoodsmen into a long struggle against Native Americans and also formed new, complex bonds with eastern British authority. By the end of the French and Indian War, the backwoodsmen looked west while the English authority saw the need to restrain settlement for fear of the Native Americans and the violence they continued to engage in after the war.

Chapter two analyzes the backwoods response to Native American violence and the actions of English authority. Focusing on Pennsylvania and North Carolina, backcountry violence provides examples of an identity crisis in action as the social contract between backwoodsmen and people in positions of authority or power faced challenges of this changing identity. In this chapter, the standard history of rugged frontiersmen braving the wilderness to settle is not as prominent as the story of eastern merchants and government officials seeking to use paralegal tactics to make fortunes off backcountry people wishing to move west. The chapter concludes with analyzing how these eastern elites achieved this while using their positions of authority to do so.

Chapter three finally brings the backwoodsmen into the Appalachian region. Explaining the true nature of settlement rather than longhunter myth, the relationship between frontiersmen and the eastern authorities seems far different from the triumphant images seen in legends and folklore. As settlement continues to threaten the ways of life
of many Native Americans in the Appalachian region, Lord Dunmore’s War provides another example of conflict and violence shaping the relationship between frontiersmen and their eastern counterparts. Chapter three ends at the opening of the Revolutionary War, an event far too large and important to analyze in this work.

In these twenty-five odd years of the process of settlement, an identity shifted from European to backcountry colonists, then to trans-Appalachian frontiersmen. By the end of this analysis of frontier Appalachian identity, the roots of an identity that has been an ever-present factor in the evolution of the Appalachian region will have a foundation. As biased as Turner may be, the significance of the frontier on the Appalachian region may provide the sense of otherness that Lincoln, Shapiro, and many others have analyzed over centuries of study. Fredrick Jackson Turner once said:

> The aim of history, then, is to know the elements of the present by understanding what came into the present from the past. For the present is simply the developing past, the past the undeveloped present… The antiquarian strives to bring back the past for the sake of the past; the historian strives to show the present to itself by revealing its origins from the past. The goal of the antiquarian is the dead past; the goal of the historian is the living present.  

In this, Turner outlines yet another basis of this work. By understanding the past, even the far past before Shapiro, the Appalachian identity that is continually called into question and analyzed by scholars, pundits, and lay people alike, lies with this past.

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Chapter One: Land of Promise, Land of Violence

In the concluding comment of Henry D. Shapiro’s work, he says, “We may judge the validity of the idea of Appalachia only by assessing its consequences in action. But this we can only do if we attempt first to understand its history and its function by asking what problems it solves and whose interests – intellectual as well as practical – it thereby serves.”

Though Shapiro’s study of the idea of Appalachian otherness goes back to the 1870s, the idea of Appalachian otherness must already have had a basis before this period. Otherness directly connects with an individual’s, group’s, or, in this case, region’s identity. Identity in Appalachia separated the people of the region from the other regions of America while also internally binding the individuals within Appalachia together. In order to trace this identity and its formation, we must first venture before the period of Shapiro’s interest. The formation of regional identity correlates with the formation of the region, as we know it in Anglo-American society. Therefore, to fully understand Appalachian otherness as an identity, the period of the Appalachian frontier is. However, the evolution of identity is much like the evolution of history itself. Though historians like to organize history by time, topic, or place, all things are connected; the same premise applies to the study of identity. With this in mind, studying the identity of Appalachia requires tracing those who settled in the region back to their colonial standing as well as their pre-colonial experiences.

By 1700, the English colonies in America stretched nearly along the entire Atlantic coast of North America. As settlement in the 17th century focused towards

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England, urban centers and rural farmlands along the coast grew into more advanced, sufficient societies with Europe as their model for modernization. In the late 17th century, the influx of immigrants and the rapid pace of colonial growth pushed settlement westward with the natural boundary of the Appalachian Mountains acting as a buffer between English colonies and French claimed lands across the mountains where multitudes of Indigenous Americans lived.\textsuperscript{14} Many who settled inland from the coast came from different backgrounds and held different identities, but they were all citizens of the American frontier and they were all in a similar situation. This was enough to form a collective consciousness that placed the backwoodsmen into a different category of citizen when compared to the more advanced regions of colonial America. The similarities in their identities spanned beyond their identity as backwoodsmen. Many, although coming from different places and situations, brought with them similar characteristics that they took into the backwoods and carried throughout their settlement west of the Appalachia Mountains. Much of these characteristics developed in Europe as the people who generally made up the population of the backwoods were of two primary ethnicities in the middle decades of the 18th century, the Scots-Irish and the Germans.\textsuperscript{15}

The Germans who eventually found homes in colonial America and settled in the backwoods came for similar reasons to the classic stories of British colonization. A desire for religious freedom, as well as the ability to succeed economically, drove Germans to the colonies. Ensuing religious turmoil in France rippled across the border, creating an

\textsuperscript{14} The French did not have permanent settlements in this region. Native Americans populated this region and held decent relations with the French.

\textsuperscript{15} The term Scots-Irish is also commonly interchangeable with Scotch-Irish and Ulster Scots. However, at the time they may have referred to themselves as the Protestant Scots. For the ease of reading and connectivity, the term Scots-Irish will be used in this research.
unsettled situation in the Rhine Palatinate region. In the Palatinate, the Protestant Germans sought to live their lives in small agrarian communities free to practice their religion and autonomy as subsistence farmers. However, the turmoil of religious-based European politics made such a life difficult if not impossible for some. The prejudice against Protestants and the Germans, who spoke a different language, has a different culture, led to violence and persecution as small farming communities in the Palatinate often experienced attacks where people lost their lives and had their property destroyed. This led to a refugee crisis as the Germans wished to relocate in search of areas where religious freedom, personal autonomy, and cheap land existed. At the same time, the Penn family, eager to lure settlers to the new colony of Pennsylvania and sympathetic to the religious feelings of the Germans, welcomed the settlers with promises of cheap land. The combination of cheap land and freedom from religious persecution created Pitt’s “poor man’s paradise” for many Germans. As they arrived in Pennsylvania, Germans settled in the fertile farmlands west of Philadelphia, maintaining a communal sense of German heritage in a certain, condensed area. Germans brought their agrarian, communal lifestyle with them to America. Cheap, fertile lands meant a chance to succeed as farmers in the regions outside of Philadelphia. With the shared heritage, Germans stuck together and settled in a condensed area out of a sense of security. Though trusting the forward-thinking Quaker colony, the German people settled in the region to maintain an insular security and have maintained this even into the modern day. Due to the Quaker’s mentality and the acceptance of German immigrants, Pennsylvania soon held the connotation as a land where poor, marginalized, or oppressed people could find a haven and a chance for security and success while maintaining their old sense of identity.
The colony of Pennsylvania fit the description of what the Germans desired. Founded by the open-minded Quakers, the religious freedom of the new colony attracted the Protestant Germans as they knew that the religious persecution experienced in Germany would not follow them to this new land. The Penn family advertised the colony as a “Poor Man’s Paradise” where someone of low social standing could buy land and live an autonomous yet simple life.\(^\text{16}\) Even though the Penn family of Pennsylvania advertised the land as such, this was far from charitable, as an immigrant to the colony had to be able to purchase land, albeit cheap land. The Germans who made the voyage to

Pennsylvania had to be able to afford the land so they were not the poorest but generally just lower class, yeoman farmers with enough to purchase the cheap farmland.

The Scots-Irish share a similar story with the German immigrants. The Scots-Irish were Presbyterians from the Scottish lowlands who immigrated to North Ireland (Ulster) in search of cheap farmland during the English colonization of Ireland. Available farmland in Ulster was only part of the reason for the Scots to immigrate as social strife in Scotland also pushed people to seize the opportunity. Life in Scotland before and even during English rule was insular, agrarian, desolate, and, when compared to life in much of England, somewhat primitive. The Lowland Scots, often wary of rule from as far south as London but not as rebellious as those in the Highlands, felt disgruntled by distant rule while also feeling hopeless as to be able to resist it. During the time of England’s first colonization in America at Jamestown, the English crown under James I also began colonizing Ireland. As with Jamestown, English colonization in Ireland sought to establish English-controlled colonies and attempt to spread English rule throughout Ireland. In order to do this, Englishmen had to established settlements there. Along the same lines as early American colonization, it was the poor and marginalized that ended up settling. With the Lowland Scots in their position and the establishment of the English kingdom of Ulster sharing similar qualities to the Scottish Lowlands, the Scots rarely turned down an opportunity to immigrate to Northern Ireland.

Once in Northern Ireland, the poor Scottish immigrants made their living in communities of sheepherders and sold wool with relative success. However, English wool producers disliked the competition from Northern Ireland and pushed the Irish Parliament to ban the exportation of wool from the country. With English Lords in
control of the markets and politics of Ireland, the Ulster-Scots soon began to feel similar economic subjugation similar to what they felt in Scotland. With their ability to trade wool cut off by English authorities, the desire to immigrate returned its old appeal that first brought them to Ulster. Nearly a century after the first Scottish moved into the area, the Scots-Irish began to immigrate in small numbers to other English colonies in the West Indies and America. Similar to the Germans, the Scots-Irish experience with religious persecution by both the Catholic and the Anglican churches made the prospects of religious freedom appealing. As with the Scottish Lowlands and Ulster, the agrarian spirit of the Scots-Irish carried over into their journey into the American colonies. With cheap land and their knowledge of and dedication to agrarian practices, the journey to America produced many positive opportunities including a greater chance of economic success and increased individual freedoms. The availability of cheap and fertile farmland in the American colonies convinced the Scots-Irish to make the journey, leaving the religious, economic, and political persecution behind them. A famine hit Northern Ireland in 1740, exacerbating the mass exodus of Protestant Scottish from Ulster to America.  

The Scots-Irish, like the Germans, settled in the colonies for the sense of safety and security. Generations of classifications as second-class citizens in the eyes of England, as well as their move to Ulster, created a similar sense of insularity. The Scots-Irish also held the characteristic of being speculative of outside authority. Due to their history with English governments and English mercantilists, the Scots-Irish immigrants

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to the American colonies sought some manner of independence and self-reliance, free of authoritarian encroachment. Like the Germans, the Scots-Irish found this in Pennsylvania as well, however, the similar backgrounds and similar goals of the two groups fell short of being able to form a relationship between the Germans and the Scots-Irish. The two groups found themselves in the middle of a political debate within the rapidly growing colony of Pennsylvania.

Due to the Penn family advertising in areas like the German Palatinate, England, and the English colonies, including Ulster, poor, marginalized people found Pennsylvania to be the primary stop for those wishing to escape persecution and poor social standing in exchange for opportunity and agency. This attracted a great many immigrants to the colony and between 1700 and 1740 when the colony nearly quintupled in size.\(^{18}\) Nearly all arrived at the port of Philadelphia. By 1740, the city population was around 10,500, only surpassed by Boston (17,000) and New York (11,000) in size.\(^{19}\) In the colonial center of Philadelphia, mercantile firms, and an elitist class made up of merchants, government officials, and landed elites began to form creating a very apparent divide in class.\(^{20}\) The influx of immigration into Pennsylvania was not solely Scots-Irish and German though they were the two largest groups. Anglicans moved into the colony in the first half of the 18\(^{th}\) century though their numbers are far lower than any other group with the Anglican population only reaching 25,000 in 1759. The Germans made up the largest number at 65,000 followed by the Scots-Irish at 55,000. Another group that contained

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\(^{18}\) United States Census Bureau. *Population in the Colonial and Continental Periods*, 6. The population of Pennsylvania in 1700 is estimated at 20,000. By 1740, the population was an estimated 100,000.


\(^{20}\) Here, elites means the upper echelon of colonial society. The relationship between elites and backwoodsmen is crucial to understanding dynamics of power and how it forges the creation of identity.
both a large population and a significant measure of power was the Quakers, the followers of Quaker and colonial namesake William Penn to the colony. In 1759, they numbered 50,000.\textsuperscript{21}

The large number of non-Anglican Protestants and non-English was a great concern to many of the mercantile elites and government authority. Anglicans began to worry that the British colony would transform from a British colony to a more independent German colony.\textsuperscript{22} In 1751, Benjamin Franklin, questioned, “Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a colony of aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us, instead of our Anglifying [sic] them, and will never adopt our language or customs any more than they can acquire our complexion?”\textsuperscript{23} Franklin worried about the status of the colonies as a whole and Pennsylvania in particular. Franklin feared that immigrant “conquerors” would undermine the English character of the colony. In his essay on how the population dispersion can affect the way in which that country governs and manages itself, Benjamin Franklin discussed how the large numbers of immigrants could easily control trade, culture, and politics and might even undermine British control and governance of the colony by sheer numbers alone.\textsuperscript{24} Others shared Franklin’s sentiments. Such feelings towards Germans by the Anglican English built into a sense of German otherness. As history often explains, ethnic differences greatly contributed to the establishment of the “other” in terms of identity and the Germans were


\textsuperscript{23} Benjamin Franklin, \textit{Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries &c} (Boston: S. Kneeland, 1751), 10.

\textsuperscript{24} Franklin, \textit{Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries}, 6-7.
no different in the eyes of the English. However, their strong relationship with the predominately-Quaker colonial officials of the colony as well as their geographic location near Philadelphia allowed for relations to continue and for the Germans to continue their journey for success and security in Pennsylvania.

Regardless of what Franklin and the other elites of Philadelphia felt towards their non-Anglican neighbors, many Germans resided in Pennsylvania. With the abundance of cheap land the colony heralded, the attraction of Pennsylvania was greater for the farmer and the husbandman. Given that many of the Quaker, Germans, and Scots-Irish were husbandmen and farmers before making their voyage to the American colonies, these groups attempted to establish themselves in communities of their own friends, often made up of their own ethnic background. The issue for each group now was to find the parcel of land that would best suit their needs while also being close enough to a market to make their lifestyle successful and practical. The Germans who immigrated in great numbers nearly a decade before the Scots-Irish mostly established themselves in the land west of Philadelphia but east of the northern tip of the Allegheny Mountains, an area still populated by the so-called Pennsylvania Dutch.25

Scots-Irish still settled in this area as well but in smaller numbers, but many pushed further west into the Allegheny Mountain area, settling in the valleys of the Susquehanna River and the Conococheague Creek. In these areas, the Scots-Irish found themselves much further from the market at Philadelphia. However, this seclusion was not new to the Scots-Irish as they experienced similar situations in the Scottish Lowlands.

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25 The Pennsylvania Dutch, a misnomer of the German Deutch, still holds a heavy presence in the culture of the area.
and more recently in Northern Ireland. In a way, seclusion and insularity meant security and freedom from outside influence to the Scots-Irish. In the Pennsylvania backcountry, the Scots-Irish adapted to the new soil and the new land well.\textsuperscript{26} Due to this need to adapt and thrive in their secluded settings, the Scots-Irish of the Pennsylvania frontier maintained their insularity and their separation from eastern society. As most Scots-Irish settled west and north of the German region in areas such as the Susquehannock, the settlers of central Pennsylvania found themselves at a much further distance from Philadelphia, meaning their relation to both government and to markets stretched as far as their route. However, the opinion held by other groups outside the Scots-Irish towards them did not consider these hardships when forming their opinions of their livelihoods. The Scots-Irish quickly gained the reputation of being lazy, backward, and poor husbandmen. This reputation of not partaking in more market transaction, albeit not the fault of the Scots-Irish personality contributed to further discrimination.\textsuperscript{27}

The Scots-Irish, Germans, and Quakers did not share mutual understanding when it came to governance. The political climate in Pennsylvania only grew tenser as the rapidly growing populous became more diverse in the first half of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. The Quakers believed that the Penns should retain the power, as it was their colony through the grant by the English Royal Government. The Germans supported the Quakers in this position. However, many colonists distrusted Proprietary rule and wanted the power to lay in the hands of an elected representative assembly with all those of European descent allowed to partake in the political processes of the colony. Many Anglicans took this

\textsuperscript{26} Jackson, \textit{A Social History of the Scotch-Irish}, 105-108.
position in favor of representative government, but a majority of the support came from the Scots-Irish who wanted a say in government and who felt targeted by the exclusion of western counties in political processes. During this period, the two differing ideologies led to partisanship in the colony, which often led to gridlock when it came to issues of the colony. Many of the issues that the colonial politics faced were on the frontier, such as defense and policy with the Indians who still resided in the western areas of the state. As frustration with politics increased and available land in the colony decreased, newcomers to the colony, many of whom were Scot-Irish, did not find the opportunities they anticipated. However, other colonies such as Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas sought to increase their populations while also making a quick and easy profit off land sales in the western portion of their colonies. Soon, many in Pennsylvania began to follow an old Iroquois trail south through the Great Valley in search of opportunity and success.28

The Great Wagon Road ran from Philadelphia west, later bending southwest through the Great American Valley. The trail passed modern-day Lancaster and Gettysburg, Pennsylvania and entered into the Maryland panhandle near Hagerstown. The trail then crossed into the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia and followed the valley south to Roanoke where it then cut south into western North Carolina, running through the Yadkin Valley, and further south into South Carolina and ending in Augusta, Georgia.29 The first stop outside Pennsylvania for many traveling south was the Maryland panhandle. The governor of Maryland, Charles Calvert, the great-grandson of Charles II

of England, accepted new immigrants many of whom settled in the panhandle valleys and took up agrarian, communal lifestyles similar to those in the old world and in the Pennsylvania backwoods. Settlers spread through the Shenandoah and eventually into the Yadkin Valley of North Carolina, accessing fertile land and beginning to farm in their tight-knit communities. What came of this displacement were variations of the same identity.

Figure 3. Map of the Great Wagon Road

The people that settled in the backcountry of these Middle and Southern colonies looked very similar to the disconnected, agrarian communities along the Allegheny Mountains in Pennsylvania. Even though they looked very similar, these settlements lacked a mutual identity despite their similarities. This is due to their insularity and the

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growing nature of self-reliance. Even though the individual identities were strikingly similar in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and into the valleys of northwestern North Carolina, the connection of this similar identity of backwoods otherness did not yet exist in the minds of the backwoodsmen. As families established themselves along the Great Wagon Road in Maryland, Virginia, or North Carolina, the societies do not appear to be as cohesive as that of the Germans west of Philadelphia. The geographic isolation of these groups created this sense of insularity where people focused inwardly on their own business rather than realizing their similarities other insular communities. Those of the Yadkin Valley in North Carolina relate themselves to that colony as the people of the Shenandoah Valley do the same with Virginia. The governments of these colonies see these people as their citizens and their identity as Scots-Irish exists in their own surnames, but not as a cohesive group the way the Germans do.

The dichotomy of North Carolina and Pennsylvania during the period of backwoods settlement in the early to mid 18th century despite their geographic distance from one another. North Carolina land availability was similar to Pennsylvania in the early part of the 18th century. Due to poor soil in the Tidewater region of the colony, speculators from Virginia and South Carolina sold land cheaply in order for a quick return on their investments. Due to this, Scots-Irish settlers found North Carolina to be a similar “poor man’s paradise” comparable to Pennsylvania and one without the political tensions. As the soil in the Tidewater and Piedmont of North Carolina did not bode well for agriculture, the western regions of the colony, whereas rivers and valleys broke off from the Great American Valley and held good soil for subsistence farming. Though this geographic separation of western North Carolina led to physical separation from the
eastern regions as well as other colonies, the separation in identity, as well as a sense of
otherness, began to take shape in North Carolina much due to this same geographic and
cultural separation. The settlers of North Carolina appeared to be backward, uneducated,
lonely, and uncultured. These characteristics came from a trans-colonial view of
environmental determinism led them to conclude that the poor had earned their fate.
North Carolinians, even more so than Pennsylvanians, were characterized by these
stereotypes. Visitors and outside observers who traveled through the colony spoke ill of
the society and makeup of the colony. A South Carolina visitor to the colony in 1765,
Charles Woodmason, wrote: “The Manners of the North Carolinians in General, are Vile
and Corrupt --- The whole Country is a Stage of Debauchery Dissoluteness and
Corruption.”.31 In this sentiment, the backwoods of the American colonies housed a sense
of otherness when compared to the eastern sections. Though this sense of otherness
cannot necessarily count as Appalachian otherness, but considering it was from the
backwoods of North Carolina where many settlers of Appalachia began, this sense of
backwoods otherness contributes to both pushing these people west while also
establishing their identity is different from that of other regions.

By the middle of the 18th century, the colonial backwoods stretched from
Pennsylvania, through western Virginia, and down as far as the mountainous area of
western North Carolina. As settlers in these lands began their lives as husbands and small
artisans, the relationship with eastern authorities began to evolve as traders within the
colonies looked further west. Even though the French claimed the lands west of the

31 Charles Woodmason, “Account of North Carolina made in 1766” in The State Records of North Carolina,
Appalachian Mountains, along the Ohio River, and into the Appalachian plateau, French colonizers had little interaction with the region. The lands around the Ohio River, stretching as far north as Lake Erie and as far south as New Orleans along the Mississippi River Valley, all had French claims but local Native American tribes dominated the region and still held a certain level of autonomy. The two main tribes along the Ohio River, or *la Belle Rivière* as the French called it were the Delaware, who lived towards the source of the river in western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio and the Shawnee, who controlled the southern part of the river and lived north of the Ohio River in modern-day Ohio. Though these two tribes established themselves in these regions, their lineage in these areas did not precede the colonization of the region. The Iroquois held the previous claims over the large region of land until the Beaver Wars when the Shawnee and Delaware pushed out Iroquois influence in the late 17th century.

The lasting effect of the Beaver Wars was that the Six Nations saw the French, who had aided in the acquisition of the land by other tribes from the Iroquois, as enemies to the Iroquois people and lost much of their western territories to various tribes. The Shawnee became the dominant force in the Ohio River Valley, the Erie and Wyandot along the banks of Lake Erie, and the Delaware along central Ohio and western Pennsylvania.\(^3\) The Iroquois’ alliance with the British led to many political and economic deals via treaties that, more often than not, worsened tensions with western Native American tribes. This trend lasted well into the latter half of the 18th century and even

into the 19th century, repeatedly growing backcountry tensions where colonial or American backwoodsmen felt the effects of the Anglo-Iroquois allegiance.

Figure 4 Map of Iroquois lands before and after the Beaver Wars

In the beginning, to middle 18th century, the old axiom the enemy of an enemy is a friend rang true as British involvement in the colonies grew and expanded due to the growing threat of the French in the west. The long-time enemy of the French found an ally in the Six Nations of the Iroquois early in the colonizing process. As the British sought to trade along the Ohio, the alliance with the Iroquois along with the concern of western tribes spilled over into violence as attacks and raids similar to what Findley endured on the Ohio River became commonplace. Once claimed by the Iroquois, the Six Nations sold land in western Pennsylvania to James Logan, secretary to William Penn, although tribes such as the Delaware, Shawnee, and Conestoga lived there. These land deals resulted in two dramatic changes in colonial America. First, the Six Nations held a position of power and influence they had not held since before the Beaver Wars. The land deals forced tribes in western Pennsylvania and as far south as the Shenandoah Valley to

33 Map of the Iroquois claimed lands during the Beaver Wars.
move west into the trans-Allegheny regions of Ohio. The action of the displaced tribes to move west into Ohio was not what the Six Nations nor the British intended. The coalition of the British and the Six Nations thought the tribes would accept the new power shift and keep their lands rather than move west. The influx of the Delaware along with the past tensions of various wars between the British and the French as well as the Six Nations and other tribes made for a perfect storm of violence. With such tensions growing so rapidly, war between the French and British, along with their respective allies became imminent.

The British focus west was twofold, and each fold represented a different mentality and a different purpose. In Pennsylvania, the western focus remained on healthy trade with the Shawnee and Delaware of the Ohio River Valley and western Pennsylvania. With backing by many wealthy investors, mostly from Philadelphia, the Irish-born George Croghan soon became synonymous with Indian trade by 1750. Croghan developed relationships in the west and held a steady trade partnership that meant success for him and his investors.\textsuperscript{34} In Virginia, the focus west was not on trade, but on the speculation and future ability to sell land west of the Alleghenies. Several small trading firms the lands west as a source of cheap land that, when granted by the British government, could then be sold relatively cheap and make even more money for the already wealthy investors. Though many trading firms shared this idea, the most important was the Virginia-based Ohio Company. The reason this company stands out is due to the investors that formed the base of the company. Several well-known Virginians

\textsuperscript{34} “George Croghan to the Governor of Pennsylvania, December 16, 1750,” Pennsylvania Archives, Colonial Records Vol. V, 496-498. Here on out seen as P.C.R.
made up this company including Colony Council members, governors, wealthy merchants, and military figures, mostly from Northern Virginia made the foundation of the company. The goals of the company, as Alfred P. James historian of the company put, were “particularly American.” Of course, the Ohio Company wanted to explore west over and across the Appalachian Mountains, but the colonial system of land grants led to an insatiable desire for land speculation where land was available. By focusing on the west, the Ohio Company could join in on trade with Native Americans, but more importantly could also expand western settlements for white settlers, often putting them at odds with not only the French but also other English colonists from northern colonies such as Pennsylvania and New York.

As colonial merchants and elites played the game of markets and attempted to grow their status as a company as well as their own individual wealth, the backwoodsmen of the colonies had little to do with this exchange. Though trade with Native Americans meant roads, trading posts, and movement into western settlements en route to the Ohio River Valley, the backwoodsmen were unable to secure a substantial trade with Native Americans themselves. Whereas trade with the Native Americans did not mean much to the backwoodsmen, land speculation peaked interests as this would mean land in the west that could be bought cheap and expand their possibility for the ever so important chances for success and security. In 1749, the Ohio Company prepared to begin trading with Native Americans in the west. A young George Washington, acting as an investor, surveyed west of the Appalachians for the Ohio Company going as far as the Maryland

36 James, The Ohio Company, 3-4.
panhandle along the border of Pennsylvania. A famed frontiersmen Thomas Cresap ventured to the western lands to meet and discuss trades and relations with the Native Americans. The Ohio Company and the Pennsylvania traders began to clash as each competed over trade with the Native Americans. The Ohio Company and the Pennsylvania traders began to clash as each competed over trade with the Native Americans. Both colonies knew the mouth of the Ohio River was crucial to the success of trade. In 1744, the Iroquois sold their claimed lands in Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley, a portion of the Great Wagon Road, where many backwoodsmen settled on their own accord as the Virginia government was unable to stop them. However, Virginia felt that this treaty stretched clear to the Ohio River watershed, giving it control over the river and the lands surrounding it. The Virginia House of Burgesses then granted the Ohio Company three hundred miles at the Ohio River fork with the stipulation that families, all of the backwoodsmen, would settle there and allow for increased settlement west.

Thus far, the history of the backwoodsmen takes a latter thought to that of these elite colonial traders, but this is for a reason. Though part of the backwoods identity in popular memory is a sense of self-reliance and rugged determination, the real story is much different. Though early settlers in western Virginia acted on their own authority when settling along the Shenandoah, this was due to legal technicalities of Virginia not having obtained the land for the Iroquois along with the fact that the Blue Ridge Mountains separated the Valley from the Piedmont of the colony, making control of the region difficult. The story of the Ohio Company attempting to purchase land and obtain grants for settlement, targeting an audience of backwoodsmen, is one of the first displays

37 A Letter from the President of Virginia [Thomas Lee] to Governor Hamilton, P.C.R. Vol. 4, 422-424.
of backwoodsmen relying on eastern elites for land and their sense of security and success. If the myth of self-reliance and determined spirit were true, backwoodsmen could and perhaps would have settled on their own accord, acting as agents of spreading Euro-American society across the wilderness while also using their own agency to settle and secure themselves. However, the very real story is that many of these frontier families relied on eastern merchants and officials to obtain land legally. Many of the famous early frontier names such as Christopher Gist and Thomas Cresap were not independent hunters or noble frontiersmen, but rather employees of large eastern firms.\textsuperscript{40}

The increase in trade and the expansion of settlement in western lands benefitted families who needed land to live on and off of, but the real bounties of these endeavors went to rich investors in the east. However, the brunt of negative reaction to this expansion landed at the doorstep of the backwoods settlements.

One aspect of this increase in western trade that many in both Pennsylvania and Virginia overlooked was the influence of the French. While the two colonies competed over the trade with Native Americans, the French saw their economic alliances fading in favor of British trade. French officials began to pressure Native American allies to punish those who broke their allegiance to France in favor of the British. Meanwhile, the French began to become an evergrowing presence in the Ohio River Valley by constructing and occupying forts along the Ohio River and western Pennsylvania. The increase of French presence forced Pennsylvanians to back off their trade, however, the Virginians were not so easily bullied. Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia, also an acting investor in the Ohio

\textsuperscript{40} Alfred P. James, \textit{The Ohio Company: Its Inner History} (Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1959),
Company, felt that this increase was a French attempt to stifle legal Virginia expansion. Dinwiddie pleaded to the British government for guidance on how to react to French encroachment. The British government allowed Dinwiddie to demand the French leave their forts on the Ohio and allowed supplies and permission to construct British forts in the region. If the French refused to leave, Dinwiddie had permission to use force. However, the House of Burgesses halted Dinwiddie’s attempts due to political frustrations with him and fear he was acting out of the interests of the Ohio Company while using public funds. Instead, Dinwiddie sent the 21-year-old George Washington, anxious to prove himself and see the Ohio country, to deliver the demands for the French to leave their forts.

Washington, then just a colonial major, was far from capable of such a task. Washington did not speak French nor any variation of an indigenous language, held little formal education, lacked diplomatic skills, knew little of the region, and, perhaps worst of all, knew nothing about the diplomacy of Native Americans. However, with Christopher Gist as a guide, Washington had not only a scout but an interpreter to many of the Native tribes in the region. Washington surveyed the French fortifications and found them sturdy and well-supplied. He demanded the forces at Fort Machault and Fort Le Boeuf, both sitting along the Allegheny River north of Fort Duquesne. Both forts

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42 “Message of Governor Dinwiddie to the House of Burgesses, 1753,” ” from The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie, 39-41.
refused Dinwiddie’s demands to leave with both poise and confidence.\textsuperscript{45} Washington returned to Williamsburg, but both he and Governor Dinwiddie failed to see perhaps the two most important aspects of the failed trip, the reaction by the Native Americans to his presence and the terrain of the region. When Washington disembarked on his trip, he convinced Tanaghrisson, a Seneca Chief and friend of the British better known as the Half King, to travel along to act as a presence of Native American – British allegiance. The Half King agree and also brought along Guyasutha, a Mingo Chief, and two of his fellow tribesmen to follow.\textsuperscript{46} When Washington arrived with this small Native American entourage at Fort Le Boeuf, the regional commander Legardeur de St. Pierre, much wiser in conducting diplomacy with the Native Americans, noticed something very important that both Washington and Dinwiddie did not. The Shawnee nor the Delaware were present in Washington’s party, a sure sign that these two very important tribes were not allied with the British and would defend their lands from British encroachment.

By the time Washington returned, Dinwiddie obtained the permission to begin constructing forts in the claimed lands. The attempted construction of these forts was the tipping points to violence and began the French and Indian War in 1754. Due to geography alone, the French and Indian War was a frontier war and it was a war over land. The obvious obstacle of the Allegheny Mountain range that separated the British colonies from the Ohio River Valley served doubly as an issue for the British. First, the mountains were difficult if not impossible in areas to cross with a large force without drawing attention or attack by guerrilla tactics. Secondly, the Native American allies of

\textsuperscript{45} Letter from Mr. Legardeur de St. Pierre, a principal French Officer, ins Answer to the Governor’s Letter, December 15, 1753.

the French were perfectly capable of crossing the mountains without drawing notice and reaching the backcountry of Virginia and Pennsylvania. The French used both of these British weaknesses to their advantage. One of the first large-scale attempts to break into the Ohio River Valley was by General Braddock in his infamous march to Fort Duquesne, which met disaster due to the inability to quietly traverse large military forces across the mountains. What proved even more crucial were the actions of many of the Native American tribes in the backcountry of Pennsylvania and Virginia. In order to cause disruption and chaos in the colonies, the French employed Native American tribes, acting as willing participants, to venture into the colonial backcountry for the purpose of raiding and attacking settlers.

In fall of 1755, after allowing settlers to bring in their harvest, a British force of eighty men left Fredericksburg, Virginia to venture into the Ohio country under the command of Major Andrew Lewis. The force was ill-prepared and poorly disciplined from the start with a majority of the soldiers turning out drunk. The force headed west and continually dealt with the fear of Native American attack and desertion by the men. While spending a day gathering corn from nearby farms and hunting deer, one of the companies came upon a backcountry homestead. Colonel Charles Lewis describes the scene: “This evening, Capt. Spotswood and a soldier to (sic) the plantation of one Williams, where the houses were burnt by the savages. The body of a woman lay near one of the houses, her head being scalped, and also a small boy and young man.”

days after this discovery, the force set to the task of gathering corn yet again to find another massacre. Col. Lewis again wrote:

We saw the bodies of three different people, who were first massacred, then scalped, and afterwards thrown into the fire; these bodies were not yet quite consumed with the flesh on many parts of them. We saw the clothes of these people yet bloody; and the stakes or clubs, the instruments of their death, still bloody, and their brains sticking on them. The orchards were all down, the mills destroyed, and a waste of all manner of household goods.\textsuperscript{48}

Such violence was not uncommon nor taken lightly. In order to protect backcountry settlements, Washington advised that settlers in Virginia seek refuge at nearby forts in the Shenandoah Valley and even in the Greenbrier Valley in present-day West Virginia. These forts acted as jumping off points for British campaigns, and defense for the eastern colonies, but now would house the citizens of the backwoods.\textsuperscript{49} However, this was not practical for every person on the frontier as the construction of forts took time and resources and remained several miles apart. In order to maintain the assurance of safety, the colonial officials, under the suggestion of Washington, “compelled” the people to move into “townships” in order for them to be greater in number and more capable of protecting themselves and each other.\textsuperscript{50}

In these townships, numbers of backwoodsmen and their families would congregate and live together, herding animals together and working together to maintain enough food for everyone. These townships and the congregations of refugees that moved to forts brought many of the backwoodsmen physically together. Rather than destroying their self-reliance, insularity, and solitude, the backwoodsmen found that the

\textsuperscript{48} Lewis, “Journal Dec. 5\textsuperscript{th}, 1755.” \textit{Frontier Wars Papers}, L.D.M.C.
\textsuperscript{49} George Washington to Governor Robert Dinwiddie, October 11, 1755.
\textsuperscript{50} George Washington to Governor Robert Dinwiddie, April 7, 1756
traits were shared and, in certain cases, collectively beneficial when necessary. In a sense, the townships and the forts brought backwoodsmen together in a way they had not been before, finally making them realize of their common, shared characteristics. They found that such characteristics that they held were not impacted by others who shared similar traits and that they were better protected when threatened by outside forces when collected together. Col. Lewis even noted that the backwoodsmen appeared very well-prepared for a successful life in the backcountry. Col. Lewis said of the people at the massacre witnessed on December 5th that “These people were, in my opinion, very industrious, having the best corn I ever saw. and their plantations were well calculated for produce and every other convieny suitable to the station of a farmer.” When such industriousness and ability to succeed in the backcountry came together in these townships, a new sense of self-reliance through community formed a bond between these frontiersmen similar to what many experienced in Braddock’s campaign. Through the violence of French-endorsed Native American attacks, the frontier, through fear and necessity, fused together in Virginia and Pennsylvania as well as fusing the colonies as a whole during the French and Indian War.

Among frontier communities, this conflict forged new relationships that affected the identity of the backwoodsmen. The violence between Native Americans and frontier settlements led to an ever-growing disdain of one towards the other. Brutality occurred on both sides, as white frontiersmen sought to establish the western lands as theirs and Native Americans sought to end white encroachment through such tactics. The hopes of a

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51 Colonel Charles Lewis, *Journal*, Dec. 5th, 1755. L.D.M.C.
peaceful transfer of land from Native American to white shattered in exchange for a collective recognition that Native Americans were, when compared to frontiersmen, an other themselves. Backwoods identity remained starkly different compared to eastern identity, but the increase of conflict created a relationship that, yet again, bound frontier communities to their eastern counterparts. The frontier settlements did not have the ability to defend themselves from either the Native Americans or the French. Only through colonial authority, backed by the British government, could security from the French and their Native allies happen. However, the relationship was not one-sided, as the colonial authority relied on backwoods militias to help with their endeavors west. Just like the relationship between Gist and Washington in their original trek to demand the French leave their forts, the frontiersmen often acted as the source of backwoods ingenuity that could help them journey west and fight effectively. During peacetime, the colonial authority needed frontiersmen to settle west as they expanded. Now, the frontiersmen acted as a buffer and a tool to help expansion through conflict.

The French and Indian War created three, distinct section going from west to east, the Native Americans, the frontier people, and the eastern societies. In this situation, the Native Americans hold the extreme classification as another. The Native Americans, seen by whites of all statuses as a different, primitive, and inferior race, are extreme in that they are so vastly different, that their sense of otherness classifies them as nearly opposite to white colonists. Due to this classification, they act as another force to secure the foundation of white settlers together, regardless of their status or ethnic background, as being of European descent cast them into a higher standing than being Native American. In the frontier communities, the sense of other remains as they still hold the stigma as a
peculiar and different people, cut off from modern civilization but also a tool to expand settlement and source to obtain wealth via property purchasing, goods, and labor. These varying degrees of otherness come from an eastern-centric point of view. This is due to the fact that source material comes heavily from eastern elites and, seeing the frontier as an idea that stems from trans-continental colonization, the east acts as the center of the American empire before America even obtains independence. Despite the coming together of white identity in the colonies despite the otherness, tensions between the frontier and the east grew out of the French and Indian War as many felt that it was the fault of the eastern elites that the war happened in the first place. Despite the French and Indian War bringing frontier society and eastern society together more succinctly, it also created tension between these two groups.

Although violence on the frontier drew the frontiersmen together in a more physical sense out of necessity of strength in numbers, the actions of the British elite brought frontiersmen together to one state of mind. Washington and Dinwiddie met with skepticism by frontiersmen regardless of frontier violence. As Eastern authority ventured into the frontier to wage war, with them came the call for frontiersmen to act as militia, to provide the army with food and supplies, and to submit to the authority of eastern government. In Virginia, the issues between people primarily resulted in prejudice from social status as lower status and higher status joined together in these townships, both with predetermined mentalities towards the other.53

In Pennsylvania, the problem appeared even more complex as prejudice went beyond social status and revived old ethnic prejudices between Scots-Irish and Germans in the backcountry as well as Protestant and Quakers in the western regions of the colony. This put the local authorities of these townships in a desperate position that typically led to them bending to the will of their neighbors rather than to the desire of distant authority. Despite the gathering of individual frontiersmen, the unified identity as such did not take precedence over old prejudices. In a sense, what came from this was the same insular and independent nature of the frontiersmen but mixed with communal identities of ethnicity in Pennsylvania and social status in Virginia. This paragraph is better than some of the preceding but still could be much clearer.

The first few years of the French and Indian War proved to be the most challenging to the backcountry. With the Native Americans, specifically the Shawnee, so capable of crossing the Allegheny Mountains into Virginia and wreaking havoc on backcountry civilians, the British colonial government had to provide shelter for these settlements while also attempting to wage war, suffering defeat after defeat. Washington, coming to the forefront of the Virginia struggle during the French and Indian War after Braddock’s defeat, constantly struggled to have enough militia to protect settlements while also struggling to fight the war across the mountains. The impact this had on backwoodsmen played into the previous feelings towards distant government. The French and Indian War did not occur due to encroachment of frontier settlements, but by the desires of the eastern elite to open new markets, trade opportunities, and possible land

54 Ward, Breaking the Backcountry, 60.
55 Ward, Breaking the Backcountry, 60.
speculation. However, the eastern elite did not feel the brunt of violence and the
destruction of property as did those living along the frontier.

The inability to protect the frontier and the impressment of supplies by the
English soldiers fueled frontier frustration towards both the enemy to the west and the so-
called ally to the east. The tide of war shifted in 1758 when a new London government
approved financing of new military operations in the colonies under General John Forbes.
Forbes combined a force of many different groups of people: Scottish, Irish, American,
British, German, and even backwoodsmen from both Pennsylvania and Virginia. Forbes
also employed tactics better suited to the frontier than those employed by General
Braddock. By appealing towards tribal ties, Forbes undermined French relations with
certain tribes through familial channels much to his success.\textsuperscript{56} Forbes and his
subordinates also sought to cure the issue of desertion, a growing occurrence as the war
went on especially in the backcountry. By pardoning those who returned to fight and
vowing strict punishment for those that did not return, Forbes was able to increase his
numbers in preparation to venture into the Ohio region. Once more, a large force trudged
slowly through the frontier towards Fort Duquesne with infighting between Virginians
and Pennsylvanians over who the Ohio River Valley rightly belonged to in tow. Due to
the Forbes Indian diplomacy, the support of Native Americans to the French at Fort
Duquesne collapsed and the French abandoned the fort, turning the tide of the war
completely.\textsuperscript{57} By 1760, most of the fighting in North American ceased and, by 1763, the
French officially surrendered signing the Treaty of Paris, ending the war officially from a

\textsuperscript{57} Ward, \textit{Breaking the Backcountry}, 178-186.
European standpoint, which many felt would bring peace to the colonial backcountry and open the western lands for expansion.

![Figure 5 Map of changes in land claims after Treaty of Paris, 1763](image)

At the conclusion of the French and Indian War, the victors, both eastern and frontier looked west. The eastern authorities and elites saw a chance for expansion of territory for white settlers that would also bring new wealth. The people on the frontier saw lands that meant personal independence and a greater chance for freedom from the confines of the east. Though life on the frontier was challenging even in the colonial backwoods, the prospects of western settlement, more distant from the east enticed many frontier people. To say that backwoods people despised or felt necessarily like a different people from the east would be untrue. However, they did see themselves as tied to a society focused on individual growth, but only for individuals who were already
successful, while they did not concern themselves with increasing their status as they were happy with simpler life. One son of a Maryland frontiersman remembers, “The manners and customs of the people, among whom we resided, were exceedingly simple – no aspirations for wealth or preferment – contentment appeared to be the lot of all, and happiness dwelt in every breast amidst the abundance of home stores, acquired by honest industry.”

The early frontiersman also remembers the distance of courts, which led to the necessity for self-reliance on courts. In a sense, the frontiersmen did not wish to escape the existence of systems of law and order in search of anarchy, but rather the self-autonomy to create their own, egalitarian systems in their own communities. Another early frontiersman agrees:

I imagine I hear the reader saying this was a hard living and hard times. So they would have been to the present race of men, but those who lived at that time enjoyed life with a greater zest, and were merely more healthy and happy than the present race… Of course, our wants were few and exceedingly simple, and the products of the soil and hunting yielded a rich supply. Thus we lived within ourselves on our own industry, our only dependence being upon the favors of an overruling, bountiful Benefactor. We spun and wove our own fabrics for clothing, and had no tax, no master, no court, no justices, no lawyers, no constables, and no doctors, and, consequently, had no exorbitant fees to pay to professional gentlemen. The laws of kindness governed our social walks… When assembled all was attention and order, and no one was allowed to behave disorderly, as such conduct would have been punished, and the miscreant driven from decent society. Such was the high sense of honor and decorum…

Although these sources describe life in the frontier post-French and Indian War, they also describe the wishes and goals of frontiersmen as they looked west. Though the French and Indian War tied the frontiersmen to eastern authority and the ability to move west

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relied on the same, the frontiersmen desired to escape the bounds of eastern authority in search of their own self-reliance and autonomy, something only the west could provide. As the above quotes prove, the desire to move west for the backwoodsman was not a search for wealth nor to provide means of increasing social or economic status. In the mind of the backwoodsmen, the west meant a chance to be more distant from the authority that continued to impose on their own autonomy. In order to maintain their safety, success, and way of life, expansion west was their main goal. However, this goal could only be achieved via the same authorities they sought to escape.

The French, now defeated, no longer stood in the way of expansion, the colonial and British authority, on the other hand, did. Despite the French defeat, the Native Americans did not have the ability to return to their mother country as the French did, because they had been fighting for their homes all along. The Native Americans in the Ohio River Valley and west of the Appalachians were not willing to give up their lands without a fight. Both frontiersmen and the eastern authorities concerned themselves with Native Americans. Where one group saw a people standing in the way of their autonomy and independence, the other saw another means to create wealth through trade. However, neither group knew exactly how the Native Americans would react to the conclusion of the war with France. Between 1760 and 1763, the French and Indian war, although not concluded but not active, proved a period of transition for all involved. The French were still present but accepting the fact that they lost in North America, unsure how this would affect their colonization. Their Native American allies faced a similar conundrum as some sought to transition from French to British allegiance, other sought to find solace free of colonization, and some continuing the fight through these transitional years and
beyond. On the other side, the British Empire affirmed its dominance over North American colonization but still faced troubles ahead.
Chapter Two: “Bellys of Liquor, Mouths of Swearing”

Looking at the map of the British land claims after the end of the French and Indian War, the colonies look much different. The French ceded all colonial holdings. The English increased their land settlements through the Treaty of Paris, and by 1763, they claimed all the lands east of the Mississippi River with the exception of present-day Florida. Despite this starkly new map of the colonies, very little had changed by 1763. In Pennsylvania, traders, now with wartime debts, desired to travel west to trade with the Native Americans as a way to regain their losses in the war. The Ohio Company wished to venture west into the Ohio River Valley to survey and speculate in lands while trading with western tribes. The backwoods people felt that their ability to move west, further from the confines of eastern-controlled authority was now at hand as long as companies like that Ohio Company could receive the grants to purchase and sell lands. In short, the British colonists felt that, now that the war was over and the French were no longer a factor, it was now time to get what they were fighting for all along.

However, while the French and Indian War may have been officially over, the Native Americans who had allied themselves with the French were not so easy to give into peace. The feelings towards the French loss and the prospect of dealing with the English created mixed reactions among Native Americans. Similar to the backwoodsmen, Native Americans, specifically those who fought against the British, saw their own ability to procure safety and success at risk with the encroachment of the British. In order to establish that both safety and success remained attainable, the Native Americans of trans-Appalachia attempted to ensure their own safety and security differently. Some felt that
diplomatic and economic relations with the British were inevitable, and in order to ensure the well-being of their people, relations with the British might as well begin as the French were no longer present. Not all, however, shared this sentiment, as some Native Americans did not see the French and Indian War as concluded. Those who felt this way found their inspiration in the cries of one man. In the Great Lakes region, an Ottawa War Chief, Pontiac refused to see the problems they fought for as solved and, despite lacking French aid, vowed to continue the fight.

In Pontiac's mind, as well as the minds of those who supported him, the English were not capable of being diplomatic. The English, specifically English settlers represented the imminent destruction of Native American life and resistance to this threat was essential. Pontiac's beliefs came from logic and observation. In 1761, the Lenape Prophet named Neolin added a religious dimension. The Lenape Prophet claimed to have a vision that presented European influence as "evil" and the cause of Native suffering, including the decline of game, increased diseases, and the reliance on Europeans for clothing, food, and trade goods. Neolin affirmed that the only way for Native Americans to ensure their eternities in the afterlife was to rise up, in an allegiance of all tribes, and rid themselves of European presence and influence, thus returning to their old ways of life. Neolin's prophecy only strengthened and inspired Pontiac. Pontiac challenged all Natives to "drive off your lands those dogs clothed in red who will do you

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60 Neolin means "Enlightened" in the Lenape language.
nothing but harm." This decree held both religious and logical merit and built a coalition around Pontiac, the leader of the uprising. In 1762, while preparing attacks, Pontiac claimed:

It is important for us, my brothers, that we exterminate from our lands this nation which seeks only to destroy us. You see as well as I that we can no longer supply our needs, as we have done from our brothers, the French. The English sell us goods twice as dear as the French do, and their goods do not last... When I go see the English commander and say to him some of our comrades are dead, instead of bewailing their death, as our French brothers do, he laughs at me and at you. If I ask anything for our sick, he refuses with the reply that he has no use for us. From all this you can well see that they are seeking our ruin. Therefore, my brothers, we must all swear their destruction and wait no longer. Nothing prevents us; they are few in numbers, and we can accomplish it.

This speech by Pontiac and the prophecy by Neolin show that the goal of their uprising was simple and focused; the English in North America must face destruction before they can destroy the Native Americans.

Pontiac's opinion towards the British inspired but perhaps not as much as his actions against them. After a failed attempt to besiege Fort Detroit, news of his action spread to surrounding Native villages and inspired many to take action for themselves in allegiance to Pontiac. At one-point, Native Americans controlled nine of the eleven forts in the Old Northwest with the exception of Fort Detroit and Fort Pitt. Pontiac's Uprising split the Native American population in two with many allying with him and many opposing his actions, fearing the English

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response. As successful as Pontiac's Uprising was in inspiring anti-British sentiment and action, Pontiac failed to procure a large enough following to wage a full-scale war against the British as the French had in the French and Indian War. What it did inspire was random acts of violence against the English settlements all while avoiding attacks against French settlements along the Ohio River. As Pontiac focused on British official targets such as forts and military outposts, other Native Americans took Pontiac's message against the presence of the English to mean more than just targeting the military. In Western Pennsylvania, geographically separated from the brunt of Pontiac's actions, Native Americans loyal to Pontiac's cause waged violence against Pennsylvania backwoodsmen that mirrored the violence endured during the French and Indian War. The violence, perpetrated by small bands of Natives loyal to Pontiac against the wishes of many Native authorities, branched from a variety of tribes, namely the Lenape and the Susquehannock.

Pontiac’s Uprising signaled the dawn of a new period on the American colonial frontier. Though Native Americans such as Pontiac wished to continue the actions of violence against frontier settlements, the division in the ranks of trans-Allegheny Native American communities hints that the toll on the French and Indian War was as divisive to the Native Americans as it was to their English adversaries, if not more so. In the observations of George Croghan, an active and

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64 Historians refer to Pontiac's violence in a variety of ways. Some refer to it as a conspiracy, but others, including the author, find this term inappropriate. Others refer to it at Pontiac's Uprising, which also has the connotation of small-scale, reactionary violence. In this research, the term Pontiac's Uprising seems much more fitting given the level of relative success and reach it had.

65 Dixon, Never Come to Peace Again, 242-245.
influential Indian agent in the Ohio River Valley, as well as General Jeffery Amherst, a veteran of the French and Indian War in the Ohio region, the Native Americans that continued assaults past 1760 was seemingly small, roaming hunting parties rather than a formidable force.° Pontiac drew these small, unorganized bands into a more cohesive force. However, Pontiac failed to ever bring that force to a point where it could effectively reach their goals. One of the more lasting effects of Pontiac’s actions was what his uprising did to the frontier.

Pontiac’s Uprising sought to do much more than stopping the encroachment of settlers. The English were the scourge of their wellbeing. However, the majority of Englishmen in the American colonies did not feel the sting of these western raids. In their minds, small raiding parties were of no concern when compared to the former enemy the French. The backwoods settlements found themselves trapped in between the said culture clash. When looking east, the backwoods saw a distant and unconcerned east who saw the war was over and the pressing need for mending and replenishing wealth lost during the war as a top priority. This heightened the need for self-reliance in the backwoods. It is no surprise, after seeing the eastern authority and even the authority in the west as unable to keep the backwoods settlements safe during the French and Indian War and into Pontiac’s Uprising, that backwoods communities started to band together in an effort to protect themselves and each other from

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these Native American attacks. The formations of backwoods militias, many of whom were made up of veterans and scouts of the French and Indian War shows the heightened self-reliance, but also a new sense of community that did not exist as cohesively as before the war.

Backwoods settlers saw the issue as a clash of cultures rather than the isolated incidents of a separate population of the Native Americans. In the mind of the backwoodsmen, Native Americans were a cohesive group that stood in the way of western expansion as well as a threat to the safety of the western settlements. However, many sought trade and even to establish profitable relationships with Native Americans as they had done before the war, when it came to violence in the frontier, reactions by backwoodsmen often targeted innocent villages and even women and children.

The Pennsylvania backcountry felt the brunt of these attacks and many in the region believed that inaction by colonial officials exacerbated their plight. The most popular narrative of this tension is the Paxton Boys of west-central Pennsylvania who massacred a Susquehannock village at Conestoga after raids on frontier settlements grew to the point of inability to stand idly by. In his pamphlet, *The Narrative of Late Massacres*, Benjamin Franklin detailed the actions of the Paxton Boys:

On Wednesday, the 14th of December, 1763, Fifty-seven Men, from some of our Frontier Townships, who had projected the Destruction of this little Common-wealth, came, all well-mounted, and armed with Firelocks, Hangers and Hatchets, having travelled through the Country in the Night, to Conestogoe Manor. There they surrounded the small Village of Indian Huts, and just at Break of Day broke into them all at once. Only three Men, two Women, and a young Boy, were found at home, the rest being
out among the neighbouring White People, some to sell the Baskets, Brooms and Bowls they manufactured, and others on other Occasions. These poor defenceless Creatures were immediately fired upon, stabbed and hatcheted to Death! The good Shehaes, among the rest, cut to Pieces in his Bed. All of them were scalped, and otherwise horribly mangled. Then their Huts were set on Fire, and most of them burnt down. When the Troop, pleased with their own Conduct and Bravery, but enraged that any of the poor Indians had escaped the Massacre, rode off, and in small Parties, by different Roads, went home.67

This sort of attack became common in backwoods acts of violence. This nature of violence predates the French and Indian War, but, as outlined previously, violence in the frontier saw a drastic increase in brutality and commonality during the war. With the war only officially over but issues with the Native Americans still present, such brutal acts of violence continued as pressure to move west grew in both the settlers and the merchants alike.

Even though Pontiac’s Rebellion as well as the memory of violence during the French and Indian War was still present, the village of the Conestoga continued to have a friendly relationship with local colonial settlements. Upon the destruction of the village by the Paxton Boys, frontier settlements and government officials alike mourned for the massacred and vowed punishment for the perpetrators. Governor John Penn declared:

That on Wednesday, the Fourteenth Day of this Month, a Number of People, armed, and mounted on Horseback, unlawfully assembled together, and went to the Indian Town in the Conestogoe Manor, in Lancaster County, and without the least Reason or Provocation, in cool Blood, barbarously killed six of the Indians settled there, and burnt and destroyed all their Houses and Effects: And whereas so cruel and inhuman an Act, committed in the Heart of this Province on the said Indians, who have lived peaceably and inoffensively among us, during all our late

67 Benjamin Franklin, A Narrative of the Late Massacres, in Lancaster County, of a Number of Indians, Friends of this Province, By Persons Unknown. With some Observations on the same. (Yale University, 1764.) http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-11-02-0012.
Troubles, and for many Years before, and were justly considered as under the Protection of this Government and its Laws, calls loudly for the vigorous Exertion of the civil Authority, to detect the Offenders, and bring them to condign Punishment.68

However, the Paxton Boys ignored this warning and, after learning some families of the Conestoga town were not present during the destruction of the village and found them sheltered by Colonial officials at a workhouse in Lancaster. The Paxton Boys forced their way into the workhouse and massacred the remaining families with hatchets, in the same manner Franklin described above.69 Yet again, John Penn rebuked the Paxton Boys and called for their arrest. However, the Paxton boys did not see the situation in the same as the Pennsylvania officials. The action of the Paxton Boys was not simply anger and a bloodlust towards the Conestogas or even Native Americans in general. The issue was with the continuing dismissal of frontier settlements by the same colonial officials that now heralded attention towards them.70

The Paxton Boys rallied a meeting at a tavern to collect support for their petition. The Paxton Boys, centered on the Susquehannock region where Scots-Irish tended to settle in the early 18th century, lived physically disconnected from Philadelphia and therefore the colonial government. In a way, this particular group of Scots-Irish backwoodsmen exercised their own agency and self-reliance in their actions, albeit with cruel and radical action. The seemingly random act of violence suddenly turned into a 250-man march on Philadelphia with massacred

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69 Franklin, A Narrative of the Late Massacres.
bodies to demand action and colonial representation in the frontier counties. Franklin and a delegation met the march in Germantown. After promises of governmental consideration, made by Benjamin Franklin, the Paxton Boys dispersed back to Paxtang but remained an example of a frontier militia with an immense distrust towards their colonial government. In the historiography of colonial reaction to Pontiac and the violence he inspired, the Paxton Boys remain a dominant example. However, one lesser-known example reinforces the narrative of frontier grievance.

In July of 1764, a small raiding party of Lenape Indians from a village on the Muskingham River in the Ohio territory ventured into Scots-Irish settlements in Pennsylvania. They attacked the schoolhouse near present-day Greencastle, Pennsylvania in Franklin County. The band killed and scalped ten children along with the schoolmaster, Enoch Brown. When the party returned to their village, the elders and chiefs rebuked them for their actions and marked them cowards for targeting the children. Despite the village's displeasure of the raid, the Scots-Irish reaction was swift but far different from that of the Paxton Boys. Tensions on the Pennsylvania frontier still existed despite the promises of taking the plight of backwoodsmen into consideration. Due to, what was by 1764, nearly four years of raids and violence directed at settlements, the backwoodsmen saw the fault not in the Native Americans, but in the colonial, British government. Violence

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72 For more information on the Paxton Boys and their actions and influence see Jack Brubaker, *Massacre of the Conostogas: On the Trail of the Paxton Boys in Lancaster County* (Charleston: The History Press, 2010.)
73 Archibald Loudon, *A Selection of Some of the Most Interesting Outrages Committed by the Indians in Their Wars with the White People* (Carlisle: Press of Loudon, 1808), 283.
between Native Americans and backwoodsmen was an unpleasant fact due to the tensions leading up to and the violence during the French and Indian war. The fact that violence was continuing past the official end of the war made this fact even more lasting and present, but what was not tolerable to the backwoodsmen was the passiveness and, in this case, the utter carelessness of eastern, colonial elite specifically from the Pennsylvanian government and traders in Philadelphia.

After the French and Indian War, many English traders found themselves in deep debt due to the war, which had disrupted trade and led to the mercantile firms buying supplies while not selling to cover the cost. However, the positive aspect for such firms was the victory of the British and the subsequent opening of trade with western Native Americans. One such firm was the Philadelphia-based Baynton, Wharton & Morgan Company. Facing serious debt, the firm saw western Pennsylvania and the Ohio region as the chance to regain lost wealth. However, Pontiac's Rebellion was of far greater concern to the British crown than the wealth of such firms. With Pontiac's Rebellion in full swing by 1763, the British crown enacted the Proclamation of 1763 in an attempt to quell further tensions in the backwoods. The Proclamation established two important boundaries on the colonies. First, the proclamation established a western boundary at the Appalachian Mountains barring any settlement beyond and calling back settlements already established beyond. Secondly, it barred any trade with Native Americans without a proper license signed by a colonial official.74

The reaction to the Proclamation of 1763 reflected a variety of concerns for a variety of people. Different people in different lifestyles felt different effects from the Proclamation and all for different reasons. Those who already lived or wished to explore beyond the Appalachians felt stifled, only multiplied by many frontiersmen venturing into and seeing the Ohio region during the French and Indian War and wishing to venture into the area for exploration. The firms that wished to trade saw their opportunity to regain pre-war wealth and expand in the new markets the west offered fade away. However, one of these concerns was not as absolute as the other. The loophole of the signed licensure allowed firms to continue trade with British officials in the west. The British presence in the west remained a strictly military presence, but the opportunity to trade could still exist through these official channels with the procurement of the proper paperwork. Through this legal loophole, Baynton, Wharton & Morgan saw their chance to capitalize on the opportunity to trade. At this time, Indian Agent George Croghan saw a similar chance to possibly quell violence through trade with peaceful Native Americans. The commander of Fort Detroit, Colonel Henry Bouquet, who was also attempting to stop Pontiac's Rebellion, signed a license making goods deliverable to both Fort Pitt and Fort Detroit for the purpose of resupplying the forts while also establishing trade with local Native Americans. Using an old connection to George Croghan, Baynton, Wharton & Morgan became the firm of choice to trade in the west. Using a generous loan from another friend, Benjamin Franklin, Baynton, Wharton & Morgan began their supply trains west under the
protection of regular British Army. When the Native American raids, especially
the Enoch Brown Massacre occurred, many on the Pennsylvania frontier saw this
continuation of trade as a violation of the Proclamation of 1763 and a prime
time for the people in the west. Those who shared this sentiment towards the continuation of trade could not stand
idly by.75

The supply trains departing from Philadelphia and crossing the length of
Pennsylvania to Fort Pitt stopped along the series of forts, many constructed
during the French and Indian War. These forts acted as the pit stops for the supply
trains and would often be a site of trade, possibly paralegal trade. Angry with the
trade and inspired by the Enoch Brown Massacre, Scots-Irish frontiersmen in the
Pennsylvania backcountry formed militia bands, similar to the Paxton Boys, in an
ttempt to investigate these wagon trains. These militias typically formed around
communities. The insularity of these communities, stemming back to the need for
defense in the formation of townships in the French and Indian War, really shows
in these communities as geographic location created a familial bond with people
to protect one another.76 In the spring of 1765, a militia group stopped the train
bound for Fort Loudon, one of the stops on the venture west, and demanded to see

75 Baynton, Wharton, & Morgan to Benjamin Franklin, 30 May 1765, in Franklin Papers.
George Croghan, A Selection of George Croghan’s Letters and Journals Relating to Tours Into the Western Country –
November 16, 1750 – November, 1765 (Pennsylvania, 2007)
https://archive.org/details/selectionofgeorg00crogrich. Eleanor M. Webster, “Insurrection at Fort Loudon
in 1765: Rebellion or Preservation of Peace?” Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine 47, no. 2 (April,

76 William Trent to Joseph Shippen, Jr., March 13, 1765, Shippen Papers, Historical Society of
Pennsylvania, VI, 119.
the shipment's manifest. Two times the militia stopped the train, and twice the British captain refused to allow them to search. With the growing concern of frontier investigations by the backwoods militias, British captain ordered the ammunition to be stored in a nearby farm until it was safe to retrieve.

Figure 6 Map of the Conococheague Uprising of 1765.

However, the militia did not take the refusal well but lacked the desire to push the subject further despite their frustration. Rather than continue their demands, the militia warned the people of the Conococheague Valley, located close to Fort Loudon, of the train. The reason for contacted the frontier militia there was simple. Militia leader James Smith, a veteran of the French and Indian War and one of the few to have ventured west into Kentucky, was not predisposed to take
the refusal to search well. The frontier militia of the Conococheague shared Smith's attitude and knew that if words were of no use, action was the only discourse the British elite and their military cronies would understand.\textsuperscript{77}

The Black Boys saw the need for action and took the opportunity but fully understood the risks that came with it. In order to hide their identity, the Black Boys dressed in Native American attire, similar to their typical buckskins, and painted their faces black, hence their namesake. They intercepted the wagon train, demanded to inspect it, and when told they could not, they threatened the teamsters and soldiers and burned some of the goods, saving personal items of each driver. The British officer made for the nearest British fort, Fort Loudon, and described the affair. The commander of the fort, Lieutenant Grant, determined the act to be a form of rebellion and ordered a party to go look through the wreckage for any salvageable items and arrest any backwoodsmen encountered along the way. The detachment looked through the wreckage and arrested two frontiersmen nearby without any explanation or further investigation as to whether or not they took part in the burning of the goods. Upon arresting and searching the burned train, the British detachment found themselves suddenly surrounded by fifty armed backwoodsmen and ordered the release of the prisoners. The commander of the detachment refused and the backwoodsmen dispersed, allowing the detachment to return to Fort Loudon with prisoners.\textsuperscript{78} Within days, James Smith


\textsuperscript{78} Eleanor M. Webster, “Insurrection at Fort Loudon in 1765: Rebellion or Preservation of Peace?” \textit{Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine} 47, no. 2 (April, 1964): 125-139.
and his militia came to Fort Loudon and threatened to attack any British soldiers if they attempted to move the prisoners to Carlisle for trial. As Smith and his militia confronted Fort Loudon, another frontier militia searched a farm where they discovered and destroyed seven barrels of powder.\textsuperscript{79} The people of the colonial backwoods who threatened the soldiers were the standard Susquehannock regional settler. Typically of Scots-Irish descent, many of these individuals migrated to the area before the French and Indian War and either served officially as militiamen or as home guards during the war. When the British officers arrested members of the militia, the familial bonds created through frontier life meant further offense to the men who made up the militias causing them to react to protect their friends and neighbors.

As long as the backwoods prisoners remained captive at Fort Loudon, the backwoods militia, still under the command of James Smith and his brother, magistrate William Smith, began to attack the fort. The first act was to assault horses grazing in the fields nearby. This prompted Lt. Grant to send a small force in pursuit, which led to an exchange of gunfire between the two groups and led to one backwoodsman obtaining a small wound. Magistrate William Smith signed a warrant for the commander of the unit for wounding a civilian, a warrant that Grant did not accept when delivered.\textsuperscript{80} Due to Grant’s refusal to respect the warrant as well as release the prisoners, Smith captured Grant while out riding and tried to barter his release in exchange for weapons taken from backwoodsmen.

\textsuperscript{79} William Trent to Joseph Shippen, Jr., March 13, 1765, Shippen Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, VI, 119.

\textsuperscript{80} Warrant for the Arrest of Sergeant Leonard McGlashan, Pennsylvania Archives IV, 224.
as well as the prisoners. Grant refused and Smith threatened to take him to North Carolina as a prisoner. When Smith began moving Grant south, Grant agreed to the terms in May of 1765.\textsuperscript{81} Within a month, the legal trade between Native Americans and English traders continued and the Black Boys rebellion ended.

The significance of the Black Boys Rebellion lies in its purpose. The goals of the rebellion are not quite clear. The fact that the rebellion ended in 1765 when the ban on trade with Native Americans became legal again hints that the issue was in legality and backwoods concern with paralegal action by the eastern elite. However, there may be a deeper issue at hand. During the most tumultuous period at Fort Loudon, a pamphlet, seemingly written and signed by William Smith, made its way around the area of the Pennsylvania frontier. It read:

These are to give notice to all our Loyal Volunteers, to those that has not yet enlisted, you are to come to our Town and come to our Tavern and fill your Bellys with Liquor and your Mouth full of swearing and you will have your pass, but if not your back must be wipt and your mouth be gagged; you need not discouraged at our last disappointment, for our Justice has wrote to the Governor and everything clear on our side and we will have Grant the officer whip'd or Hang'd, and then we will have orders for the goods so we need not stop, what we have a mind and will do, for the Governor will pardon our crimes, and the Clergy will give us absolution and the country will stand by us, so we may do what we please for we have Law and Government in our hands and we have a large sum of money raised for our support, but we must take care that it will be spent in our Town, for our Justice gives us, and that have a mind to join us, free toleration for drinking, swearing, Sabbath breaking and any outrage which we have a mind to do, to let those strangers know their place — It was first Posses (Black's Town) and we now move it to Squire Smith's Town, and now I think I have a right to call it and will remain till our pleasure, and we call it Hell's Town in Cumberland County the 25th of May, 1765. Your Scripture says that the Devil is the Father of sins, but I assure you this is the plain truth what I say. God bless our brave and Loyal Volunteers and success to Hellstown. Warlike Stores or any Article not herein mentioned. Given under my Hand & Seal, 15 May, 1765,

\textsuperscript{81} “Deposition of Lieutenant Charles Grant,” Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, IV, 220-2.
William Smith.\textsuperscript{82} This advertisement alone gives an explicit description of the frontier mindset of the time. The advertisement displays the manner of character that appears to be wild as well as unrefined. The use of liquor was equally common in both rural and urban centers. However, the blatant acceptance and even promoting of swearing and Sabbath-breaking, as well as referring to their meeting place as “Hell’s Town,” displays a general disregard for social norms.

As interesting as this disregard for social norms was, it does not, however, fall solely between a rift between urban and rural life, but rather a separation in social and regional identity. This message shows an embracing of the similar concept of otherness seen in the opinions of people in the North Carolina backwoods before the French and Indian War. The backwoodsmen, still seen as backward, uncultured, uneducated, wild, and different from those in the east, embrace the dichotomy as a means of social rebellion within their own sphere. Compare these ideas of backwoodsmen characteristics to Shapiro’s analysis of otherness where northern authors write about the peculiarity of the mountains south, a similar analysis of otherness that is still present in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century. These small struggles are both evidence of and push a separation of identity where eastern authority and elites continue to profit at the expense of backwoods people, at least in the minds of the frontier population, when they should be more focused on the betterment of the western communities. Between the constant Native American attacks and the total disregard for frontier safety by mercantile

\textsuperscript{82} Lt. Col. Reid to Gen, Gage, 14 June 1765, in Colonial Records, IX, 270-272.
firms in the east, backwoodsmen’s desire to push west and resettle only grew from these tensions. The issue in the case of both the Paxton Boy’s Rebellion as well as the Black Boys’ Rebellion, however, was not an eastward facing rebellion. In other words, the concern in the minds of the frontiersmen was not their relation to the east, but rather to the west. Both groups sought stability and safety in the backwoods, an area and geography that forced colonial backwoodsmen to search for both by themselves with little to no reliance on the English officials of the east. The Paxton Boys sought security in the act of murdering the Conestoga village in a dual sense. The primary goal was not to massacre Native Americans, but rather attempt to draw the attention of the Pennsylvanian government to the frontier settlements, which actually succeeded.

At its very roots, the issue on the Pennsylvania frontier was a question of the validity and effectiveness of power. As previously stated, the Scots-Irish backwoodsmen distrusted official forms of power that they had known for over a century in the forms of the British government. When the Scots-Irish came to the colonies and settled in the backwoods, they lived distant from authority but still within it. This creates a certain relationship between the backwoodsmen and eastern elites where certain things were expected, the ever-important safety and success, but when eastern elites began to look to ways to profit, much at the expense of backwoods communities, the divide between the two groups grew. In a way, the desire to push west grew through these social conflicts as the further geographic distance between authorities meant a greater need and ability to be self-reliant.
The French and Indian War and Pontiac’s Rebellion shaped actions along the Pennsylvanian frontier. The need for stability, success, and safety, as the frontiersmen learned in the French and Indian War, was difficult to obtain and would have to happen without the help of colonial elites or government. However, securing stability and security was also impossible on the individual level as an individual did not have the ability to procure their own autonomy by themselves. In order to succeed on the frontier, the backwoodsmen had to rely on one another as they learned to do in the French and Indian War to ward off Native American raids. The other lesson was that, as far as the colonial government was concerned, the search for backwoods stability was not a pressing issue as long as there was a relative peace in the frontier. When issues, such as the French and Indian War and Pontiac’s Rebellion arose, the colonial governments played politics and looked at the larger picture while the frontiersmen stayed concerned about themselves and their neighbors. This all leads to a need for self-reliance in the backwoods beyond that of the individual. It was crucial that the frontiersmen, as a society and as a people, maintained a strong sense of self-reliance and the ability to be self-reliant. This self-reliant nature builds into a characteristic where outside factors that challenge or threaten their stability must meet with some manner of force and, as shown above, often became violent.

Pennsylvania was not the only colony where such a reaction boiled over into a violent reaction. The major difference between the Pennsylvanian violence and the violence in North Carolina was the issue that sparked the violence to start. Pontiac’s Rebellion did not spread as far south as North Carolina and issues with
Native Americans in North Carolina were minimal if existent at all. As the frontiersmen in Pennsylvania were fighting in their own way for stability, the North Carolinian backwoodsmen sought to fix a problem of their own. By the mid-1760s, a number of factors led to tension all over North Carolina, especially in the backwoods. Between the 1750s and the 1760s, North Carolina experienced a series of droughts that hurt agriculture throughout the colony, especially where. The droughts put an economic strain on many backwoodsmen who were already facing economic issues typically being very poor. A second reason was an influx of new settlers went into the backcountry as new colonists moved to the colony post-French and Indian War, which upset the balance in an already fragile and new society for many of those who settled there decades prior. However important these factors were to tensions in the Carolina backcountry, the main cause of anguish was the mass of corruption that developed in the colony. As England created new taxes on the colonies, public officials on many levels embezzled tax money. In the case of the backwoods, it was not the colonial government itself, but rather the local sheriffs and magistrates that were the primary problem. 

In these backwoods counties, local governments, made up of the courts and sheriffs, held dominion on the local level. With the rise of corruption and embezzlement on the colonial level, the corruption trickled down into these local governments. Sheriffs and court officials favored newcomers into the area who

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sought to bring markets and society that is more eastern into the backwoods communities. Doctors, merchants, and lawyers seeking to establish themselves in the backcountry, a land now ripe with opportunity. In order to allow these colonial newcomers in, courts and sheriffs marginalized the backwoodsmen in an attempt to exploit if not completely force their departure from their lands. Sheriffs and court officers would inflate taxes and, if paid, would skim off the top before sending the revenue to the colonial capital at New Bern. If the settler could not pay the increase, the payment changed to land seizure that sold cheap to friends or for a profit that would go into the pockets of local officials. The sales of seized land often brought more merchants and lawyers eager to make themselves wealthy, even though they often continued relatively simple or even crude lives when compared to other colonial elite. This created a divide that looks starkly different from the aforementioned Pennsylvanian uprisings.  

When historians write on the corruption of colonial North Carolina, many view it through the lens of class, seeing it at the wealthy using power and wealth to exploit the lower classes. Although this is certainly true, there is more than class at play in their decision to exploit the western people. As a traveler to the North Carolina backwoods commented seeing the justices of the peace dressed very crudely and another saw that the sheriffs appeared as “Gladiators… ready for

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84 Ekrich, 170-175.
85 Nancy Isenberg does this in her monograph White Trash. Ekrich does to a certain extent but does not seem to completely discuss it in terms of class, but more of a social history. Many articles on the subject use the class method of discussing the Regulator Wars.
As often mentioned in reference to North Carolina, neither of these travelers desired to go back. Even though the main goal of those using the system for their own purpose was exploitative, the emergence of merchants, doctors, and, in particular, lawyers and court officials added tensions that went beyond the realm of just class. The arrivals of these individuals meant the coming of something that, by now, the backwoodsmen distrusted. The influx of merchants upset the economic order of the backwoods with its reliance on self-sufficiency and cooperative barter, while the influx of lawyers meant a change to their individual and the collective ability for self-governance and control.

In order to maintain stability, security, and success, the backwoodsmen saw action as their only option. The establishment of vigilante backwoodsmen with the purpose of protesting corruption and greed on the part of colonial officials on both the local and colonial levels quickly evolved in the Regulator Movement, a greater movement to establish regulation of local government. The movement was relatively small the first few years with only small clashes. This began to change with the rule of Governor Tryon upon his arrival in 1765. Though quiet for the first few years, the increase in taxes destined to pay for his lavish Governor’s Mansion in New Bern rallied an increased zeal in the Regulator Movement. In spring of 1768, this small movement organized into what would become the Regulator Movement. Their purpose was simple:

to assemble ourselves for conference for regulating public grievances and abuses of power, in the following particulars, with others of a like nature

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that may occur: (1) We will pay no more taxes until we are satisfied that they are agreeable to law, and applied to the purposes therein mentioned, unless we cannot help it, or are forced. (2) We will pay no officer any more fees than the law allows, unless we are obliged to do it, and then to show our dislike and bear open testimony against it. (3) We will attend all our meetings of conferences as often as we conveniently can.... (4) We will contribute to collections for defraying the necessary expenses attending the work, according to our abilities. (5) In case of differences in judgment we will submit to the judgment of the majority of our body.  

The Regulator movement spread and grew along with the severity of the actions by their opposition. The refusal to pay legal taxes as well as the armed uprising in protest to colonial officials sparked official resistance on the part of the North Carolina government. When the Regulators sought to use the court system and peaceful political activism as a means to their end, they met with arrests of delegates and refusal to allow the Regulators a voice in the courts. These actions met with exceeding violence as Regulators stormed courtrooms and assaulted judges, quickly spreading panic into the ranks of the colonial elite. The Regulator Movement continued to be a dominant and violent force into the American Revolution, opposing the tyrannical rule of colonial elites along the way. As widespread as the corruption in North Carolina was the feelings towards the Regulators was not as unified by the backwoodsmen as one may think. Many opposed the violent practices of the Regulators and saw a different means of action to oppose or, in this case, escape the corrupt practices of the North Carolina elite leading to varying reactions.

With the violence and tensions in the backwoods of Pennsylvania and North Carolina, the complexity of backwoods identity starts to show. Less than a decade before, backwoodsmen fought alongside British regulars and colonial military bodies in an attempt to open the west for expansion, free of the danger of the French. With the ending of the war with French but the continuation of Native American hostilities, the British government saw the need to limit western expansion until the government could assess the situation and attempt to quell the Native American resistance through trade. However, many Native Americans saw through these attempts and remained determined, not just to keep British colonial expansion at bay, but to rid themselves of future problems by pushing back English settlement for good. While the British government cut off any path for westward settlement, merchants could still restart trade using their connections while backwoodsmen could not move west. All the while more eastern authorities in the forms of legal, governmental, and military bodies continued to encroach on the backwoodsmen themselves. Do these tensions and these actions further create a sense of otherness in backwoods societies? In a way, yes they do. When backwoodsmen take up arms against the British authorities or take matters into their own hands by slaughtering innocent Native Americans, the rebellious, untrustworthy, volatile, violent nature of backwoods society becomes increasingly noticeable to eastern elites. An example of this is Benjamin Franklin’s reaction to the Paxton Boys and the government of North Carolina’s reaction to the Regulators. However, the creation of social otherness not that simple. While the backwoodsmen act rebelliously and enforce such a stigma, they still recognize
themselves and remain recognized by the colonial authority as citizens of a British colony. The sense of otherness is enough to make them a different brand of citizen but not enough to make them a different people altogether. Regardless of their status, the question of western expansion remains present in the minds of many colonists, both elite and in the backwoods.

Land ownership further complicated the relationship between frontiersmen and eastern authorities. Due to the desires of eastern merchants to reopen the west for settlement and trade coupled with the actions of backwoodsmen, the Proclamation of 1763 became increasingly unpopular. In the late 1760s, two specific treaties would open the west for expansion. In the minds of the British government, two separate tribes had legitimate claims in the western lands. In the north of the colonies, the Iroquois Confederacy controlled the lands along the Ohio River Valley, south into present-day Kentucky, and western Pennsylvania. In the south, the Cherokee held the claims to the region of modern-day Tennessee, southern Kentucky, southern West Virginia, and the extreme western parts of Virginia and North Carolina. In order to legally open these lands, two separate treaties by two separate individuals would have to have tribal approval. In order to do this, the British crown stepped in by using the two Indian agents in the colonies.

In the northern parts of the colonies, Sir William Johnson held the title of Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the Northern District. Johnson arrived in the colonies to settle portions of New York with Irish Protestant families. In order to make his way in the colonies, Johnson began to grow relationships and trade with
local Native Americans, specifically those of the Iroquois Confederacy. Due to his status and relationship with these tribes, Johnson accepted his role as Superintendent during the French and Indian War. When awarded this position, Johnson hired an old friend and fellow Indian trader to assist him with the western tribes. That friend was George Croghan. Due to Johnson’s recognition of Iroquois claims in the west, Johnson worked with them to legally allow western settlement despite the tribes in the west not being Iroquois. During the 1768 meeting, the tribes present were the Six Nations of the Iroquois, the Mingo (a splinter group of western Iroquois and a conglomeration of other, smaller tribes, and a representative of the Delaware (who had split into several factions of various trust towards the British.) 89 This treaty ceded all Iroquois claims to the west as far west as the Tennessee River, near modern-day Paducah, Kentucky, making most of present-day Kentucky and all of present-day West Virginia open for settlement by settlers, mainly from Virginia and Pennsylvania. The main issue that arises from this treaty is who is missing from the deliberation of the document. Even though the Mingo and some Delaware supported the ratification of the Treaty, the primary tribe of the region, the Shawnee were not present at the meeting and would not agree to the terms. However, in the minds of Johnson, Croghan, and the merchants of Virginia and Pennsylvania, the matter of land claims in the west was settled. 90

In the south, the situation was similar. The southern district Superintendent of Indian Affairs was John Stuart, a Scotsman, merchant, and veteran of wars with the Cherokee. His past dealings with the tribe established a relationship with the Cherokee and they trusted him. Meeting in October of 1768, Stuart got the Cherokee to agree to cede their claims in the region beyond the Appalachian Mountains in present-day Tennessee, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Georgia with the understanding that no more white expansion would take place beyond the set boundary lines. The Cherokee agreed and signed the Treaty of Hard Labour in October 1768, just a few months after the Treaty of Fort Stanwix.91

With these two treaties ratified, settlement in the west opened. However, in order for backwoodsmen to actually procure land, they would have to go through the means of purchasing it from land companies in the east. The ability for these companies to have land to sell came from grants issued by some form of authority, either the British or colonial governments as these actions were to extend colonies or create new colonies loyal to the British government, yet again binding the backwoodsmen to both eastern, distant governmental authority and elitist mercantilist firms.

The 1760s proved to be an important decade for the backwoodsmen and the evolution of their identity. The desire to push west grew out of the success of the French and Indian War, but with the Native Americans still fighting, the

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British government had to step in to protect their citizens while they attempted to quell the situation via military enforcement and trade. This created issues in Pennsylvania especially where backwoodsmen displayed their displeasure by slaughtering innocent Native Americans or attempting to halt trade via violent uprising. In North Carolina, the introduction of eastern bodies of government controlled by elitists and government agents caused similar tensions. The decision by the backwoodsmen to show their disdain for government and mercantilist action through violence separates them from eastern authority. However, this separation is only social as the backwoodsmen still proclaim their loyalty and still remain citizens. What does come from these actions is the continued desire to venture west in search of safety, security, and autonomy where self-governance can exist without the encroachment of elites attempting to gain more wealth and status. This can only happen through these elitist, leaving the backwoodsmen in a peculiar conundrum of wishing to venture west and obtain autonomy via geographic distance, but can happen via the same rich elites they wish to leave behind. With the Treaties of Hard Labor and Fort Stanwix leaving the west open for obtaining land grants, movement into the west finally starts to take shape but also brings about new problems that continue to shape backwoods identity into the region of Appalachia.
Chapter Three: The Dark and Bloody Ground

After the Treaties of Fort Stanwix and Hard Labour, the fixation on western settlement began to take shape. In a sense, these two treaties allowed for the first real, mass expansion of America across the Appalachians. Historians such as Frederick Jackson Turner recognized the venture west into Appalachia as the beginning of the trans-continental frontier experience, creating sections that, in turn, affected the way American identity and regional identity formed. This is also the period where the popular memory of the frontier began to form. As romantic as it is to think of free, independent, noble frontiersmen traversing a wild, unknown land, this picture of the frontier experience in Appalachia is far from fact. The romanticized version of the frontier starts in this period, but once delving into the real history of the establishment of settlements in Appalachia, a drastically different and less romantic picture begins to form. The question is how true is the romantic interpretation of the trans-Appalachian past?

In order to answer this question, the best place to start is the epitome of trans-Appalachian frontier myths: Daniel Boone. Though Boone’s story began during the French and Indian War, Boone’s primary place in history is mostly due to his exploits across the Allegheny Mountains. Boone’s background set him up to be the model frontiersmen. Born in Berks County, Pennsylvania, west of Philadelphia, Boone has the background of being born in continental America. Being born in the colonies, although relatively common amongst frontiersmen, gave legitimacy to the character of the frontiersmen as quintessentially American. Boone was also of English descent, making him somewhat of an oddity, as many frontiersmen in the Appalachian region were Scots-
Irish, Irish, Scottish, or, to a lesser extent, German. However, Boone does have the defining characteristic of a Quaker upbringing. Due to his sibling’s choices of “worldling” spouses, the Boone family found themselves excommunicated from the Quakers and forced to relocate.92 Like many backwoodsmen of the colonies, traveling down the Great Wagon Road became the sensible route to North Carolina and, like Pennsylvania, it provided the welcoming arms of backwoods settlement at affordable rates. It was here where Boone and many other backwoodsmen of North Carolina joined the ill-fated expedition of Braddock. After returning to the Yadkin Valley from the disastrous venture, Boone and his fellow backwoodsmen expected similar results to their Pennsylvanian and Virginian counterparts. The expectation of new lands in the west opening for settlement meant further ability for the ever-important safety and security the backwoodsmen seemed to chase constantly. The Proclamation of 1763 put these desires to explore, survey, and settle west of the Alleghenies to a halt.93

When the Wars of Regulation came to North Carolina, Boone and many in the Yadkin Valley did not partake in the violence. Due to a distaste for political strife, Boone saw it best to leave rather than become involved in such a struggle against political power, something that would later become unavoidable. In a sense, Boone sought flight over fight, not because he enjoyed or felt complacency with encroaching outside elites, but because the knowledge of the existence of Kentucky seemed far more promising.94

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92 The term “worldling” is the Quaker term for someone outside the Quaker faith. A Quaker marrying someone outside of the Society of Friends was severely frowned upon. When two of Boone’s siblings chose to do so, the family was excommunicated and forced to relocate.
93 Lyman C Draper, Notes on Daniel Boone, Draper Papers, 2B, James Madison University; Robert Morgan, Boone: A Biography (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2008), 1-118.
94 Morgan, Boone: A Biography, 89. In this work, Kentucky does not mean the modern borders of the state of Kentucky. The region of Kentucky existed as all lands south of the Ohio River, west of the Allegheny Mountains, east of the Mississippi River, and north of the Alleghany Mountains where the shift west.
This notion of Boone as the hopeful eye west rather than the rebellious voice in the east is the foundation of the Boone myth. Extrapolated from Turnerian frontier characteristics such as individualism and a desire for personal autonomy and freedom, Boone’s decision to wish for settlement beyond the mountains and away from the struggles of eastern hierarchies and power towards autonomous existence and away from violent struggle for autonomy captures the frontier ideas of Turner. This alone does not make Boone the legend he is in American memory.

Where Boone gains his reputation as a romanticized frontiersman comes in 1769, when he and a company of friends, Finley included, left the Yadkin Valley on an extended hunt. These long hunts become popular once the frontier opened. It allowed backwoodsmen such as Boone to explore, visit, and hunt in the western lands while also surveying it for possible settlement.95 What came from this early exploration was the creation of the long hunter myth. Named after their hunts that lasted between six months to a year, long hunters passed through the Allegheny mountains to explore the lands in eastern Tennessee and, later, Kentucky. On one of these long hunts, Boone found the Cumberland Gap, the Cherokee route into the Kentucky hunting lands. Long hunts consisted of various numbers of male backwoodsmen, sometimes as many forty or more in a party, and were “equipped with rifles, traps, dogs, blankets, and dressed in hunting shirt, leggins and mocassins.”96 When it comes to primary source documentation of the long hunts, little exists; thus, longhunters and their escapades in the trans-Appalachian

95 Daniel Boone, “The Adventures of Col. Daniel Boon, one of the first Settlers, comprehending every important Occurrence in the Political History of the Province” from The Discovery and Settlement of Kentucke by John Filson (Wilmington: James Adams, 1784), 51.
frontier take up little space in the historiography of the region and time. Despite this lack of credible sources, the long hunters continue to dominate the myth of the American frontier. As the above quote displays, the aesthetic of the long hunters reflects common imagery of what frontiersmen appeared to be. The buckskin-clad adventurers using experience and primitive wit to traverse mountain ranges, ford rivers, hunt big game, and have diplomacy with local Native Americans. However, the real story of the longhunters casts a different image.

One of the more detailed accounts of a long hunt comes from the pen of Boone himself, describing in detail the aforementioned hunt with Finley and a small number of companions. In the summer of 1769, the group departed for Tennessee in search of game and to explore the land. Boone explained that they found ample hunting ground with “beasts of all sorts” and the “buffaloes were more frequent than I have seen cattle in the settlements.” This portion of Boone’s tale matches the mythos of the trans-Appalachian frontiersman where these romantic heroes found a bountiful source of good hunting ground far from a “civilized” society. However, Boone himself debunked this myth. Boone told of the weather being horrid, and his party forced to find shelter from the elements of the rainy seasons. By December 22 of 1769, Boone’s long hunt took a turn for the worse.

On this day, Boone and a fellow hunter, John Stewart, found themselves captured by an unnamed Native American hunting party. The party took Boone and Stewart

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98 Here, civilized means the then common idea of being European as compared to the Native Americans who were seen as primitive. Historians now know that Native Americans did in fact have civilized society, but this is meant to display the mentality of Euro-American longhunters.
hostage and kept them until the pair made their escape during the night. Traveling back to
the camp, the hunters found it ransacked and destroyed. Boone’s brother, Squire, later
found them after arriving across the mountains on a separate hunt that departed from
North Carolina. Though Boone and Stewart made a harrowing escape, some days later
Stewart yet again felt the harshness of the frontier. Boone says:

Soon after this, my companion in captivity, John Stewart, was killed by
Savages, and the man that came with my brother returned home by
himself. We were then in a dangerous, helpless situation, exposed daily to
perils and death amongst savages, wild beasts, not a white man in this
country but ourselves.100

As harsh as the frontier was, and the above statement confirms that it was harsh and
violent, the real myth of the frontier experience being noble, exhilarating, and liberating
comes from such passages. Boone continues:

Thus situated, many hundred miles from our families in the howling
wilderness, I believe few would have equally enjoyed the happiness we
experienced. I often observed to my brother, You see how little nature
requires to be satisfied. Felicity, the companion of content, is rather found
in our own breasts than in the enjoyment of external things; And I firmly
believe it requires but a little philosophy to make a man happy in
whatsoever state he is. This consists in a full resignation to the will of
Providence; and a resigned soul finds pleasure in a path strewn with
briars and thorns.101

As quickly as Boone outlines the perils of frontier explorations and long hunts, he just as
quickly outlines the extreme feeling of freedom and happiness he feels while hunting the
newly opened lands. This is the Boone known to the popular memory of the frontier.
However, does Boone, with his mix of rugged ability to survive mixed with his
romanticized view of individual freedom in the wilderness actually epitomize the frontier

experience? The simple answer is no. As Boone says, “few would have equally enjoyed the happiness we experienced.” Boone recognizes he is an oddity in the frontier, a person who actually enjoys and finds solace in the endless woods. When compared to the experiences of those in the colonial frontier during the French and Indian War and in the subsequent struggles of frontier Pennsylvania and North Carolina, the mentality Boone has towards his experience is unique to him. In this, Boone recognizes himself to be an oddity and that his romanticized vision of the American frontier applies solely to himself.

One aspect of Boone’s story that is very real is his discussion of Native Americans. It warrants a discussion of Native American society at the time to really understand the complexity of the Native American side of post-treaty Appalachia. As outlined in the previous chapter, the trans-Appalachian frontier is split into distinct regions, each capable of being studied out of context with the other. In the South, the Cherokee dominated the focus of American-Native relations when it came to the settlement of Kentucky. Due to political agreements with tribes north of Kentucky, the Cherokee used the Cumberland Gap to hunt in Kentucky, but not to the extent of northern tribes. The Iroquois ceded their occupation in past wars with the new tribes that called the lands along the Ohio River Valley home. Of these, four distinct tribes stand out. The first, the Wyandot, occupied the northernmost portions of modern-day Ohio along the Great Lakes. During the French and Indian War, they allied with the French and some joined in Pontiac’s Rebellion. Despite some interest in defying British power, others enjoyed the

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102 Boone, “The Adventures of Col. Daniel Boon, one of the first Settlers, comprehending every important Occurrence in the Political History of the Province”, 53.
prosperity of British trade.\textsuperscript{103} The second tribe that held sway in the Ohio territory was the Delaware.\textsuperscript{104} The Delaware encompassed eastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania. The tribe enjoyed a general peace with white settlers in the backwoods of Pennsylvania, but not without tensions. Some Delaware joined with Pontiac, attacked white settlements during, and after the French and Indian War but by 1770, generally enjoyed a relatively good relationship with some white settlers and with British traders as well.\textsuperscript{105} The Mingo lived in modern-day West Virginia and into portions of Eastern Ohio. The Mingo also enjoyed peace with British authorities and traders. The Mingo were formally a part of the Iroquois and joined with a number of other mismatched, smaller tribes to make up the large Mingo tribe.\textsuperscript{106} As important as the groups were to the socio-political society of Native American tribes in the Ohio River Valley north of Kentucky, none held more standing than the Shawnee did.

The Shawnee originally pushed the Iroquois out of the Ohio River Valley and settled there themselves after pushing the then five nations further east in the latter half of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century. The Shawnee, as historian Douglas Hurt put it, “personified the Native Americans on the Ohio frontier and exemplified their aggressiveness and bravery as well as their reserve and reasonableness.”\textsuperscript{107} With leaders such as Cornstalk, Blue Jacket, and Puksinwah, father of the would-be famed leader of the Shawnee Tecumseh, the Shawnee held a place of high regard and dominance over the regions they called home. The

\textsuperscript{104} The Delaware tribe is often also referred to as the Lenape or Line Lenape. In this, the name Delaware will be used as it is the more commonly used name.
\textsuperscript{105} Hurt, \textit{The Ohio Frontier}, 16-20.
\textsuperscript{106} Hurt, \textit{The Ohio Frontier}, 20.
\textsuperscript{107} Hurt, \textit{The Ohio Frontier}, 10.
Shawnee shared their hunting lands in Kentucky with the Cherokee in the south and actively refused to settle there for fear of upsetting the delicate ecosystem of Kentucky. The Shawnee consisted of five divisions within the tribe, each serving a certain purpose in the politics, religion, and military matters as a whole. However, each group acted with a certain level of autonomy and self-governance when it came to specific affairs. Each sect of the tribe held its own military organization with a singular war chief in a trickling down the hierarchy of power down to individual hunting parties. However, the war chiefs did not hold any official power over the internal politics of the camp. These decisions fell to the responsibility of elders and tribal meetings. The Shawnee allowed women to be war chiefs, fight, and hold positions as peace chiefs, but could not be involved in the council or elder meetings. Religious and ceremonial matters, the control of the production of crops, the sentencing of captives, and domestic roles for women confined women’s roles in the Shawnee, but women still held sway and could alter the decisions of war chiefs. The Shawnee would become the most powerful and present problem for the frontiersmen moving into the area.

The decision by the Shawnee and other tribes that lived near Kentucky to keep it unoccupied did so, not out of a sense of duty to maintain the environment or the ecology of Kentucky, but rather to enjoy political peace with other tribes that all shared Kentucky for the purpose of hunting and gathering. During the 18th century, the plains and hills of Kentucky were full with large herds of big game, grazing and seeking shelter in the dense woods. Buffalo, elk, and whitetail deer, all-important prizes for hunters, existed in great numbers. Along with this larger game were varieties of smaller animals including beaver,

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raccoon, foxes, squirrels, polecats, possums, and various other small animals that provided small amounts of meat for the hunter. Predators such as bear, wolves, mountain lions (also called panthers by some), and wild cats all roamed the woods and mountain areas. Along with the wide variety came large numbers of each of the animal. Of course, records of the numbers of animals do not exist, but the reasoning behind the land being free of Native American occupation outside of hunting parties explains a very important aspect of the trans-Allegheny region. The concern of settlers in the region, especially in 1784, was the Native American presence in the region and the decades of violence between them and previous white settlers. Native Americans, specifically the Shawnee, were an ever-present force in the Appalachian frontier in 1784 and, due to their history in the region, there is a good reason for this concern.

One of the more important decisions made by the Shawnee as a whole was to refuse occupation of Kentucky. The Native Americans who lived around Kentucky knew of the consequences of settling in the region. Adding human settlement to Kentucky could severely upset the balance of the ecosystem and risk the bountiful varieties and numbers of game, which held great importance to the surrounding tribes. In this sense, the acts of Native Americans towards the longhunters such as stealing supplies, pelts and capturing or killing them was not solely a form of bloodlust or hatred towards whites. The actions of stealing goods and, at times, violently opposing white encroachment carried multiple functions. It was a way to obtain supplies and goods from whites, a way to protest and attempt to oppose encroachment, while also, to a lesser and more arguable extent, punish what they saw as poaching from the neutral hunting grounds. However,

Boone and others outlined the actions taken by Native Americans to be unwarranted and unethical, the Native Americans saw the longhunters as poaching on their hunting lands and taking far more than was necessary, upsetting the delicate balance of this land. However, where Native Americans saw a necessity to maintain the environment, white British colonists saw an opportunity for settlement in an area with distant Native American neighbors and plenty of resources and land to create a sustainable, successful life beyond the scope of eastern authority and land speculation. However, this idea also contains an element of the myth that relates to the popularity of longhunters being the primary actors of expansion into the trans-Appalachian frontier. A majority of early white settlement and exploration did not come from the long hunters as the small groups of individuals simply surveyed and explored new lands while scoping for possible locations of settlement. However, these groups lacked the ability, both practically and economically, to settle. While longhunters explored the southern portions of the land west of the Appalachian Mountains, more influential and important exploration came from a more practical and accessible route north of Kentucky; the Ohio River. The Ohio River not only adds a greater breadth of the Appalachian frontier, but also was the primary means of venturing into the frontier, not Boone’s Cumberland Gap route.

With Fort Pitt sitting at the confluence of the rivers that formed the Ohio, the river became a far more practical way to venture into Kentucky than to traverse the Allegheny Mountains. The exception to this was, of course, those in North Carolina where they were too far south to venture that far north to use the river and traversing the mountains made more sense. However, when it came to introducing white settlers into Kentucky, it was the Ohio River, not the routes of longhunters that delivered them to Kentucky. Where the
longhunters become the mythical idea of settlement, the Ohio River, historically speaking, provided the route for most settlers into Appalachia. As simple as using the Ohio River as a means to travel to Kentucky, there still existed a problem for those who wished to go. Unlike the longhunters who could carry all necessities with them, means of transportation on the Ohio River was expensive and supplies to make the journey were equally a monetary issue. Besides this, the people venturing down the Ohio River to survey land for settlement and establish trade were no private individuals, but rather representatives of powerful, successful mercantile firms, most notably the Ohio Company.

Again, the history of the colonial backwoodsmen intertwines with the large trade firms of the urban centers. Although the earlier narrative of the Pennsylvanian Black Boys seemingly obtaining some degree of success over the extralegal trading of the Baynton, Wharton, & Morgan Company, the will of rich English urbanites prevailed past the small roadblock of the frontier uprising. The end of the Proclamation of 1763 meant that these large firms and their investors could finally look west to new lands for speculation. In Pennsylvania, Benjamin Franklin and the Baynton, Wharton, & Morgan Company came together to create the Grand Ohio Company. The Grand Ohio Company became Pennsylvania’s answer to the Ohio Company of Virginia. The Mississippi Company also became interested in the lands west of the Allegheny Mountains, but, unlike common conceptions of the frontier, the mad rush for land did not exist. Instead of this chaotic land grabbing, each company needed to obtain a grant to the land and each had a reasonable interest in the land. In Virginia, the colonial gentry involved in the Ohio Company shared the desire to invest in the west with the veterans of the French and
Indian War, who, after a decade, finally saw the potential to get the lands they fought for in the war. The Pennsylvanian Grand Ohio Company made offers to buy lands in the Ohio and Kentucky territories from the Royal Government and establish new colonies under English Royal jurisdiction. The Pennsylvanian Grand Ohio Company and the Virginia Ohio Company now sat at odds with each other as each attempted to obtain land from Royal Grants.\(^\text{110}\) The Ohio Company of Virginia, under the direction of George Mercer, made the plea that seniority in the Ohio River Valley justified the Ohio Company’s claim for a grant.

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\text{encouraged to hope the Ohio company, who were the very first adventurers, and have expanded, so large a sum of money, upwards of 14 years since, on a settlement begun under the sanction of government, will not be prevented, from prosecuting their design, while others of your majesty’s subjects, who have lately only formed their scheme, enjoy the benefit of the [Ohio] company’s labour, and discoveries.}^{\text{111}}
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Despite this desperate plea, Mercer worried his political past would endanger his plea for the Ohio Company. Mercer opposed the Stamp Act and his opinion against the act endangered his chances of obtaining the grant from the crown for the Ohio Company in favor of the Grand Ohio Company, who did not have such political dissenters in positions of great influence. In a bold move, Mercer, without the approval of other investors, merged the Ohio Company’s interests with the Grand Ohio Company and created the Walpole Company.\(^\text{112}\) As per the Ohio Company’s “Articles of Agreement and Copartnership,” members of the Ohio Company, once obtaining a smaller portion of the


\(^{\text{112}}\) Mulkearn, George Mercer Papers, xvi.
land from the merger into Walpole, received their due land claim. Mercer also took this opportunity to buy out another member of the company, Arthur Dobbs, and was thus entitled to two land quotas. The Ohio Company as a whole received one thirty-sixth of the 2.5 million acres in the land grant, roughly worth just under 70,000 acres, of which Mercer was now due two shares, making him the largest stockholder. Despite Mercer’s clever meandering of company lines, investors in both companies opposed the merger and Mercer’s attempts to make himself the largest stockholder, splitting Virginian and Pennsylvanian interests. When the crown granted the land rights to the Walpole Company, the King inserted himself into this split and furthered problems between English governmental rule and American economic interests. By the late 1760s, the economic overreach of the King contributed to the growing sentiment of anti-English rule. Considering who was involved in these companies, it is no small wonder that many of the names are recognizable, not by their association with mercantilist land speculation, but rather the coming Revolution where many fought for independence.

While large mercantile firms fought over massive land grants, settlers did continue to venture and survey west, setting up small but perhaps extralegal settlements along the Ohio River. The dichotomy between large, elite companies such as the Walpole, Grand Ohio, or Ohio Company and the small-scale settlement by some backwoods communities existed before the ventures in the trans-Appalachian frontier and after. The habit of eastern authority inserting themselves into the lives of frontiersmen existed while Scots-Irish immigrants settled in North Carolina. As mentioned in chapter

113 Articles of Agreement and Copartnership for the Ohio Company for the Space of Twenty Years, May 23, 1751 (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society.)
114 Mulkearn, George Mercer Papers, xvi.
one, it was rich Virginians who owned land in the swampy lands of North Carolina and sold it to poor, Scots-Irish immigrants for an inflated price. As outlined by Stephen Aron in his monograph, *How the West Was Lost*, land speculation would force Daniel Boone and early settlers out of Kentucky and further west as landed elites with powerful connections used legal jargon and court cases to negate squatters and land claims seen as illegitimate for a number of reasons.\(^{115}\) Though large-scale immigration to the frontier could not happen without the establishment of land ownership, which could only happen through the large-scale companies, small-scale settlement still took place along the Ohio River, not yet realizing the risks of losing illegitimate land claims later, mostly during the period after the American Revolution and the road to statehood beyond the Appalachians.

This is where the tangent of the large mercantile firms crosses with the discussion of colonial backwoods identity in relation to Appalachian identity. As outlined throughout the discussion thus far, the need for safety and security of poor, white backwoodsmen meant a certain degree of autonomy and a desire to be self-reliant. However, the ability to be self-reliant in a society where land ownership was a primary tenet, favors those who obtain grants to land by government bodies, which in turn meant a necessary level of preexisting status and wealth. When the English companies responsible for colonizing the Atlantic coasts began the process of settling, it was not rich, landed gentry that made the journey and survived the elements, but poor, lower class individuals with little to nothing left to lose. As was the case with the trans-Appalachian frontier, for it was not the elites of the Walpole and Ohio Companies that would venture across the Allegheny Mountains and settle, but the poor, lower class backwoodsmen in

search of security, success, and autonomy. In other words, the self-reliance of Appalachian identity in the frontier period is but a myth and an unachievable dream. The only way colonial backwoodsmen could obtain their autonomy was to settle in the frontiers, geographically distant from authority. In order to do this, however, colonial backwoodsmen relied on rich elites and governmental procedures of land ownership and property rights to obtain said property for themselves. This negates the idea of self-reliance, as colonial backwoodsmen relied on outside authority and capitalist entities in order to survive.

Small settlements and trading posts began to pop up along the Ohio River in the early 1770s. The trade posts started under the advisement of mercantilist trade firms and often worked and maintained by frontiersmen. These settlements were not random acts of agency by frontiersmen, but actually advised by colonial governments and military, mostly from Fort Pitt and the Virginia Governor Lord Dunmore. As these settlements grew in number under the noses of the Native American tribes and as settlers moved into the Ohio River Valley at the allowance of the Virginian colonial government, tensions between frontier settlers and Native Americans, specifically the Shawnee, continued to grow. In late 1773, James Boone, son of Daniel, and his friend Henry Russell, son of a prominent Captain, met their demise at the hands of an unknown Native American band in western Virginia. This attack led to the momentary pause of moving a group of settlers into Kentucky and struck fear in the white settlements. In order to maintain peace and grasp a greater understanding of the tension, colonial authorities sent

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116 Hurt, The Ohio Frontier, 55.
117 Dr. Hugh Mercer to Col. William Preston, 1773, 3QQL, L.D.M.C, Microfilm, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA; Capt. Daniel Smith to Col. William Preston, March 22, 1774, 3QQ15, L.D.M.C.
scouts along the Ohio River to investigate. Their findings explain much about the growing tensions. Scouting parties loyal to either the Ohio Company or the Grand Ohio Company still traversed the Ohio River Valley during this period (1773-1774). Skirmishes between these parties and the Shawnee became commonplace as did “robberies” of goods and supplies by the Shawnee. The Shawnee would often attempt to capture surveyors and/or take supplies and goods away from parties as a way of resisting white encroachment along their lands. In April of 1774, John Floyd, a Virginian surveyor, wrote to Col. William Preston informing him the Shawnee claimed to have received “directions from the Superintendent Geo Crohon [George Croghan] to kill all the Virginians they could find on the River & rob & whip the Pennsylvanians.” Throughout the account, Floyd explains the tensions boiling over from temporary capture and confiscation of goods to firefights between whites and Native Americans. During one engagement between the two groups on Beaver Creek outside Pittsburgh, a skirmish resulted in one white man being killed, one wounded, and one missing. These official correspondences display the level of tension between these two groups and how it escalated over time.

How do the increased tensions affect forming an identity different to that of easterners? The individuals speaking are not independent settlers along the Ohio River Valley nor are they representative of mass-independent movements west. They are colonial officials with connections to the Virginian and Pennsylvanian government or

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118 Instructions by Capt. William Russel to scouts, 3QQ18, L.D.M.C.
119 The term “robberies” is the most commonly used term in the correspondence. However, as previously stated, the taking of supplies was still a mild form of resistance to white encroachment by the Shawnee.
120 John Floyd to Col. William Preston, April 26, 1774, 3QQ19, L.D.M.C.
121 John Floyd to Col. William Preston, April 26, 1774, 3QQ19, L.D.M.C.
with ties to the aforementioned mercantile firms speculating western lands. In Floyd’s letter, he speaks of Colonel Washington’s “Plot.” The plot relates to Washington’s own trip along the Ohio River as far as the Kanawha River, where Washington wished to claim patents for 200,000 acres that he would then sell to veterans of the French and Indian War as his part of the Ohio Company and in an attempt to make good on their wishes. When discussing the Ohio Company and the Grand Ohio Company, the relationship between frontiersmen and these capitalistic endeavors appears very strong, nearly a dual necessity as the companies need the purchasing of land by frontiersmen as much as frontiersmen need the companies to legally purchase land through a government grant. However, the question of governance is equally at play in the quest for land acquisition. As mentioned above, the government, both of the English crown as well as the colonial, played a role in the legality of western expansion and land ownership. While large mercantilist firms in the Atlantic colonies fought over legality with the throne, colonial governments, acting as proxies of these companies, continued to survey and scout western lands in the hopes of continued expansion of their own colonial borders. The relationship between mercantilist trade firms and colonial governments strengthened over the need for governments to protect business interests for the good of the colony, but more so for the benefit of elitist associates involved.

However, the lack of ability of colonial governments to protect and deal with the Native American attacks led to the frontiersmen displaying a certain level of agency by taking actions into their own hands. In response to the growing tensions, some

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122 John Floyd to Col. William Preston, April 26, 1774, 3QQ19, L.D.M.C.
123 A good example of this is Washington acting as a political player, military authority, and investor in western lands throughout the mid-18th century.
frontiersmen took matters into their own hands in the spring of 1774. A number of frontiersmen, led by a well-known hunter and scout of German descent named Greathouse, entered a Mingo camp along the banks of the Yellow Creek nearby modern-day Wheeling, West Virginia. The Mingo tribe, as mentioned before, maintained a civil relationship with white colonists due to Chief Logan’s family having good relationships with white colonial officials. When the white hunting party of Greathouse entered the camp, the Mingo had no reason to distrust the white men. Greathouse invited some of the camp over to the far bank where his party camped and offered them alcohol. Three accepted and quickly became drunk, two refused, as did a woman who came with them along with her infant child. The two that refused the alcohol accepted a shooting contest with the white hunters. After the two sober Mingo men fired, Greathouse’s party shot two and tomahawked the three inebriated Mingo. The woman attempted to escape but was also shot and lived long enough to explain to the white hunters that her baby was half-white and begged for them to spare the child. The hunting party agreed and supposedly returned the infant to the father somewhere in Pennsylvania.124

When the Mingo camp found the massacre, they fled for refuge down the Ohio until caught by colonial authorities out of Wheeling, led by Michael Cresap. Cresap returned to Wheeling with the Mingo camp to find their leader, Chief Logan, whose brother, father, and sister fell victim to the massacre at the hands of the Greathouse Party. With his three closest relatives murdered for seemingly no reason outside of blind

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124 Reminiscences of Judge Henry Jolly, 6NN22-24, L.D.M.C. It is important to note the story of the massacre at Yellow Creek has been told a number of ways. As far as primary source documentation goes, Judge Henry Jolly’s appears to be the most understandable and clear when compared to the secondary source information.
prejudice, Logan declared peace between his people and Long Knives impossible.\textsuperscript{125} The judge who wrote of the Yellow Creek massacre of Logan’s family did so in a way that displays his feelings towards the actions:

Could any person of common rationality, believe for a moment, that the Indians came to Yellow creek with hostile intention, or that they had any suspicion of the whites, having any hostile Intentions against them, would five men have crossed the river, three of them in a Short time dead drunk, the other two discharging their Guns, putting themselves entirely at they mercy of the whites, or would they have brought over a Squaw, with an infant paupoos, if they had not reposed the utmost Confidence in the friendship if the whites.\textsuperscript{126}

The feelings of the judge displayed in this excerpt show that common sense did not ally itself with the frontiersmen of the Greathouse party. Despite the opinions on what occurred at Yellow Creek, Chief Logan could not endure peace with the white settlers and considered the relationship between the Mingo and the whites split. Logan appealed to the Shawnee, for an alliance could stop white encroachment and violence as well as provide opportunities for retribution for Yellow Creek. Though the Shawnee feared war with the white colonists, Blue Jacket, Puksinwah, and Chief Cornstalk agreed to help the Mingo fight the white settlers.\textsuperscript{127}

As the new alliance of the Mingo and the Shawnee began to terrorize white settlements along the Ohio, white settlers sought refuge at Fort Pitt, whose authorities informed the Virginia government of the situation. Yet again, the colonial government saw the need to protect western settlements and interests from the Native Americans. In

\textsuperscript{125} Long Knives, or Shemanese, was a term used by many Native American tribes in the region to describe the Virginians. It was a nod to the long, curved swords carried by Virginia officers.
\textsuperscript{126} Reminiscences of Judge Henry Jolly, 6NN22-24, L.D.M.C.
response to these tensions and the recent violence, Virginia governor John Murray, better known as Lord Dunmore, declared war on the Shawnee and the Mingo. Lord Dunmore sent orders for militias to form and be prepared to “defend that part of the Country or to march to the Assistance of any other.”

On June 12, 1774, a letter reached Fort Pitt explaining that the Mingo and Shawnee had started their terrorizing of frontier settlements, including scalping families along the upper Ohio River. The acceleration of hostilities led to an increase in security, with Lord Dunmore ordering Daniel Boone to warn settlements closer to the Cumberland Gap of a possible attack by the Native American attacks. As frontier fears of Native Americans grew, so did the inability to recognize friend from foe when it came to tribal associations. As outlined before, conflict shapes and alters identity. It has the ability to forge alliances and break apart relationships. It is through these first conflicts in Appalachia that the frontier began to change the identity of the frontiersmen.

The Cherokee still recognized the treaties made in the late 1760s, but the increase in violence on the frontier as well as the turmoil in the political landscape of Native American tribes around Kentucky led them to have interest in the new spring of violence. Though the Cherokee did not assault frontier settlements, some white settlers attacked Cherokees. Later in the summer, a colonial patrol met a hunting party in the Greenbrier Valley of southern West Virginia and a skirmish broke out. Between the locations of hostilities and the growing threat of the Cherokees to the south, the situation in the

128 Lord Dunmore, Circular Letter sent to county-lieutenants, 3QQ39, L.D.M.C.
129 Extract of a letter from Fort Pitt, June 12, 1774. Pennsylvania Gazette, 2JJ3 60, L.D.M.C.
130 Capt. William Russel to Col. William Preston, 3QQ46, L.D.M.C.
southern settlements of Kentucky looked as dire as it was along the Ohio River. Over the next few months, the scene on the frontier was a mix of Native American attacks and white colonial reactions. It took time and work to build an army capable of following the Shawnee and the Mingo deeper into the Ohio. Dunmore and his subordinates spent these crucial months building and supplying an army, and creating defenses along the frontier. By October 1774, Dunmore ordered the Irish-born Virginian Andrew Lewis to camp and prepare to build a fort at a crucial location along the Ohio River called Point Pleasant where the Kanawha River empties into the Ohio. Lewis’ force contained roughly one thousand men and most of them were frontiersmen with little knowledge of military discipline. Elsewhere, forces spread out in order to protect the frontier. Col. Adam Stephen led a force across the Ohio and the Hockhocking River Lord Dunmore was in route with more men of his own to join the fight. On the morning of October 10, 1774, a large group of Shawnee, led by Cornstalk, Puksinwah, and Blue Jacket, crossed the Ohio and engaged with Col. Lewis’ forces at the Battle of Point Pleasant.

The Battle of Point Pleasant was a decisive victory for the colonial settlers. At the battle’s end, the Shawnee retreated across the Ohio and further north in search of the safety of their lands. Puksinwah, the father of the legendary Tecumseh, lay dead on the battlefield. The force under Lewis claimed victory in their battle, and then proceeded to chase the Shawnee north and planned to rendezvous with Dunmore and the other colonial militias. By October 19, the Shawnee realized their situation after the Battle of Point Pleasant.

Pleasant and agreed to peace talks with the Virginian officials. At Camp Charlotte near modern-day Circleville, Ohio, the Shawnee agreed to cease and cede hunting lands south of the Ohio River and to allow white settlement to occur. Chief Logan, more concerned with his personal vengeance, the damage done to his family, and the betrayal of the colonial whites with whom he had been so friendly, did not partake in the peace talks, but sent his statement to the talks for all to hear:

I appeal to any white man to say, if ever he entered Logan's cabin hungry, and he gave him not meat; if ever he came cold and naked, and he clothed him not. During the course of the last long and bloody war, Logan remained idle in his cabin, an advocate for peace. Such was my love for the whites, that my countrymen pointed as they passed, and said, Logan is the friend of white men. I had even thought to have lived with you, but for the injuries of one man. Col. Cresap, the last spring, in cold blood, and unprovoked, murdered all the relations of Logan, not sparing even my women and children. There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature. This called on me for revenge. I have sought it: I have killed many: I have fully glutted my vengeance. For my country, I rejoice at the beams of peace. But do not harbour a thought that mine is the joy of fear. Logan never felt fear. He will not turn on his heel to save his life. Who is there to mourn for Logan? Not one.¹³⁵

Logan’s message, now known as Logan’s Lament, became a foundational sentiment for the coming decisions for many of the Ohio Valley Native Americans when they chose to join the British in the American Revolution.

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¹³⁵ Chief Logan, “Logan’s Lament,” Ohio History Central, accessed January 20, 2018, http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Logan%27s_Lament. In this, Logan blames Cresap for the killing of his family. However, documentation shows Cresap encountered the Mingo village as they were running away from Yellow Creek and captured them and brought them back to Wheeling where Logan was talking with colonial officials. The blame laid on Cresap is incorrect on Logan’s part.
The result of the Battle of Point Pleasant and the subsequent Treaty at Camp Charlotte was a massive victory for the local frontiersmen. The Shawnee had been an ever-lasting presence and one that never agreed to the terms of the treaties that opened the west for settlement. In a way, the Shawnee symbolized the one tribe that would be willing to fight to keep their lands. One veteran of the battle said, “And tho Many brave men lost their lives, Yet I hope in its consequences, it will be a general Good to the Country, and this engagement will be long Remembered to the Memory & Honour of those who purchas’d the Victory by their deaths.” The victorious battle meant that Shawnee violence would cease to occur against the frontier settlements and that the lives of frontiersmen could continue. However, this battle and the subsequent victory would be for naught with the coming American Revolution, which sparked a new fury and opportunity for the Shawnee to take their lands back from the encroachment of white settlement.

At the conclusion of Dunmore’s War, the frontier setting was drastically changed. Dunmore’s decision to move against the Shawnee and the Mingo resulted in the Shawnee ceding their lands and allowing for settlement. Dunmore returned to Williamsburg to find that, although his endeavors were successful, the British authorities did not find happiness as Dunmore and the frontiersmen did. In December of 1774, Dunmore wrote a letter of his account to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Dartmouth. Dartmouth sent a letter to Dunmore over the months of the war, rebuking him for taking the matter into his own hands and getting the Treaty of Camp Charlotte signed by the

Shawnee. Dunmore’s reply defended his actions, as well as revealing the way Dunmore and many colonial leaders viewed the frontiersmen:

My Lord I have learnt from experience that the established Authority of any government in America, and the policy of Government at home, are both insufficient to retrain the Americans; and that they do and will remove their avidity and restlessness incite them. They acquire no attachment to Place; But wandering about Seems engrafted into their Nature; and it is a weakness incident to it, that they Should forever imagine [sic] the Land further off, are Still better than those upon which they are already Settled.

Dunmore continues to explain that the frontiersmen and people of the colonial backcountry, despite having little ability or legality to do so, have no mind for recognizing treaties and will emigrate regardless of legality. Dunmore paints a picture of the frontiersmen as having little recognition for authority of government nor the legality of treaties or land ownership. Dunmore also defends himself by recognizing the rights of the Walpole Company who had received their grant for lands in the west before Lord Dunmore’s assault on the Ohio Natives. At the end of his account, Dunmore seems to excuse himself of any wrongdoing, claiming it was either legal and in the spirit of helping mercantile firms with their legal settlement, or the case of frontiersmen acting outside of government authority.

The problem with Dunmore’s account is a common one for historians. How true is his claim that frontiersmen refuse to recognize government authority? If one is to focus on the Regulatory War in North Carolina or on the actions of the Pennsylvanian Black Boys, it seems his assessment is correct. However, as stated in that section, these were

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137 Dunmore to Dartmouth, official report, Williamsburg, December 24th, 1774, 15J4-48. L.D.M.C.
isolated events more than a shared sentiment of frontiersmen. If colonial backwoodsmen did not recognize government authority, why did they not break the Proclamation of 1763? Why did it take just nearly seven years after the Treaty of Fort Stanwix for colonial settlement to happen at any large rate? Why was it that the majority of frontiersmen who did venture into Kentucky before Dunmore’s War did so as agents of colonial governments or mercantile firms? The conclusion here is that Dunmore seems to stretch the truth and use the myth of the American frontiersmen as a way to exclude himself from blame as, at times, he more fervently desired frontiersmen to relocate to Kentucky despite land not being available for purchase from mercantilist firms yet. The events and history of the colonial backwoods before and after the opening of the frontier due to the Treaty of Fort Stanwix explains a different story than what Dunmore wishes to convey. The frontiersmen, for the most part, did seem distrusting if not disdainful of eastern authority. The events in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and those that led to Lord Dunmore’s War show a dismissal of authority when frontiersmen feel they are not being taken into consideration or receiving their due of government protection. However, they willingly and happily fight with Dunmore and settlement in mass does not take place until after the Shawnee agreed to cede Kentucky to settlement. At that point, a majority of settlement still takes place under the guidance of colonial governments or mercantile firms.

Where did this leave the frontiersmen who would come to settle these lands? It left the frontiersmen in a position they had been in since before the Proclamation of 1763 and after. The frontiersmen were merely pawns in a game controlled by elites who made up both mercantilist land firms and the colonial government authority. The frontiersmen,
seeking their own autonomy and success, expanded colonial settlement and colonial power as they moved west. As they ventured west, pressures mounted between frontiersmen and Native Americans. As tensions grew the level of how little autonomy and self-reliance frontiersmen had come with the necessity of colonial intervention and aid with military action. With the growing concern of Native Americans and the ever-present issues of legal authority, the frontiersmen were at the mercy of the colonial governments, the most effective means of protecting them from Native American harassment via military force as well as the safeguard from mercantile firms and their legal issues. Yet again, the frontiersmen of the trans-Appalachian frontier found themselves bound to eastern authority and elites, this time in the need for protection, especially from the issues with Native Americans who objected to their encroachment.

Lord Dunmore sent James Harrod into Kentucky with a large party of settlers to reestablish an abandoned settlement in modern-day Kentucky now known as Harrodsburg. Point Pleasant soon held a fort overlooking the confluence of the Ohio and Kanawha Rivers and a small village soon held white settlers. The start of settlement was not just from Virginians and Pennsylvanians along the Ohio River Valley and stakes in land acquisition did not just land in the mercantile firms of these colonies. Though the majority of exploration and surveying took place in the northern portion of the region, the surveying of the longhunters and their tales of Kentucky soon sparked the interest of North Carolinians as well. As in the colonies of Virginia and Pennsylvania, the backwoodsmen of North Carolina faced the issue of legality and security as well. Daniel Boone still desired to move into Kentucky and take many of his neighbors from the Yadkin Valley with him. A small mercantile firm in North Carolina known as the
Transylvania Company sought to establish a new colony of the same name. In order to do so, the primary investor, Judge Richard Henderson met with Cherokee leaders and signed the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals and purchased a large swath of land for the new colony. With the land purchased, Henderson allowed Boone to move several settlers south through the Cumberland Gap and settle along the banks of the Kentucky River in Boonesborough. However, when compared to the actions of the Virginian and Pennsylvanian companies, the actions of Henderson’s Transylvania Company dealt only with the Cherokee and not with colonial authority much less the authority of the British government. This semi-legal scheme ended as quickly as it began with the Virginia government refusing to recognize the land claim and purchase of the land by the Transylvania Company.\textsuperscript{138} However, Boone and his fellow settlers in southern Kentucky remained and Boonesborough became an important outpost in the frontier settlements as it was far from the Native Americans in Ohio, though not out of reach.

By 1765, the majority of Native Americans who called the region west of the Appalachian Mountains home had recognized the validity of white settlement, either by legal treaties or by force. Settlements in Appalachia could now continue to grow and establish themselves with the frontiersmen seeking to establish community, autonomy, success, and security for themselves. Meanwhile, eastern elites could continue to sell land and continue trade west with frontiersmen and Native Americans alike. The relationship established between frontiersmen and the east was still strong as trade and security between the two groups remained in 1765.

\textsuperscript{138} Morgan, \textit{Boone: A Biography}, 190-201.
The narrative of the establishment of Appalachian identity continues well past 1765. In a way, Appalachian Identity forms even more so in relation to the formation of American as a country rather than as a British colony. However, the roots of otherness in Appalachia predate the establishment of America and the modernizing of the region around the turn of the 19th century. Otherness existed far before this period, dating back to when frontiersmen still lived within the confines of the British government in the backwoods of the original America colonies. In order to truly understand the formation of Appalachian Identity as a whole, the discussion of Appalachia moves forward from 1765 to the modernizing of the era in the Early Republic. However, one major factor stands in the way of an all-encompassing narrative of Appalachian identity. The changing of identity in Appalachia takes a second seat to the changing identity of America as a whole.

Less than a year after the conquering of the Ohio River Valley in 1765, American colonists, both elite and common, rebelled against British authorities. Though this Revolution began in eastern urban centers, the frontier felt the sting of the war as well. Frontiersmen had to figure out where they fell in this dichotomy of America versus Britain. As important and pressing as the American Revolution was, changes continued to happen in Appalachia. As America as a whole saw their own identity change result in a Revolution, Appalachian identity continued to change in its own way as well.
Epilogue

Shortly following the conclusion of Lord Dunmore’s War, the entirety of the American colonies faced a widespread identity crisis of epic proportions in the American Revolution. Beginning in the New England Colonies, the overall change in American society grew to the point of breaking away from Britain in search of their own need for success and security on a larger scale than seen in the colonial backwoods and subsequent Appalachian frontier. This large-scale need for change reverberated into the frontier settlements forcing frontier communities to choose sides, ultimately joining the question of Appalachian identity to that of what American identity should be, British or independent? For some, this question was hardly a difficult one to answer. In the frontier region of eastern Tennessee along the Watauga River, a small society, known as the Watauga Association declared their own independence and created a small, communal, semi-autonomous government in 1772. The Watauga Association joined with the colonial effort for Independence and became one of the more important outposts in the west for rebellious militias.

On October 7, 1780, around nine hundred backwoodsmen from across the Appalachian Mountains surrounded a British encampment on the summit of King’s Mountain in western South Carolina. After the crippling defeat of the rebel forces in Charleston, the British Army began marching north, fully aware that many of the frontiersmen west of the mountains supported the cause for an Independent America. Weeks before the battle, Colonel Patrick Ferguson ventured west along the Appalachian Mountains in order to protect the British flank and hunt down rebel militias. Ferguson hunted a group of frontiersmen based along the Watauga River in East Tennessee. This
militia had crossed the mountains, made notice of themselves by raiding and harassing Loyalist settlements in western South Carolina. In order to protect the Loyalists, Ferguson sent a message to frontiersmen “that if they did not desist from their opposition to the British arms, and take protection under his standard, he would march his army over the mountains, hang their leaders, and lay waste to the country with fire and sword.”

The answer to the threat was a call to arms by the frontiersmen and with the surrounding of Ferguson’s camp, the frontiersmen delivered the answer to Ferguson’s threat.

Legend says that Ferguson proclaimed that God could not even drive he or his men off King’s Mountain, and he was right. However, not in the way he intended as the victorious frontiersmen of the Watauga buried him near the summit. In a decisive victory for the rebel frontiersmen, King’s Mountain cemented the ability of frontiersmen to fight the British. The frontier forces suffered few casualties compared to the British. The frontiersmen, using guerrilla tactics and hunting rifles, became a formidable force against the British loyalists. The Battle of King’s Mountain is evidence of the frontier desire for independence as well as their ability to exercise their own autonomy in the conflict of the colonies.

The Battle of King’s Mountains acts somewhat like the climax of the war in the frontier as frontiersmen cross back over the Appalachian Mountains to attack the British flank and return to the frontier. Before this decisive victory, the Revolution on the

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frontier was a trying and bloody conflict. The Revolution on the frontier pitted the colonial settlers against not only British forces, but also largely, Native Americans. Under the advisement of the British, the Shawnee, Mingo, and many Delaware, the same groups that fought against the frontiersmen in Lord Dunmore’s War broke all treaties and sided with the British to drive the white settlers out of their homeland. In 1777, colonial forces executed Chief Cornstalk at the fort at Point Pleasant where he fought in Lord Dunmore’s War just three years before. Chief Cornstalk’s murder at the hands of frontier colonists acts as a symbol of the transition of Appalachia from a land of Native American freedom to a region of Anglo-American dominance.

During the war, Daniel Boone, fearing that the Shawnee under the command of Chief Blackfish would attack and overrun the settlement at Boonesborough, willingly surrendered to the Shawnee. Boone bluffed so well that many of his own men suspected that he switched sides and supported the British, resulting in a court martial for treason after he escaped. The court-martial found Boone not guilty of treason, but it did become an embarrassing subject for Boone.\textsuperscript{142} Despite this, Boone soon became somewhat of a local legend, much thanks to Filson and, although much later, Draper. Both men used Boone story to elevate him and provide a very exciting, romanticized look at the west and the story of its settlement by white frontiersmen. The story of Boone’s trial became a footnote to the overall legend, a scarcely discussed tale in the life of a legend. The Daniel Boone known today in American folklore was far from a traitor, but actually, a symbol of

\textsuperscript{142} Morgan, \textit{Boone}, 271-281.
the American spirit venturing west to expand the nation fought for in the American Revolution, an early semblance of Manifest Destiny.

By war’s end, the Revolution in the trans-Appalachian frontier had changed from the times of Lord Dunmore’s War. With the British no longer in control of the colonies, the nation looked inwardly at what it would be. Across the Appalachian Mountains, settlers did not have the ability to question such things. The Shawnee and other Native Americans in the region still posed a threat and continued to fight settlement until the Treaty of Greenville in 1794 when they ceded most of Ohio to the American government, opening the land for white settlement.¹⁴³

However noble the fight for national independence was in the Appalachian frontier, the critical era saw a reemergence into the pre-Revolutionary question of Appalachian identity versus the identity of the nation as a whole. As revenue for the fledgling government of the newly created United States became an increasing worry for the Ohio Company investor, a veteran of both the French and Indian and Revolutionary Wars, and the new president, George Washington, the need for taxation laws became imminent. Following the guidance of Alexander Hamilton, Washington imposed a tax on whiskey. In the western frontiers, the whiskey tax was more than a tax on alcohol, but also an attack on a source of income and even a form of bartering currency for those with more corn than money. The Whiskey Rebellion acts as a close of the question between Appalachian frontiersmen and eastern authority. When those in the west laid down their

arms to end the rebellion as Washington marched west, the relationship between Appalachians and the American government ended in the critical era.144

The question of Appalachia post-Revolution ventured outside of the bounds of the question of power. As with bodies of authority, Appalachian frontiersmen had similar issues with eastern elites. With the Whiskey Rebellion acting as a question of authority, the issue of land questioned the role of elites in Appalachia. By 1792, barely three decades after the opening of the region to settlement, Kentucky became a state in the union. Statehood for the region meant modernization. Influxes of new migrants to the region came. With them came law, government, order, speculators, and a new brand of elites looking to make their fortunes grow in the fertile lands of the Bluegrass Region. Many of the original settlers endured legal battles over land, most of whom had neither the money nor legal power to win their cases. Even Daniel Boone fell victim to such issues, and in 1799, he moved west to Missouri, yet again seeking his own brand of safety and security.145 With Boone’s departure, Kentucky symbolically faced its own modernization. The society of Kentucky became similar to that of its eastern counterparts, fitted with a Republic form of government, rigid class structures, and the same legal and social hierarchies that many of the early backwoodsmen protested in the 1760s. With this, the story of Appalachia really begins, but, as stated before, all things in history are connected and Appalachia brought the spirit of its founding with it. As the frontier closed, the foundation for Appalachian otherness existed and began to evolve.

Conclusion

In 1784, John Filson wrote an extended history of “Kentucke” with the help and guidance of Daniel Boone as it existed before white settlement took place in the early 1770s. This means that the ways in which Filson and Boone describe Kentucky are more relative to the land before the mass introduction of permanent, white settlers. In Filson’s history, the first section discussed focused on the many rivers of Kentucky. The rivers emptied into the Ohio River in the north and provided guidance for traversing the area as well as a vast array of wildlife. These rivers were also prime spots for settlement. The long hunters and explorers of Kentucky were also interested in the soil in the area. As the work of choice for people along the entirety of the colonial backwoods was subsistence farming, the soil of any new possible settlement must be rich enough to sustain success for small farms. The soil along the rivers was normally very good, but in some areas in eastern Kentucky, along the mountains, the soil was very rocky and not good at all except in small spots. In the plains of Kentucky, often now known as the Bluegrass Region where Lexington now sits, the soil was better than almost anywhere else in the region. Due to the healthy soil, these areas formed roaming plains that provided grazing for many different types of wildlife, which leads to Filson’s next topic and a very important aspect of Kentucky for the perspective frontiersmen.¹⁴⁶

Filson’s book is as much a part of the creation of the myth of Appalachia as other texts written of the area and people and possibly even more so. Though he refers to it as a “history,” Filson’s book is more of a description and advertisement for Kentucky

¹⁴⁶ John Filson, The Discovery and Settlement of Kentucke (Wilmington: James Adams, 1784), 7-27.
settlement. With subheadings such as “Situation and Boundaries,” “Rivers, “Nature and Soil,” “Air and Climate,” “Soil and Produce,” “Trade,” etc., Filson’s book does not focus as much on the settlement, but more on the benefits of settlement. In his concluding statements on Kentucky, he says:

The fertile region, abounding with all the luxuries of nature, stored with all the principal materials for art and industry, inhabited by virtuous and ingenious citizens, must universally attract the attention of mankind, being situated in the central part of the extensive American empires… where agriculture, industry, laws, arts, and sciences, flourish; where afflicted humanity raises her drooping head; where springs a harvest for the poor; where conscience ceases to be slave, and laws are no more than the security of happiness; where nature makes reparation for having created man; and government so long prostituted to the most criminal purposes, establishes an asylum in the wilderness for the distressed mankind.

The recital of your happiness will call to your country all the unfortunate of the earth, who, having experienced oppression, political or religious, will there find a deliverance from their chains. To you innumerable multitudes will emigrate from the hateful regions of despotism and tyranny; and you will surely welcome them to partake with you of your happiness.147

Filson then appeals to the glittering generalities of American society. Claiming that individuals such as John Locke, William Penn, and George Washington to explain the mindsets of the people of Kentucky. Kentucky’s citizens then have a spirit of anti-authority (Locke), egalitarianism (Penn), and purely American identity (Washington.)

The use of these individuals, added to the appendix of Boone’s autobiography, appeals to the characteristics of famous individuals to explain what Kentucky identity, in this context including greater Appalachian identity, really is. Filson then goes on to list how industry and agriculture in Kentucky provide immigrants with the opportunity to succeed in any endeavors. He concludes:

147 Filson, Discovery and Settlement of Kentucke, 107-108.
In your country [Kentucky], like the land of promise flowing with milk and honey, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, that spring out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, and all kinds of fruits, you shall eat bread without scarceness, and not lack any thing in it; where you are neither child with the cold of Capricorn nor scorched with the burning heat of cancer; the mildness of your air so great, that you neither feel the effects of infectious fogs, nor pestilential vapours. Thus, your country, favored with the smiles of heaven, will probably be inhabited by the first people the world ever knew.  

Filson explains Kentucky as a literal heaven on earth with his metaphorical description of the land. Though written in 1784, this analysis of Kentucky, still a region and still in its period as a frontier, build the myth that the land is not only other but also spectacular and that a person who moves there should be proud of doing so due to the benefits of its environment and society. It also separates this land from the east, depicting the east as a land of tyranny and oppression based on inequality. Filson creates a nationalistic sense of other, through the positives of Kentucky and comparing them to the negatives of the east. Even though Filson refers to his work as a history, a quick read through can see that it goes far beyond the realms of history. It even goes beyond the realms of a topographic essay or a work of ecological research. At its core, Filson’s history is an advertisement, attempting to seduce backwoodsmen with a dedication to agriculture, hunting, and being distant from authority to come and settle in Kentucky. Of course this could only happen through the purchasing of land from eastern companies, but once there, a settler could enjoy all of what he had been longing for in the backwoods. The nationalism and emotion Filson creates is not so much a personal sense of pride in the region, but basic marketing to sell land and increase western settlement.

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148 Filson, Discovery and Settlement of Kentucke, 109.
Filson’s early history explains a dichotomy within Appalachia. Although Filson uses descriptions of the fruitful and open land as well as the glittering generality of Boone, the goal of Filson, when viewed as an advertisement, seeks to bring people into the area, thus destroying the benefits of moving there outlined in his book. As more people ventured into the area, the open spaces soon became crowded and much of the game dwindled if not completely disappeared. With an increase of people came the increase of power, wealth distribution, and society, all connected to the east. If frontiersmen such as Boone sought to escape such entities by moving west, they instead brought such entities with them as they expanded.

Over time, these entities of power and status continue to exist in Appalachia as they did and do outside of the region. Even though the American Revolution and subsequent events like the Whiskey Rebellion and the modernization of Appalachia led to the established relationship between Appalachia and the United States, the question of relative identity in the mountainous area remained an ever-present question. The identity of Appalachians evolved over time, but, in the relation to the rest of the United States, Appalachia remained a social other when compared to the outside. The evolution of identity in Appalachia is traceable from the before the American Revolution into today. Scholars such as Shapiro have analyzed the evolution of Appalachian identity from after the Civil War and into today. Putting Shapiro’s work and ideas into context with the frontier experience of Appalachia, the cognitive dissonance of what is reality for frontiersmen and what the perceived reality allows for the creation of myth and thus the
creation of an identity based on said myth. If Appalachia is an idea more than an actual, tangible region, the idea of Appalachia starts with values similar to those we see in Boone, adding to the mythos of the American frontier and Appalachia as a whole.

Of course, in order for such a myth to create something as real as Appalachian identity, it takes more than legends. There has to be an element of a real “otherness” in order for this separate identity to exist. Thus far in the narrative of the creation of the Appalachian frontier, the identity of otherness comes in the oddity of backwoods culture and society. Of course, Appalachian identity separates from backwoods identity when the individuals begin to settle across the Allegheny Mountains. If Boone represents a romanticized version, accepted in popular memory to be the foundation of frontier and Appalachian identity, then that would mean Boone, acting as a representative of longhunter culture, could not be the oddity he recognizes himself to be. When one delves into the history of Appalachian settlement, there is a far different narrative, one that may explain Appalachian identity as a constant over the span of the past and into the present and that explains not only the creation of Appalachian otherness but also the characteristics that form Appalachian identity in both a conceptual and a perceived reality. With the idea of otherness established in the colonial backwoods, the opening of the frontier brings about a new evolution of otherness between identities. The true story of the Appalachian frontier, the one focusing on the majority of settlement rather than just the idealized Boone, allows for a much different realization of how Appalachia and the frontier formed. The frontier, in the mind of Turner, was the meeting ground where

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Euro-American society met a vast wilderness. To Limerick, the frontier was an idea more than a place or an “unsubtle concept in a subtle world.” Here, the frontier is a bit of both and something different. The frontier stands looking west over the American continent to lands untouched by Euro-American conquest, but also has its back to the areas conquered. The frontier is an idea of transforming the society, people, culture and identity into something new by extending Euro-American society and culture west over the continent. The venture into Appalachia, however, was far different from the colonial frontier that was its predecessor. The Appalachian frontier was the first American frontier where the first semblance of American pitted itself against Native American society in the west and European society in the east. In order to see how the conflicts both to the west and back to the east formulated frontier society to create an Appalachian identity, a discussion of the Appalachian conflict is necessary.

What then does the frontier experience in Appalachia tell us about the creation of identity in the region? Looking at the period before settlement begins in Appalachia; the would-be settlers came from similar backgrounds. Many came from Scots-Irish heritage meaning that their experience with government authority, specifically English, already held a history of tension. In the American colonies, the frontiersmen first settled in the backwoods. The colonial backwoods was the most suitable geography for their agrarian lifestyle and the physical distance to authority meant a life of semi-autonomy in their own communities. However, as colonial bodies of merchants, gentry, and government began to grow, the desire for expansion west grew. The difference here is that people in

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positions of authority, either political or economic, wished to expand west in an attempt to expand their own power, while backwoodsmen wished to expand west to maintain their own way of life in light of a growing Anglo-American society. Despite this difference, the expansion westward resulted in the French and Indian War. The violence and turmoil of this war resulted in several changes. On the smaller scale, backwoodsmen became more communal and recognized the need for mutual aid in light of trying time. They also grew to hate the Native Americans even more, seeing them as the ultimate enemy of their own western expansion. On a large scale, the relationship between these backwoodsmen and the eastern authority evolved as well. While backwoodsmen wished to escape the encroachment of authority, they also recognized the need for state power to protect them from Native Americans. By the end of the French and Indian War, the defeat of the French and their Native Americans allies left hope for backwoodsmen and authority alike for a new wave of expansion.

However, this wave would not arrive quickly as the Native Americans across the Appalachians continued to be a threat to expansion. In order to protect citizens, the British government forbade expansion through the Proclamation of 1763. Despite the halting of expansion, authorities in the east, specifically merchant elites, were able to continue trade in the west in order to remake lost wealth from the French and Indian War. This trade appeared as a dismissal and ignorance of frontier hardships to the backwoodsmen who felt the effects of Native American violence in Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, the growth of merchant firms and authority began to physically encroach in the backwoods of North Carolina. These issues led to conflicts such as the Black Boys Rebellion and the Paxton Boys uprisings in Pennsylvania as well as the War of
Regulation in North Carolina. These conflicts symbolize a crisis of identities in the backwoods. Through these conflicts, the identity of frontiersmen begins to evolve with new characteristics becoming noticeable.

The frontiersmen become increasingly distrustful of eastern authority. They see businessmen, government, law, and power as threats to their own insular communities as though outside authority seeks to destroy their own ability to self-govern. Many believe that moving west will provide a relief of this encroachment, but movement west can only happen through the power of the very systems they seek to escape. In order to legally purchase land, it must come from purchasing it from land speculation of mercantilist firms, made up of powerful colonial elite. These tensions mixed with the wishes of powerful land speculators lead to questionable treaties with Native Americans, but ultimately open the land west of the Appalachian Mountains to settlement for white frontiersmen.

Once settlement opened in 1768, the process of occupation began slowly. Merchants used seasoned frontiersmen to explore west, normally down the Ohio River. As settlement took place closer to Fort Pitt, tensions with local Native American tribes boiled over much due to the actions of settlers. With settlements in need of protection, authorities in Virginia under the leadership of Lord Dunmore waged war against a coalition of Native American tribes such as the Shawnee and the Mingo. At the end of the violence, white settlers secured the ability to begin to colonize the Appalachian frontier in modern Kentucky, West Virginia, and Tennessee much to the disdain of Native Americans in Ohio and the Old Northwest. Within two years of this victory, the colonies rejected the authority of England and waged a revolution against the mother country.
If we take Turner’s words about the purpose of the history being the ability to understand the present by using the past and apply this idea to Appalachia identity we see the true nature of the region. Appalachian identity consists of a rift between reality as it is and reality as perceived, just as Shapiro argued. Appalachia identity, like frontier and backwoods identity before it, exists because those both within and outside of Appalachia believe it to be true. Tracing modern identity within the mountain region and venturing backwards through history, you would first reach Shapiro’s era of creation. If one ventures further back in time, one would also find that a separate identity of settlers existed in the minds of eastern whites as well as the settlers themselves. The frontier experience capitalized on the anti-authoritarian, self-sufficient, and prideful characteristics of the early citizens of Appalachia. Over time, these same characteristics existed and added additional traits as well, culminating in the modern sense of identity in the mountains and foothills of Appalachia. Does this identity hold the key for solving the complex issues of Appalachia? The simple answer is no, but understanding the construction and evolution of this identity may hold the key to explaining the complex nature of a peculiar land and people.
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