

# Attachment I: Full Exhibit Script

TO COME TO A LAND OF MILK AND HONEY: LITCHFIELD AND  
THE CONNECTICUT WESTERN RESERVE  
LITCHFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 2023-2024

## **INTRO. LABEL**

Over 400 miles separate the town of Litchfield and the city of Cleveland, but in the aftermath of the American Revolution, it was the people of Connecticut who shaped the future of Northeast Ohio. Claiming an area of over 6,000 square miles along the shores of Lake Erie as its rightful property, Connecticut established an extension of New England on the American frontier: the Western Reserve.

The story of the Western Reserve can be told through any number of historical lenses, but it is primarily a story of people: the people who felt compelled to leave Connecticut and New England for a new life in the West, and the people who chose to stay behind; the Native peoples who were forced from their lands by the arrival of migrants; the enslaved men, women, and children who were brought west against their will; and the Black migrants who chose to make their homes in Ohio despite continued discrimination.

Authority over the Reserve had already passed from Connecticut to the federal government by the time Elijah Boardman and Emily Nash wrote their differing accounts of the “land of milk and honey,” but the social, cultural, and economic ties between Connecticut and Ohio remained in place. Drawing inspiration from the Litchfield residents who contributed to this history, *To Come to a Land of Milk and Honey* tells the story of the Western Reserve using the voices of the people who experienced westward migration.

## **EXHIBIT TERMINOLOGY**

The story of the Western Reserve is complex, involving the movement of thousands of people between different locations and communities. As exhibit developers, we make decisions about what terminology we use to communicate this complex story.

We maintain that the story of westward migration is not about the settlement of untouched lands, but of the intentional displacement of Native peoples and resettlement of their lands by largely white populations. Within our exhibit, we use the term Native when referring to Ohio’s Indigenous peoples, especially the tribal nations present in the region during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. When known, we use the names of the Native nations and individuals being discussed.

We use the term migrant to refer to those coming to the Western Reserve from other communities in the United States, and immigrant for those arriving from other countries. The terms settler and settled are used when referring to migrants living in specific communities.

The terms Black migrants and Black residents refer to the enslaved, formerly enslaved, and free African American populations living in Ohio. Those arriving in or moving through Ohio to escape enslavement are referred to as freedom seekers. Multiple historical documents are reproduced within this exhibit and maintain their original terminology, including terms that we no longer use today.

## SECTION I – Origins of the Reserve

Imagine taking Connecticut's northern and southern borders and extending them west to the Pacific Ocean. Under the terms of a royal charter given to the colony in 1662, Connecticut was to stretch from the "Narraganset-Bay on the East," to the Pacific Ocean or "South Sea on the West Part." The wording of Connecticut's charter, and the charters given to certain other colonies, provided a justification for claiming western lands. In the early years of American independence, these "landed" states surrendered their western claims to the federal government to ensure the strength and stability of the new nation.

Connecticut ceded its western lands in 1786, but it "reserved" a territory in the northeast corner of present-day Ohio for its continued use and settlement. This became the Connecticut Western Reserve. The American government incorporated the ceded lands into the Northwest Territory, a vast area encompassing the future states of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, and part of Minnesota. The Native tribes living in the Territory were uninvolved in its creation, and many resisted American claims to their lands.

### Object

Abel Buell's "New and Correct Map of the United States" shows the western land claims of Connecticut and other states as they stood in 1784. Multiple states had competing or overlapping land claims, such as the area of northern Pennsylvania that Buell (born in Killingworth, Connecticut) depicted as belonging to his home state. Smaller states and those without western land claims protested, fearing that states such as Virginia would grow too powerful if allowed to keep their claimed land. To solve this debate, Congress proposed that all states cede their western lands to the federal government. In time, these lands would be organized into new states on equal footing with the original thirteen.

"A New and Correct Map of the United States of North America"

1963 (reprint of 1784 original)

Abel Buell (1742-1822)

Collection of the John M. Olin Library,  
Cornell University

### Object

Adopted on July 13, 1787, the Northwest Ordinance created a system of government for the Northwest Territory, outlined a method for creating new states from Territory lands, and listed the individual rights guaranteed to its inhabitants. Importantly for the young American government, the Ordinance also confirmed federal authority in the Territory and would, in theory, lessen disputes between white settlers, land speculators, and Native populations.

As you continue through the exhibit, consider these three passages from the Northwest Ordinance:

Art. 3. Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.

Art 3. The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress.

Art. 6. There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been duly convicted: Provided, always, that any person escaping into the same, from whom labor or service is lawfully claimed in any one of the original States, such fugitive may be lawfully reclaimed and conveyed to the person claiming his or her labor or service as aforesaid.

“A Map of the North Western Territory”

1796

Samual Hill; Thomas & Andrews (publisher)

Map provided courtesy of the Map Library at the  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

## **SECTION II – Claiming New Connecticut**

When Connecticut asserted its right to keep the Western Reserve, it claimed land that had long been settled and used by Native peoples. A confederation of Native tribes stood against American encroachments on unceded lands in the Northwest Territory, lands which the British had surrendered to the United States after the American Revolution with little to no consideration for Native populations.

The defeat of the Native confederation resulted in the Treaty of Greenville in 1795, which established a new boundary line between Native territory and the United States that cut the Western Reserve in two. The Native leaders who signed the treaty agreed to relinquish land claims south and east of the line; government representatives agreed to do the same for all lands north and west of the line. Despite obtaining legal title to less than half of its claimed land, the state of Connecticut turned its attention to promoting the sale and settlement of the entire Western Reserve.

### **Object**

The Treaty of Greenville redefined the boundary between Native land and the territory open to American and European resettlement. The boundary line followed the course of the Cuyahoga River before cutting across Ohio, passing through the middle of the Connecticut Western Reserve. Much of the land east and south of the boundary line had already been surveyed and divided by 1804, when Abraham Bradley created this map of the United States.

Abraham Bradley was born in Litchfield and attended the Litchfield Law School. In 1791, he relocated to Philadelphia to clerk for Postmaster General Timothy Pickering. Self-trained in the fields of topography and cartography, Bradley published the first combined map of post office locations and routes in 1796.

Map of Native Nations in Ohio (top)

H.C. Shetrone and R.B. Sherman

Created for the Ohio Historical Society, c.1970

Courtesy of the Ohio History Connection, VFM 0477-4

Section of “Map of the United States” (bottom)

1804 (5th ed.)

Abraham Bradley Jr. (1767-1838)

Collection of the Library of Congress

### **Object**

Prior to their defeat at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, the Native confederation achieved notable victories against American expeditions in the Northwest Territory. This broadside provides a dramatic account of the defeat of American soldiers and militia under the command of Arthur St. Clair in 1791. Printed in Boston, the broadside serves as both anti-Native and pro-westward expansion propaganda. Reinforcing racist imagery by presenting the Native warriors as “Wild Indian Savages” and “bloody brutes,” the broadside argues that the conflict in the Ohio County might decide the “future Freedom & Grandeur of Fifteen or Twenty States, that might, at some Period, be annexed to the American Union.”

Broadside: “Columbian Tragedy”

1791

E. Russell

Courtesy of the Ohio History Connection,  
OVS 2500

### Object

Between 1785 and 1795, a loose confederation of Native tribes fought against white frontiersmen and the American military in the Northwest Territory. Led by Michikinikwa (Little Turtle) of the Miami and Weyapiersenwah (Blue Jacket) of the Shawnee, the confederation included warriors from the Miami, Shawnee, Wyandot, Lenape (Delaware), Ottawa, Potawatomi, Ojibwe (Chippewa), and other nations. After a series of Native victories, President Washington dispatched Anthony Wayne to take command of the American forces. Better organized and better trained than the previous American forces, Wayne's army defeated the confederation at the Battle of Fallen Timbers on August 20, 1794. After the battle, Little Turtle and other Native leaders began meeting with Wayne at Fort Green Ville (now Greenville, Ohio), where a treaty was signed on August 3, 1795.

Look first: Who do you think painted this view of the treaty signing, and how might that affect its accuracy?

"Painting of Indian Treaty of Greenville" (left)

1795

Artist unknown (believed to be an American officer)

Oil on canvas

Chicago History Museum, ICHI-064806

Reproduction of a Portrait of Michikinikwa (Little Turtle) (above)

1790-1812

Artist unknown

Courtesy of the Ohio History Connection, SC 2086

### Object

Leaders of the Wyandot, Delaware, Shawnee, Ottawa, Miami, Eel River, Wea, Chippewa, Potawatomi, Kickapoo, Piankashaw, and Kaskaskia nations signed the Treaty of Greenville. Their signature marks are seen here, reproduced from the original treaty. In addition to ending hostilities and defining the new boundary line, the document included provisions for Native hunting rights on ceded lands, for annual payments owed to the nations signing the treaty, and for continued American occupation of certain forts in Native territory.

The Treaty of Greenville failed to achieve a lasting peace on the newly drawn frontier. The federal government used treaty-making as a tool for claiming Native land under the guise of equitable exchange. Not all Native tribes living on the ceded lands participated in the Greenville negotiations, and many refused to honor the treaty terms. White settlers continued to encroach on Native land and attack Native villages. Americans, including legislators and land speculators in Connecticut, continued preparing for future westward expansion. Renewed warfare and new treaties would soon force Ohio's Native populations further west and south.

Treaty of Greenville, August 3, 1795, between the Wyandot, Delaware, Shawnee, Ottawa, Chippewa, Potawatomie, Miami, Eel River, Wea, Kickapoo, Piankashaw, and Ka  
(Ratified Indian Treaty #23, 7 STAT 49)  
General Records of the United States Government,  
National Archives.

### **SECTION III – Distributing the Reserve**

In 1792, Connecticut set aside the westernmost 500,000 acres of the Western Reserve as the Sufferers' Lands, later known as the Firelands. Land deeds were offered to residents of nine towns along Connecticut's coast as compensation for property destroyed by British raids during the American Revolution.

Instead of distributing the remaining three million acres of land in individual pieces, Connecticut opted to sell the entirety of the Western Reserve in a single transaction. After hearing bids from multiple investor groups in 1795, Connecticut sold the Reserve to the proprietors of the Connecticut Land Company. This group of investors included some of the wealthiest and most influential men in the state. Among the initial proprietors in the Company were four Litchfield residents: Ephraim Kirby, Uriel Holmes Jr., Uriah Tracy, and Elijah Wadsworth.

The Company made the \$1.2 million purchase largely on credit, with each proprietor receiving an amount of land in the Reserve proportional to their individual investment. A large section of the purchased land was located west of the boundary line established by the Treaty of Greenville. The fact that the Company was willing to invest in lands still under Native claim is a clear indication that they foresaw the further displacement of Indigenous populations.

#### **Object**

Born in Canterbury, Connecticut, Moses Cleaveland was one of the original proprietors of the Connecticut Land Company. In 1796, the Company placed Cleaveland in charge of a surveying expedition to the Western Reserve. On his way to the Ohio Country, Cleaveland met with members of the Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) Six Nations at Buffalo Creek, New York, and with the Mississauga at the mouth of Conneaut Creek in the Reserve. Thought to be from the Mississauga First Nations, this pipe and tobacco pouch are believed to be the ones collected by Moses Cleaveland in 1796. Cleaveland described his meeting with the "Massasagoes" in his journal.

Pipe and Tobacco Pouch

c.1796

Collection of the Western Reserve Historical Society

#### **Object**

Moravian missionary John Heckewelder created this map of Northeast Ohio before the arrival of Moses Cleaveland. The map shows the Cuyahoga River (far left), the location of Native paths, and the site of a "Moravian Indian Town" in 1786. Next to the Conneaut Creek is a note regarding the Connecticut Land Company purchase. The Heckewelder Map was found in the papers of Moses Cleaveland, indicating he may have carried the map during the 1796 surveying expedition.

"Heckewelder Map"

John Gottlieb Ernestus Heckewelder (1743-1823)

c.1796

Collection of the Western Reserve Historical Society



## Object

Surveyor Moses Warren Jr. of East Lyme, Connecticut, used these tools to survey the Western Reserve as part of the Company's surveying expeditions in 1796 and 1797.

Surveyor's Compass and Case

Surveying Chain

Graphometer

1790s

On loan from the East Lyme Historical Society of Connecticut, Home of Moses Warren Jr.

## Object

The Connecticut Land Company struggled to stay profitable. Many investors circulated their own advertisements in the east and relied on land agents in the Reserve to oversee sales and collect rents and payments. Land sales were hindered by the scattered distribution of lands to the Company's proprietors; the continued Native presence in the Reserve; and uncertainties about who would govern and protect those living in the Reserve.

Broadside: "For Sale, the Following Tracts"

1807

Aurora, Ohio

Broadside: "Notice to Emigrants"

1830

Geauga County, Ohio

Collection of the Western Reserve Historical Society

## Object

Connecticut's legislature placed the \$1.2 million raised from the sale of the Western Reserve into a "perpetual fund" to support public education in Connecticut. Any interest earned on the mortgages and bonds owed by the Connecticut Land Company was to be distributed annually to school districts around the state. Seth P. Beers, a Litchfield Law School graduate, served as commissioner of the Connecticut School Fund for over 20 years.

Portrait Miniature of Seth P. Beers

1835-1837

Anson Dickinson (1779-1852)

Watercolor on ivory

Collection of the Litchfield Historical Society

## **SECTION IV – Living in the Reserve**

The Connecticut Land Company used a lottery system to divide and distribute the Western Reserve lands. Rather than settling one area at a time, each proprietor received, and then resold, separate plots of land scattered throughout the Reserve. The result was slow and uneven growth. By 1800, the entirety of New Connecticut contained only 1,000 to 1,500 people. It was not until the 1820s that the Reserve was fully surveyed and divided into named townships, though most of the larger communities remained east of the Cuyahoga River and along Lake Erie.

Visitors to the Reserve provided some of the best accounts of the general state of settlement. John Melish, a Scottish mapmaker, described New Connecticut in his 1818 *Travels through the United States of America* as both a region of great potential and a place of problems yet to be solved. Illustrating the unevenness of settlement, Melish described Hudson township as “an old and thriving settlement,” whereas passing through Tallmadge township he remarked that “the country is very thinly settled, and the road deplorably bad.” He found Cleveland to be a place “dignified with the name of a city” that “remained a paltry village, containing a few houses only.” The people of Cleveland were “pale, sickly, and dejected” after a season of severe sickness, a common complaint among early residents. Two men living just west of Cleveland, however, said “the country there was quite healthy and well settled.”

### **SUB: Schools & Education**

Even though the Western Reserve was sold by Connecticut to fund public education, the Connecticut Land Company made no provisions to support public schools in New Connecticut. In laying out the Reserve, the Company ignored the established federal model which reserved one lot in every township in the Northwest Territory “for the maintenance of public schools.” Instead, those arriving in the Reserve would have to hire their own teachers and build or improvise their own schoolhouses.

As a result, many Western Reserve communities in the early years of settlement lacked access to quality education. Some families preferred to send their children back east to obtain their education. More than a dozen students traveled from Ohio to attend Sarah Pierce’s Litchfield Female Academy, which gained a national reputation for offering quality academic and ornamental training.

Educational opportunities in the Reserve improved over time as migration continued and townships grew. James Tongue, a Maryland doctor who toured the region, provided this description of New Connecticut in 1807:

*“Even here in this infant country, learning is encouraged and patronized: a University is formed, with a fund of thirteen thousand dollars, and the building is already up and covered, for the accommodation of youth: and here there are now to be found (what cannot be boasted of in some states) twenty-four common schools for education, and seven circulating libraries.”*

### **Object**

David Hudson of Goshen, Connecticut, migrated to the Reserve in 1799 and established his namesake township before returning east to bring on his family and additional settlers. He was heavily involved in the founding of the Western Reserve College in 1826 as the first institution of higher learning in New Connecticut. The school continues today in Cleveland as Case Western Reserve University.

Engraving of Western Reserve College  
Mid-nineteenth century

Miniature Pennant, Western Reserve College  
Felt  
Collection of the Litchfield Historical Society

Object

Anna Maria Perkins traveled from Warren, Ohio, to attend Sarah Pierce's Female Academy in Litchfield, where she completed this embroidered mourning picture. Perkins is one of multiple identified students who traveled from Ohio to the Academy. Already a teacher in Kinsman, Ohio, Irene Hickox was sent to Litchfield to learn how to run an advanced female seminary. She then transferred the Academy's rules and curriculum to her Kinsman classroom.

Needlework Picture  
c.1822  
Anna Maria Perkins (1807-1828)  
Silk on silk  
Collection of the Western Reserve Historical Society

Object

Sally Doolittle worked this sampler as a young girl in Cornwall, Connecticut. Her family migrated to Portage County, Ohio, where Sally married in 1840 and raised her family. Her sampler provides an insight into the kinds of sentimental objects brought west by Connecticut migrants.

Sampler  
1825-1830  
Sally Doolittle (1818-1852)  
Cornwall, Connecticut  
Collection of Hollie Davis and Andrew Richmond

Object

These three samplers were worked by early settlers of Warren, Ohio. Jane Ann Chesney's sampler (1828) includes a central medallion showing Warren's impressive town hall. She lists her instructress as Lucretia Swift Spaulding, a native of Windham, Connecticut, who attended the Litchfield Female Academy before migrating to the Western Reserve, where she taught at the Warren Academy. Jane's sister-in-law, Elizabeth Lewis Iddings, likely copied her sampler in 1836. The smaller of the three (1852) is by Jane's daughter, Mary Chesney Iddings.

Sampler (above, top)  
1828  
Jane Ann Chesney  
(1816-1889)

Sampler (above, left)  
1836  
Elizabeth Lewis Iddings  
(1827-1849)

Sampler (above)  
1852  
Mary Chesney Iddings  
(1843-1912)  
From the Collection of Alexandra Peters

### Object

The Western Reserve was not the only area of Ohio being surveyed, sold, and settled. John Melish's map of Ohio from 1813 shows the various other land districts established in the state. The Ohio Company of Associates purchased 1.5 million acres of land from Congress in the southeast of the Ohio Country in 1787, and laid out the settlement of Marietta the following year.

Map of Ohio  
c.1813  
John Melish (1771-1822)  
Courtesy of the Ohio Historical Society, MAP VFM 0003-8, AL02772

### Object

The Treaty of Fort Industry created a new boundary line between Native territory and the state of Ohio, one that ran along the western border of the Firelands. Representatives of the Ottawa, Potawatomi, Chippewa, Wyandot, Munsee, Delaware, and Shawnee signed the treaty. Part of the annual payment owed to the signing nations was to be secured from the Connecticut Land Company. A decade after acquiring the Reserve, the Company now had a legal claim to survey and distribute their purchased lands west of the Cuyahoga River.

Almon Ruggles of Danbury, Connecticut, arrived in Ohio in 1805 to lead the survey of the Firelands. The following year, the Land Company sent Abraham Tappan to survey the western portion of the Reserve. In his later life, Tappan wrote that it was said "by those who attended this treaty, that the Indians in parting with and making sale of the above lands to the whites, did so with much reluctance, and after the treaty was signed, many of them wept."

Treaty of Fort Industry, July 4, 1805, between the Wyandot, Ottawa, Chippewa, Munsee, Delaware, Shawnee, and Potawatomi (Ratified Indian Treaty #44)  
General Records of the United States Government,  
National Archives.

### **SUB: Land of the Free?**

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 established a precedent for the prohibition of slavery in Ohio and the other states created from the Northwest Territory. The Ordinance did not, however, grant freedom to enslaved individuals living north of the Ohio River. While slavery and involuntary servitude were

prohibited, freedom seekers entering the Northwest Territory were still considered the property of their enslavers and could be “lawfully reclaimed and conveyed to the person claiming his or her labor or service.” This distinction between free and enslaved, along with uneven enforcement of the Ordinance, allowed slavery to continue in the Northwest Territory. Many of the early investors in the Western Reserve, including Elijah Boardman, Benjamin Tallmadge, Elijah Wadsworth, and Ephraim Kirby were themselves enslavers in Connecticut.

The Ohio Constitution of 1803 maintained the same prohibitions on slavery and involuntary servitude but included no language as to the legal status of freedom seekers entering the state. Fugitive slave ads published in the slaveholding border states often listed Ohio as a likely destination for freedom seekers. Beginning in 1804, the Ohio General Assembly established laws meant to discourage Black migration to the state. These laws required Black residents to register with the county and show proof of their freedom.

Inset: Fugitive Slave Ad, Nashville Gazette, 1820

### Object

Among the provisions in the Black Laws of 1807 is one requiring any Black resident to secure a bond of surety for \$500 from at least two other people, “conditioned for the good behavior” of the new resident as well as support should they “thereafter be found within any township in this state, unable to support themselves.” This copy of the 1807 laws was reproduced alongside an 1886 speech before the Ohio House of Representatives.

Broadside: “Black Laws of 1807”

1886 (reprint)

General Assembly of the State of Ohio

Collection of the Library of Congress

### **SUB: Nancy’s Story**

What little we know about the enslaved and free African Americans who migrated to Ohio is often found in official records and the personal papers of the white settlers with whom they were associated. Nancy and her son Prince are no exception. The Litchfield vital records reveal that Capt. Elijah Wadsworth “had negro Prium, s.[on] Nancy, b. Feb 9, 1801.” Connecticut’s gradual emancipation laws required the registration of children born to enslaved women after 1784. Male children did not gain their freedom until the age of 25.

Inset: Trumbull County probate record book, entry for Nancy, dated February 11, 1805.

As required by Ohio’s Black Laws of 1804, Nancy registered as a free Black resident with Trumbull County. Nancy made the journey to Ohio with her eldest son, recorded here as Prince, when he was 20 months old. Her second son was born in 1803, but there is no mention of the father of either child. If she had previously been enslaved by Wadsworth, she may have traveled to the free state of Ohio to prevent being bought or sold.

Although we found no further mention of Nancy, her son Prince is listed in Elijah Wadsworth’s last will and testament. As transcribed in the Trumbull County probate records on February 27, 1818,

Wadsworth bequeathed Prince's "services" to his wife, Rhoda, "until he shall become twenty one years of age, and in case he the said Prince Negro shall faithfully serve out his time agreeable to his indentures, then it is my will that he the said Prince Negro shall be entitled to fifty acres of Land."

## **SECTION V – Missionaries & Religion**

A white meetinghouse on a town green was not an uncommon sight in more developed townships in the Western Reserve, but the people living in the region preferred varied levels of religious activity. In the early years of migration, most of the religious work was done by missionaries who traveled between communities to deliver sermons, perform baptisms and marriages, and form congregations.

In 1801, Congregationalist and Presbyterian leaders agreed on a “Plan of Union” to share missionaries and resources in the Reserve and other western regions. Missionaries were instructed to promote “a spirit of accommodation” between Congregationalists and Presbyterians. Churches in each town were to be organized according to the wishes of the settlers, following either the Congregational or Presbyterian model.

Other denominations followed suit. In 1820, New Milford native Henry Mason Boardman joined with neighbors to form an Episcopal congregation in Boardman, Ohio. He wrote to his mother of his “duty to our God, that, while I live, I should exert myself in His service.” Eight years later, they constructed a house of worship. The church still stands, claiming to be the oldest Episcopal parish in the state.

### **Object**

Religious leaders in New England frequently expressed worries about the spiritual lives of those heading west. In 1817, the Congregationalists of the General Association of Connecticut published *An Address to the Emigrants of Connecticut*, urging those “in weak and scattered settlements, where you have no stated preaching at present...to form churches without delay, however small at first, and perseveringly to maintain public worship on the Sabbath.”

The Connecticut Missionary Society sent the young missionary Jonathan Lesslie to the Western Reserve in first decade of the nineteenth century. Lesslie used this table to record his missionary activities in the Reserve, a place he refers to simply as “Connecticut.” The table lists each town Lesslie visited (a journey of 2,426 miles) and the number of sermons he preached in each location. He also records the number of baptisms performed, a helpful indicator of both religious belief and the growth of Ohio towns.

Chart, included in a letter from Jonathan Lesslie to the Connecticut Missionary Society Trustees  
March 7, 1808

Collection of the Connecticut Conference Archives, United Church of Christ

### **Object**

Catharine Beecher created this map of the United States at Sarah Pierce’s Litchfield Female Academy, either as a student at the school or during her time as an assistant teacher. Completed a decade after Ohio achieved statehood, Beecher’s map still refers to the northeastern corner of the state as the “Connecticut Reserve.” Beecher modeled her school in Hartford, Connecticut, on the methods and curriculum of Pierce’s Academy. She later accompanied her father, the Rev. Lyman Beecher, to Ohio where she campaigned for improved education in the American frontier. Lyman Beecher served as president of Lane Seminary in Cincinnati.

Map of the United States  
c.1815  
Catharine Beecher (1800-1878)  
Watercolor and ink on paper  
Collection of the Litchfield Historical Society

Object

This plan of Huron, a county seat in the Firelands, shows a community organized around four institutions: the meetinghouse (church), courthouse, jail, and academy. These moral and education institutions formed the “pillars” of an idealized New England town recreated in the Reserve.

Plan of Huron, Ohio  
1810-1830  
Collection of the Western Reserve Historical Society



## **SECTION VI – Deciding to Migrate**

Migration was rarely an easy decision. Motivated to promote settlement and make good on their investments, landowners in the Reserve described it as a fertile, safe, and hospitable place to live. At the same time, Connecticut residents read persistent rumors about the poisonous snakes and dangerous animals found in the Reserve; heard of the widespread illness affecting surveying parties and early settlers; and questioned the safety of living so close to Native and British territories. In making the decision to trade the familiar for the unknown, migrants weighed the disadvantages of staying in Connecticut with the possible advantages of making a new life in the Western Reserve. These conditions are often referred to as push factors and pull factors.

### Push Factors (Connecticut)

- Overpopulation creating shortages of available land and local resources
- Poor agricultural harvests in recent years
- Party politics and animosity towards non-Federalists
- Inequitable taxation
- Involvement of the Congregational Church in politics, taxes, and daily life (prior to the disestablishment of the Church in the 1818 Constitution)

### Pull Factors (Reserve)

- Availability of affordable land
- Promise of agricultural potential
- Employment opportunities and economic mobility
- Greater freedom from political and religious institutions

## **SUB: Connecticut Responds**

As more Connecticut residents left for the Western Reserve, Pennsylvania, New York, Vermont, Maine, and other places with available land, those left behind worried about the negative effects of this steady migration. As migration peaked after the War of 1812, some called for Connecticut to improve agriculture, develop the state's manufacturing, and reform taxes to keep residents from leaving. Others stressed the real, exaggerated, and imagined drawbacks of trading Connecticut for the wilderness. Those leaving Connecticut tended to be younger and male, something that Governor Oliver Wolcott Jr. noted in an 1817 speech before the state legislature:

*“An investigation of the causes which produce the numerous emigrations of our industrious and enterprising young men, is by far the most important subject which can engage our attention...it is certain that the ardour for emigration may be excessive, and perhaps the time has arrived, when it will be wise in those who meditate removals, to compare the value of what they must relinquish, with what they can expect to acquire.”*

### Object

Anonymously published under the pseudonym “Samuel Simpleton,” *The Idiot, or, Invisible Rambler* included a recurring cartoon titled “Uncle Jerry Simpleton’s Tour to the Ohio.” This image of two men

meeting on the Ohio road was reproduced in anti-migration brochures and other literature intended to dissuade those thinking of trading New England for Ohio.

*The Idiot, or, Invisible Rambler*

May 30, 1818

Boston, Massachusetts

Private Collection

Portrait of Oliver Wolcott Jr. (far left)

1813

Gilbert Stuart (1756-1828)

Oil on mahogany

Collection of the Litchfield Historical Society

Object (grouped)

Migrants to the Western Reserve generally took one of two routes:

The southern route went through Pennsylvania. Migrants had to cross the Allegheny Mountains, but after crossing there were few obstacles on the road to Pittsburgh, which was just 60 miles from the Reserve border. Many began this route in the autumn.

The northern route went through New York, often passing through Buffalo and following the shoreline of Lake Erie. For migrants starting in late winter, this route offered good sleighing as an alternative to roads, which were unreliable even at the best of times. Once things thawed out, however, they would have to navigate swollen streams and other water obstacles. The northern route also offered water transportation, if and when available.

Cloak (Turkey Red)

Late eighteenth century

Wool

Collection of the Litchfield Historical Society

On average, the journey from Connecticut to Ohio took about one month for single travelers on horseback with light luggage, and two months for families traveling with more possessions. Most migrants traveled 12 to 15 miles per day. In some cases, one member of the family would make an initial trip to locate their lands, set up a household, or contract for construction or the clearing of land. They would then return east and bring along their family to New Connecticut.

Margaret Van Horn Dwight migrated to Ohio in 1810, at the age of 19. The niece of Timothy Dwight, president of Yale, Margaret traveled west to live with her cousins in the Western Reserve. Her travel journal was later published as *A Journey to Ohio* in 1810.

Saddlebags and Saddle

Used by Moses Warren Jr.

c.1796

On loan from the East Lyme Historical Society of Connecticut, Home of Moses Warren Jr.

Surveyor Moses Warren Jr. traveled between Connecticut and the Western Reserve in 1796 and 1797 as a member of the Connecticut Land Company surveying expeditions.

## **SECTION VII – Surveying the Reserve**

The Connecticut Land Company's first order of business was to explore and survey the estimated 1.2 million acres of land purchased from the state. Surveying is the process by which land is measured, divided, described, mapped, and recorded. Only by surveying the Western Reserve could the Company take an immense and relatively unknown area of land and divide it into smaller pieces that the proprietors could easily define, locate, price, sell, and exchange.

The Company financed surveying expeditions to the Western Reserve in 1796 and 1797. The members of these surveying parties created some of the earliest surviving accounts of the region and its remaining Native inhabitants, before resettlement forever changed the natural and human landscape of northeastern Ohio.

### **SUB: Finding Food**

Surveying parties spent months completing challenging work in relative isolation, and every man needed to be fed. The party's officers purchased large amounts of food as they traveled west, including butter, cheese, salted pork, bacon, grain, tea, and cider. Once they arrived in the Reserve, the men supplemented their supplies by hunting, fishing, and foraging for local plants and animals, some of which were unknown to their New England diets. They also purchased food from Native residents who continued hunting and fishing on the land.

To the right, you can see some of the food sources found in the Reserve by surveyor Moses Warren Jr. and Connecticut Land Company proprietor Turhand Kirtland. Turn each photograph to see what they ate!

### **SUB: The Surveying Process**

After arriving on the shores of Lake Erie, the surveyors' first task was to locate and run (measure using a surveying chain) the line separating the Western Reserve from the state of Pennsylvania. After locating the southeast corner of the Reserve, the teams began to divide New Connecticut into townships of five square miles.

Vertical rows of townships were called ranges and were numbered from east to west; the townships within each range were numbered from south to north. By establishing this grid system, townships could be easily located on a map even before they were named.

The surveyors worked in teams of six to ten men, and each man had a job to do: chainmen moved the surveying chain when running a line; axemen cleared brush to provide the surveyors with a clear line of sight; packmen led the horses carrying the team's supplies; and the surveyor recorded the findings and kept the team on course. Surveyors had special training in mathematics, astronomy, and the use of compasses and other tools. The surveying team marked trees and placed posts as they divided the Reserve into townships. Importantly for those back in Connecticut, the surveyors also made notes on the quality of the land, availability of water, and types and quantities of trees.

### **Object**

A native of Suffield, Connecticut, Seth Pease traveled to the Western Reserve in 1796 and 1797 as a surveyor and astronomer for the Connecticut Land Company. Working with fellow surveyor Amos Spafford, Pease surveyed the area around Cleveland and produced one of the earliest maps of the city. After returning to Connecticut, Pease and the noted New Haven printer Amos Doolittle created the first published map of the Western Reserve.

The maps created by Pease and other surveyors allowed the Connecticut Land Company to more fairly distribute Reserve lands to the company's investors. In turn, printed versions of these maps allowed individual investors to easily locate their lands and share those locations with potential buyers and settlers.

"A Map of the Connecticut Western Reserve From Actual Survey" (above)  
1796  
Seth Pease (1764-1819)  
Collection of the Western Reserve Historical Society

"Map of the Western Reserve" (left)  
1842  
Reed & Rollo (publisher)  
Collection of the Helga J. Ingraham Memorial Library,  
Litchfield Historical Society

### Object

Seth Pease oriented his early map of Cleveland with "south" at the top and "north" at the bottom, where you can see Lake Erie and the mouth of the Cuyahoga River. This layout reflects how the surveyors would have found the land if arriving by boat.

"A Plan of the City of Cleaveland"  
1796  
Seth Pease (1764-1819)  
Collection of the Western Reserve Historical Society

### **SUB: Supplying the Reserve**

Elijah Boardman ran a successful mercantile business in New Milford, Connecticut, and owned large amounts of land in the Western Reserve. Boardman was heavily involved in promoting settlement on his western lands and eager to see the townships succeed. Entries in his business ledgers and letters sent to his land agent in Ohio, Eli Baldwin, record key information about westward migration to the Reserve: What kinds of people in Connecticut were buying or leasing western lands? What forms of skilled labor did investors such as Boardman hope to attract to their townships? What goods did migrants bring with them, and what goods were in high demand in the Reserve? How did migrants purchase supplies before leaving and upon arriving in New Connecticut?

Explore: Look for quotes from Elijah Boardman and Eli Baldwin in this section of the exhibit, and in "Business & Trade," to learn more about these questions.

Object

Portrait of Elijah Boardman

1789

Ralph Earl (1751-1801)

Oil on canvas

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,  
Bequest of Susan W. Tyler, 1979

Object

Houses Fronting New Milford Green

c.1796

Ralph Earl (1751-1801)

Oil on canvas

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT

The Dorothy Clark Archibald and Thomas L. Archibald Fund, The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, The Krieble Family Fund for American Art, The Gift of James Junius Goodwin and The Douglas Tracy Smith and Dorothy Potter Smith Fund, 1994.16.1

## **SECTION VIII – Renewed Conflict**

Many of the principal investors in the Western Reserve expressed frequent worries over the success of New Connecticut. Far removed from New England, the Reserve in the early 1800s remained a sparsely settled experiment on the American frontier. The proximity of British, Spanish, French, and Native territories threatened new conflict and deterred migration to the Reserve and other western lands.

The British maintained a military presence in the Northwest Territory and supported their Native allies in resisting American expansion. Tensions escalated as Britain attempted to disrupt trade between the United States and France, causing some American politicians to agitate for war. While the Southern and Western states largely supported a renewed conflict with Britain, Federalists in Connecticut and New England voiced fierce opposition to the idea.

The United States declared war on Great Britain on June 18, 1812. In the ensuing conflict, known as the War of 1812, many Connecticut migrants found themselves on the front lines in Ohio and the Michigan Territory. Litchfield migrant Elijah Wadsworth, who had served as a Major General of the state militia since 1804, oversaw the defense of Northeast Ohio and the construction of roads and fortifications.

### **Object**

In 1812 and 1813, American, British, and Native forces clashed along the border between the Northwest Territory and Canada. American victories at the Battle of Lake Erie and the Battle of the Thames in the fall of 1813 were overshadowed by British raids along the Chesapeake Bay the following year and the capture and burning of Washington, D.C.

American and British representatives met in Belgium in December 1814 to negotiate an end to the hostilities. Before news of the peace could reach America, British forces mounted a failed assault on New Orleans on January 8, 1815.

Broadside: "War Declared"

June 22, 1812

Connecticut Mirror

USS Constitution Museum Collection

### **Object**

The Shawnee leaders and brothers Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa formed a Native confederation to resist American settlement in the Northwest Territory. Tecumseh, a veteran of the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, had refused to sign the resulting Treaty of Greenville. Influenced by the teachings of his brother, Tecumseh sought to unite Native peoples in order to preserve their freedom, lands, and cultures.

Tecumseh's Confederacy drew the attention of William Henry Harrison, governor of the Indiana Territory. In 1811, Harrison attacked and destroyed the brothers' village at Prophetstown during the Battle of Tippecanoe. Tecumseh then led his followers against the United States during the War of 1812, serving as a key ally of the British. He died at the Battle of the Thames in October 1813.

Ten-squat-a-way, The Open Door, Known as The Prophet, Brother of Tecumseh (top)  
1830

George Catlin (1796-1872)

Oil on canvas

Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Jr., 1985.66.279

Portrait of Tecumseh (bottom)

c.1808

Harper & Brothers (publisher)

Collection of the Toronto Public Library



## SECTION IX – Business & Trade

The availability of work, provisions, and finished goods in the Western Reserve depended on when a settler arrived and where they purchased land. Investors such as Elijah Boardman actively recruited blacksmiths, cobblers, tailors, and other tradespeople whose skills would improve the local economy and attract further migration. Contracts with tradespeople sometimes included provisions listing the labor expected of the men's wives. When Elijah Boardman hired William Thair to transport livestock to the Reserve, the agreement required Thair's wife, Sarah, to cook and do laundry for Boardman's hired men.

Both settlers and investors complained frequently of a lack of cash. Many residents adopted an economic creativity that became common on the frontier. Settlers traded their skilled labor for necessary provisions. Land purchasers could work off some of their debts by making improvements such as clearing farmland and repairing roads.

An anonymous account of New Connecticut appeared in the Connecticut Herald in 1816 and painted a more positive economic view of the Reserve after the War of 1812. The writer described fertile soil for growing hemp, tobacco, and other crops; a plentiful supply of stone for quarrying; coal and iron deposits; large dairies in many towns; salt springs and sugar production; and plentiful timber "of almost every kind common to this latitude."

### Object (grouped)

Peter Hartman and his family emigrated from Germany to Pennsylvania before continuing to Wayne County, Ohio. More than 70 identified coverlet weavers were active in this area. Many of them worked multiple jobs and sold coverlets to earn additional income. A gifted weaver, Peter Hartman also maintained a farm, preached as a "circuit rider," and later owned a dry goods store.

Jacquard coverlet

1837

Peter and John Hartman

Wooster, Ohio

Collection of the Litchfield Historical Society

Lemuel Porter was a Connecticut chair and clockmaker who moved to Ohio in 1818, where he was able to leverage his skills to become an architectural joiner. He was responsible for designing and building the Congregational Church in Tallmadge, Ohio, which closely resembled Litchfield's own Congregational Church.

Painted Windsor Chair

Attributed to Lemuel Porter (1780-1829)

1800-1818

Collection of the Litchfield Historical Society

Garry Lewis migrated from Connecticut to Warren, Ohio in 1816. He became involved in the wooden works clock industry that flourished in Trumbull County from 1812 to the mid-1830s, and included his brothers and fellow clockmakers Charles, Wheeler, and Lambert W. Lewis. Lambert's factory in nearby Vienna was among the largest and most successful in Trumbull County. Garry, who also supplied timber

for clock production, likely contracted with other clockmakers to produce his tall case clocks, which were signed either “G. Lewis” or “Garry Lewis.” The tall case and pillar and scroll clocks manufactured in the Western Reserve illustrate a continuation of Connecticut clock styles executed in wood species native to Ohio.

Tall Case Clock  
c.1820  
Garry Lewis (1800-1862)  
Trumbull County, Ohio  
Collection of Hollie Davis and Andrew Richmond

Object (grouped)

Tall Case Clock (image, left)  
1830-1840  
Riley Whiting  
Winchester, Connecticut  
Private Collection

Shelf Clock (platform)  
1820-1827  
Hopkins & Alfred  
Litchfield, Connecticut  
Collection of the Litchfield Historical Society

Shelf Clock (image, left)  
1830-1840  
Pritchard & Blakesly  
Dayton, Ohio  
Private Collection

Born in Milford, Connecticut, Jonathan Goldsmith apprenticed to a carpenter-joiner as a teenager and was active in Connecticut and Massachusetts. Migrating to Ohio in 1811, he completed numerous homes and commercial buildings in Cleveland, Painesville, and other towns in Lake County. Goldsmith’s Cleveland homes were designed for prominent city residents and executed in the late Federal and early Greek Revival styles popular in the 1830s. Many of his business records, architectural drawings, and letters survive in the collection of the Western Reserve Historical Society.

Architectural Drawing (right, wall)  
c.1830  
Jonathan Goldsmith (1783-1847)  
Cleveland, Ohio  
Collection of the Western Reserve Historical Society

Object (grouped)

Connecticut clockmaker Eli Terry patented an affordable yet elegant shelf clock that was mass-produced in the 1820s and widely copied by other manufacturers. Decorated with pillars on each side and

scrollwork at the top (fancy designs in wood, often cut with a scroll saw), the pieces became known as Connecticut pillar and scroll clocks. Other common elements included elegant feet, a painted wood dial, and a reverse-painted lower glass door. Sold throughout the country by traveling peddlers, the form was also produced in the Western Reserve, where local woods were preferred to expensive imported mahogany.

Shelf Clock  
Late 1820s  
Mark Leavenworth  
Waterbury, Connecticut  
Collection of the Litchfield  
Historical Society

Shelf Clock (image)  
1830-1850  
Allison Turner  
Ashtabula, Ohio  
Private Collection

A native of Woodstock, Connecticut, David Bacon spent years working as a missionary among Native populations in the Northwest Territory. In 1804, he became a minister and missionary in the Western Reserve. The Church authorized Bacon to establish the township of Tallmadge, named for prominent landowner and Litchfield resident Benjamin Tallmadge. Bacon struggled to attract new settlers to the town and could not collect enough taxes to pay his creditors. He was evicted from the land in 1812 and returned to Connecticut.

Bacon died in 1817, before he could see Tallmadge succeed and grow into a center of Congregationalist faith in the Reserve. Between 1819 and 1822, Connecticut-born architect Lemuel Porter constructed a new Congregational Church in Tallmadge, built in the Connecticut style.

(top)  
Photograph: Congregational Church, Litchfield, Connecticut  
Collection of the Helga J. Ingraham Memorial Library,  
Litchfield Historical Society

(bottom)  
Photograph: Congregational Church, Tallmadge, Ohio  
Collection of the Library of Congress

### Object

Judson Canfield of Sharon, Connecticut, purchased land in the Western Reserve and moved to Ohio in 1815. When it was donated to the collection, his pocket watch contained watch papers from Warren, Ohio, and Cleveland, Ohio.

Portrait of Judson Canfield  
1796  
Ralph Earl (1751-1801)  
Oil on canvas

Collection of the Litchfield Historical Society

Pocket Watch

1811

Smith

Watch Papers (various)

Collection of the Litchfield Historical Society

### **SUB: Migrants and Immigrants**

The regional identity of the Western Reserve was shaped by the many old New England families who settled there, but the same opportunities that attracted settlers from Connecticut and Massachusetts also attracted migrants from other states and immigrants recently arrived from Europe. Traveling to and living in Ohio forced New Englanders to interact with people from different cultures and communities. Not all New Englanders welcomed these interactions, revealing in their journals and correspondence a stark level of prejudice and cultural intolerance.

### **SUB: The Erie Canal**

In 1817, New York Governor DeWitt Clinton convinced the state legislature to fund an ambitious canal project to connect the Hudson River with Lake Erie. The canal was dug before dynamite and steam-powered tools were invented. An estimated 50,000 laborers spent eight years digging the canal using hand tools, black powder, and horse-drawn machinery. Among them were large numbers of Irish immigrants, who often completed the most dangerous work for meager wages. Once finished, the Erie Canal completed a navigable waterway that stretched across New York and linked the Atlantic Ocean with the former Northwest Territory. Detractors of the project called it “Clinton’s ditch” or “Clinton’s folly,” but the canal proved a financial success and accelerated both American commerce and westward migration.

### Object

Former Connecticut residents played important roles in the canal’s story. Before the canal was dug, Bridgeport native Jesse Hawley fell into debt trying to transport flour from western New York to markets on the Atlantic coastline. While in debtor’s prison in 1807, he wrote fourteen essays advocating for a canal and detailing its possible construction. Published in the Genesee Messenger, these essays influenced others to begin surveying the land and determining the feasibility of a canal. When construction began in 1817, Wethersfield-born surveyor Benjamin Wright served as the project’s chief engineer.

Broadside: “Grand Celebration!”

1825

Geneva, New York

Collection of the New York State Library

### **SUB: Ohio Follows Suit**

Ohio capitalized on the success of the Erie Canal by constructing its own canal system. Completed in 1832, the Ohio & Erie Canal stretched over 300 miles between Cleveland and the town of Portsmouth,

Ohio, on the Kentucky border. By joining Lake Erie with the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, the Ohio & Erie Canal formed an economic and transportation network joining New York, Ohio, Louisiana, and the communities on America's developing frontier. The canals transformed the Western Reserve from a land of scattered settlements to a prospering region.

Object

Broadside: "Scheme of a Lottery for Improving the Navigation between Lake Erie and the River Ohio, through the Cuyahoga and Muskingum Rivers"

May 23, 1807

Cleveland, Ohio

Collection of the Western Reserve Historical Society

Object

The canal network provided a more reliable and less expensive method of transportation, which in turn promoted travel and increased trade and migration between Eastern and Western states. Cleveland, one of the first settlements established in the Reserve, became a major commercial and industrial center. Manufactured goods from the northeast and raw materials from western territories moved through Cleveland's docks and warehouses. New industries arose to turn these raw materials into desirable products such as steel, creating jobs for European immigrants and migrants from Eastern states.

(left)

Newspaper Ad: "Ross & Lemen"

1837

Collection of the Library of Congress

(above)

"Four Views of Cleveland"

1834

Thomas Whelpley

Collection of the Cleveland Public Library

Object

"Northwest Part of the Public Square"

1839

Joseph Parker

Cleveland, Ohio

Collection of the Western Reserve Historical Society

## **SECTION X – Legacy of the Reserve**

Examining the story of the Western Reserve provides a window into many aspects of our broader national history. Debates on how new territories could join the Union in the years after the Revolution created a path to Ohio statehood, which in turn served as a model for new Western states. In a state that passed laws discriminating against Black migrants, the Reserve became a center for abolitionist efforts in the 1840s and 1850s. Many of the Reserve’s Native peoples faced continued displacement and were forced further west as America continued its expansion; others remained in or returned to Ohio where they continue to contribute to the state’s culture and history.

### **Object**

The Wendat (later Wyandot) people migrated from southern Ontario, with some settling in northern Ohio. After the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, the Wyandot were forced to surrender most of their Ohio lands to the federal government. In 1842, under the government’s aggressive Indian Removal policies, the Wyandot were forced to cede their Ohio reservation and relocate to Kansas.

Little is known about the origin of this map, but one author speculated it may have been created at the time of the removal of the Wyandot from the reservation. If that is the case, the creator of the map may have been plotting out new Ohio townships over the existing settlements of the Wyandot. A number of Wyandot homes and other sites are visible, including the location of the mission church.

Wyandot Reservation Map

Pre-1842

Artist unknown

Courtesy of the Ohio History Connection,  
MAP VFM 0474-4

### **Object**

(above, left)

Map of Lands Assigned to “Emigrant Indians” in Western Territory  
c.1834

Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, National Archives

(above)

Memorial from the Ladies of Steubenville, Ohio, Protesting Indian Removal  
February 15, 1830

Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, National Archives

### **Object**

Photograph: Mission to the Wyandot Nation

Pre-1842

Upper Sandusky, Ohio

Courtesy of the Ohio History Connection,  
MAP VFM 0474-4

## **SUB: Anti-slavery Activities**

Although slavery was outlawed in Ohio's constitution, residents of the state remained divided in their support for the anti-slavery movement. Many who were willing to denounce slavery in order to uphold the courts and laws of Ohio were unwilling to support abolitionist activities or welcome Black migrants into their communities. For free Black residents and freedom seekers, the state remained a place of both opportunity and continued discrimination throughout the nineteenth century.

Anti-slavery debates took root at the young educational institutions in the Western Reserve. Students at Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati withdrew from the school when it attempted to prohibit anti-slavery discussions. The "Lane Rebels" came to the Reserve to join Oberlin College, which agreed to guarantee free speech and admit Black students. In 1854, Frederick Douglass delivered a commencement address at the Western Reserve College in Hudson, describing the "ignobility" of those wishing to remain neutral on the subject of slavery.

White and Black Ohioans participated in the Underground Railroad, especially in communities bordering Lake Erie, a popular pathway to Canada. Many residents impeded the efforts of slave catchers searching for freedom seekers living in or passing through the Reserve. The passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which required Northern law enforcement officials and citizens to aid in the capture of freedom seekers, sparked a new wave of anti-slavery sentiment in the Reserve, in Ohio, and across the country.

#### Object

Some Ohioans actively resisted abolitionist activities. In 1836, mobs in Cincinnati twice destroyed the printing press of James Birney, publisher of the anti-slavery newspaper, *The Philanthropist*. Even in the Reserve, abolitionists in Lake County in the 1830s were harassed by mobs and barred from speaking by town resolutions.

*The Philanthropist*  
December 18, 1838

#### Object

Harriet Beecher Stowe was born in Litchfield and educated at the Litchfield Female Academy. At the age of 21, she left Hartford and accompanied her father to Cincinnati, Ohio, a city separated from the slave state of Kentucky only by the width of the Ohio River. Multiple experiences during this period influenced Stowe's writing of her famous anti-slavery book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, including her travels in Kentucky, interactions with formerly enslaved people and freedom seekers, and the anti-slavery debates at Lane Seminary, her father's school.

*Uncle Tom's Cabin*  
1853  
Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896)  
Edinburgh, Adam and Charles Black  
Collection of the Helga J. Ingraham Memorial Library, Litchfield Historical Society

#### Object

Anti-slavery supporters in the Reserve disagreed on how to best end the practice of slavery. Some favored immediate abolition and equality for formerly enslaved people. Others supported gradual

emancipation or the efforts of the American Colonization Society, which sought to purchase freedom for enslaved individuals and promote their removal to a colony in Africa. Some simply wanted to stop the spread of slavery to new states.

John Brown, born in Connecticut and raised in the Western Reserve, advocated for radical abolitionism. Brown's family moved from nearby Torrington, Connecticut, to Hudson, Ohio, in 1805. Raised in an anti-slavery home, Brown is said to have dedicated his life "to the destruction of slavery" in 1837 after learning of the death of Elijah Lovejoy, an abolitionist newspaper editor killed by a pro-slavery mob. In October 1859, Brown led a raid on the arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, hoping to start an armed revolt of enslaved people. Found guilty of treason and murder, Brown was executed two months later.

Photograph of John Brown  
c.1859  
Reproduction of a daguerreotype  
Collection of the Library of Congress

### Object

Look first: What do you see in this painting? How has the artist, John Gast, represented his idea of "progress"? How has he depicted Native peoples?

"American Progress" is a symbolic painting of American westward expansion and Manifest Destiny, the belief that Americans were destined to expand their nation across the continent of North America. Created just after the height of westward expansion, the painting depicts Columbia, a female personification of America, walking from east to west. Around her are covered wagons, migrants carrying rifles, and symbols of "progress" such as telegraph wires and a schoolbook representing American education. At the far left of the painting are the Native peoples being displaced by white migration. The posture of one of the Native men, who raises a tomahawk towards Columbia, suggests conflict between those moving west and those being forced from their homes.

"American Progress"  
1872  
John Gast (1842-1896)  
Chromolithograph  
Collection of the Library of Congress



## **Graphics: Timelines**

### **Timeline I: Origins of the Reserve**

1662

Connecticut's royal charter established "sea-to-sea" boundaries for the colony.

1769

Conflict broke out in northern Pennsylvania as settlers from Connecticut asserted their claim to the land. Known as the Yankee-Pennamite Wars, the dispute continued until 1799.

1775

On April 19, British forces clashed with American militia at the Battles of Lexington and Concord. The American Revolution began.

1781

The state of Virginia began ceding its vast western land claims to the American government. It decided to keep a section of land in present-day Ohio as payment for war veterans.

1783

Great Britain signed the Treaty of Paris, recognizing American independence and ceding most of Britain's claimed land east of the Mississippi River.

1786

Connecticut ceded its claimed western lands to the United States. Following the model of Virginia, Connecticut retained an estimated 3.5 million acres of land along Lake Erie.

1787

Congress passed the Northwest Ordinance, creating a system of government for the Northwest Territory. Because it was owned by Connecticut, the Reserve was not governed as part of the Territory.

### **Timeline II: Claiming New Connecticut**

1784: Treaty of Fort Stanwix

Members of the Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) Six Nations were forced to give up land in New York and the Ohio Country. Oliver Wolcott of Litchfield served as one of the American treaty commissioners.

1785: Treaty of Fort McIntosh

Young leaders from the Wyandot, Lenape (Delaware), Ottawa, and Ojibwe (Chippewa) signed a new treaty relinquishing land claims in the Ohio Country. The treaty was largely rejected by the region's Native populations.

1789: Treaty of Fort Harmar

Arthur St. Clair met with Native leaders near present-day Marietta, Ohio. Using gifts and the threat of violence, St. Clair persuaded those present to sign a treaty reinforcing the terms outlined at Fort McIntosh.

1791

A Native force led by Michikinikwa (Little Turtle) of the Miami and Weyapiersenwah (Blue Jacket) of the Shawnee defeated General Arthur St. Clair at the Battle of the Wabash.

1794

A confederation of Native tribes was defeated by Major General Anthony Wayne at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, near present-day Toledo, Ohio.

1795: Treaty of Greenville

Native leaders signed the Treaty of Greenville. A new boundary line was drawn through the Ohio Country to separate Native territory and the United States.

### **Timeline III: The Connecticut Land Company**

1792

Connecticut set aside the western portion of the Reserve as the Firelands. This land was for Connecticut residents whose property was destroyed during the American Revolution.

1795

The Treaty of Greenville opened part of the Reserve for sale and new settlement. A group of private investors organized the Connecticut Land Company and purchased the entire Reserve from the state of Connecticut for \$1.2 million.

1796

General Moses Cleaveland traveled with a surveying party to the Reserve and met with Native leaders at Buffalo and Conneaut. The settlement of Cleaveland (later, Cleveland) was named in his honor.

1797

The Connecticut Land Company financed a second surveying party, with Seth Pease as principal surveyor.

1805

The Treaty of Fort Industry forced Native populations further west and opened the remainder of the Western Reserve for new migration.

1809

The Connecticut Land Company dissolved after struggling to remain profitable due to poor land sales and limited settlement.

### **Timeline IV: The Path to Statehood**

1787

The Northwest Ordinance established a process for creating new states from the Northwest Territory. The Ordinance also prohibited slavery in the Territory.

1800

Congress passed the Quieting Act to affirm Connecticut's right to the Western Reserve and guarantee existing land titles. Connecticut then granted the federal government jurisdiction over the Reserve, which became part of the Northwest Territory.

1802

President Thomas Jefferson approved the Enabling Act to begin the process of admitting Ohio to the Union.

1803

Jefferson endorsed the Congressional decision to grant Ohio's statehood. Ohio's legislature met for the first time on March 1.

1804

Ohio passed a series of laws, known as the Black Codes or Black Laws of 1804, which discouraged Black migration to the state. A second set of Black Laws were passed in 1807.

## Graphics: Quotes

### **Abigail Perkins, 1827**

*"The mode of traveling on the canal I admire, the country is beautiful on both sides many neat flourishing villages we passed through; while the boat was in the locks we frequently walk'd around...the villages on the canal are very flourishing. I was surprised to see handsome public buildings in most of them, some settled not more than 2 or 3 years"*

Some, like Abigail Perkins of Norwich and Litchfield, traveled on the Erie Canal to sightsee and visit family. Perkins spoke highly of the city of Rochester, New York, in an 1827 letter to Elizabeth Buswell. Her canal boat entered the city "by moonlight & pass'd over the great aqueduct falls on one side mills on the other, crowds of people waiting for the expected boats to arrive all seem'd actively engaged."

### **Amzi Atwater, early 1820s**

*"...we are in hopes that when the Great Canal gets through to the Lake, some other things will bear transportation, but we are not to expect that every bodys pocket will be full of money and indeed it is not necessary."*

### **Amzi Atwater (Letters to a friend in Connecticut)**

Early 1820s: *"The people in this part of the state are in general despos'd to support schools, but as we have no public money for that purpose it is expensive supporting good ones."*

1831: *"The Western Reserve College at Hudson is flourishing at a rate perhaps seldom know[n] in the United States. Academies are established in many of the most important Towns and Villages and common schools in every neighborhood."*

Connecticut Land Company's surveying teams and was one of the few surveyors to actually settle in the region. Atwater's opinion of his adopted home, and especially the quality of education it afforded, changed drastically between the early 1820s and the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, which brought new commerce and migration to the Reserve.

### **Joseph Badger, 1801**

*"After an appropriate prayer, the oration was delivered, interlarded with many grossly illiberal remarks against Christians and Christianity."*

A Massachusetts native, Joseph Badger arrived in the Western Reserve in 1800 as a missionary for the Connecticut Missionary Society. As one of the earliest clergymen working in the Reserve, Badger could not help but express moments of doubt in a journal kept from 1801 to 1803. Despite the mixed reception he received in some towns, Badger founded the first Congregational Church in the Reserve and continued there as a missionary and resident minister for over 30 years.

### **Eli Baldwin, 1804**

*“you mentioned that Mr Beach Summers talked of coming out here in a sleigh and that he would bring some things for you besides Hoes and Sythes if this Reaches you before he sets out...also send me Irish Linin enough for two Shirts...also I wish Mr Nathan Camp to get a very good fife if ther are any to be had as he is a judge of Musical Instruments being himself a Musician”*

#### **Eli Baldwin, 1805**

*“Nathaniel Blakely is soon to be Married to Polly Brainard and is determined to sell his plans as he does not like to have a Dutchman for so nigh a Neighbour”*

Eli Baldwin, land agent for Elijah Boardman, wrote to his employer in Connecticut to update him on payments, sales, and other developments in Boardman’s Ohio lands. According to Baldwin, Nathaniel Blakely intended to exchange his land to avoid living near a German or Pennsylvania Dutch migrant.

#### **Elijah Boardman, 1798**

*“I wish also that you would forward four or five Maps (if you have Recd them from New Haven) of New Connecticut, or lodge them in Hartford for me with notes by Letter of the place so that I may forward the Cash & send for the Maps”*

Planning to visit his lands in the Western Reserve, Elijah Boardman wrote to Seth Pease to obtain copies of any drawings the surveyor made of three townships along the Cuyahoga River. With the drawings in hand, Boardman wrote that it “would not take long to check out those three Towns...so that I may trace out my lands having the plan with me.” In addition, he inquired whether Pease could forward copies of his “Map of the Connecticut Western Reserve” if Doolittle had finished printing them.

#### **Elijah Boardman, 1808**

*“Mr Ruggles will want one or two cows, probably 20 or 30 Bushels of Wheat, some Corn, as much as 300 lb of good Salt Pork...some sheep and also a part of my wool this spring - & some sugar – whiskey &c all of these you can get if I have not them on hand – by some debtors”*

Writing to Eli Baldwin about a new settler heading to the Reserve, Elijah Boardman listed the various provisions and other goods the settler would likely need once he arrived in Ohio. If Baldwin did not have these items on hand, he was instructed to collect them from other settlers who owed Boardman money.

#### **Elijah Boardman, 1808**

*“Mr Ruggles will make a very [good] settler in Palmyra...he is a very ingenious Blacksmith, Plowmaker – curious at repairing guns – making Bells &c the Family are respectable Industrious people – You will let the Palmyrians know of this probably valuable acqisition to their Settlement”*

#### **Elijah Boardman, 1802**

*“As to the Northwest Territory becoming a State – I have no doubt but the people will be generally for it and it will be important that they form a good constitution and I have no doubt but what the New England forms will be better than any other which that State can imitate.”*

### **Elijah Boardman, 1802**

*"I feel as much interested in the production of those fields and how they appear as if they were within 40 rods of my Store – I do not really expect to live on them any considerable portion of time, yet they seem more like home to me than any other spot, and more pleasing than any other on earth except my own house."*

The Connecticut Land Company's primary goal was to profit from the sale of lands in the Western Reserve. The Company made few provisions regarding the development of those lands, leaving each investor to decide their own level of involvement. Elijah Boardman of New Milford, Connecticut, tried to attract migrants to his Ohio lands by clearing farmland and building roads and mills. He also sold land to individuals and families he believed were of good character and who would contribute to the success of the community.

### **Moses Cleaveland, 1796**

*"I prepared to meet them, and after they were all seated, took my seat in the middle. Cato, son of Paqua, was the orator, Paqua dictated. They opened the council by smoking the pipe of peace and friendship...requested to know our claim to the land, as they had friends who resided on the land, and others at a distance who would come there. They wanted to know what I would do with them. I replied, informing them of our title, and what I had said to the Six Nations, and also assured them that they should not be disturbed in their possessions, we would treat them and their friends as brothers. They then presented me with a pipe of friendship and peace, a curious one, indeed."*

### **Cornplanter, Half-town, and Great-tree, 1790**

(Letter to President George Washington)

*"When our chiefs returned from the treaty of fort Stanwix, and laid before our Council what had been done there our Nation was surprized to hear, how great a Country you had compelled them to give up, to you, without paying us any thing for it."*

### **Amos Doolittle, 1798**

February 15: *"I received your letter of the 5th Instant on the subject of Engraving a Map of new Connecticut: would inform you that I should be very happy to undertake the Jobb, and can set about it immediately... if you pleas to Favour me with the Jobb I will exert my self to do it in the Neatist manner I am capable of"*

April 19: *"I here with send you 2 doz of your Maps of the Connecticut Reserve. hope they will answer your expatations. Where has a number of Gentlemen sent in names to certain Towns in which they were concerned I have taken the Liberty to Engrave on the Plate"*

### **Henry Leavitt Ellsworth, 1811**

*"Almost every hut is a tavern as it brings in a little cash which is in great demand among the first settlers who, generally speaking, are poor and destitute."*

Henry Leavitt Ellsworth studied at the Litchfield Law School in 1811, the same year he traveled to the Western Reserve to inspect lands purchased by his family. His account of the journey was later published as *A Tour to New Connecticut* in 1811. Appointed as a “Commissioner to the Indians” after the passage of the Indian Removal Act, Ellsworth returned west in 1832 to oversee the forced resettlement of Native peoples to the south and west of Arkansas.

### **William Grayson, 1786**

*“The delegation of our State was very much embarrassed with the Connecticut business... their cession was nothing but a state juggle contrived by old Roger Sherman to get a side wind confirmation to a thing they had no right to...I don’t see what is to prevent them from keeping it always, as the [federal] constitution does not give a Court in this instance, & a war with them would cost more than the six million of acres is worth.”*

Not everyone was content with Connecticut’s decision. William Grayson, a delegate from Virginia, felt that Connecticut had no right to withhold the Western Reserve from the federal government. He did admit, however, that the Reserve would form a “barrier [against] the British as well as the Indians,” raise the value of the nearby territories, and promote their settlement.

### **Uriel Holmes Jr., 1803 (Letter to Elijah Wadsworth)**

*“We have fears here of a Spanish War, and Mr. Root and I have strong fears that it will materially injure the settlement of the Reserve”*

### **Elijah Wadsworth, 1803 (Letter to Ephraim Kirby)**

*“money is very scarce in this Country, the damnable cry of War in the last Congress by the Minority has given a check to sail of lands here & settlement of this State”*

### **Uriel Holmes Jr., 1804**

*“If you can sell any considerable share of the Town of Litchfield [Ohio] to a Company & get early pay, you may sell my Lands at something less than \$2.50 – But you will remember never to contract to convey till all the purchase money is paid – There is still an increasing disposition in the people of this State and Massachusetts to go to New Connecticut – Can’t you or some other one write us a good account of the Country the progress of settlements that we may publish in the News papers to highten the spirit”*

The proprietors from Litchfield frequently corresponded to discuss their shared investments. In this letter, Uriel Holmes Jr. asks Elijah Wadsworth to write an account of the “progress of settlements” in their Ohio lands as a means of promoting new migration. Wadsworth was the only Litchfield proprietor to permanently move to the Western Reserve, where he became heavily involved in organizing post offices, schools, and the state militia in the region of Canfield, Ohio.

### **Hannah Huntington (Letters to her husband, Samuel Huntington)**

1804: *“I kept the fever & ague till I was put to bed our child was suppos’d to be the victim of it. for 4 hours there was every exertion to preserve it without any effect...it was buried the 27th of March”*

1808: *"I have concluded that Frank will stay at home this Winter there is to be a school open'd by Mr Thurstons...I think perhaps he may do as well as to go to Warren & we shall save boarding the little boys I have school'd myself some but my time is fill'd with something all the day"*

Born in Norwich, Connecticut, Hannah Huntington migrated to the Western Reserve between 1800 and 1801, traveling with her husband, six children, two servants, and a companion named Margaret Cobb. Samuel's work required regular travel across Ohio, leaving Hannah responsible for both the family's welfare and Samuel's business affairs. She ran the family farm, conducted financial transactions on Samuel's behalf, and made decisions regarding the children's education. Hannah's letters to Samuel reveal the ways in which necessity and opportunity changed women's roles on the western frontier. They also record her social interactions and the realities of daily life in the Reserve, including the constants of illness and loss.

### **President Thomas Jefferson, 1803**

(Letter to William Henry Harrison)

*"...in this way our settlements will gradually circumscribe & approach the Indians, & they will in time either incorporate with us as citizens of the US. or remove beyond the Missisipi. the former is certainly the termination of their history most happy for themselves... should any tribe be fool-hardy enough to take up the hatchet at any time, the seizing the whole country of that tribe & driving them across the Missisipi, as the only condition of peace, would be an example to others, and a furtherance of our final consolidation."*

### **Thomas Kelly, 1828**

*"This is no place to make much money, but bartering one with another; most of the tradesmen get store pay, that is victuals or any thing that you want out of the shops or stores as they call them."*

An early foreign immigrant to the Western Reserve, Thomas Kelly was born on the Isle of Man in the Irish Sea between Ireland and Great Britain. Hundreds of Manx immigrants left Europe to settle in the Western Reserve in the 1820s. Kelly arrived in New York in 1827 and traveled by boat on the Erie Canal and Lake Erie to reach Ohio. Likely drawn to America by the positive reports sent home by earlier arrivals, Kelly described the Cleveland area as a place of inexpensive land and economic opportunity.

### **Thomas Kelly, 1828**

*"Mechanics for work and board themselves, a joiner gets 1 1/4 dollar, mason 1 1/4 dollar, tailor 1 dollar; shoemaker 1/2 dollar, a smith (by the way they sell their wrought iron) can earn 3 or 4 dollars a day. Any man that could set up a tanyard would be a fine thing. Sadler is a very good trade. Cooper is of little use, they make their coopering in factories"*

### **Ephraim Kirby, 1802**

(Letters to Elijah Wadsworth in the Reserve)

June 12: *"I am happy to learn by your favour of the 29th of April that you arrived safe at the land of promise in good health"*



September 27: *"I shall be happy to hear how you have fared on your journey, and of your safe arrival at the land of promise"*

**Laura Pease Tallmadge, 1839**

*"The canal through this village is completed from here to Beaver & we can now go from here to Troy all the way by water the southern route, and next year when it is finished from this to Akron, where it unites with the Ohio canal...if the railroad between Pittsburgh & Cleveland should be made, we can almost go to see each other 'socially' for an afternoon"*

A number of smaller canals, including the Pennsylvania & Ohio Canal in the southeast of the Reserve, linked additional towns to the Ohio & Erie Canal and other waterways leading into Pennsylvania. As Tallmadge anticipated in her letter, the expansion of railroads in the 1840s and 1850s decreased the use of Ohio's canals.

**Lavinia Tuttle, 1836**

(Letter to Maryann Dudley of Litchfield)

*"This Country is generally healthy and very pleasant much more so than the one we came from I do not wish to go there again to live. we would like you to sell and move to this country we should like your society"*

**Maera (Walk-in-the-Water), Chidawenoe, Rowsah, Rewayerough, Ququengh, Yeaugh Lowanea, Roniyarech, and Mentotonak, 1812**

(Letter to President James Madison)

*"Fathers, this is the way in which this small spot, which we so much value, has been so often torn from us. We, the Wyandotts, are now a small nation. Unless you have charity for us, we will soon be forgot, like the Nottaways of Virginia."*

**Emily Nash, 1813**

*"All had to work then or starve with hunger...Mother found all the work spinning and weaveing that we could do...Mr Ford let us have a cow and twelve sheep and wanted women work for pay. He let us have meat and lots of provision so we made out to live and not go hungrey. If it had not been for the womens work we could not get along for provisions is very high it being in the time of the war."*

**Emily Nash, 1815**

*"I fear the Indians will remember it a long time and seek for revenge for being driven from their hunting ground around the river where they had camped for many years till the ground both sides of the river is covered thick with Indian arrows..."*

**Seth Pease, 1797**

*"this morning we began to deal out regular Rations one lb chocolate to the whole, about 5 lb. Pork to 6 men. a small porringer of sugar to each mess – a bottle of Tea to two messes – a bottle of Rum to each mess"*

**Simon Perkins, 1813**

*“Judge Pease has arrived who says that no further information has been received from the garrisons at the west, I am very much inclined to believe that the Militia from this Brigade will not be required, and as it will be very destructive to the interest of the people now to be called off you will please to advise me if I may on any condition delay the march of men from my Brigade.”*

Born in Norwich, Connecticut, Simon Perkins arrived in the Reserve in 1798 as a surveyor and land agent for the Erie Land Company. He held many positions in his adopted home, serving as the Reserve’s first postmaster, an officer in the Ohio militia, and president of the Western Reserve Bank. Perkins wrote General Elijah Wadsworth in May 1813 concerning “garrisons at the west,” likely a reference to the failed siege of Fort Meigs by British troops and their Native allies under Tecumseh.

**Benjamin Tallmadge, 1812**

*“We have a most furious party of Republicans, as they call themselves, from the interior, who are loud & urgent for war. You may perhaps recollect a Mr Calhoun from South Carolina, who studied Law at Litchfield some years ago...I believe it is the full intention of these ardent Men to enter into a War with G. B. if the Orders in Council should not be repealed...I can give no adequate View of the madness & folly of such a measure at this time”*

Benjamin Tallmadge, who served as Washington’s spymaster during the American Revolution and invested in both foreign trade and the Western Reserve, wrote to fellow Litchfield resident Frederick Wolcott in the early weeks of 1812. He described recent proceedings in the House of Representatives, where a group of Democratic-Republicans pushed for a declaration of war against Britain.

**Henry Tazewell, 1798**

(Letter to James Madison)

*“At length they have converted Congress into a Company of Land Speculators. Connecticut has sold what was called her reserve—for 1,200,000 dollars—she now offers to cede the Jurisdiction over it to the US, if they will confirm her sale. Her right is the most unfounded that I ever examined.”*

**Isaiah and Abigail Tuttle, 1836**

(Letter to Rhoda Baldwin Dudley of Litchfield)

*“I have forty five acres of good land about a mile and half from the centre of the town, we live in a log cabin, not as pleasant indeed as would be desirable but we get along quite comfortably...and are perhaps as comfortable here in the woods as we should be in Con[n]ecticut.”*

**Isaiah and Abigail Beach Tuttle, 1836**

(Letter to Rhoda Baldwin Dudley of Litchfield)

*“I think that generally the cause of truth, of morality and religion is advancing and hope and believe that it will finally prevail---This country is rapidly advancing in agriculture, in arts, and commerce and it requires a constant vigorous effort on the part of the friends of religion that the moral improvement may keep pace with these”*

### **Margaret Van Horn Dwight, 1810**

*"I should not have thought it possible to pass a Sabbath in our country among such a dissolute vicious set of wretches as we are now among...It is dreadful to see so many people that you cannot speak to or understand— They are all high dutch, but I hope not a true specimen of the Pennsylvanians generally."*

Margaret Van Horn Dwight took the southern route from Connecticut to the Western Reserve, traveling across New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Dwight and her traveling companions relied on taverns for food and lodging, many of them located in communities of German descent (Pennsylvania Dutch). Unfamiliar with their language and customs, Dwight formed a highly critical opinion of her hosts as loud, crude, and intemperate.

### **Moses Warren Jr., 1796**

*"Here is a great gang of Wild Irish digging a Canal to unite Woodcreek with the Mohawk Their employers do well to set so many of the dross of human nature about a Work of Public Utility"*

On his way to the Reserve in 1796, surveyor Moses Warren Jr. came across a group of Irish immigrants employed to dig a canal. In his surveyor's journal, Warren referred to the workers as "Wild" and called them the "dross" of humanity: foreign, unwanted, and inferior.