

PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING AUTHOR OF *JOHN ADAMS* AND *1776*

# DAVID McCULLOUGH



— THE —

# PIONEERS

➤ THE HEROIC STORY OF THE SETTLERS ◀  
WHO BROUGHT THE AMERICAN IDEAL WEST



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— *THE* —  
**PIONEERS**

The Heroic Story of the Settlers  
Who Brought the American Ideal West

David McCullough

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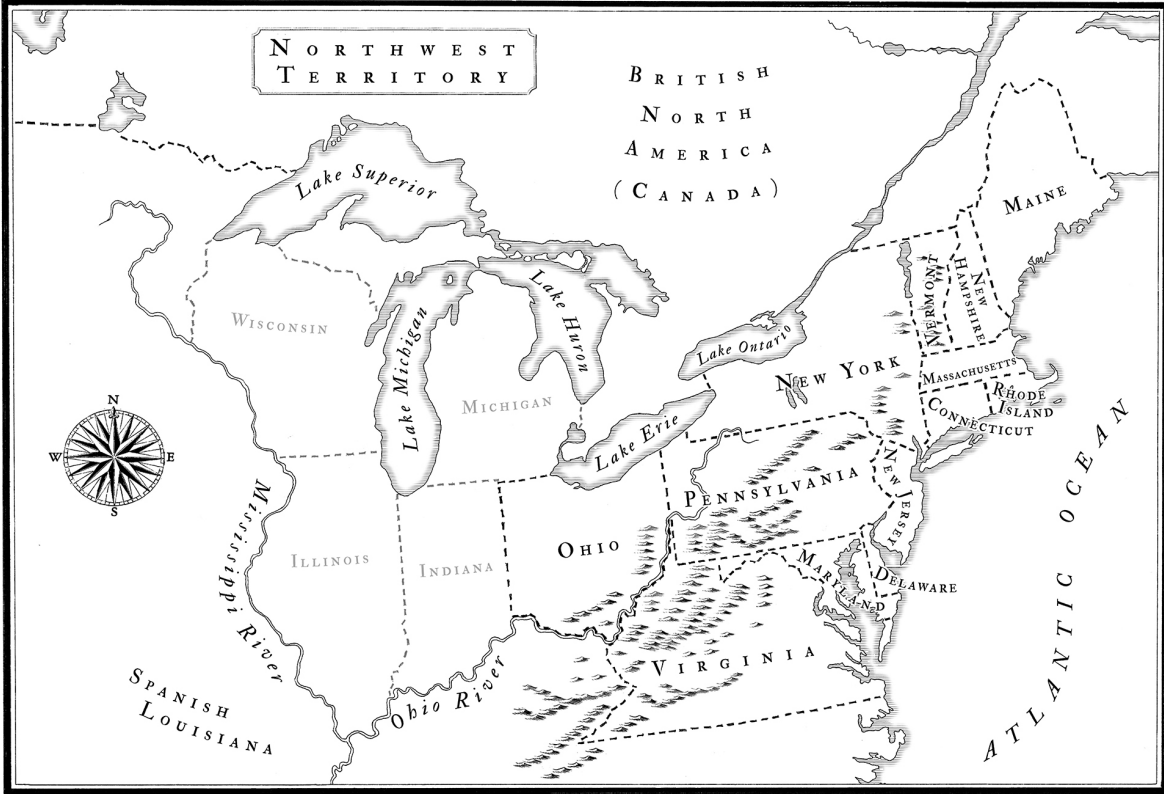
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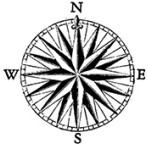
*For Rosalee*

*The character ought to be known of these bold pioneers. . . . From whence did they spring? . . . For what causes, under what circumstances, and for what objects were difficulties met and overcome?*

—EPHRAIM CUTLER



SOUTHEASTERN OHIO



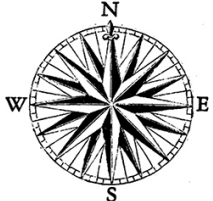


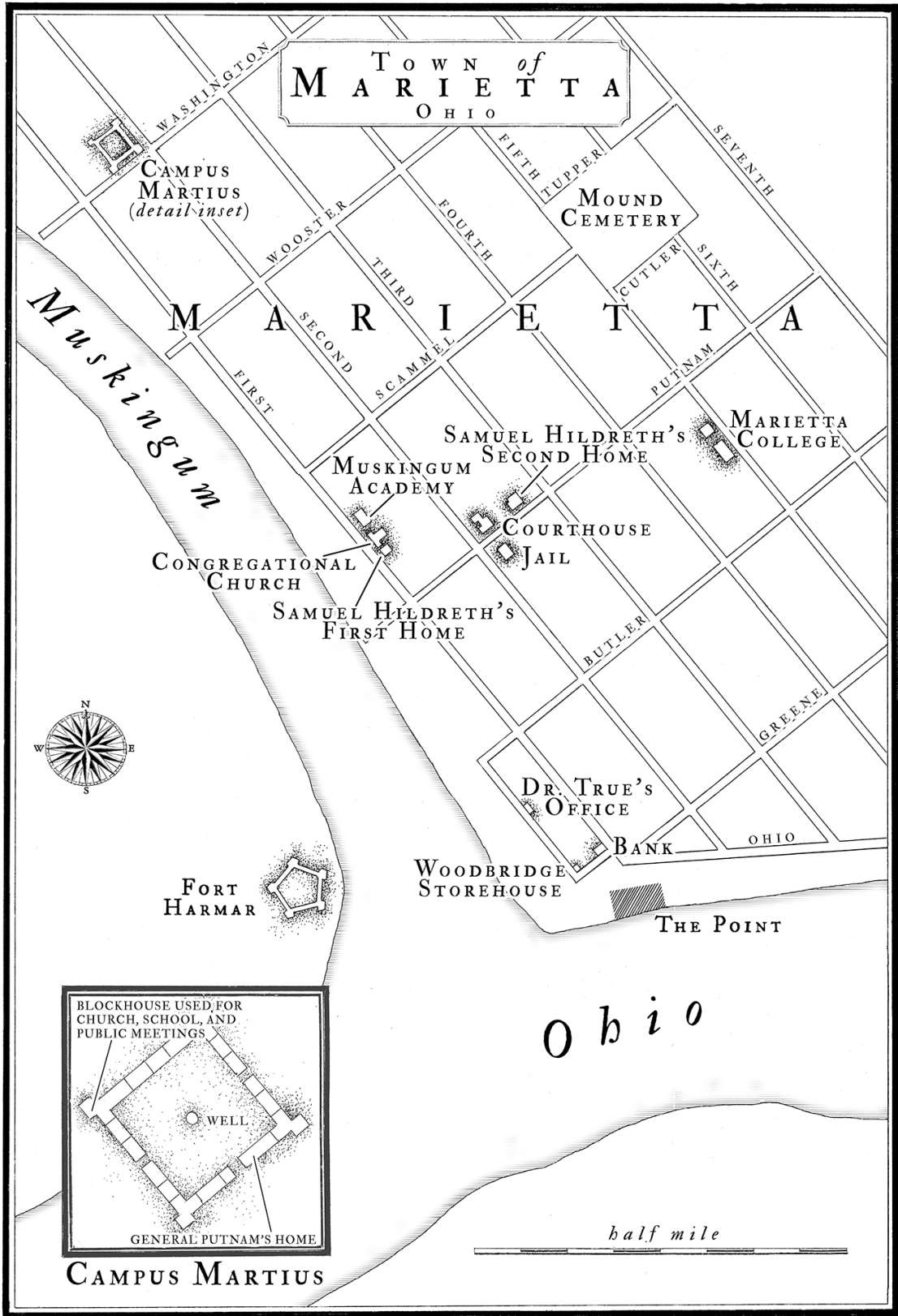
SOUTHEASTERN OHIO  
AROUND  
MARIETTA



OHIO

VIRGINIA





# PART I

1787–1794

⇒ CHAPTER ONE ⇐

## The Ohio Country

*The Ohio is the grand artery of that portion of America which lies beyond the mountains. . . . I consider therefore the settlement of the country watered by this great river as one of the greatest enterprises ever presented to man.*

—J. HECTOR ST. JOHN DE CRÈVECOEUR, 1782

### I.

Never before, as he knew, had any of his countrymen set off to accomplish anything like what he had agreed to undertake—a mission that, should he succeed, could change the course of history in innumerable ways and to the long-lasting benefit of countless Americans.

That he had had no prior experience in such a venture and was heading off alone in his own one-horse shay appears to have been of little concern. If he was as yet unknown to those with whom he would be dealing, he carried with him letters of introduction from the governor of Massachusetts, the president of Harvard College, and some forty others. The day of his departure was Sunday, June 24, 1787.

Manasseh Cutler was forty-five years old and pastor of the First Congregational Church of Ipswich Hamlet, a tiny Massachusetts village not far from the sea, thirty miles north of Boston. He had been born and raised on a hilltop farm in Killingly, Connecticut, and given the biblical name of Manasseh after the oldest son of Joseph. Like most New Englanders, he was a descendant of those strong-minded English Puritans who had landed

in America in the seventeenth century and proliferated ever since. James Cutler, the first of the family to arrive, had fathered twelve children. The Reverend Cutler himself was one of five and the father of eight.

He had attended Yale College, with classmates mainly from New England among whom a biblical name such as he had was by no means uncommon. He was distinguished for “diligence and proficiency,” and finished with honors in 1765.

In less than a year he married Mary Balch of Dedham, Massachusetts, a small trim blonde said to have had a no less amiable disposition than he. Her father, the Reverend Thomas Balch, performed the wedding ceremony. When offered the chance to run a chandlery—a ship supply store—in Edgartown on the island of Martha’s Vineyard, bride and groom moved immediately to the island and there remained for three years, time enough for two sons, Ephraim and Jervis, to be born, and for Manasseh to conclude that a mercantile life was not for him.

He resolved to enter the ministry under the tutelage of his father-in-law back in Dedham. His studies continued for nearly two years, during which he started preaching in one town or another. “Prosecuted my study,” he wrote in his diary. “Began to make sermons. May God grant me his blessing and assistance in so important an undertaking, and make me serviceable to the cause of religion, and the souls of my fellow men.”

He was offered the pulpit at Ipswich Hamlet. The day of his ordination, at age twenty-nine, the Meeting House was thronged so “exceedingly” that not more than half the people were able to attend.

A bit above average in height, stout but well-proportioned, the Reverend Cutler had a ruddy, healthy look, and dressed always in ministerial black—black velvet coat and breeches, black silk stockings. He would be described as a gentleman of “the old style, country type.” But stiff-necked and somber he was not, any more than were most Puritans, contrary to latter-day misconceptions. Puritans were as capable as any mortals of exuding an affable enjoyment of life, as was he. Like many a Puritan he loved good food, good wine, a good story, and good cheer. His black clerical attire, a professional requirement, by no means represented disapproval of bright colors in clothing or furniture or decoration. It was said he could out-talk anyone, and from numerous of his diary entries, it is obvious, too, that he had an eye for attractive women. But here again that was no violation of Puritan rules.



He had as well great love for his large family, his wife and children, and was ever attentive to their needs for as long as he lived.

In addition to all this, and importantly, Manasseh Cutler was endowed with boundless intellectual curiosity. It may be said he was a university unto himself, ranking high among the notable polymaths of the time, those “of great and varied excellence” who took an interest in nearly everything.

He had succeeded in becoming three doctors in one, having qualified for both a doctor of law and doctor of medicine, in addition to doctor of divinity, and having, from time to time, practiced both law and medicine. At one point he looked after some forty smallpox patients and seems to have gained a local reputation for his particular skill at coping with rattlesnake poisoning. He became an honorary member of the Massachusetts Medical Society, received a degree of Master of the Arts from Harvard, and was elected a member of the Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Further, to supplement his meager income as pastor—never more than \$450 a year—he had added a third floor to the rectory and established his own private boarding school where the students were “prepared for usefulness in the world.”

Most remarkable were his continuing scientific pursuits. He was at once an avid astronomer, meteorologist, and naturalist. Over the years, his modest income notwithstanding, he had acquired his own barometer, thermometer, telescope, spyglasses, and celestial globe, and was particularly esteemed among fellow scientists for his work in botany, and for having written the first-ever treatise on the classification of the flora of New England—a study of some 350 separate species. His knowledge of botany was probably surpassed by few if any Americans of his generation.

Year after year he carried on extensive correspondence with leading figures in all the sciences on both sides of the Atlantic. One letter concerning his studies of the aurora borealis, written in 1778 to Ezra Stiles, the president of Yale, went on for twenty-four pages.

Between times he studied French. Indeed, he seems to have been studying something nearly every waking hour. “Engaged in the study of botany,” reads one diary entry. “This morning endeavored to observe the eclipse of the moon,” reads another. “Studied,” “studied hard,” “studied very hard,” he recorded one day after another.

Once, with a half dozen others, he climbed the highest peak in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, carrying a heavy barometer on his back in

the spirit of wanting to bring back new knowledge—to compute the elevation at the summit, which he recorded to be 9,000 feet. That either he or the barometer had overestimated the height by some 2,600 feet did not in the least deter his zest for learning.

On the day of his departure on his unprecedented new mission, he brought with him the cabinet necessary for saving botanical specimens collected along the way.

He had a favorite quotation from Virgil that to his family seemed the key to his character, “*Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*”—“Fortunate is he who understands the cause of things.”



The year before, on the morning of March 1, 1786, the Reverend Cutler and ten others gathered in Boston at the famous Bunch of Grapes tavern, at the corner of King and Kilby Streets. Their purpose was to launch a highly ambitious plan involving the immense reach of unsettled wilderness known as the Northwest Territory. They were a group of veteran officers in the Continental Army, as Cutler was considered also, having served six months during the Revolutionary War as an army chaplain.

At the peace treaty ending the war, signed in Paris in 1783, the American diplomats John Adams and John Jay had insisted that all the lands controlled by the British west of the Allegheny Mountains and northwest of the Ohio River east of the Mississippi, be ceded to the new United States. The British commissioners persistently urged making the Ohio River the westernmost boundary of the United States, but John Adams, it is said, responded indignantly, “No! Rather than relinquish our claim to the western territory, I will go home and urge my countrymen to take up arms again and fight till they secure their rights, or shed the last drop of blood.” John Jay agreed and the British found it best to yield the point.

The land on the southern side of the Ohio was part of Virginia and already being rapidly settled according to the Virginia system, which allowed a man to take and mark for himself any unappropriated lands. By the New England system, so-called, the land lying north of the river was to be properly surveyed and sold, the establishment of settlements done by legal process, and lands of the natives to remain theirs until purchased from them.

Until that point the United States government did not own a single acre of land. Now, all at once, almost unimaginably, it had acquired some 265,878 square miles of unbroken wilderness, thus doubling the size of the United States. It was an unsettled empire north and west of the Ohio River, bigger than all of France, with room enough for as many as five more states and included access to four of the five Great Lakes, one of which, Lake Michigan, reached to its very center.

And then there was the Ohio River, itself a great natural highway west, *la Belle Rivière*, as the early French explorer René-Robert Cavelier de La Salle had called it.

The new realm was spoken of as “the back country,” “the vast interior,” “the howling wilderness,” “the fair domain beyond the Ohio,” or simply “the Ohio country.” There were no roads as yet anywhere in all this wilderness, no bridges, no towns, churches, schools, stores, or wayside taverns. In New England there were more than a thousand towns, one about every five miles. But in all the immense territory to the northwest of the Ohio River, the territory from which five states were to emerge—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin—there was as yet not one permanent legal settlement.

A few remote forts had been established and there were hunters, trappers, fur traders, and “squatters,” those who settled wherever they chose and without legal claim to the land.

Much, too, was reported of forests teeming with wolves, bears, wild boars, panthers, rattlesnakes, and the even more deadly copperheads. And, as every easterner knew, there was the “Indian menace,” the many native tribes who considered the Ohio country their rightful, God-granted domain. Much blood had already been shed in wilderness battles and atrocities committed by both natives and white men. These were realities well-known throughout the east and particularly on the minds of those gathered at the Bunch of Grapes.

Worst of all had been the infamous massacre by American militia of ninety-six peaceable Delaware Indians in central Ohio in 1782—Christian men, women, and children who knelt singing hymns as they were systematically clubbed to death, all because they were mistakenly thought to have had a part in the murder of a family of settlers. In revenge soon after, at Upper Sandusky, the Delawares stripped naked, tortured, cut off the ears, burned while still alive, and scalped a captured American officer, a

friend of George Washington's, Colonel William Crawford. Delaware justice demanded a life for a life be taken, but they would give an enemy an opportunity to die well and honor his family during ritual torture. Crawford's dismemberment was also to insure that he would be a less formidable enemy in the next world. The story of Crawford's fate, the ultimate frontier nightmare, was told over and over back east.

Only the year before the Bunch of Grapes meeting, one of the group, General Benjamin Tupper, as part of a government surveying party, had been turned back from entering the Ohio country so severe was Indian resistance to the encroaching settlers.

Then, too, there was also the immediate reality of serious, mounting troubles right at home. Unprecedented financial panic had gripped the new nation since the end of the Revolutionary War. The resources and credit of the government were exhausted. Money, in the form of scrip issued by the government, was nearly worthless. The scrip the veterans received as compensation for their service was worth no more than ten cents on the dollar. Trade was at a standstill. In Massachusetts the situation was worst of all. Farmers were being imprisoned for debt. Only a few months earlier an armed rebellion led by a poor Massachusetts farmer and war veteran named Daniel Shays had to be put down by a force of loyal militia commanded by General Tupper.

As it was, the severe economic depression that followed the war would last longer even than the war. But out west now there was land to be had as never imagined—vast land, rich land where there was “no end to the beauty and plenty”—that could be made available to veterans at a bargain price in compensation for their service. West was opportunity. West was the future.

“As time progressed, the New England Revolutionary officers and soldiers interested in western immigration became more and more impatient to realize their hopes,” as one settler was to write.

They were poorer than their neighbors who had not been in the field; and if they had more of pride, that was only natural from the lives they had led, and surely they had a right to feel proud of the services they had rendered. One who was among them, and a close observer, says that they had a better and more dignified bearing than before the war, dressed more handsomely, and were improved in manners and conversation. . . . These men it must be remembered did not receive

money in pay for their fatigue, exposure and suffering, but final certificates in settlement.

“The spirit of immigration never ran higher with us than at this time,” Manasseh Cutler wrote to a member of the Congress, Nathan Dane, who happened also to be a Massachusetts neighbor.

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The leading figure—the driving force—at the Bunch of Grapes gathering was a widely known hero of the Revolution and, in normal times, a farmer and surveyor, General Rufus Putnam. It was he who had called the meeting.

A commanding presence, he stood nearly six feet tall and spoke in a manner described as straightforward and impressive. One of his eyes had been disfigured by a childhood injury that “gave it an outward, oblique cast, leaving the expression of his face strongly impressed on the mind of the beholder.” In his portrait he is shown in profile, with the intention, no doubt, to hide the bad eye. As would be said:

He was not brilliant, he was not quick, but he was richly endowed with that best of gifts—good, sound, common sense, and he had, in unusual degree, that prescience that enabled him to skillfully adapt means to ends, so as thereby to accomplish what he wished. . . . His judgment was sound, he was patient and had great power of endurance. His integrity was never questioned.

He was also known to be full of jokes and loved to sing.

Most important to matters at hand, Rufus Putnam, before the end of the Revolution, had led 288 officers in signing what was known as the Newburgh Petition, whereby land bounties promised to veterans would be provided in the Ohio country in payment for their military services.

Then, at the war’s end, he had written a long letter to Washington about the possibilities represented by the Ohio country, knowing Washington as a young man had seen that wilderness firsthand on surveying expeditions and, further, that Washington owned land there. He was already an Ohio land speculator.



I am, sir [Putnam wrote], among those who consider the cession of so great a tract of territory to the United States . . . a very happy circumstance and of great consequence to the American empire.

Washington, though a Virginian to the core, had particularly high regard for the New Englanders who had served under his command. A great part of his military history had been made north of the Potomac, beginning in Boston.

Many there were in New England, Putnam assured him, waiting for the chance to head west as settlers, and there was “not the least doubt but other valuable citizens will follow their example.”

In a letter to Congress, Washington strongly supported the idea, but in a subsequent letter to Putnam he wrote, “. . . matters, as far as they have come to my knowledge, remain in *statu quo*.”

In 1784 Putnam wrote again to Washington to assure him settlement of the Ohio country still “engrosses many of my thoughts, and much of my time,” and that as soon as Congress made provisions for granting land there, thousands from New England would emigrate. Meanwhile, however, many were “growing quite impatient, and the general inquiry now is, when are we going to the Ohio?” It was being called “Ohio Fever.” Putnam preferred to call it “the Ohio cause.”

In 1784 an ordinance for the government of the Northwest Territory had been drawn up by several members of Congress including Thomas Jefferson. It proposed, “That after the year 1800 . . . there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any of the said States. . . .” The ordinance passed but without any slavery restrictions, and without them as would be said, it was “a dead letter.”

Jefferson had since backed off from his position on slavery, having decided not to risk his political “usefulness” by maintaining such a stand. Further, by this time he had resigned his seat in Congress and departed for France to serve as the new American ambassador.

The plan set forth now at the Bunch of Grapes was to form an association or company to purchase from the government lands in Ohio and establish a first settlement there. A “very pleasing description” of the western country was provided by both Generals Putnam and Tupper. Manasseh Cutler, too, took an active part in the discussions. He had read nearly all that had been published of the writings of early French explorers

and like others had been moved especially by descriptions of the land and the river by St. John de Crèvecoeur.

It is, without doubt, the most fertile country, with the most varied soil, the best watered, and that which offers to agriculture and commerce, the most abundant and easy resources, of all those which the Europeans have ever discovered. . . .

Crèvecoeur also described the experience of giving oneself up to the current of the Ohio River. “This sweet and tranquil navigation appeared to me like an agreeable dream.” (In a book he was soon to publish, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Thomas Jefferson referred to the Ohio as “the most beautiful river on earth,” though, like Manasseh Cutler, he had never seen it.)

Full agreement at the Bunch of Grapes gathering was reached with no difficulty and in the days that followed further details were seen to. It was to be called the Ohio Company of Associates and Rufus Putnam was to be its chairman. A fund of a million dollars would be raised. No one could purchase less than one share, or more than five. Payment for each share would be primarily the face value of the certificates held by the veterans, plus \$10 in gold or silver. The cash raised by the \$10 payments was to cover the company’s operating expenses.

That the Ohio Company was also, apart from its noble intentions, a venture in land speculation went without saying. Those founders taking part at the Bunch of Grapes were to receive generous compensation. Rufus Putnam and Manasseh Cutler, for example, were each to receive four shares, or 4,692 acres of land.

Major Winthrop Sargent, another surveyor who had been to Ohio, was named secretary of the company, and Manasseh Cutler was chosen to negotiate with the Continental Congress in the purchase of the land. He was also to have a say in the enactment of a new Ordinance, whereby Congress would establish how the new states were to be laid out, and, importantly, the conditions under which they were to enter the Union. Such an ordinance was essential, for without it no purchase could be arranged. As would be said, “What would homes be worth to New England men without good government?”

That a national constitution had still to be resolved by the summer of 1787 meant there was as yet no president of the United States, only a Congress to deal with.

It was intended that this ordinance, now called the Northwest Ordinance, should stipulate that in the whole of the territory there would be absolute freedom of religion and particular emphasis on education, matters New Englanders considered fundamental to a just and admirable society.

Most importantly, there was to be no slavery. In the plan for the creation of a new state northwest of the Ohio River, the proposition put forth by Rufus Putnam and others at the time of the Newburgh Resolution, the total exclusion of slavery was an essential.

As would be observed by historians long afterward, the Northwest Ordinance was designed to guarantee what would one day be known as the American way of life.

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Manasseh Cutler was to be the spokesman for the “Ohio cause” on the scene with the Congress in New York. The word “lobbyist” had yet to come into use. Rather he was the “agent” assigned to win congressional approval, and no fitter or more capable agent could have been selected.

His enthusiasm for the whole undertaking seemed to compound by the week. “The more I contemplate the prospect,” he wrote to Winthrop Sargent, “. . . the more I feel myself inclined to take an active part in carrying on the settlement and to be one of the first emigrants.” He was already contemplating the number of foreign vegetables that might thrive in land so rich.

## II.

The day of his departure being a Sunday—“Lord’s Day,” as he liked to say—the Reverend Cutler preached a sermon before bidding goodbye to his wife and family and heading off “southward” to Cambridge, Boston, Providence, Rhode Island, and beyond, rolling along in his horse and

buggy, making thirty to thirty-five miles a day and, to judge by his daily journal entries, in grand spirits.

He was bound first for New York, where the Congress sat, then Philadelphia, where for the past month the Constitutional Convention had been meeting in secret sessions. Crossing into Connecticut, he made a brief stop at the family farm in Killingly to see his father and found all well, his father, at age eighty, in better health than he expected, still able to help bring in the hay.

At Middletown, the traveling pastor was the guest of General Samuel Holden Parsons, one of the directors of the Ohio Company. A Harvard graduate, attorney, and noted officer in the Revolution, Parsons had traveled to the Ohio country only the year before as one of the commissioners appointed by Congress sent to the Northwest to negotiate a treaty with the Indians. He could speak from experience about the Ohio River, the great reach of the wilderness, the fertility of the soil. He and Cutler talked for the better part of a day. In addition, Parsons provided Cutler with still more letters of introduction.

At New Haven, he stopped again, this time to call on the president of Yale, the Reverend Ezra Stiles, a tiny sparrow of a man who, like Cutler, had enormous interest in practically everything.

It had been years since Cutler had been back to his alma mater and Stiles, happy to show him about, led a campus tour, introducing him to faculty and students, showing him the library and a collection of apparatus for the study of science. When Stiles insisted Cutler stay for a midday dinner with his wife and four daughters, Cutler could not resist. "I sent for my trunk," he wrote, "and showed the Doctor and his lady, and the young ladies, my botanical apparatus and books, with which they were all highly pleased, having never seen anything of the kind before." The previous day en route he had collected a number of flowers, all still perfectly fresh in his botanical box. With these in hand, he proceeded to deliver a short lecture on fructification, separating the parts at the same time, all to the delight of his audience. Only a call to dinner ended the performance.

Cutler could not have enjoyed the day more, but when urged to spend the night, he declined. He was on a mission and must keep on his way.

The roads were "very bad," or "excessively bad." He worried about his horse. A tavern at Fairfield, Connecticut, was "miserable, dirty." He wrote of crossing King's Bridge ("small, very narrow, and badly built") onto New

York Island and of seeing the ruins of British encampments and fortifications on both sides of the road on his way down to the city, as well as the ruins of Fort Washington, Fort Independence, and other fortifications built by the Americans.

By mid-afternoon Thursday, July 5, having covered 302 miles in twelve days, he arrived at the Plow and Harrow in New York and from there, wasting no time, he set off to deliver his letters of introduction.

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From that point on things moved rapidly. The days that followed were as full as any he had known. He was everywhere, busy every hour, meeting or conferring with, or being hosted by one figure of importance or influence after another. In his business with Congress he regarded success “a duty.”

The morning of July 6, he went to New York’s City Hall to deliver his introductions to several members of Congress. At eleven o’clock he climbed the spacious stairs to the Congress Chamber on the second floor. At the time only eight of the thirteen states were represented by delegates.

A member from Virginia, Colonel Edward Carrington, greeted Cutler and introduced him to other members to whom Cutler delivered his “petition” for purchasing land for the Ohio Company and proposed the terms and conditions of purchase. A committee of five was then appointed to agree on the terms and report to Congress.

He had made a good start, as no doubt he sensed. His manners in particular impressed three of the five members who were southerners. Never before, they said, had they seen such qualities in a northern man.

That the one who had come to persuade the members of Congress to accept a proposal of such monumental scale was neither a commercial proponent nor politician, but a well-mannered figure of high learning and culture, as well as a man of the cloth, was in itself a matter of considerable interest and importance. Clearly he was to be taken seriously.

In the days that followed, he dined in style several times, starting at the home of General Henry Knox, once a Boston bookseller, now secretary of war. Already an investor in the Ohio Company, Knox had great influence among veterans and was fervently urging Congress to act. Both the general and Madam Knox, as she liked to be called, with their love of lavish hospitality, had become quite large. (Secretary Knox weighed



approximately 325 pounds.) Cutler described her as “gross” and thought her way of doing her hair, piled a foot high on top of her head, far from attractive.

But at a dinner hosted by an English social lion, Sir John Temple, the consul general of Great Britain, he was delighted to find Lady Temple “the greatest beauty, notwithstanding her age, I ever saw,” as happily he recorded in his journal, and then went on about her “soft but majestic air” and smiles that “could not fail of producing the softest sensibility in the fiercest savage.” One would suppose her to be no more than twenty-two, he wrote, when in fact she was forty-four and already a grandmother.

Attired as usual in clerical black, the Massachusetts pastor remained as courtly and socially active as always and filled his diary with each day’s events and observations on those he was meeting. Such effort as he devoted to the diary alone would have been enough in itself to tire most people. Yet he was also faithfully writing home to his wife, Mary, and depending greatly on repeated word from her, as he would continually during times away from her for years to come.

On the afternoon of July 9 he went again to climb the stairs to the Congress Chamber and in the course of much discussion made his case. This time, however, the session did not go well. What exactly was said, he did not record, only that they “debated on terms but were so wide apart that there appears little prospect of closing a contract.” With the meeting ended, several members of the committee were “polite enough” to point out to him the splendors of the great room, its fine furnishings, the grand, full-length portrait of George Washington, and drapery that “infinitely exceeds anything of the kind I ever saw before.”

Clearly he had much work to do.

Earlier that same day he had made a most important call on the geographer of the United States, a military engineer and surveyor of long experience on the western frontier, Thomas Hutchins, to discuss the best possible site for settlement on the Ohio River. That afternoon they met again.

A veteran of the French and Indian War, Hutchins had laid out Fort Pitt at Pittsburgh, where the Monongahela and the Allegheny Rivers meet to form the Ohio. Later, in 1766, he had conducted a hydrographic survey down the Ohio, on an expedition led by the well-known Indian trader George Croghan. A great number of Shawnees and Delawares went too, the

entire party with baggage filling seventeen canoes. They traveled the whole length of the ever-winding river, more than 1,000 miles from Pittsburgh to the Mississippi, with the result of the first published survey describing the river's depths, currents, bordering hills, and bottomlands.

More recently, Hutchins had been in charge of several surveys of the Ohio frontier under the protection of a military escort. He knew the territory as did very few white men and, as Manasseh Cutler learned, he had no hesitation about voicing his opinions on the subject. "He gave me the fullest information . . . and advised me, by all means, to make our location on the Muskingum, which was decidedly, in his opinion, the best part of the whole of the western country."

The great trees of the forests at the confluence of the Ohio and Muskingum would not only provide timber aplenty for houses and boat building, but were a sure sign of fertile soil. Further, a federal fort, Fort Harmar, had now been established close by and the native population in the vicinity was comparatively small, two highly important advantages.

Thomas Hutchins's advice was to be decisive.

The great Puritan leader John Winthrop, on board the ship *Arbella*, in 1630, on his way with the first Pilgrims to settle in Massachusetts, had famously declared, "For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill." By all evidence, the Reverend Manasseh Cutler had decided where in the Ohio country the new City upon the Hill was to be located.



On July 10, he dined with an English immigrant, William Duer, who had distinguished himself as a member of the Continental Congress during the Revolution and later became involved in a number of commercial and financial projects whereby he had become quite wealthy. He lived in the style of a nobleman. "I presume he had not less than fifteen different sorts of wine at dinner, and after the [table] cloth was removed," Cutler wrote. Also present were Winthrop Sargent, who had come on to New York to work with Cutler, and another from Massachusetts named Samuel Osgood, who had recently been appointed one of the Board of Treasury.

To what extent Cutler discussed his conversation with Thomas Hutchins about the ideal location for settlement, if at all, is not known, but it would seem unlikely he could have kept Hutchins's opinions to himself. In any

event, Duer, Sargent, and Osgood were all to play considerable parts in what followed.

Congress by then had come to an agreement on the form of government for the western territory and drawn up a bill, a copy of which was sent to Cutler, and with leave for him to make any remarks he wished and propose any amendments, which he proceeded to do that same afternoon of July 10.

That done, he decided the time had come for a visit to Philadelphia, to pay calls on Benjamin Franklin, Dr. Benjamin Rush, and several other notables in the fields of science and medicine. There was, to be sure, the expectation also of meeting and conversing with those members of Congress taking part in the Constitutional Convention in session there.

Early the next morning, he was on the road again.

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Keeping his horse and buggy at a steady clip, covering ninety-five miles in just two days, he found himself “a little fatigued” by the time he arrived and checked in at the Indian Queen, an elegant Philadelphia inn on Third Street between Market and Chestnut. His third-floor room provided a broad view of the Delaware River and New Jersey beyond. A servant brought him tea and he was quite happy to have no plans for the evening.

But no sooner did he hear about the number of members of the Constitutional Convention staying in the house than his fatigue vanished and he “very agreeably” spent the evening meeting and conversing with a half dozen or more of considerable importance, including James Madison and George Mason of Virginia, Charles Pinckney of South Carolina, and Alexander Hamilton of New York, who, like Henry Knox, was already a stockholder in the Ohio Company, with no immediate interest in settling in the west, but great interest in it as a speculative venture. Not until one in the morning did Cutler retire.

He was to spend only two days in Philadelphia, but he had arrived just as a summer heat spell had broken and cooled the city. He also managed to pack more into his time even than in his days in New York, and from the many pages he filled in his journal, from his descriptions of so much that he saw and of the eminent figures he met and conversed with, the visit was like nothing he had ever experienced.

He breakfasted the first day with Elbridge Gerry of Marblehead, Massachusetts, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and a member of the Constitutional Convention, then toured the city with a noted physician, Gerardus Clarkson, covering twenty miles in a handsome four-wheeled, open carriage pulled by a pair of “very large and fine” horses.

He and Clarkson called on another signer of the Declaration of Independence and the most notable of Philadelphia physicians, Dr. Benjamin Rush, then moved on to meet the celebrated portrait painter Charles Willson Peale at the museum Peale had created. It was the first of its kind in America combining both art and natural history, and far beyond anything Manasseh Cutler had ever seen or even imagined.

One particular part [he wrote] is assigned to the portraits of the principal American characters who appeared on the stage during the late revolution, either in the councils or armies of their country. . . . I fancied myself introduced to all the General Officers that had been in the field during the war, whether dead or alive, for I think he had every one, and to most of the members of the Congress and other distinguished characters.

In another part of the vast room was a great array of natural “curiosities” collected by Peale—all manner of shells, turtles, frogs, toads, lizards, water snakes—in addition to a variety of wild animals and birds of almost every species in America. What amazed Cutler most was that they were all real. It was hard to imagine Noah himself could have boasted a better collection.

From the Peale Museum, the tour moved on to the State House—Independence Hall—which Cutler thought “richer and grander in style” than any public building he had ever seen. Proceeding to the Mall outside, they confronted the city’s prison, the one experience of the day Cutler did not care for. He thought the building sufficiently elegant. It was “its unsavory contents” he found objectionable. In the warmth of the July morning all windows were open.

Your ears are constantly insulted with their Billingsgate language, or your feelings wounded with their pitiful complaints. Their long reed poles, with a little cap of cloth at the end, are constantly extended over into the Mall, in order to receive your charity, which they are

incessantly begging. And if you refuse them, they load you with the most foul and horrid imprecations.

There were stops at the university and to view several churches of different denominations. Then, after a brief rest, they were joined by Elbridge Gerry to move on to what was to be the main event of the day, to the Market Street home of Benjamin Franklin.

As all knew, Franklin, at eighty-one, was taking part in the Constitutional Convention, but on this particular afternoon they found him in his garden, sitting under a large mulberry tree chatting with several gentlemen and ladies.

“There was no curiosity in Philadelphia which I felt so anxious to see as this great man,” Cutler would write. In his imagination until then Franklin loomed considerably larger than life.

But how were my ideas changed, when I saw a short, fat, trenched old man in a plain Quaker dress, bald pate, and short white locks, sitting without his hat under the tree, and, as Mr. Gerry introduced me, rose from his chair, took me by the hand, expressed his joy to see me, welcomed me to the city, and begged me to set myself close to him.

At once they entered into a “free conversation” and most agreeably, until one point when Franklin started to talk about some humorous incident that had taken place earlier in the day at the Constitutional Convention and had to be stopped by one of the other listeners and reminded of the secrecy of all Convention matters.

By this time, as it was turning dark, everyone moved inside to Franklin’s library where Cutler feasted his eyes, certain he was looking at the largest and finest private library in America. And, of course, there was more to be seen than books:

He showed us a glass machine for exhibiting the circulation of the blood in the arteries and veins of the human body . . . a rolling press for taking the copies of letters or any other writing . . . his long artificial arm and hand, for taking down and putting books upon high shelves which are out of reach . . . his great armed chair, with rockers, and a large fan placed over it, with which he fans himself, keeps off

flies, etc., while he sits reading, with only a small motion of his foot; and many other curiosities and inventions, all his own.

What Franklin wanted most to show his accomplished guest was a large volume on botany, “which, indeed,” wrote Cutler, “afforded me the greatest pleasure of any one thing in his library.”

The book was so large that only with great difficulty was Franklin able to raise it from a low shelf and lift it onto a table. But as it often was with old people, wrote Cutler, “he insisted on doing it himself, and would permit no person to assist him, merely to show us how much strength he had remaining.” As Cutler’s father could still help bring in the hay, so the great doctor could still bring to the table weighty works of the mind.

The book was *Systema Vegetabilium* by the Swedish naturalist Carolus Linnaeus, lavishly illustrated with large full-color cuts of every plant. “It was a feast to me,” Cutler wrote. He wished he had at least three months to devote himself entirely to this one volume.

Franklin, too, as he said, loved natural history, and Cutler was amazed and “delighted with the extensive knowledge he appeared to have of every subject, the brightness of his memory, and the clearness and vivacity of all his mental faculties.” Not until ten o’clock did Cutler and the others take their leave.

The day following, Saturday, July 14, he was up and dressed earlier than usual. Told that the City Market was among Philadelphia’s greatest curiosities, he walked out the door to see for himself. It was still dark, yet people were converging from all directions.

The market was an open, one-story brick building nearly half a mile in length. By the time it was daylight the marketers had everything arranged. All that might be imagined was on display—fish, meats, vegetables of every kind, fresh fruit—and all in perfect order. No less a wonder was the crowd, people “of every rank and condition in life, from the highest to the lowest, male and female, of every age and every color.”

He could hardly tear himself away, but another full day was in store. Taking no break for breakfast he and Dr. Clarkson were off again in the doctor’s carriage, heading this time to the large homestead and famous gardens of the eminent naturalist William Bartram, several miles out of town on the banks of the Schuylkill River. There a considerable contingent of those attending the Constitutional Convention was already gathered and

waiting, including Madison, Mason, Rutledge of South Carolina, and Alexander Hamilton.

Bartram was found busy hoeing in his garden without shoes or stockings, and at first seemed embarrassed by so large a delegation appearing so early in the day. But, as Cutler wrote, he soon got rid of his embarrassment and became quite sociable.

Like his time with Franklin, this summer morning visit with William Bartram was an experience Cutler would long treasure. They talked botany, toured the garden, then walked to the river between two great rows of immense trees to a summer house on the bank of the river.

About nine o'clock the group moved on to breakfast at Gray's Tavern also on the Schuylkill, and were treated to a tour of an even more lavish garden. For someone as passionate about flowers as Cutler, it seemed paradise.

At every end [he wrote], side, and corner, there were *summer-houses*, arbors covered with vines or flowers, or shady bowers encircled with trees and flowering shrubs, each of which was formed in a different taste. In the borders were arranged every kind of flower, one would think, that nature had ever produced, and with the utmost display of fancy, as well as variety.

On a path overlooking the river, they came to a fence, beyond which was a "view of one of the finest cascades in America. . . . A broad sheet of water comes over a large horizontal rock, and falls about seventy feet perpendicular. . . . Here we gazed with admiration and pleasure for some time."

As if he had not already done enough for one day, he next undertook an afternoon tour of the Philadelphia hospital with Benjamin Rush. It seemed the more there was for him to see and learn in the time available, the more people wanted to show him, the greater his curiosity and energy.

Rush led him first to the hospital's museum to see the finest collection of medical paintings in America. Then, along with twenty or so students, he took Cutler on his rounds of the sick. With each case Rush considered worthy of notice, he would address the students on the nature of the trouble at hand and the mode of treatment to be pursued, and on each of these

occasions he would direct his comments to Cutler also, but always as though he, too, were a physician, which Cutler greatly appreciated.

They moved next to the floor below to see the cells of the “maniacs,” a setting and experience about as different from the gardens of that morning as anything could have been. The cells were each about ten feet square and as formidable as those in a prison. Here were men and women, twenty or thirty in number, some fierce and raving, some nearly naked, others singing and dancing, or talking incessantly.

But as Cutler already knew, Rush was far ahead in his profession in his insistence on treating the insane as kindly as possible. “This would have been a melancholy scene indeed, had it not been that there was every possible relief afforded them in the power of man,” he wrote. All was exceptionally clean—as it was throughout the hospital. To Cutler the hospital seemed more like a palace than a hospital.

Shortly after a midday dinner with Rush, the ringing of a church bell signaled that the library on the second floor of Carpenters’ Hall—the historic place where the first Continental Congress had met—was open for receiving and returning books. It was to be Cutler’s last stop in Philadelphia. As he told the others, he would be leaving for New York that evening.

Back at the Indian Queen, he said his goodbyes to those attending the Constitutional Convention he had come to know. To what extent he had discussed the Ohio project with them, or encouraged their involvement, is unknown. For all he wrote about his many activities in Philadelphia, he recorded virtually nothing concerning the great purpose he was so intent on serving.

That he considered his time in Philadelphia among the most stimulating experiences ever there is little doubt. In just two days, he had seen most of the city’s main attractions and met and conversed with all the leading citizens he could have wished for.

Nor is there any doubt he himself had made an immensely favorable impression on those he met. When one of the other guests at the Indian Queen expressed amazement that the Reverend Cutler came to be in such demand in so short a time in a city he had never before set foot in, Cutler said it was the introductory letters that made the difference. But it had been much more than that.



As would be widely appreciated in time to come, that he had received “the most marked attentions” by figures so distinguished and of such prominence, was clearly “testimony to the worth and excellence of the character of Dr. Cutler.”

Having settled his account at the inn and loaded his trunk onto the back of his one-horse shay, he was again on his way, knowing the moment of decision in New York was close at hand.

### III.

“Called on members of Congress very early this morning,” begins his journal entry for Thursday, July 19. “Was furnished with the Ordinance establishing a Government in the Western federal Territory.”

He also learned a number in Congress were “decidedly opposed” to his terms—though what this was about, he did not say—and some to any contract whatever. Clearly, he needed to know how many were opposed, who they were, and if possible bring them around.

He was not at all sure about some of the New Englanders in Congress who worried that the lure of Ohio would take away too many of the home population. One was Congressman Nathan Dane, his neighbor from Ipswich—“Dane must be carefully watched,” Cutler wrote, though exactly what concerned him is not clear.

Three Virginians were with him, he knew—Edward Carrington, William Grayson, and Richard Henry Lee—but a half dozen others could not be counted on. “If they can be brought over, I shall succeed; if not, my business is at an end.” At a committee meeting he was told by the members they intended to make their report before the close of day.

The following morning, Friday, July 20, the secretary of Congress presented him with the ordinance agreed upon the day before, stating the conditions of the contract, and Cutler informed the committee that he could not agree to the terms proposed. “I told them I saw no prospect of a contract, and wished to spend no more time and money on business so unpromising.”

At this point William Duer, secretary of the Board of Treasury, came to him with proposals from a number of principal characters of New York to

“extend our contract” further down the Ohio to the confluence of the Scioto River “and to take in another company, but that it should be kept a profound secret.” The plan, which also had the support of Winthrop Sargent, struck Cutler favorably.

Importantly, he had come to have high regard for Duer. “He is a gentleman of the most sprightly abilities, and has a soul filled with the warmest benevolence and generosity,” Cutler would write. “He is made both for business and the enjoyment of life.”

He also thought it best not to say anything further about Duer’s proposal to Congress for now. As it was, the committee was “mortified” and seemed not to know what to say, but still urged another attempt.

Early the next morning, several members of Congress called on Cutler to report that on learning he was determined not to accept their terms and proposed leaving the city, Congress had “discovered a much more favorable disposition, and believed if I renewed my request I might obtain conditions as reasonable as I desired.”

“This,” as he wrote, “had the desired effect.” The land purchase, he told them, would now be extended down the Ohio as far as the Scioto River. The Ohio Company’s large purchase of land would provide Congress with funds of nearly four million dollars to pay down some of the national debt incurred during the Revolutionary War. “Our intention was an actual, a large, and immediate settlement of the most robust and industrious people in America; and that it would be made systematically, which must instantly enhance the value of federal lands, and prove an important acquisition to Congress.” On these terms he would renew the negotiations, if Congress was willing.

July 22 being a Sunday, he attended three different church services and, to judge by his journal, dispensed with politics entirely until the next morning, when he, Sargent, and Duer “made every exertion in private conversation to bring over my opposers in Congress.”

When the Reverend Cutler was repeatedly asked what civil office would be agreeable to him in the western country, he said he wished no such office, a response, as he wrote, that seemed surprising to “men who were so much used to solicit or be solicited for appointments of honor or profit.”

In the days following a good part of his time was spent with the head of the Board of Treasury, Samuel Osgood, whom he had first met at Duer’s dinner party and with whom he had much in common. A resident of

Massachusetts and a Harvard graduate, Osgood, too, had great interest in science and was known for his piety, as well as his understanding of politics.

Cutler had been told Osgood was much in favor of the new terms Cutler had offered. Still, Cutler wrote, “such is the intrigue and artifice practiced by men in power, that I felt very suspicious, and was as cautious as possible.” He had no scruples, however, about going over all of the Ohio Company’s plans with Osgood. And Osgood, to Cutler’s surprise, “highly approved.” Indeed, he “thought it the best ever formed in America.”

George Washington, as both of them doubtless knew, held to the strong belief that organized settlement of the frontier was the best way. “To suffer a wide-extended country to be overrun with land-jobbers, speculators, and monopolizers, or even scattered settlers, is, in my opinion,” Washington had written, “inconsistent with that wisdom and policy which our true interest dictates, or which an enlightened people ought to adopt; and besides, it is pregnant of disputes, both with the savages and among ourselves.”

“If we were able to establish a settlement as we proposed, however small in the beginning, we should then have surmounted our greatest difficulty,” Osgood told Cutler. “Every other object would be within our reach, and, if the matter was pursued with spirit, he believed it would prove one of the greatest undertakings ever yet attempted in America,” noted Cutler.

On Thursday, he, Sargent, and Duer did their best to pull every string they could. But Cutler’s patience was nearly gone, which led the English diplomat Sir John Temple to remind him that were he to spend another month trying to get what he wanted he would be far more expeditious than was common for smaller matters through Congress, and that he should remember he was attempting something of unprecedented magnitude, exceeding any private contract ever made before in the United States. What was more, Temple told him, he had never seen anyone who “so warmly engaged” the attention of Congress as Cutler had. Nor had he ever known the members more pressing to bring an issue to a close.

*Friday, July 27.* I rose very early this morning, and, after adjusting my baggage for my return, for I was determined to leave New York this day, I set out on a general morning visit, and paid my respects to all the members of Congress in the city, and informed them of my

intention to leave the city that day. My expectations of obtaining a contract, I told them, were nearly at an end.

At half past three that afternoon, he was informed that a new Northwest Ordinance had passed Congress “without the least variation,” and the Board of Treasury was directed to close a contract with the Ohio Company. As the record of the vote on the Ordinance certified, eight had been present.

By the agreement a grant of 5,000,000 acres of land had been obtained for \$3,500,000—a million and a half acres were for the Ohio Company and the remainder for a private real estate venture, the Scioto Company. “We are beholden to the Scioto Company for our purchase,” Cutler would acknowledge. He and several other associates—Rufus Putnam, Samuel Parsons, Winthrop Sargent—were to receive substantial shares in the Ohio Company speculation.

Just as Sir John Temple had told Cutler, and as Cutler himself was well aware, it was much the largest, most far-reaching contract in the history of Congress. And immense as it was in monetary and geographic scale, the clearly stated articles of the new ordinance—“An Ordinance for the Government of the Territory of the United States, North-West of the River Ohio”—were no less in their far-reaching importance.

The ordinance, as would be said, “created a machinery of government for immediate use,” provided for the creation of new states, and established a form of government meant to be of perpetual obligation. Not surprisingly, given the number of those from Massachusetts involved, the new ordinance read much like the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the first constitution in the United States, written in 1779 by John Adams.

Cutler knew Adams. He had dined with him, and had been present for some of the sessions concerning the creation of the Massachusetts constitution.

Particularly in the declaration of rights in both the new ordinance and the Massachusetts constitution were the similarities most evident, Article I of the ordinance, on freedom of religion in the territory, reading almost the same as that in the Massachusetts constitution.

In what he wrote, John Adams had left no doubt about his faith in education as the bulwark of the good society, the old abiding faith of his Puritan forebears. And so, too, in its Article III, the ordinance was quite clear on the matter. “Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to

good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”

That such emphasis be put on education in the vast new territory before even one permanent settlement had been established was extraordinary. But of even greater importance was the fact that outside of New England there was then no such thing in the United States as a system of state-supported schools of any kind, and even in New England students were poorly taught, housed, and hardly supervised in the least. Before the year was out, in a contract between the Ohio Company and the Board of Treasury, it would be specified that a section in each township be reserved for common schools and be “given perpetually to the use of an university.”

To Manasseh Cutler the establishment of a university was of utmost importance as was plain to everyone concerned. It was “a first object,” as he later told his oldest son, Ephraim, “and lay with great weight on my mind.”

“Wisdom is the principal thing,” read the ancient directive in Proverbs; “therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding.”

Importantly, the same Article III of the ordinance stated that the “utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent . . . they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress.”

But it was Article VI that set forth a tenet such as never before stated in any American constitution. “There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory.” And, as was well understood, this had been agreed to when slavery existed in every one of the thirteen states. It was almost unimaginable that throughout a new territory as large as all of the thirteen states, there was to be no slavery.

Nothing written at the time indicated who had been most responsible for Article VI. In his journal Cutler said nothing on the subject. Nathan Dane of Massachusetts would later claim credit for that part of the ordinance. But this seems unlikely. While he may have drafted certain parts, he was not the writer Manasseh Cutler was. As his own biographer would say, Dane had “no graces of style, either native or borrowed, neither did he ever seek for any.”

Overall Manasseh Cutler had played the most important role by far. Years later he would tell Ephraim he had indeed prepared that part of the ordinance banning slavery and, as Ephraim also recorded, the reason for

this, as well as the recognition of religion, morality, and knowledge as foundations of civil government, arose from the fact that his father was “acting for associates, friends, and neighbors, who would not embark in the enterprise, unless these principles were unalterably fixed.”

In the opinion of the two grandchildren, William Parker Cutler and Julia Perkins Cutler, who would later edit and publish Manasseh Cutler’s journals and correspondence, his way with the southern members of Congress had been the deciding factor.

In any event, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 would prove to be one of the most far-reaching acts of Congress in the history of the country.

As one widely respected, later-day historian, Albert Bushnell Hart of Harvard University, would write, “Never was there a more ingenious, systematic and successful piece of lobbying than that of the Reverend Manasseh Cutler” and the great Northwest Ordinance of 1787 stands alongside the Magna Carta and the Declaration of Independence as a bold assertion of the rights of the individual.



Eager to be heading home, Cutler hurriedly packed, made a number of parting calls, took up the reins of his horse, and was on his way north, though, as he said, with some reluctance. The “attention and generous treatment” he had been shown in New York were “totally different from what I had ever before met with.” He loved the city, loved its business, the grand buildings from four to six stories high, the straight, well-kept streets, the way people dressed, and the way they treated strangers. It was a city with a great future, he felt certain.

Not until past midnight Saturday, August 4, did he finally reach home. As he dutifully recorded he had traveled 885 miles. “Thus I completed one of the most interesting and agreeable journeys I ever made in my life . . . and may probably have reason to consider it as one of the most happy events of my life.”

## IV.

Through the rest of that summer and on into the fall there was much for the good pastor to attend to with his family, his parishioners, his boarding school, and, in addition, the hundreds of people now coming to his door to talk about the Ohio country and issues large and small to be settled as soon as possible in preparation for a first expedition to the distant wilderness. “Determined to send men this fall,” he wrote in his journal at the end of August.

September 10–15 House full of Ohio people all the week  
Sept. 21, 22 Ohio people here . . .  
Sept. 24–29 Much engaged in the Ohio matters

Great care had to be taken to choose those who would be valuable in the community once it was established. By September 29, more than 150 had applied, and out of those, thirty-seven had been signed on.

In October, even though he had not seen the Ohio territory, the Reverend Cutler published a pamphlet on it, a work of considerable substance and effort in which he described the natural resources, soils, climate, the earlier enthusiastic judgments of an English engineer, and predicted that because of the great Ohio River and plentitude of fine timber at hand, shipbuilding would thrive there.

Further, he made his strongest statement yet on the subject of education and the important part it was to play. The field of science “may be greatly enlarged,” he wrote, “and the acquisition of useful knowledge placed upon a more respectable footing here than in any other part of the world.

Besides the opportunity of opening a new and unexplored region for the range of natural history, botany, and medical science, there will be one advantage which no other part of the earth can boast, and which probably will never again occur; that, in order to begin *right*, there will be . . . no inveterate systems to overturn.

And it was never too soon to get started on so worthy an aspiration. Even now, he wrote, “Could the necessary apparatus be procured, and funds immediately established for the founding of a university on a liberal plan, the professors could get started in their work.”

For his father, this was “a season of the most arduous labor,” son Ephraim would recall. It was his father’s particular character that, after he

had fully considered a matter and settled his mind to effect a purpose, nothing could discourage him; his energy and perseverance overcame all difficulties.

General Putnam . . . [was] to take charge of the pioneer party; still, the men and means were to be sought for and provided, and in this he bore his full share. I well remember the extreme anxiety and toil it occasioned him. I was then only about twenty years of age, but I enlisted some of the first adventurers; many, however, of the most effective men were induced to come forward through my father's influence.

The thought that he, too, might go on to Ohio, had been on Manasseh Cutler's mind for some time, but with so much still to attend to there at home, he knew he must stay where he was. But if he could not go, his son Jervis, an adventurer by nature, was eager to take his place. At age nineteen he was to be one of the youngest men on the expedition.



The first pioneers—forty-eight men including surveyors, carpenters, boat builders, common laborers, and a blacksmith—were to go in two parties. One, numbering twenty and headed by a veteran officer, Major Haffield White, was to depart first from Ipswich Hamlet. The second, led by General Rufus Putnam, the overall head, or “superintendent,” of the expedition, would leave soon after from Hartford, Connecticut.

Their tools, one ax and one hoe per man, as well as thirty pounds of baggage, were to be carried in the company wagon. In addition, each man was to furnish himself with one good musket, a bayonet, six flints, powder horn and pouch, priming wire and brush, half a pound of powder, one pound of musket balls, and a pound of buckshot. Wages were \$4 a month.

By the time all was ready, December had arrived, hardly the best time of year to be setting off for the far wilderness. They would be traveling on foot the entire way until reaching the headwaters of the Ohio, so even under ideal conditions they would be moving at a speed of little more than one mile an hour, or about ten miles a day on an overland journey of some 700 miles that included the mountains of western Pennsylvania.



But spirits were high and the importance of getting there with the least delay possible was very much in mind. Once at the Ohio, time would be needed to build boats for the journey downriver—all to arrive in early spring, soon enough to get in a first planting of gardens and corn sufficient for survival.

Before sunrise the morning of Monday, December 3, 1787, a band of pioneers had gathered in front of the rectory, where they were to take an early breakfast. At dawn, they paraded in front of the house, and after a short address delivered by the Reverend Cutler, “full of good advice and hearty wishes,” the men fired a three-volley salute, and marched off down the road, young Jervis among them, cheered by the bystanders and following a large covered wagon pulled by oxen.

The wagon had been a gift from Manasseh Cutler and he himself had painted the white inscription on the black canvas sides, “*For the Ohio.*”