OHIO HISTORY
Volume 111/Summer-Autumn 2002

LOUIS W. POTTS

Visions of America, 1787–1788: The Ohio of Reverend Manasseh Cutler

During the winter of 1786 the Congregational minister at Ipswich Hamlet (later Hamilton) took time from tending his flock of seventy or so congregants to jot his secular musings to Jeremy Belknap, a fellow cleric in Massachusetts. Manasseh Cutler reflected on "a new maggot in my head, which sometimes bites pretty smartly. What, think you, my friend of the Ohio Country? Is it not much more preferable to these frozen regions?" Then feeling particularly pinched by postwar finances which left him but "a very scanty living," Cutler envisioned in the Northwest Territory, "A landed interest in that part of the country will supply a family with all the necessaries and even luxuries of life, with a very small part of the labor which is necessary here to get a very indifferent living." From the eastern coast, Cutler believed the banks of the Ohio River then constituted "incomparably the best part of the United States." Cutler urged his correspondent to write to another renowned natural scientist, David Rittenhouse in Pennsylvania, for "particular information" on the Ohio. Both Cutler and Belknap believed that Rittenhouse had gained firsthand experience surveying the region. Cutler concluded, "I suspect I have got into the field of fancy, and if I have, I wish to be shown the way out."[1]

Louis W. Potts is Professor, Department of History, University of Missouri-Kansas City.

1. Manasseh Cutler to [Rev. Dr. Belknap], February 10, 1786, William Parker Cutler and Julia Perkins Cutler, (eds.), *Life, Journals and Correspondence of Rev. Manasseh Cutler*, 2 vols., (Athens, Ohio, 1987 reprint of 1888), II: 236–40. Belknap shared multiple avocations with Cutler. For example, in 1784 both had climbed the White Mountains of New Hampshire on a scientific expedition.

From today's perspective we know that the "maggot" and the "fancy" did not disappear but rather grew to greater proportions in the next decade. In the spring of 1786, Cutler, who had served in the War for American Independence as chaplain to patriotic forces defending nearby Rhode Island, joined other disgruntled army veterans in forming the Ohio Company of Associates. Each investor would contribute $1,000 in Continental certificates plus $10 in gold or silver for each share to purchase from the national domain. Cutler plunged into the adventure, agreeing to act as a solicitor of subscriptions in March though he was then handicapped by lack of information. He wrote a colleague at the head of the projected $1 million venture, "The Ohio Country is too little known in this part of the Commonwealth, that the people greatly need information with respect to its situations and the qualities of the lands." Rival schemes tempted Yankees to "northern frozen deserts; but were they made sensible of the fertility and temperature of the climate of the Ohio country, they would turn their faces to the southward. . . . Fear of the savages and the distance from connections seem to be the only objections I have heard any person make, but the flattering prospects of so fine a country opens to their view, and the numbers that will engage in the first settlements, in a great measure to obviate them."[2] The clergyman-speculator assumed the role of cultivator of Ohio fever.

In the ensuing year and a half, Cutler, from his position as one of the five directors of the Ohio Company, threw his energies into plans to settle a new America in Ohio. In this Cutler complemented an-

2. Manasseh Cutler to [Major Winthrop Sargent], March 24, 1786, Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life*, I: 187–89. Cutler particularly sought "extracts from Captain Hutchins' pamphlet." This would have been the initial report of Thomas Hutchins, Geographer of the United States, who with a party of thirty-eight had surveyed the Ohio public lands for Congress in 1785 and again in the summer of 1786. R. Douglas Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier: Crucible of the Old Northwest, 1720–1830* (Bloomington, Ind., 1996), 149–56, emphasizes that "Systematic survey promised to open the Ohio frontier to an orderly settlement process" even though Hutchins had been intimidated by Indians and his surveyors "made a number of mistakes." Many in the party including Winthrop Sargent, who "sent back glowing reports about the Ohio country," had their eye on attractive lands for speculation. In 1786, Cutler had been supplied a map of the Ohio region (author unknown) most probably by Abraham Williams of Barnstable, a co-founder of the Ohio Company in Massachusetts. Hutchins' earliest maps may be consulted in Beverly W. Bond, Jr., (ed.), *The Courses of the Ohio River taken by Lt. T. Hutchins Anno 1766 and Two Accompanying Maps* (Cincinnati, 1942).

other company leader, Rufus Putnam, the celebrated war hero, advocate of redeeming land bounties promised veterans, and organizer of New England settlers to the Ohio. As one student of the speculative venture put it, "Putnam was a soldier, Cutler was a diplomat; Putnam was a surveyor, Cutler was a social engineer. . . . Putnam knew and represented the pressing needs of the prospective settlers; Cutler was conspicuous in inaugurating and achieving the plan for this settlement."[3]

Manasseh Cutler. (SC 2324, OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTIONS.)

The summer of 1787 found Cutler on "one of the most interesting and agreeable journies I ever made in my life. It had in every view been prosperous but in many respects infinitely exceeded my expectations."[4] In his 885-mile jaunt he had circulated through southern New England soliciting subscribers for the Ohio Company, concentrated on relentlessly lobbying the Confederation Congress in New York City as it was then deliberating on the Northwest Ordinance, and paid a quick visit to Philadelphia (perhaps as courier between Congress and the Constitutional Convention). Throughout the trip he added to "the large and very respectable" list of acquaintances by meeting Rittenhouse and Thomas Hutchins, Geographer of the United States, as well as making botanical observations.[5] As representative of the

3. Robert Elliott Brown, *Manasseh Cutler and the Settlement of Ohio, 1788* (Marietta, Ohio, 1938), 7–8. That Putnam was more than a soldier can be clearly seen in Rufus Putnam to George Washington, June 16, 1783, Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life*, I:167–72. See also Emilius O. Randall and Daniel J. Ryan, *History of Ohio: The Rise and Progress of an American State* (New York, 1912), 2: 448, for the Putnam-Cutler duo.

4. Diary, August 3, 1787, Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life* I: 318; Louis W. Potts, "Manasseh Cutler, Lobbyist," *Ohio History*, 96, (Summer-Autumn, 1987), 101–23.

5. Diary, July 27, 1787, October 27, 1787, Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life* I:

Ohio Company of Associates and the Scioto Company, in October 1787 he signed contracts with the Confederation Congress for nearly five million acres (for $3.5 million). It is clear that Cutler had emerged from a minor cleric in a Massachusetts hamlet to a major player in the unfolding of his nation's posterity. "Cutler was a sort of Renaissance man, who had studied divinity, medicine, and botany, but wore his learning lightly." As a "wily lobbyist," in league with the unscrupulous William Duer (described by Cutler as "a man of the most sprightly abilities"), Cutler had joined, as he termed it, "many of the principal characters in America" who had invested in the combined resources and ambitions of the Ohio and Scioto Companies.[6]

Cutler acted as "social engineer" in envisioning a settlement at the juncture of the Muskingum and Ohio Rivers. Cutler's personal motto was a quotation from Virgil: "Happy is the man who can recognize the course of things." Since coming to Ipswich in 1771 he had been vitally involved in community building; operating a boarding school for elite North Shore boys; accumulating a philosophical cabinet (including barometer, thermometer, microscope, telescope, spyglass, and celestial globe); corresponding with botanical luminaries at Harvard, Yale, and ultimately throughout Europe; dabbling in both law and medicine; and finding time to tend an ever growing list of plants on his parsonage grounds. In all these pursuits he took an instrumentalist approach. He later wrote a fellow botanist about plant life in the Ohio Valley: "To make the science of Botany of public utility, every attention ought to be paid to the specific properties of vegetables. The most imperfect hints of the uses to which they have been applied in medicine, and for other purposes, may be of service." He foresaw Ohio cultivators tending to "the Indian tea, Japan varnish tree, and European grapes." As a natural historian Cutler had honed his visual acuity and was hence partial to translating what he had seen

303–09, 326. Mary Cone, *Life of Rufus Putnam* (Cleveland, 1886), 103–04, opined, "Much has been said in regard to the unwise choice made by the directors of the Ohio Company in locating their lands....they selected a tract that included within it more poor, rough, broken land than would be found anywhere else in the whole territory."

6. Ted Morgan, *Wilderness at Dawn: The Settling of the North American Continent* (New York, 1993), 416–25; Diary, July 27, 1787, Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life*, I:306.

into verbal descriptions. Pamela Regis has noted that after the Revolutionary War, "The natural historical declarations," such as produced by Cutler, "defined the place where the country would exist, and named and illustrated the objects of the creation that would furnish the new land . . . Natural historical representation presents America at its most characteristic—its unique plants, animals, peoples, and scenes—and as outside of time."[7]

Henry Steele Commager once observed that the allures of the Ohio Country meant "a new life for Cutler, or perhaps just an enlargement of the old. . . . one suspects that the whole Ohio adventure was a kind of by-product of Cutler's passion for botany and for exploring Indian mounds."[8] Yet contemporary newspaper accounts referred to his purchases as "Cutler's Indian Folly" or "Cutler's Indian Haven," and generations of scholars place Cutler in the forefront of "Ohio Fever." Cutler had proved adept as an observer and creator of communities as well as plants. From 1771 to 1823 he would lead his congregation and town (Hamilton) through the turbulences of the revolutionary and early republican eras. As the new year of 1783 dawned he had produced a quantitative and qualitative description of his local community, including an eleven-year tabulation of births, diseases, and deaths. He believed that such data "with the collateral information concerning the situation, air, water, and employment of inhabitants" could provide "very important instruction, and lead to

7. Manasseh Cutler to [Dr. Baird, Washington, Pa.], November 12, 1788, to Winthrop Sargent, April 20, 1786, Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life*, II: 284–86; Pamela Regis, *Describing Early America: Bartram, Jefferson, Crevecoeur, and the Rhetoric of Natural History* (DeKalb, Ill., 1992), 11, 25. Cutler's initial botanical publication in 1785 proclaimed: "In an infant country, where nature has been liberal in her productions, and internal resources are greatly wanted, few objects can be of greater significance than natural history....The cultivation of this branch of science will open to our view the treasures we possess unenjoyed; and must eventually tend to the security and welfare of our citizens, the extension of their commerce, and the improvement of these arts which adorn and embellish life." Rev. Manasseh Cutler, "An Account of Some of the Vegetable Productions, Naturally Growing in this Part of America," *Bulletin of the Lloyd Library* (Cincinnati, Ohio), 7:1903, 396. Cutler's manifold curiosities are charted in John C. Greene, *American Science in the Age of Jefferson* (Ames, Iowa, 1984), passim.

8. Morgan, *Wilderness at Dawn*, 422; Hurt, *Ohio Frontier*, 178. Randall and Ryan, *History of Ohio*, 2: 456. Henry Steele Commager, *The Empire of Reason: How Europe Imagined and America Realized the Enlightenment* (Garden City, N.Y., 1977) 27–28.

many useful inquiries and discoveries by town leaders throughout the Commonwealth." He was adamant about one deduction: Ipswich was the victim of out-migration "of the young, healthy and robust. . . . The new settlements [which he would ultimately envision on the banks of the Ohio] must, therefore, greatly exceed the old in excess of population, in proportion to the number of inhabitants."[9]

Both within the Ohio Company and strenuously in his lobbying for the Ohio lands from Congress, Cutler emphasized the attributes of the settlers he would recruit: They would carry and transmit American values. He wrote fellow speculator Winthrop Sargent in 1786 that they "ought be cautious about admitting adventurers from the southward. New England settlers will certainly be best. . . . The more I contemplate the prospect opened by this association, the more I feel myself inclined to take an active part in carrying on the settlement." He believed that a stagnation in the Massachusetts economy would propel a "large number of very considerable property and respectable characters" toward the adventure. In his initial lobbying effort, a letter to Nathan Dane, delegate to Congress, dated March 16, 1787, he confided that Congress would benefit both in selling its national domain and defending the lands against Indian depredations because "settlers from the northern states, in which this company is made up, are undoubtedly preferable to those from the southern states. They will be men of more robust constitutions, inclined to labor, and free from the habits of idleness." Their toils would increase the value of lands granted to the Ohio Company as well as those of nearby congressional tracts.[10]

His demographic pursuits complemented Cutler's urges toward social history. He later lamented to a son-in-law that despite decades of extensive correspondence "my friends, in their letters, have been so sparing in relating occurrences and circumstances which are every day happening." He recognized that "the little concerns of families, neighborhoods, and the town" provided the essence of settlement.[11]

9. [For the American Academy of Arts and Sciences], February 14, 1783, Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life*, II: 210–15.

10. Manasseh Cutler to [Major Sargent], March 24, 1786, April 20, 1786, March 16, 1787, and Cutler to [Nathan Dane], Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life* I: 187–89, 189–91, 192–93, 194–95.

11. Manasseh Cutler to Dr. Torrey, October 31, 1803, Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life*, II: 137–39; Peter Onuf appraised Cutler as an "inveterate collector and

As members of New England's thinking class, ministers such as Cutler had "secured their station by means of cultural virtuosity." They were both the producers and assimilators of high culture as well as creators and transmitters of that culture.[12] Later his obituary in county newspapers would conclude, "The God of nature had endowed him with a sound mind of a superior order, and in the pursuit of knowledge he labored with uncommon success. . . . He was an ardent, distinguished friend to his country, and possessed an enlightened, discriminating understanding of her best interests."[13] It seems that by 1787–1788 Cutler had amassed the aptitudes and experiences of a planner.

Within the last fifteen years a small legion of scholars, spurred by the Bicentennial of the Northwest Ordinance and regional studies throughout American history, have placed added importance to events that unfolded in the Ohio Valley in Cutler's era. The current belief was that republics were only suitable for homogeneous and compact societies. Peter Onuf has pointed out that redefinitions of liberty, development, and union were then evolving. Cutler and his cohort "needed to invent a new vision of their future prospects [in the west] that would transcend and invalidate the grim predictions of republican theory," while Eric Hinderaker has emphasized that after 1783 "In the Ohio Valley a full range of American diversity came together in a single place for the first time."[14] In a variety of publications, Andrew R. L. Cayton has challenged the prevailing belief that Federalists' plans for the American West were anachronistic and that the Jeffersonian vision was destined to prevail. While the Jeffersonians

classifier...The cosmopolitanism of Cutler and his associates was characterized by a fascination with Indian antiquities and a determination to create a compact, stable, and prosperous community on the New England model". See Onuf in John Garraty and Mark Carnes (eds.), *American National Biography* (New York, 1999), 5: 933–34.

12. Peter S. Field, *The Crisis of the Standing Order: Clerical Intellectuals and Cultural Authority in Massachusetts, 1780–1833* (Amherst, Mass., 1998), 1.

13. Obituary notice of Dr. Cutler, published in the *Salem Observer* (being a communication to that paper) and in the *Essex Register*, immediately after his death. [July 28, 1823], Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life*, II: 370–72.

14. Peter S. Onuf, "Liberty, Development, and Union: Visions of the West in the 1780's," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 43(April, 1986), 180; Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673–1800* (Cambridge, England, 1997), 245–46.

thought of empire as the extension of traditional social relationships in the space of the West, Federalists yearned to transform those relationships, for example by engendering national loyalty. Men like Cutler, dreaming of personal fortune and national glory, would achieve "the establishment of the foundations of a radical political and social order west of the Appalachian Mountains. . . . Their goal was to create and to develop not only the wilderness but society, to cultivate both fields and human relationships in order to create a world in which people acted as if they were parts of something larger than families and local communities."[15]

Cutler's radical assumption was that both a prosperous economy and a stable society could be artificially constructed in the first American West. Visionaries such as he willed the nation to develop through both space and time. Cayton points out that venturers like Cutler, with their cherishment of systematic development, epitomized by square townships with allocations for support of cultural institutions, were not harkening back to New England. Rather as members of a national company "designed to make profits for its individual stockholders through impersonal transactions in the commodity of land," subscription agent and societal planner Cutler was part of an "expanding international economy" once he sanctioned solicitations to French settlers for the Scioto Company. On the one hand Cayton emphasizes the theme of social disintegration found in the "exaggerated public prose and anxious private letters" from Cutler and associates, but on the other he reminds us that "the active participants in the migration [to Ohio] were indeed speculators in the future as well as land."[16]

In 1787–1788 Cutler produced three different expressions of his vision for America: 1) a map with accompanying explanation that he had printed in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island to drum up investors in the Ohio Company and settlers for the company's lands. This publication, translated into French and published in Paris, was

15. Andrew R.L. Cayton, "Radicals in the 'Western World'": The Federalist Conquest of Trans-Appalachian North America," in Doron Ben Atar and Barbara B. Oberg (eds.), *Federalists Reconsidered* (Charlottesville, Va., 1998), 78–79, 85, 94–95.

16. Andrew R.L. Cayton, *The Frontier Republic: Ideology and Politics in the Ohio Country, 1780–1825* (Kent, Ohio, 1986), 16–17.

hawked by Joel Barlow in his solicitations on behalf of William Duer, Cutler, and other members of the Scioto Company; 2) a travel diary Cutler kept during his only visit to the banks of the Muskingum in the summer of 1788. This would lay out the logistical challenges New England settlers would encounter as they trekked to the new country; 3) an exhortation he delivered to the initial settlement, designated Marietta by the time he arrived in the Ohio country. These selections illustrate some of the themes developed by John Jakle's study of early images of the Ohio Valley. Jakle noted that eighteenth-century travelers depicted "not the region as it really was so much as the region as it was thought to be." What did Cutler expect to see in the upper Ohio, what did he encounter in his trek there, and how did he perceive the development of the area? In sum, what did he think he saw and what did it mean?[17]

Where did Cutler acquire his preconceptions for a mental map of Ohio? He was introduced to Thomas Hutchins on July 7, 1787, during his initial congressional lobbying in New York City. Hutchins had traveled through the Old Northwest and Old Southwest since the era of the French and Indian War. In 1778 he had published a book on the natural history and terrain of the northwestern frontier, and a decade later would publish a map of the Seven Ranges he surveyed for Congress.[18] Hutchins and Cutler consulted about location of the Ohio Company's purchase. It was Hutchins who pinpointed the Muskingum, west of the ranges he was surveying for the first federal townships, as "the best part of the whole of the western country." Some historians have subsequently debated whether Hutchins favored

17. John A. Jekle, *Images of the Ohio Valley: A Historical Geography of Travel, 1740 to 1860* (New York, 1977), vii, 5–6. Gregory H. Nobles has emphasized, "To a frontier planner like Cutler, anyone who lived in opposition to, or even outside of, the prescribed patterns of settlement posed a threat. Such people did little to promote productivity and profit, and they impeded the designs of those who hoped to direct future frontier development across the continent." Nobles, "Straight Lines and Stability: Mapping the Political Order of the Anglo-American Frontier," *Journal of American History*, 80(June, 1993), 34.

18. "Thomas Hutchins," by James X. Corgan, in Garraty and Carnes (eds.), *American National Biography,* 11:594–95. In Thomas Hutchins, *An Historical Narrative and Topographical Description of Louisiana and East Florida* (Gainesville, Fla., 1968 reprint of 1784) xxxi, Joseph G. Tregle points out that Hutchins, under pressure from the Ohio Company, let Winthrop Sargent prepare the final report of surveyors of the Seven Ranges, which stretched from Pennsylvania's western border to nearly the Tuscarawas River.

the forks of the Muskingum rather than its mouth for location of the company's initial settlement. Although Cutler does not mention Hutchins in his diary recording his subsequent autumn visit to Congress, he later produced an attestment from Hutchins (dated October 28, 1787) certifying that the facts related in Cutler's pamphlet "are judicious, just, and true, and correspond with observations made by me during my residence of upward of ten years in the country."[19] Additional on-site observations came from Winthrop Sargent, Benjamin Tupper, and other New England officers who had attached themselves to the federal surveys. Five of the surveyors of the Northwest Territory became associated with the Ohio Company and probably influenced the precise selection of the tract, much distant from troublesome Indian settlements yet accessible to a hundred miles of the Ohio River, and under direct protection of Federal troops located at Fort Harmar.[20] A third source of Cutler's information was French publications relating to the Ohio country. One of his sons remembered that Manasseh "had read all that the early French explorers" had published on the Ohio region, and that raising money and men for Ohio occasioned "extreme anxiety and toil," which tested Cutler's perseverance and energy.[21]

Cutler collaborated with surveyors returning from Ohio in the summer of 1787 and fellow agents of the Ohio Company in working on a publicity package for dissemination; a twenty-four page pamphlet, *An Explanation*, was published in November in Salem,

19. Diary entries, July 7–9, 1787; *An Explanation*... Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life* I: 230–38; II: 393; Samuel P. Hildreth, *Pioneer History* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1848), 210–12, pointed out that Cutler's fellow citizens of Massachusetts "ranged from anxious enthusiasm to complete skepticism" about living in the West..

20. Joseph W. Ernst, *With Compass and Chain: Federal Land Surveyors in the Old Northwest, 1785–1816* (New York, 1979), 47, 84–85; Hurt, *Ohio Frontier*, 155–57; Hildegard Binder Johnson, "Perceptions and Illustrations of the American Landscape in the Ohio Valley and the Midwest," *This Land of Ours: The Acquisition and Disposition of the Public Domain* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1978), 3, observed, "Ohio was the 'experimental'; it shows greater cadastral variety than any other state carved out of the public domain" and "Most surveyors were not cartographers. They did not map the land, they drafted plats."

21. Julia P. Cutler, *Life and Times of Ephraim Cutler* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1890), 5, 7. To enhance *An Explanation's* promotional appeal, he included the 1784 descriptions of the Ohio River from the pen of Hector St. Jean Crevecoeur, perhaps with an eye on the European market. Charles Evans, *American Bibliography* (New York, 1941 reprint), vol. 7, #20312, #21037.

while the 66x49mm map followed five months later.[22] His diary of the period is replete with Ohio matters, one notable notation coming December 3, 1787, when the first contingent of settlers departed for Ohio. One of the departure points was Cutler's home in Ipswich, another was Putnam's in Rutland. At Ipswich the parson gave a short address, "full of good advice and hearty wishes for their happiness and prosperity." Among the group, which ultimately numbered twenty-four, was Jervis Cutler, age nineteen. With his own hands father Manasseh had painted "For the Ohio at the Muskingum" on one of the wagons he had constructed for the journey.[23] Characteristically, Cutler assumed that as chief planner he had prerogative and thus wrote Ohio Company Director Putnam that the settlement should be called Adelphia, symbolizing the (hoped for) harmony among the brethren, if not between Native Americans and American settlers. Skeptics would come to call the town "Putnam's Paradise."[24] The initial settlers ultimately chose Marietta. Cutler, in pamphlet and map, claimed the Ohio was "now more accurately known, and may be described with confidence and precision."

Historian Peter Onuf has observed that in 1787, "The West that

22. The full title was *An Explanation of the Map Which Delineates that Part of the Federal Lands Comprehended Between Pennsylvania West Line, the Rivers Ohio and Scioto, and Lake Erie, confirmed to the United States by Sundry Tribes of Indiana, in the Treaties of 1784 and 1786, and Now Ready for Settlement* (Salem, Mass., 1787, 1966 reprint by University Microfilms). The map was published also in 1788 in Boston by Adams & Nourse. Evans, *American Bibliography*, #20312, #21037. Both were published anonymously. Most historians use the 1788 publication to attribute the essay and map to Cutler. Philip Lee Phillips, *The First Map and Description of Ohio 1787 by Manasseh Cutler: A Bibliographical Account with Reprint of the Explanation*, (Washington, D.C., 1918), 5, 12. Phillips assumes Cutler did draw the map although he never claimed so. John W. Reps, *The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States* (Princeton, N.J., 1965), 218.

23. Diary, September 10–December 3, 1787, Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life*, I: 322–30. Timothy J. Shannon, "The Ohio Company and the Meaning of Opportunity in the American West, 1786–1795," *New England Quarterly*, 65(September, 1991), 393–413, emphasizes the disharmony within the Ohio Company and Cutler's defensiveness on the subsequent failure of the Scioto Company which pulled down the Ohio Company.

24. [Dr. Cutler to General Putnam, Rutland], December 3, 1787, Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life*, I: 374–76; *An Explanation*, Hurt, *Ohio Frontier*, 180–84, notes the incipient disharmony, some of it manifested when the settlers chose Marietta as the name for their settlement. Further conflicts were when non-New Englanders squatted at nearby Pickett's Point outside the control of the Ohio Company.

policy makers imagined . . . was nothing like the West that already existed. . . . The Western land problem thus forced Americans to think in new ways about their future. . . . An unimproved, underdeveloped West was unimaginable."[25] Thus Cutler's imagination, expressed both visually in the map and verbally in the pamphlet, made a fundamental contribution to how the Ohio country ought to be conceived. His 1788 map, a reworking of the larger 1778 publication by Thomas Hutchins, retained Hutchins' general outline of the Ohio Valley, most especially the various tributaries and the distorted short distances of portages between them and those flowing into Lake Erie. He also borrowed from Hutchins certain topographical notations, such as coal deposits and free stone. The main visual message, reinforced by text in the legend, was imposition of the congressionally mandated (1785) survey of the land into ranges of six square-mile townships, each with sections designated to support "schools and religious purposes." The map charted these grids westward from the Pennsylvania line and "The Indiana Tract" on the left bank of the Ohio (in Virginia's ceded lands) to the Scioto River, where they met the Great Plains of Scioto."[26]

To support religion was Cutler's idea alone, for in fact the 1785 ordinance made *no* statement about supporting religion. Rather, it stipulated, "There shall be reserved for the United States out of every township, the four lots being numbered 8, 11, 26, 19 . . . for future sale. There shall be reserved the lot N16, of every township, for the maintenance of public schools, within the said township; also one third of all gold, silver, lead and copper mines, to be sold, or otherwise disposed of as Congress shall hereafter direct." Nonetheless, when the Northwest Ordinance superceded the 1785 legislation, it held back section 16 for education and section 29 "for the purposes of religion." Sections 8, 11, and 26 were again reserved by Congress for future sale and not more than two townships were set

25. Peter S. Onuf, *Statehood and Union: A History of the Northwest Ordinance* (Bloomington, Ind., 1987), xiii, 3, i, 23.

26. Comparison of "A New Map of the Western Parts of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and North Carolina, comprehending the river Ohio" by Thomas Hutchins, London, 1778, and "A Map of the Federal Territory, from the Western boundary of Pennsylvania to the Scioto River...." by Manasseh Cutler, 1788, from Library of Congress Collections at http://memory.loc.gov/.cgi-bin/query. Call numbers G3707.05 1778, H8 vault; G4081.F7 1785, C8 vault.

aside for the "purposes of a university."[27] Cutler noted where lands had been designated for Virginia, Connecticut, and army claimants, as well as those the Federal government granted to the Wyandottes, Delawares, and Hurons along Lake Erie. The orderliness of settlement was reinforced by a "sidebar" depiction of "the city to be built on the Muskingum River." The settlers would combine Roman names for the square stockade (Campus Martius) with streets named for company founders, one of whom, Cutler, mandated the planting of mulberry trees along each street to provide shade, beauty, and "salubrity of the air" for the citizens. The artificial and egalitarian grid pattern, for which Cutler had lobbied both within the Company and to Congress, mandated support for education and religion to achieve an ordered liberty.[28]

The promotional *An Explanation*, not unlike Congressional surveys, has an explicit structure in its presentation. An announcement in the Salem press on November 11, 1787, claimed the pamphlet "highly entertaining, well worthy the perusal of every excursive reader, who wishes to enlarge his views, and cultivate an acquaintance with 'a paradise of pleasure, opening in the wild.'"[29] As the title explicates, the author wished to frame the region of "the annexed map" by both emphasizing the riverine communications system (Sandusky-Scioto-Muskingum-Ohio-Great Miami) "all navigable from 100 to 900 miles" within the larger Great Lakes–Mississippi–eastern American settlement; in essence he saw a definable region. "Prodigious extensions of territory are here connected . . . we may anticipate intercourse between them." He predicted soon "steamboats will be found to do infinite service in all our extensive river navigation." Thus he focused on the enticements

27. Merrill Jensen, *The New Nation: A History of the United States During the Confederation 1781–1789* (York, 1950), 354–59.

28. Hurt, *Ohio Frontier*, 181. Nobles, "Straight Lines and Stability," 37, emphasizes "the regular, early replicated one-mile-square democratic open social spaces designed by Congress in the early days of the Republic symbolized order as much as openness and opportunity." Cutler's map is in contrast to one carried by his contemporary, John May, who also traveled between Massachusetts and Ohio. May's map is relatively blank, although it does designate locations for Adelphia and the Ohio Company tract. Nor are the rivers of the Ohio country as prominent. Dwight L. Smith (ed.), *The Western Journals of John May, Ohio Company Agent and Business Adventurer* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1961).

29. Phillips, *The First Map*, 5.

of his company's particular tract: "no part of the federal territory unites so many advantages, in point of health, fertility, variety of production, and foreign intercourse as that tract which stretches from the Muskingum to the Scioto and the Great Miami Rivers." He saw that the region could be connected to Lake Erie to the Hudson River to Albany and beyond; to the Potomac via the Ohio and Monongahela; to the James River and the Potomac via the Kanawha; to Florida and West Indies markets via the Ohio-Mississippi thoroughfare. Though he was particularly careful to disclaim hyperbole in travelers' and surveyors' reports, he approvingly quoted one appraisal that the place was "the most commodious and most fertile spot on earth." Within the mapped territory Cutler the promoter came to focus his message: "It is a happy circumstance that the Ohio Company are about to commence the settlement of this country in so regular and judicious a manner. It will serve as a wise model for the future settlement of all the federal lands [yet be] a continuation of the old settlements, leaving no vacant lands exposed to be seized by such lawless banditti as usually infest the frontiers of countries distant from the seat of government."[30] Thus Cutler sought to calm anxieties of his investors about the threats of squatters or schisms in the national domain.

The Company, following the design of Congress, would develop the "latent beauties" of the region and fulfill travelers' prophecies for the Ohio to make it "the garden of the world, the seat of wealth, and the center of a great empire." Cutler, directing his message to "the philosopher and the politician" (his own cohort), designated four integral variables in this vision: 1) natural abundance: "every considerable commodity, that is cultivated in any part of the United States, is here produced in the greatest plenty and perfection"; 2) manufacturing potential: he recommended "companies of manufacturers from Europe could be introduced and established in this inviting situation under the superintendence of men of property . . . as

30. [Cutler], *An Explanation*, 8, 13, 9, 10, 14. Cutler relied not only on Thomas Hutchins and Benjamin Tupper but also the report of Captain Harry Gordon for his 1766 trip through the region. Regis, *Describing Early America*, 26. Hutchins' eye for the navigable rivers, and the fertility of the Ohio country was earlier reported in 1778 in "Topographical Description of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland and North Carolina," reprinted in Gilbert Imlay, *A Topographical Description of the Western Territory* (3rd. ed., London, 1797), 485–507.

a beneficial example of economy to many parts of the United States"; 3) cultural stability and enshrinement of learning: in schools throughout the townships and in a university Cutler saw "the field of science may greatly be enlarged, and the acquisition of useful knowledge placed upon a more respectable footing here than in any other part of the world." In perhaps his most trenchant claim as planner he opined "in order to begin *right*, there will be no *wrong* habits to combat, and no inveterate systems to overturn—there is no rubbish to remove, before you lay the foundation." Habits of republican government and allegiance to the United States would thus revive the ideas of order, citizenship, and the useful sciences. He chose to write nothing here about the role of religion in development; 4) imperial growth: Cutler's most "sublime contemplation of beholding the whole territory of the United States settled by an enlightened people" was his concluding vision that as the American population center shifted westward the nation's capitol would be re-seated in this region. A tract for the "federal town" should be offered. "This would render such transfer easily practicable, by preventing the occasion of uneasiness in the old states, while it would not appear to be the result of danger, or the prospect of revolt, in the new."[31] Cutler sought rapid integration of the West into all facets of the Atlantic community.

In March 1788 the directors and agents of the Ohio Company of Associates met in Providence, Rhode Island, to calculate shares, to count receipts, and to draw lots in the first town Putnam was then establishing. At the meeting's conclusion they resolved to next meet at the Ohio site. Thus Cutler began planning his next expedition by purchasing a sulky to be overhauled and preparing a traveling trunk for the western country. From Ohio, General Samuel Holden Parsons, Associate stalwart and one of the three territorial judges, wrote

31. [Cutler], *An Explanation*, 14–23. In the appended letter from Crevecoeur, the Frenchman had written that while traveling on the Ohio River, "I never before felt myself so much disposed for meditation; My imagination involuntarily leaped into futurity....It is destined to become the source of force, riches, and the future glory of the United States." Onuf, *Statehood and Union*, 14–15, highlighted how in Cutler's era, "Development and union were counterpoised to underdevelopment, anarchy, and counterrevolution; both outcomes were plausible....the dream of western development can be seen as a kind of oblique recognition of differences among Americans that often seemed intractable, a denial of political realities that proponents of development confronted and sometimes helped to create."

Cutler: "You are much wanted—many things are necessary to be done. Rome was not built in a day. We have some difficulties to encounter which require a persevering mind. I wish you here." Soon before his departure on July 21, 1788, Cutler heard "the very agreeable intelligence of Virginia's adopting the Constitution."[32]

Cutler played the quintessential American of his era in experiencing the long journey westward. Each daily entry recorded mileage from his established home—it would be a 751 mile trip covered in thirty days. After nearly three weeks on site, he was eastbound September 9, detouring via Philadelphia but arriving home October 15. John Jekle has pointed out that "traveling is primarily a process of validating expectations."[33] The main functions of Cutler's travel diary were three: 1) to keep an account for Ohio Company defrayed expenses; 2) to chart each stage and logistical challenge, like a modern-day automobile triptik to guide later migrants; 3) to record observations of the new vistas, fellow Americans, and particularly the various settlement patterns in polyglot Pennsylvania. All were measured against his New England standards.

On Thursday, August 14, he noted, "This morning we went down to the Ohio River, . . . where we had the first sight of this beautiful river." Among prayers he led were probably pleas for the river to rise to enable their boat to float! Sunday, his prayers answered, he wrote, "went down the river, which is a most delightful stream, very romantic." The forty-eight souls on board arrived at Marietta August 19 amidst a hard rain, after which he wrote, within a week, "Got seriously wet—almost drowned in our tent."[34] Fort Harmar, just across the Muskingum, appeared "very handsome," the garrison, governor, ladies, and hospitality "very sociable." His subsequent

32. Diary, March 4–July 21, 1788; [General Parsons to Dr. Cutler], July 16, 1788, Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life*, I, 384–86; 388–91.

33. Jekle, *Images of the Ohio Valley*, 47. For another account of the Massachusetts-Ohio experience see Smith (ed.), *The Western Journals of John May*.

34. Diary of August 14–19, 1788, Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life*, I: 408–11. Among Cutler's notes was that "General Tupper had mentioned to me a mode for constructing a machine to work in the head or stern of a boat instead of oars. It appeared to me highly probable it might succeed. I therefore proposed that we should make the experiment. Assisted by a number of the people, we went to work, and constructed a machine in the form of a screw with short blades, and placed it in the stern of the boat, which we turned with a crank. It succeeded to admiration, and I think it a very useful discovery."

entries convey a mixed message. On one hand the bountiful land he had limned in *An Explanation* was no fantasy, as the initial company cornfield astonished him "on account of its magnitude." A surveying trip up the Muskingum located "an excellent tract of land" exceeding a thousand acres. He located the spot for building the university adjacent to "fine rock for building," while a visit to one of the great trees nearby resulted in the measurement of its circumference at 46.5 feet. Of his reconnoiter of city lots and parsonage land, Cutler noted it was "much better than I expected." On the other hand, when not fatigued by his travels he was by his companions. He acted as a shuttle diplomat in three venues; between the Ohio Associates (anchored by Generals Putnam and Parsons) and the Federal military commander General Josiah Harmar and territorial governor Arthur St. Clair; between the Ohio Company settlers and the Virginians led by Isaac Williams across the river; and between the Americans and representatives of six friendly Indian tribes.[35] His diary reveals what *An Explanation* did not. First, the venture was highly dependent for protection on the garrison of Federal troops and a highly fortified settlement. Second, he was intrigued by the Indians. A Wyandot chief's squaw and her family "were very richly dressed. It is said she had on three hundred brooches, and that her whole dress cost five hundred dollars." Moreover, Cutler and fellow Directors surveyed "the Ancient Works," an arrangement of geometrical earthworks erected by Indians which was subsequently integrated into Marietta's city plan.[36] Most vexing to Cutler was the factionalism apparent

35. Diary of August 19–September 8, 1788, Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life* I: 411–20. Encounters with Indians near the settlement were contrasted to Cutler's suspenseful trip back up the Ohio where his group of fifteen spent four days believing ten hostile Indians were waiting in ambush. Their guide "was extremely frightened, and trembled." Ultimately, the "hostiles" proved to be hunters from the Muskingum "chasing a deer and a bear in the river....Our fears of Indians were now vanished."

36. John W. Reps, *Town Planning in Frontier America* (Princeton, N.J., 1969), 283–91, appraises the plan for Marietta and credits Rufus Putnam for incorporating "these mound constructions in a most interesting manner" in the layout of the settlement. [Manasseh Cutler to Dr. Belknap], March 6, 1789, Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life*, II, 248–49, intimates that Cutler believed the ancient works predated the discovery of America by Columbus, that Cutler had guided Putnam to make their measurements as the first step for preserving them, and that at the Muskingum he had argued the mounds were for military uses while the military folk argued they were for religious purposes. Jakle, *Images of the Ohio Valley*, 68–71.

within the Ohio Associates. On August 21 he recorded, "Felt myself much injured yesterday and today by representations made by the Rhode Island faction respecting the Scioto Company's purchase." Director James Varnum and Archibald Carey, late joiners to the Ohio Company, wished to share in the more speculative Scioto venture. Thus Cutler left Ohio chagrined and embittered.[37]

As a pastor and social engineer Manasseh Cutter might have perceived August 24, 1788, as his crowning moment. He preached the Sabbath sermon at Marietta taking as his text the prophecy from Malachi I:11. Where Providence was omitted from *An Explanation* and somewhat marginalized to the sabbaths in his Ohio diary, it was accorded a central role in this preaching; "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering, for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts." In addition to Malachi, he reviewed appropriate passages from Isaiah and the Book of Revelation.

Cutler was struck by two questions: could it be that the Gospel's greatest triumph was yet to come "until it shall spread through this extensive Continent"? Why was Christianity only practiced in one quarter of the globe? In response, he ventured "some conjectures." The propagation of Christianity "was distinguished by wisdom, science, and literary pursuits." Cutler's interpretations of the Biblical passage to his era was clear: "the one great end God had in view in the original discovery of this American Continent . . . was that a new Empire should be called into being—an Empire new, indeed, in point of existence, but more essentially so, as its government is founded on principles of equal liberty and justice." The deliberations of the recent Constitutional Convention were definitive: "Never before had a people an opportunity of adopting and carrying into effect, a constitution of government for an extensive consolidating body, which was the result of inferences from the experiences of past ages and sober reasoning on the rights and advantages of civil society. It may be emphatically said that a new Empire has sprung into existence, and that there is a new thing under the sun." "No one kind of religion, or sect of religion, is established as the national religion,

37. Cayton, *Frontier Republic*, 40–43.

nor made, by national laws, the test of truth." The new Constitution secured "religious as well as civil liberty." Ignorance and prejudice would not prevail. Cutler's vision thus was of religious pluralism. He disavowed that religion should become a "political machine." There ought be no further "contentions and divisions" over funding "salaries to religious instructors."

Speaking directly to his congregation on the banks of the Ohio and the Muskingum, Cutler the prophet limned:

> Under the conduct of a Kind Providence, we see settlements forming in the American wilderness, deserts turning into fruitful fields, and the delightful habitations of civilized and christianized men. . . . We this day literally see the fulfillment of the prophecy in our text gradually advancing, incense offered to the most high God in this place, which was lately the dreary abode of savage barbarity. . . . Here may the Gospel be preached to the latest period of time; the arts and sciences be planted; the seeds of virtue, happiness, and glory be firmly rooted and grown to full maturity.

The challenge he saw for himself and fellow New Englanders was one of radical adaptation: "We, indeed, bring our habits of thinking and acting in some degree with us, but a new state of things, new objects and prospects, new connections, views and designs, throw them loose about us. And this is the moment for serious attention and reflection." His reading of the Northwest Ordinance entwined efforts of religion with those of "the useful and ornamental branches of service." His developmental theme rang out: "It is the wise and judicious improvement of these natural advantages that will secure happiness." He concluded, "We have the strongest reasons for the steady, uniform practice of every moral and every social duty, as our present happiness and prosperity most essentially depends upon it." Despite denominational differences, settlers in Ohio "ought consider ourselves as members of one family, united by the bonds of one common interest. We have the strongest reasons for the steady, uniform practice of every moral and every social duty, as out present happiness and prosperity most essentially depends upon it."[38] Hence his sermon concerned what we would now label civil religion,

38. Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life*, II:439–50. Article I of the Northwest Ordinance (1787) proclaimed "No person...shall ever be molested on account of his mode of worship or religious sentiments, in the said territory," while Article III stated, "Religion, morality, *and knowledge being necessary to good government and*

applying both Biblical and political texts to the American environment.

As early as 1789 Cutler sensed he would never settle in Ohio. In the next five years his energies for Ohio affairs focused on salvaging the Ohio Purchase as the companion Scioto Purchase failed spectacularly. He and other Ohio officers who held Scioto stock suffered big losses in what he called "this unpleasant business," yet he struggled to fulfill his own prophecy.[39] He selected Daniel Story to go in his stead to minister to Marietta Congregationalists, while he labored diligently to erect a university, one that would emerge on the banks of the Miami at Athens rather than at Marietta. When Story chose to answer a second call to Ohio, Cutler was selected to author the charge. In doing so the Ipswich minister probably sketched his own self-portrait: "To see the many new societies now forming in your vicinity supplied with able and faithful ministers, must be an object near your heart." He went on to say that under the tutelage of such leaders Ohio and America would become "cultured fields inhabited by civil and well-regulated societies, peaceably enjoying the fruits of their enterprises, industry, culture and commerce."[40] This was Cutler's vision, in his search for America.

the happinesss of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

39. Morgan, *Wilderness at Dawn*, 434; Manasseh Cutler to Samuel Vaughan, Jr., April 4, 1789, [Rev. Dr. Muhlenberg], February 27, 1795, Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life*, II, 282, 293–95. At the time of his death Cutler held title to 2,543 acres in Ohio. Janice Goldsmith Peelsifer, "The Cutlers of Hamilton," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, 107 (October, 1971), 355.

40. Cutler and Cutler (eds.), *Life*, II: 10–13