

“Circumstances of such atrocity:”
Violence and Federal Authority in the
Lower Ohio Valley Borderlands at the
Turn of the Nineteenth Century

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Abstract

The following thesis examines the murder of three Lenape (Indigenous people commonly called Delaware) in 1797 in what is now southern Indiana. Two men and one woman were killed by three Euro-American settlers residing in central Kentucky. The murder became an issue in the negotiations of treaties with various Indigenous Nations in the early years of the Indiana Territory in 1800. The analysis includes the economic and geographical factors that brought the murderers and those murdered together. There is particular focus on the gendered economic roles of Indigenous women in the Ohio Valley and the role of lower-class Euro-American settlers in Kentucky. The paper also examines the layered sovereignties and shifting imperial boundaries during the period that complicated the attempt to prosecute the murderers. Federal officials trying to bring justice or advance imperial agendas did not enjoy the authority necessary to do either smoothly. Illustrated in the thesis is the transition, in Ohio Valley, from a physically violent “frontier” settler economy, which understood physically plundering Indigenous wealth as a legitimate endeavor. The transition from a powerful Indigenous economy, justice, and politics to a system of exploitation dominated by the government and predatory traders created conditions for revolution among Lenape and other Indigenous communities in Indiana.

The narrative approach to the analysis relies on the close reading of primary source material mostly generated by federal officials and court documents as they attempt to capture and try the three Euro-American murderers. To construct a rich context of geography, environment, politics, and economy the thesis draws on recent scholarship in both Indigenous and borderlands history.

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Introduction:

“About three years ago two Delaware men and a woman were quietly hunting in the neighborhood of the Ohio...” —Governor William Henry Harrison to Henry Dearborn, Secretary of War.¹

“These Indians had been in the neighborhood for a considerable time and were accustomed to Trade with a Mr. Rice...” —Harrison to Judge Harry Innes.²

It was just about time to leave for sugar camp. Lënapèxkwe and her companions camped along the creek for more than three months—one of their favorite hunting spots for the last several years. Returning that afternoon from the trader’s boat, the one hauled up on the muddy south bank of the broad and beautiful river, Ohio, they neared the north shore. She did not like the trader’s boat, the close air of the enclosed cabin, the leers from the filthy white men in their huts along high bank, but she did not trust Jim and George to get the right cloth. She needed to feel the fabric between her hands. After all it was her hands that would transform the bolt of calico into shirts, a sash, a dress and maybe a coat or two.

This fabric was different from the patterns she saw last fall at Fort Wayne. She smiled as she imagined the look, they would get in their new clothes with the unique pattern in the late summer when they went to Wapekomimekoke. Other Lenape women and men will want to know where they got the cloth. No, she did not like the trader’s flatboat or the clutch of squatters’ huts on the white man’s side of the river, but it was worth it. Stephensport, they called it. She got a better price for the furs, especially otter, here than in Fort Wayne or even Kaskaskia. There were more animals in the forest here, too. Her sisters would be jealous despite their worry for her to be so

¹ “William Henry Harrison to Dearborn,” July 15, 1801. In Esarey, Logan, ed. *Governors Messages and Letters: Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison, Volume I, 1800-1811*. Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Commission, (1922), 25-30.

² “William Henry Harrison to Harry Innes,” August 4, 1802, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., U.S. District Court Case, U.S. vs. Williams and Crutchlow, Library of Congress, Box 10, Legal Files, (1767-1823).

close to the white “settlement” situated at the mouth of the creek opposite their camp. The risks will be worth it, she thought as the canoe closed on their side of the big river.

When the rounded heavy bow smooshed into the soft mud, George was there to help unload the canoe and haul it up above the high-water mark. They would leave by horse and on foot in the next few days after they finished packing the best otter and raccoon furs. She kept these for herself to use for a new warm hat and some trim for the coat she planned to make after the corn was planted. She planned to make as many shirts as she could out of the rest of the fabric. She could trade a few and give a one or two away—one for her brother for certain.

As she stepped out of the canoe, looking back to see if she dropped anything, that is when she noticed the canoe near the far side, just up from the trader’s boat. Three men crossing in a little canoe. It sat low in the water. She could see it angled against the current toward the mouth of their Creek, moving toward them. She sighed audibly and Jim turned. She pointed with her lips and eyes toward the approaching canoe. He turned and saw the canoe. He was not worried. She did not like it. Perhaps this was the first sign of trouble that Lēnapèxkwe noticed. Three days later she was dead. Her body had been weighed down and sunk into the Ohio River. Her companions were also dead, their bodies hidden in a hollow log not far from their camp.

To say anything more specific about Lenape’s life is impossible. She enters the archives through death and anonymity. Lēnapèxkwe was not her name. It is the Unami Lenape dialect word for a Lenape woman.³ She was mourned and missed by her people. They made her death,

³ Unami is the branch of the Lenape language spoken by today’s Delaware Tribe of Indians. It is a part of the Algonquian language family. It is closely related to Munsee Lenape. A third Lenape dialect is sometimes referred to as a Northern branch of Unami and called Unalachtigo. The tribally operated language program created a database and searchable dictionary called: *The Lenape Talking Dictionary* <https://www.talk-lenape.org/>. Through the website users can access recordings of Unami Lenape speakers saying words or relating entire stories. Where I use Unami

and that of her companions, James and George, an important issue in negotiations three years after their murder. So little is known about who she was. We can guess at her hopes and dreams only through a few lines in official correspondence. In this way she is like countless women and unique at the same time. She is anonymous but an individual. Her existence is out of focus in the archives, but she is discernible. To tell the whole history of the Ohio Valley borderlands is impossible without her but there is not enough information to build a narrative around her. The fragments only suggest a story.

The lives of the men who killed Lēnapèxkwe are somewhat more legible. Their names appear in court records, proclamations, petitions, and census. Their stories are less fragmentary but still their lives, identities, and motivations vacillate in and out of focus. The most accessible illustration of life in the lower Ohio borderlands of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century is through the pens of government officials, elites, and missionaries. Their ability to portray the lives of non-elite, outlaw men is limited just as it is to portray the lives of Indigenous people. One of the reasons for this challenge is that these three groups inhabited different worlds with different values, languages, politics, and economies. The lower Ohio during this period, like other borderlands, was a place of overlapping sovereignties. Part of the kaleidoscope included different political economies: an Indigenous one of seasonal subsistence patterns with women at the center, a rustic “frontier” political economy of violence and local loyalty, and an emerging

words with entries in the dictionary I will provide a link in the notes. This will help the reader with pronunciation. For Lēnapèxkwe: <https://www.talk-lenape.org/detail?id=3896>.

While it is impossible to know which dialect of Lenape the woman at the center of this narrative spoke, it is likely she spoke Unami as well as Munsee, Shawnee and probably other Indigenous languages. She may have spoken English, possibly French and maybe even some German. The Wabash and Ohio River Valleys were a diverse place in late eighteenth century. Most Indigenous people in the area spoke Algonquian languages, but there were also Iroquoian speaking people and groups like the Wyandot and many individuals from the Haudenosaunee and Cherokee living and travelling in the area.

Unami is the language of both Lenape tribes in Oklahoma today. The ancestors of these people were part of the migration to and from what is today Indiana. Therefore, it is assumed that even if her first language was Munsee she would likely have understood and used Unami regularly.

political economy of plunder enacted by officials and elite traders.⁴ The following thesis examines the collision of these three worlds in the murder of Lënapèxkwe and her companions, and the attempt to bring their killers to justice.

The creative speculation of the moment she felt a pang of apprehension opens this thesis for two purposes. The first is to render Lënapèxkwe in three dimensions. Imagining her sights, sounds, feelings, and motivations illustrates her humanity and places her at the center of the story in a way the archived correspondence regarding her murder do not. The second purpose is to describe her in life and not, as that correspondence does, in violent death and disappearance. This technique is borrowed from a growing number of scholars of Black and Indigenous histories of North America and the Caribbean. The lack of robust archival records that describe the experience of non-elite actors is understood by some as silences. In this case the archive, created by the expanding empire of the United States, only refers to her as a Delaware woman—and then only to note her death. The lack of detail can be seen as a silence, an affirmation by US officials of the inconsequence of her life to their agenda. Silences are often replicated through standard interpretations of documentary evidence. This phenomenon was best described by Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot.⁵ Sadiya Hartman and more recently in Marisa Fuentes', extend the critique beyond recognizing silences.⁶ They both recognize that the way the archive renders the non-elite (in their cases enslaved women of African descent) is a form of violence. To not question its veracity and not critically assess the formation of that archive is to repeat the

⁴ Witgen, Michael J. *Seeing Red: Book Subtitle: Indigenous Land, American Expansion, and the Political Economy of Plunder in North America*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, (2022), 22.

⁵ Michel-Rolph Trouillot. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston, Beacon Press, (1995), 26.

⁶ Hartman, Saidiya. "Venus in Two Acts." *Small Axe*, vol. 12 no. 2, 2008, p. 1-14. Fuentes, Marissa. *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, (2016), 12.

violence. Alejandra Dubcovsky applies some of these same techniques to examine a nearly anonymous Indigenous woman from the seventeenth century Florida. She renders her name as Yndia Chacata, a reflection of some of the only information about her left in a settler archive. Dubcovsky sees focusing on Indigenous women in colonial history as a struggle against the pull of long-established metanarratives. She describes what she is uncovering as an Indigenous story “folded inside a European source and archive.”⁷ Dubcovsky blends the approaches of Hartman and Fuentes, and others, with the practice of ethnohistory. So too does Brooke Bauer. Bauer uses similar combinations of tools and disciplines, including her own knowledge of cultural practice, to question the archive that “obstructs” our understanding of Native women.⁸ The following thesis is a meager effort to apply some of these tools to a region not thoroughly examined in similar ways. Part of the story presented here acknowledges and recognizes Lënapèxkwe and the role of Indigenous women in the borderlands of the late eighteenth century Ohio Valley. To build a complete, or less incomplete, story of this Lënapèxkwe requires further collaboration with, immersion in, and knowledge of Lenape culture then and now.

The other part of the narrative to follow is that of the white male experience of the Ohio Valley borderlands. This is perhaps the opposite perspective illustrated through Lënapèxkwe. These perspectives have something in common, however. Just as Indigenous women are the subject of problematic and destructive stereotypes and mythologies, the white male “frontiersman” of the late eighteenth century borderlands is lionized in ways that not only celebrate violence but also obscure the nature of class politics in the borderlands specifically and

⁷ Alejandra Dubcovsky, *Talking Back: Native Women and the Making of the Early South*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, (2023), 31.

⁸ Bauer, Brooke. *Becoming Catawba: Catawba Indian Women and Nation-Building, 1540-1840*. Tuscaloosa, The University of Alabama Press, (2023), 12.

American history more broadly. In this way the narrative touches on an ongoing debate within American historiography about the nature of federal power within the borderlands. On one side is the notion that the frontier was a chaotic violent place that was only tamed by a strong federal government. The new American state was created to “destroy Indians and protect settlers as it would guard the rights of common white man to access the political process.”⁹ Others scholars see a collaborative process that created a strong federal government that brought order to the chaotic borderlands.¹⁰ Still another view of the role of the federal government in the Ohio Valley borderlands and beyond is as a catalyst for violence. Ron Harper argues forcefully that it was government resources pushed a relatively peaceful borderland into a violent frontier. He states bluntly, “(t)he horrors of the period stemmed from government’s intrusive presence.”¹¹ A similar take as Harper’s is Stephen Aron’s “alternative history” of the American West. He highlights the fleeting moments of intercultural concord, many often spoiled by the “interventions and arsenals of empires and nation-states.”¹²

Like all good scholarship there is some truth to all of these interpretations. In the narrative of this thesis the federal government plays both the role of peace maker and instigator. There are glimmers of peace and friendship between people from different cultures and there is unprovoked brutal violence on the individual scale. There are two elements to this particular narrative that confound placing it into either camp. First, the geography on which these events

⁹ Griffin, Patrick. *American Leviathan: Empire, Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier*. New York, Hill and Wang, (2007), 15.

¹⁰ Ablavsky, Gregory. *Federal Ground: Governing Property and Violence in the First U.S. Territories*. New York, Oxford University Press, (2021), p. 26; Spero, Patrick. *Frontier Country: The Politics of War in Early Pennsylvania*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, (2016), 275.

¹¹ Harper, Ron. *Unsettling the West: Violence and State Building in the Ohio Valley*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, (2018), 1.

¹² Aron, Stephen. *Peace and Friendship: An Alternative History of the American West*. New York, Oxford University Press, (2022), 5.

take place is unique. The events of this history play out mostly between the years 1797 and 1806. At that time the boundaries of Lower Ohio Valley (see Figures 1 and 2) were particularly unstable, not only between Indigenous and American, but between Spanish and British. Further complicating the matter, and important to this history, is the internal border between the federal jurisdiction of Indiana Territory and the state of Kentucky. The people of Kentucky, even some federal officials in the state, had little use for federal authority beyond reinforcing local loyalties. The second factor, which is overlooked by many historians involved in the Ohio Valley frontier violence and order debate, is the function of plunder as an incentive to violence. Susan Sleeper-Smith describes how plunder of Indigenous wealth fueled recruitment and sustained volunteer militia during the Revolution and beyond.¹³ The lure of plunder—in horses, silver, and other goods—attracted men to official campaigns like George Rogers Clark’s rampages through Illinois Country, and it also fueled homegrown raids across the borderlands of the late eighteenth century.¹⁴ Plunder was, after all, a major factor in the infamous Gnadenhutten massacre (a raid unsanctioned by federal officials by western Pennsylvania settlers against Moravian Lenape and Mohican communities in eastern Ohio).¹⁵ Plundering Indigenous communities was more or less a legitimized tactic in American imperial warfare in the Ohio Valley. After official hostilities ended in 1795 it remained an accepted economic pursuit to many settlers. Part of the narrative presented here illustrates the process of the delegitimizing individual scale plunder and non-state violence against Indigenous people by a newly installed federal administration.

¹³ Sleeper-Smith, Susan. *Indigenous Prosperity and American Conquest: Indian Women of the Ohio River Valley, 1690-1792*. Chapel Hill, Omohundro Institute and UNC Press, (2018), 215.

¹⁴ Trabue, Daniel. *Westward into Kentucky: The Narrative of Daniel Trabue*. Edited by Chester Raymond Young. Lexington, The University of Kentucky Press, (1981), 46 and 67; John D. Shane. Interview with Captain John Dial. In *Lyman C. Draper Manuscript Collection* 13 CC 266-237, microfilm edition, 1949) State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Accessed at Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection, Knox County Public Library, Knoxville, TN.

¹⁵ Silver, Peter. *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America*. New York. W.W. Norton & Company, (2008), 273.

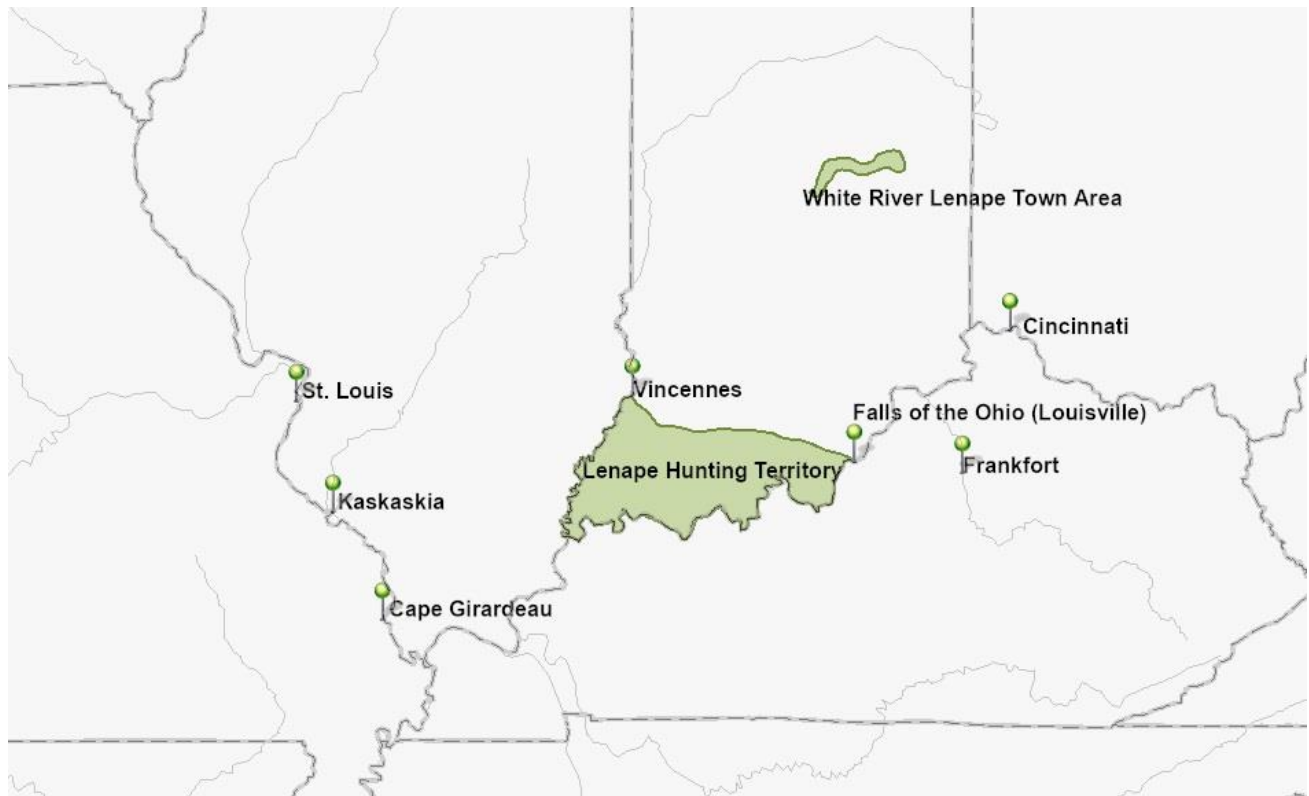


Figure 1. Map of the lower Ohio Valley and middle Mississippi



Figure 2. Detail of lower Ohio Valley

The treaty and annuity process that the pursuit of the John and Martin Williams and John Crutchlow was a part of was a new economic system. Michael Witgen describes this as the political economy of plunder. Coercing and cajoling Indigenous leaders into treaties that exchanged lands for annuities created a lucrative opportunity for traders and Indian agents to profit in a variety of ways.¹⁶ The treaties that William Henry Harrison negotiated throughout the following narrative were the first such treaties—setting the template for generations of dispossession and forced economic change. In many ways the narrative that follows is an inmate example of the clash of two or possibly more political economies. One was an Indigenous world defined by seasonal resource utilization and the centrality of women. The materials and substance of Lenape life changed—some borrowed and shared with their neighboring Nations and allies, the essential patterns followed long established routes.¹⁷ The following narrative illustrates the ability of an Indigenous economic system with women at the center to adapt and survive. Adopting new materials and methods of exchange did not make the world of the eighteenth-century Ohio Valley a less Indigenous place nor was it dependent on European trade. As this narrative reveals, in many ways the Euro-American settlers and empires were more dependent on the Indigenous world.

These two political economies, one driven by white male plunder and the other by Indigenous women's creative labor, clashed on the banks of the Ohio River for decades. Eventually through military force, economic exploitation, and individual acts of brutal violence

¹⁶ Witgen, (2022), 22.

¹⁷¹⁷ For example, according to anthropologist, Regula Tenwalder Schonenberger, some Lenape changed their word for the month of March during their eighteenth-century migrations to the interior of the continent to reflect changing subsistence patterns. From Shēwanamèkwi Kishux, meaning “shad moon” to another word, which Schonenberger does not provide, for “sugar-making moon.” Schonenberger, Regula Trenkwalder, *Lenape Women, Matriliney, and the Colonial Encounter, Resistance, and Erosion of Power (c. 1600-1876): An Excursus in Feminist Anthropology*. New York, Peter Lang, 1991_(211-212).

by Euro-American settlers and their states coerced Lenape and other Indigenous groups to leave the Ohio Valley. The same process was also an attempt to destroy an Indigenous political economy. While much of the seasonal patterns of that system were no longer viable, aspects, like the material culture of the eighteenth-century Indigenous world, survive. This culture survives in the hands, hearts, and minds of Lenape women. Scholars of Indigenous women's history demonstrate the continuity of Indigenous cultures in the face of colonialism and capitalism. This runs contrary to the grand metanarratives of North American history that depict Indigenous cultures as being subsumed by and increasingly dependent on a dominating Euro-American society. Theda Perdue illustrates this phenomenon in her groundbreaking work.¹⁸ More recent scholars like Susan Sleeper-Smith, Brooke Bauer, and Maeve Kane demonstrate the role of material culture in this process. Clothing and pottery in the Eastern Woodlands were products of women's labor. The distinct styles created by Indigenous women communicates cultural and political identity then and now.¹⁹ Today many Lënapèxkwe continue to make period clothes for ceremony and celebrations. They still use styles and materials, like "a piece of calico," featured in the opening, that would be familiar to their communities for two hundred years.

The following narrative is divided into three parts. The first chapter is an exploration of the circumstances, choices, and contexts which led to the murder of Lënapèxkwe. These include the seasonal subsistence strategies at the heart of the Indigenous Ohio Valley, and the precarity of non-elite Euro-American men. For both groups life was unstable and changing quickly in the borderlands. The second chapter describes the attempt to apply new federal law and authority

¹⁸ Perdue, Theda. *Cherokee Women: Gender and Cultural Change, 1700-1835*. Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, (1998), 9.

¹⁹ Bauer, 13; Kane, Maeve. *Shirt Powdered Red: Haudenosaunee Gender, Trade, and Exchange Across Three Centuries*. Ithica, Cornell University Press, (2023), 12; Sleeper-Smith, 175-176.

over residents Indigenous and Euro-American of the borderlands. The ongoing clash of empires (Spanish, British, American, and French) complicated this in the borderlands, as well as the variable and frail loyalties of settler society. Finally, the third chapter examines efforts, both Indigenous and settler, to reckon two political economies, an Indigenous one with women at that center and one defined by violence, plunder, and local loyalty. Both of these factors defined the borderlands of the eighteenth century but for which there was no longer space within the empire of liberty.

The participants in the events described in this narrative understood their worlds were changing. There is no doubt that they could see the land filling with people and game becoming scarcer. However, there was no way for Jim Galloway, George, and Lënapèxkwe to know that their winter hunt of 1797 would be their last.

Chapter One: The Murder

This chapter begins by setting the scene of the murder, followed by an exploration of who the murdered and murderers were and what their motivations were for being on the scene. These details and descriptions build on archival fragments present in brief mentions in official correspondence between US government officials and reconstructions of rich historical contexts. The details of the murder, such as they are, come from two letters written by William Henry Harrison more than four years after the events. The gap in time between the murder and the account explains some of the lack of specifics. Another reason for a lack of details is that his accounts are built on secondhand information from Indigenous sakima and Euro-American settlers. Harrison deposed six settlers in the effort to capture and try the Williamses and Crutchlow. None of them witnessed the killings firsthand. Their knowledge of the events came from the murderers themselves and the plunder they displayed. The Lenape sakima who confronted Harrison were also not firsthand witnesses. One line of Harrison's letter to Dearborn suggests that some Lenape discovered the crime after the fact: "Altho they were missed by their friends it was a long time before their fate was ascertained."²⁰ Here the text points to not just a memory of the event but also a process and network for transmitting, preserving information, and cataloging of grievances..

In 1797 three Lenape camped near the Ohio River in what is now southern Indiana. In fact, there were likely many Lenape (Delaware Indians as they were known to settlers at the time), hunting and trapping in the area. This was their land by way of negotiations with Myaamia, (or Miami Confederacy) and Piankeshaw, agreed to in the mid-eighteenth century.²¹

²⁰Harrison, letter to Henry Dearborn, July 15, 1801.

²¹ The treaty which granted hunting territory and land for towns in present day Indiana was between the Lenape and Myaamia groups. There is no written record of the treaty. The Myaamia (or Miami Confederacy) are made of

The treaty which the Lenape negotiated allowed their use of the land as a hunting territory, while other negotiations allowed for their agricultural towns to be built on the White River between present day Indianapolis and Muncie, Indiana.²² These towns and the hunting grounds formed two aspects of a three-part seasonal geographic and subsistence strategy to produce food and items for trade. Sugar camps, where families refined maple sap, formed the third seasonal activity within the economy of the Indigenous Ohio Valley.²³

Small family groups of men, women, and sometimes children would leave their villages in the fall for hunting and trapping camps located in designated territories, coordinated with other Lenape and their neighbors of other Nations. In late winter, as the weather began to warm the families would return to permanent sugar camps elsewhere in the broader region. After weeks of collecting and refining sugar, the family, usually led by the mother, would return to their cabins along the White River to begin preparation for spring planting. During the summer women tended the fields of traditional food crops with the additions to their cornucopia in the

various subgroups which sometimes conducted diplomacy together and separate at other times. Two of these groups included the Piankeshaw and Wea. Their homeland, Myaamiaki, stretches from the shores of Lake Michigan through the Wabash Valley. Even by the late 1770s various small Lenape settlements were scattered through the Wabash Valley. After the Treaty of Greenville, however, many Lenape relocated and established between 9-15 towns on the White River. The historic privileged position of the Lenape in Indigenous diplomacy, especially amongst other Algonquian speaking groups, may have played a role in such a generous grant of land by Myaamia. Bowes, John. *Land Too Good for Indians: Northern Indian Removal*. Norman University of Oklahoma Press, (2016), 88.

²² The name Muncie is a corruption of the term Munsee, one of the Lenape languages and one of the subgroups of Lenape. Munsee homeland is now the low Hudson River Valley and northern New Jersey. Other towns between Muncie and Indianapolis bear names related to the Lenape founders. Anderson is named for Kikthawenund or Willam Anderson, who rose to principal leadership on the White River in 1806. Strawtown is named for an original Lenape settlement. McCord, Beth. "The Ghosts of the Delaware: An Archeological Study of Delaware Settlement Along the White River, Indiana: Reports of Investigation 62," *Archeological Resources Management Service*, Muncie, Indiana, Ball State University, (May 2002).

²³ This was different seasonal pattern than Lenape groups practiced in their coast and estuary homeland, Lēnapehōkink. The pattern they followed in the Ohio Valley fit with the traditional patterns of their Myaamia and Shawnee neighbors. The ancestors of Ohio Valley people, the archeologically named Fort Ancient people, practiced a similar seasonal pattern for centuries or longer. Warren, Stephen. *The Worlds the Shawnee Made: Migration and Violence in Early America*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, (2014), 38. Welper, William. "Delaware Subsistence in East Central Indiana" in *Minnetrista Council for Great Lakes Native American Studies*, Conference Proceedings, East Central Indiana Native American Cultural Symposium (1992), 71-81.

form of apple and peach orchards, livestock, and other introduced products.²⁴ In the summer men protected the fields and towns from attack or went to war on their own offensives against other communities.

The seasonal economic system suggests it was late winter when the three Lenape—James Galloway, George, and Lēnapèxkwe—were murdered by three settlers, all men, from the other side of the Ohio River. A rough description of the plunder the murderers seized did not include any furs or foodstuffs—only a horse, some camping implements, and “a piece of calico.”²⁵ The absence of furs suggests that the Lenape group had already traded their season’s catch, likely for the calico. The three Lenape had been in the area for “a considerable time” and had often traded with Samuel Rice of Stephensport, Kentucky.²⁶ Rice recognized the calico in the possession of the Williams brothers, Martin and John, and their friend John Crutchlow.²⁷

It is possible that the Williamses and Crutchlow knew George, James Galloway and Lēnapèxkwe when they approached the camp several days before the murder. The scant sources do not reveal what their intentions were from the start. However, at first the meeting seemed to be friendly if not pleasant. The Williamses and Crutchlow remained at the camp for several days, presumably hunting alongside George and James, perhaps even eating meals prepared by Lēnapèxkwe. In late winter these meals likely consisted of meat like raccoon or deer, perhaps cooked with dried beans or corn from last year’s harvest. In earlier years deer, bear, and bison

²⁴ Lenape women had been planting and cultivating peaches since the early seventeenth century. While they were relative newcomers to the White River, generations of Indigenous women traded pits and seeds to their relatives and allies inland. The prolific orchards cultivated by Indigenous women in Ohio and Indiana during the eighteenth century gave rise to the myth of Johnny Appleseed—Indigenous women’s labor replaced by real estate speculation masquerading as Christian mythology. Sleeper-Smith, 14 and 61-62.

²⁵ Harrison to Harry Innes, August 4, 1802.

²⁶ Ancestry.com. *Fourth Census of the United States, 1820*. (NARA microfilm publication M33, 142 rolls). Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington, D.C., Breckinridge, Kentucky, (1820), 289.

²⁷ Harrison, letter to Harry Innes, August 4, 1802.

were more plentiful. Kentucky settlers, having over-hunted large game south of the river, increasingly travelled to the Indigenous lands north of the Ohio to hunt. By the 1790s hunting bison was a special novelty for Kentucky settlers and they killed many for simple sport. This coupled with the enclosure of land in private ownership and environmental transformations within central Kentucky diminished the vast habitat needed to sustain viable herds and other large wild animals.²⁸ Poaching game on Indigenous land may have been the initial motivation for the Williamses and Crutchlow's presence.

If it was it seems to not have bothered Galloway, George, and Lēnapèxkwe. The combined party camped, hunted, and communed together for days. This cooperation must not have been rare at the time. If danger to either side was a likelihood or present it seems the visit would have ended in violence or parting ways sooner. The archive is full of friendly meetings that turned violent. Robert Owen, one scholar who examines this murder briefly, laments that the “depressingly familiar” frequency with which these meetings turn tragic.²⁹ Nicole Eustace records another instance from earlier in the eighteenth century when a trade deal amongst seemingly friendly people turned to murder.³⁰ The death of two Cherokee men, Red Bird (possibly Dotsuwa) and Will, at their home in southern Kentucky at the hands of Tennessee settlers at around this same time follows the same pattern.³¹ While undeniably tragic, the pattern

²⁸ Aron, Stephen. *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*. Baltimore, Maryland, John Hopkins University Press, (1996), 115.

²⁹ Owens, Robert M. *Killing Over Land: Murder and Diplomacy on the Early American Frontier*. Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, (2024), 140.

³⁰ Eustace, Nicole. *Covered with Night: A Story of Murder and Indigenous Justice in Early America*. New York, W.W. Norton and Company, (2021).

³¹ The death of Will and Red Bird is remarkably similar to murder of the Lenape in this narrative. What little is known is from several letters written from Governor John Sevier of Tennessee to Kentucky Governor James Garrard ensuring the formers full attention in bring the killers to justice. Sevier also address the matter in a March 5th letter to Cherokee leaders. *Roulstones's Knoxville Gazette and Weekly Advertiser*, Knoxville. January 30, 1797, 2.; Sevier, John. “Letter to John Watts and other Chiefs of the Cherokee Nation” *Tennessee State Library and Archives*, (March 5, 1797). The possible site of the murder became a source of controversy within the historical and archeological

does point to a counterintuitive phenomenon. Intercultural meetings and hunting parties that did not end in violence must have been a regular occurrence throughout the region. In fact, peaceful commerce or interaction must have been the rule, not the exception. Otherwise, why would people repeatedly welcome the “other” into their camps, homes, and lives?³²

Returning to the camp near the Ohio River and the junction of one of several small tributaries (sources suggest three different locations between present day Rome and Leavenworth, Indiana), the six people hunted and communed for several days. They then decided to signal a passing boat descending the Ohio and purchased some whiskey. Drinking together the combined party became inebriated. It was at this point the murderers struck. Martin Williams lured James Galloway away from camp and struck. The first blow did not bring Galloway down. James fought Martin, nearly overpowering him despite the wounds James suffered in the initial assault. John Williams intervened in the fight, turning the tide of the battle in favor of the settler men.³³ Having dispatched James Galloway, a man “remarkable in strength and bravery,” the Williamses then returned to camp under a ruse. They said that James was lying unconscious in the woods. They lured George from camp by requesting his help bringing James back. Once away from camp they murdered George. The Williamses then secreted the bodies in a hollowed log.³⁴

community. Petroglyphs on the rock walls of the site were claimed to be the earliest renderings of the Cherokee Syllabary in 2011. More recent investigations disproved this theory clearly show that the markings were likely renderings of Euro-American names. Simek, Jan F. et al. “The Red Bird Shelter (15CY52) Revisited,” *American Antiquity*, Volume 84, Number 2, (April 2019), 302-316.

³² This seems to juxtapose the traditional borderland narrative of a Hobbesian world desperate for state or imperial power to bring order. At the same time the actual violence, whether it was rare or not, negates what Stephen Aron has called the “wishtories” of a quotidian peaceful borderland. As the story of the murder of Lēnapèkkwe, James Galloway and George reveals, the federal government during this period was just another interest bloc among multiple and varied others.

³³ Harrison, letter to Henry Dearborn, July 15, 1801.

³⁴ Harrison, letter to Harry Innes, August 4, 1802.

The account of the fate of Lënapèxkwe is somewhat more vague and confusing. The three murderers, or some portion of them, took her into a canoe and sunk her body in the Ohio River. Harrison's report neglects to reveal for certain whether she was alive in the canoe and then they killed her or perhaps they killed her before embarking. The brief account reads "they then took the Squaw into a canoe & having at first tomahawked her threw her into the river with a stone about her neck."³⁵ The description suggests that Lënapèxkwe was alive in the canoe. Perhaps the Williamses and Crutchlow intended to kidnap her. If so, they changed their mind. It is possible she resisted violently. The reasons for taking her (alive or dead), in the canoe and disposing of her body in a different manner than the two men are not recorded in the archival sources. Perhaps the murderers intended to sell Lënapèxkwe into slavery, though the nearest place to do so would likely have been several hundred miles downstream in Spanish Louisiana or further west in Illinois Country.³⁶ That would have required weeks of travel through communities like the Shawnee and Lenape at Cape Girardeau (on the Mississippi River in present day Missouri), who would not be sympathetic to three American settlers with a captive Lenape woman. This prospect would be further complicated by her active resistance to captivity. Another possibility is that the kidnappers intended to trade her for Euro-American captives or adoptees still believed to be held in the Indigenous communities north of the river. A third possibility is that the Williamses and Crutchlow believed the woman was not Indigenous, but rather a Euro-American or African American. If Lënapèxkwe appeared to the murderers as Black, perhaps they thought they might

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ The enslavement of Indigenous people, mainly women and children, was ubiquitous in the French colonial towns of Illinois Country. Indigenous slaves were counted in every settlement of the region in increasing numbers through the mid-eighteenth century when enumeration stopped. Anecdotal evidence for the persistence of Indigenous slavery in the Spanish era of administration suggests that the practice was ongoing, though hidden from official records, Ekber, Carl. *Stealing Indian Women: Native Slavery in the Illinois Country*. Urbana, University of Illinois Press, (2007), p. 41, 125, 129. Barr, Julianna. *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands*. Chapel Hill. The University of North Carolina, (2007), p. 262

be able to sell her as a slave in Kentucky. If they saw her as white, perhaps they expected a bounty for rescuing a Euro-American from captivity. Regardless of her phenotype, Lenape sakima³⁷ (leader) expected federal officials to act on her and her companion's murder under article nine of the Treaty of Greenville of 1795 which articulated a specific process for resolving matters of intercultural murder.

Depending on the interpretation of the description of her murder, she may have been dead before they embarked on the canoe, it seems that the plan was to conceal her body in the river. There are two reasons they may have taken this precaution. First they feared their deed would be discovered more easily or quicker if they did not hide the bodies. Second, they may have wished to hide evidence of further crimes on her body. If they had sexually assaulted Lēnapèxkwe, sinking her body in the deep and muddy Ohio River would hide their further guilt—and perhaps a crime like sexual assault would not be judged as forgivable as murder by their peers. Both could be true as well. In either case, however it is clear that the murderers feared discovery of their crimes probably from other Lenape hunting in the area. The description of James and Lēnapèxkwe's death suggest that neither was killed with firearms. The fight between Martin and James indicates that the murderers put themselves at considerable disadvantage by not using firearms for the killings. Perhaps the report of a firearm in such proximity to camp would draw other hunters to the area to investigate. Hiding the bodies allowed the Williamses and Crutchlow to escape with their plunder more easily.

Their plunder, according to Harrison's informers, consisted of a horse, "the trifling equipage of a savage camp, and piece of calico."³⁸ Samuel Rice, a trader living across the river

³⁷ Talking Lenape Dictionary, Delaware Tribe of Indians, <https://www.talk-lenape.org/results?query=chief>. Accessed on 2/13/2025.

³⁸Harrison, letter to Harry Innes, August 4, 1802.

from the scene of the crime, recognized the items. He had traded the calico to Lënapèxkwe in the days or weeks before the murder. That a textile was some of the only plunder of value taken from the camp illustrates an important feature of Indigenous economy of the Ohio Valley borderlands. Other witnesses in both Kentucky and Clarks Grant (present day Clarksville, Clark County, Indiana), the settler community opposite present day Louisville, reported that Martin Williams had bragged to them about the killing. That the murderers openly boasted of their crime and displayed their spoils speaks to important features of the settler political economy of the period as well.

James Galloway might have been remarkable for his strength as described in one of the sources. He may have even been an important man in the Lenape communities on the White River at the end of the eighteenth century.³⁹ He and George might have been great hunters and trappers, but it was Lënapèxkwe's economic power that took the three to the Ohio River in search of trade textiles. That calico is the one trade good mentioned amongst the plunder from their camp suggests it was a primary reason for their being in the area. Indigenous women of the Ohio

³⁹ It is difficult to say with certainty who James Galloway was. His English language name is very common for the period. That he had an English name is not uncommon for Lenape. Many had been baptized in Moravian churches over the last seventy years. A Lenape man having an English language surname is a little more unusual, but it also hints of who James Galloway might have been related to and why he and his death might have had added significance. During the mid-eighteenth-century Lenape people faced enormous and repeated pressures by colonists to leave first their homeland of Lenapehoking and later their new homes in the Susquehanna Valley of Pennsylvania. One of the prominent advocates among the Pennsylvania government for the right of the Lenape to remain and for fair and just treatment was Joseph Galloway. It is possible that Galloway's advocacy led to the adoption of his surname. Records do not suggest he had mixed race children who might bear his name but that would be another common way for Indigenous people to acquire an English surname. Circumstantial evidence suggests he may have had interactions with a prominent Lenape interpreter during the tense period of the early 1760s in Philadelphia. Another active historical personage associated with this time period is Job Chelloway. He acted as an interpreter for Lenape and Munsee leaders and negotiators during the 1750s and 1760s. His name is sometimes rendered as Galloway, Gillaway, as well as Chelloway. His age and movements also put him in the right time frame to have perhaps had a son or grandson bearing the name Galloway or Gillaway, as Harrison spells it in one letter. Nelson, Vernon H. "Records of the Moravian Mission Among the Indians of North America: Indian Individual Index, Author Index," Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Moravian Archives, (2020).

Valley during the late eighteenth century drove an economy that protected their sovereignty and enabled decades of resistance to colonialism. Like many Native nations the Lenape practiced a gendered division of labor that cast women as primarily responsible for agriculture. This gave them a tremendous amount of political power, especially in the geography of the towns occupied during the spring and summer growing seasons.⁴⁰

Decisions about land, allocation of corn, beans, and other agricultural produce rested in the hands of women.⁴¹ This was common across language and culture groups east of the Mississippi. Among the Algonquian speaking cultures of the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes women also played a leadership role in trade.⁴² Indigenous women's role in processing furs grew with the intensifying trade with Europeans.⁴³ Women's labor, like that in agriculture, gave them a stake and a voice in the politics and negotiation of trade. The trade that most interested women was that of fur for textiles. While historians, including White, made much of the dependence of Indigenous people on the trade in firearms and ammunition during the eighteenth century, more recent historians have troubled this thesis in two ways. First, trade in textiles far outpaced the trade in arms. Second, colonial observers as well as generations of historians exaggerated or conjured notions of Indigenous dependence on European trade. Native people were far less reliant on European goods than contemporary observers projected in their writings.⁴⁴ In fact in

⁴⁰ Susan Sleeper-Smith, p. 4; While Sleeper-Smith focuses on Indigenous women of groups including the Lenape during the period of this examination other scholars of eastern Indigenous groups in the south and northeast have shown similar gender roles. While there are major differences between the groups, they examine there is also much shared, including many gender divisions of labor. Control of agriculture gave women in Lenape, Shawnee, Myaamia and other Ohio Valley people political power in much the same way as is shown in the Cherokee, Catawba, and Haudenosaunee. Perdue, 13. Kane, 2. Bauer, 14.

⁴¹ Schönenberger, Regula Trenkwalder. *Lenape Women, Matriliney and the Colonial Encounter: Resistance and Erosion of Power (c. 1600-1876): An Excursus in Feminist Anthropology*. Bern, Switzerland, P. Lang, (1991), 181.

⁴² *ibid*, 235.

⁴³ White, Richard. *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815*. London: Cambridge University Press, (2010), 324.

⁴⁴ Sleeper-Smith, 128.; Michael Witgen (2022), 9-10.; DuVal, Kathleen. *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, (2006), 5.; Kane, 9.

some ways the settler economy and politics were more dependent on Indigenous manufactures and labors particularly those of women.

Of the most important items of material culture in the Ohio Valley, few were as important as a shirt or blouse. These items performed identity in important ways. They displayed wealth and status. They also communicated the intentions of the wearer. While design, construction, and style varied across cultures these functions and values were recognized by Indigenous and settler groups alike. During the late eighteenth century Euro-American settlers and traders knew that what they wore on their bodies took on added importance when they crossed north of the river on friendly business. Wearing a buckskin or undyed linen shirt signaled violence or poaching to people they encountered. A calico shirt made in the “Indian fashion” signaled friendly intent and purposes.⁴⁵ Indigenous fashion had diplomatic value.

A specific example of the monetary, diplomatic, and cultural value of Indigenous clothing was illustrated as the federal government struggled to fulfill its obligations under the terms of treaties in the early nineteenth century. The treaties guaranteed the distribution of payments to Indigenous individuals called annuities. One of the first payments made under this treaty system in the Indiana Territory took place in Fort Wayne in 1804. Moravian missionaries, ensconced on the White River amongst the Lenape towns, recorded the power of Indigenous fashion as it related to the treaty system. Two of the Indigenous converts to Christianity traveled to Fort Wayne to receive their payments. Instead of currency the pair were paid in a “full suit of clothes in the Indian fashion.”⁴⁶ The missionary diarist recorded the value of each set of clothes at twelve

⁴⁵ Perkins, Elizabeth A., Shane, John Dabney. *Border Life: Experience and Memory in the Revolutionary Ohio Valley*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, (1998), 88.

⁴⁶ Gipson, Lawrence Henry, ed. *The Moravian Indian Mission on White River Diaries and letter: May 5, 1799, to November 12, 1806*. Translated (from German) by Harry E Stocker, Herman T. Frueauff, Samuel C. Seller. Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Bureau, (1938), 296.

dollars. The Moravian diarist also describes Lenape people traveling to the annuity distribution already dressed in their finest clothing, much of which included calico shirts, coats, and other garments.

In the afternoon there rode through our village a large number of Indians who were curiously painted and ornamented with feathers, silver rings, and armbands. They wore calico coats...they appeared greatly pleased with themselves...One sees some wonderful garbs in this place...⁴⁷

A third way Indigenous women created and accumulated value was through trade silver, in the form of jewelry or decorative embellishments also referenced in the above passage. Often this trade silver was incorporated into clothing.

Susan Sleeper-Smith discusses the tremendous amount of silver accumulated and stored by Indigenous women in the form of broaches attached to their calico shirts. Much of the accounts of these valuable broach-laden clothes come from the stories of settler militiamen and soldiers. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, raids conducted by Kentucky, Virginia, and Pennsylvania settler men, sometimes sponsored by the federal government and sometime independent, targeted Indigenous towns. The raids aimed to disrupt the Indigenous ability to conduct raids against their fortified settlements, forts, and stations (at least that is the popular and official memories of these activities). A close look into the firsthand accounts of raid participants however indicates that prime motivation for young settler men was the possibility of material wealth in the form of horses, clothing, silver, and anything else of value.⁴⁸

Euro-American settler men were trained to see Indigenous towns, camps, land, and bodies as repositories of wealth. All they needed was the will and physical ability to take it and

⁴⁷ Gipson, 295.

⁴⁸ Susan Sleeper-Smith, 214.; Trabue, 47.

perhaps kill for it. This was the rustic political economy of plunder in the Ohio Valley of the late nineteenth century.⁴⁹ This was not a new phenomenon of course. One may trace the origins of this system to Bacon's Rebellion of 1676-77. Often portrayed as a uprising against powerful political elites in early Virginia, Nathaniel Bacon's rampage is better understood as an argument for the enslavement, removal, and genocide of Indigenous people.⁵⁰ While Bacon died before solidifying his political conquest, his ideology of warfare against Indigenous people prevailed and led to the widespread adoption and expansion of the Indian slave trade for sixty years in Virginia and other colonies.⁵¹ Similar uprisings in Pennsylvania, like those perpetrated by Paxton Boys and Black Boys in the 1760s, demonstrated a similar attitude toward even peaceful Indigenous people. In 1779, the US government adopted the tactic of terrorizing women and children in their campaign against the Haudenosaunee.⁵²

One of the best illustrations of this rustic political economy of plunder is the institution of the "vendue" among Euro-American settler men. The vendue was a sort of auction or sale (as suggested by the French original term) of loot taken during a raid. Daniel Trabue, a young volunteer in the Virginia militia, describes these sales after one of his early engagements during the 1770s in Kentucky.⁵³ An independent raid led by William Hardin (a figure who plays a role yet in the murder case), in the mid-1780s also hints at a vendue or a dividing up of plunder after

⁴⁹ Witgen (2022), 18. Witgen constructs the notion of the political economy of power in the Great Lakes region to describe the colonial process of not just land acquisition but of predatory trading, lending, and government contracts. He describes the emergence and utilization of this process in the early nineteenth century. In some ways the treaty negotiation and Jefferson's policies described in this thesis illustrate the origin of this process. With this in mind the violent predation of the Williamses and Crutchlow on the Lenape may be understood as a precursor to this process. Both are plunder. In recognition of the precursor status, one without the sophisticated apparatus of the state behind it, the physically violent murder and robbery can be understood as the rustic political economy of plunder.

⁵⁰ Rice, James. *Tales from a Revolution: Bacon's Rebellion and the Transformation of Early America*. New York: Oxford University Press, (2012), 214.

⁵¹ Negrin, Haley. "Cockacoeske's Rebellion: Nathaniel Bacon, Indigenous Slavery, and Sovereignty in Early Virginia." *The William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 80 no. 1, (2023), 82.

⁵² Calloway (2018), 248-249; Kane, 187.

⁵³ Trabue, 47.

he and his men and boys raided the Shawnee towns near the great salt spring in present day southern Illinois.⁵⁴ Perhaps the most famous vendue perhaps occurred in 1782 when Pennsylvania militiamen returning to their home near Fort Pitt stopped to divide the plunder they had taken from Gnadenhutten, Ohio. The men had just finished the systematic execution of 96 pacifist, neutral Lenape and Mohican.⁵⁵

Many historians attribute these and other spasms of violence to hatred, fear, and even symbolic targeting of gendered politics and women's labor.⁵⁶ These are powerful emotions and ideologies that cannot be dismissed, but overlooking the motivation of material gain in horses, silver, guns, clothing, curios, or other booty hides an important fact of settler colonialism as practiced in eighteenth century in the Ohio Valley. Otherness created an opportunity for plunder. With rare exceptions the murder and plundering of Indigenous people was, in the eyes of settler societies, a legitimate part of the economy. In 1797 the Williamses and Crutchlow engaged in this activity. They bragged about the murder and displayed the plunder to their neighbors in Kentucky and Indiana. Martin Williams even boasted of nearly dying in his battle with James Galloway. A brief examination of the lives of the murderers reveals what they may have hoped to gain through the murders.

Martin Williams and John Crutchlow were neighbors in 1797. They appear together in the Bullitt County tax rolls for that year, despite neither holding property to tax. They appear in a column with a note affirming their lack of property.⁵⁷ They were not the only settler men without any assets worth mentioning, especially in the Bullitt County area. The men are two of the thirty-

⁵⁴ State Historical Society of Wisconsin, *Lyman C. Draper Manuscript Collection* (microfilm edition 1980), Kentucky Papers, John Shane Interview, Capt. John Dial, Series 13CC 228.

⁵⁵ Silver, 273.

⁵⁶ White, 384; Kane, 184.

⁵⁷ Darnell, Betsy R. editor, *Bullitt County Kentucky Tax Lists, 1797-1804*. Mt. Washington, Kentucky, 36

five men over 21 years old listed as living north of the Salt River in the county. This general area puts them living close to the various salt works such as Bullitt's Lick. These salt works were a major employer during the 1780s and 1790s not just in the immediate area around present day Shepherdsville. They were a draw for laborers throughout the region and state.⁵⁸ Their proximity to the salt works suggests that Martin and Crutchlow were part of an entire class of men laboring at or in support of the rustic industrialism of the salt works.

There are several earlier references to Martin Williams in the area. The first, from 1786, lists him as a chain carrier on a survey of property for William Christians near Bullitt's Lick.⁵⁹ On a second document written in May of 1793 Williams is one of thirty-six men who lent their name to a petition to Kentucky Governor Isaac Shelby. In it the men suggest that a militia unit be placed on the Ohio at the mouth of the Salt River, near present day Fort Knox, to monitor incursions of Indigenous soldiers. At the time the Northwest Confederacy (or United Indian Nations) remained unconquered. The settlers and industrial workers around Bullitt's Lick remained exposed to attack. The letter expressed the desire of the "inhabitants of our frontiers" to see a force large enough to deter as well as respond to threats against the settlements as well as settler river traffic.⁶⁰ These appearances suggest that Martin Williams was not only propertyless but also actively fearful of Indigenous attack. His appearance on a petition to the Governor however is a reminder of the rather unique status of poor white male settlers in Kentucky.⁶¹ With statehood in 1792, Kentucky granted universal male suffrage, the second state in the country to

⁵⁸ Sachs, Honor. *Home Rule: Households, Manhood, and National Expansion on the Eighteenth-century Kentucky Frontier*. New Haven: Yale University Press, (2015), 52.

⁵⁹ Kentucky Secretary of State, *Virginia and Old Kentucky Patent Series*, "William Christians, Patent #9196," Frankfort, Kentucky. 1786. <https://web.sos.ky.gov/land/vaok.aspx?series=VA&recordkey=9196.0>. Accessed on 2/14/2025.

⁶⁰ Durrett, Reuben T. Collection. Shelby Family Paper 1742-1823, [Box 2, Folder 50], Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

⁶¹ Sachs, 132-133.

do so after Vermont. The right to vote and the ability, willingness, and gumption to petition the governor illustrates the political power of even economically contingent men in Kentucky.

Crutchlow does not appear as early as Martin Williams in the area's archival sources. Aside from the tax rolls in 1797, he appears in Bullitt Circuit Court documents from 1798 when he was sued by Andrew Hynes and Company, traders in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. The details of the suit suggest a possible motivation for Crutchlow's involvement in the murder of the three Lenape in winter of 1797. During the summer of 1796 Crutchlow ran up a sizable debt at Hynes and Company. Broadcloth, calico, linen, cashmere, buttons, silk thread, port wine, and services of enslaved people are included on the itemized of goods he purchased on credit. These goods listed⁸ may have been intended for him to set up housekeeping. Despite payments delivered in salt against his debt, Crutchlow still owed twenty dollars in by the end of 1797.⁶² One of Crutchlow's motivations for participating in the murders could have been a share of plunder in order to eliminate his debt. If this was the case his plan did not work. The court documents record that he repaid the remainder of the debt through a variety of labor including working in the bake shop, repairing a group of cabins, and building a desk for Hynes.⁶³

Looking into the background and economic status of Martin Williams and John Crutchlow prior to and around the time of the murders offers a portrait of men who, while they possessed some social and political standing, lived contingent lives. They depended on credit and employment from wealthier men. They were not the yeomen farmers of Jefferson's vision for the

⁶² Filson Historical Society, Robert Emmett McDowell Collection 1774-1869, "Bullitt's Lick Papers," Volume 1. Manuscript Collection, MSS A M38a1. Louisville, Kentucky.

⁶³ *ibid*

“empire of liberty.”⁶⁴ John Williams does not appear in the archival record before the effort to apprehend him. He may have been a mere teenager at the time of the murders (which would explain his absence from tax rolls if he was under twenty-one years old). Whether economic contingency drove the Williamses and Crutchlow to murder and attempted kidnapping is unknown. A generation of settler men in Kentucky had been trained to see plunder as a legitimate economic endeavor. The United States often supported, explicitly or not, the use of plunder as compensation for its forces during the decades of war against the Indigenous people of the Ohio Valley. After the 1795 peace with Indigenous Ohio Valley communities however, it was the same government that now wished to capture, try, and possibly hang the three murderers.

⁶⁴ “From Thomas Jefferson to George Rogers Clark, 25 December 1780,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-04-02-0295>. [Original source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 4, *1 October 1780–24 February 1781*, ed. Julian P. Boyd. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951, pp. 233–238.], Accessed on 3/9/2024.; Sachs, 76-77.

Chapter 2: The Chase

This chapter describes the efforts and motivations of government officials, local elites, and Indigenous leaders in relation to the attempted apprehension of the murderers. Also explored in this chapter is how the murder of Lënapèxkwe and her companions became entangled in other matters of justice and diplomacy between the Federal government and Indigenous leaders. In this process we see that federal power is limited in this time and place by a variety of factors like infrastructure, local loyalties, competing interests, duplicity, and incompetence. All of these frustrate the effort to demonstrate and enact American justice in the borderlands.

Communications in the new territory of Indiana were a problem for Governor William Henry Harrison. Nearly all correspondence from the states had to come over the bison road between the Falls of the Ohio at Louisville and Vincennes. It was just over one hundred miles, but it could be a dangerous, inhospitable place to travel. For example, a letter sent by his friend New Jersey Senator Jonathan Dayton in January 1801 from Washington D.C. did not reach Vincennes until September of that year.⁶⁵ It also took Harrison a long time to physically arrive at his new position. Appointed in May 1800, he did not arrive at his post until January 1801. He may have delayed his move until reassured that he would be reappointed by the incoming Jefferson administration.⁶⁶ Harrison spent much of the first few months of 1801 settling personal real estate matters in Kentucky and Ohio. The first letter he received seems to have been one from his father-in-law and political patron, John Cleves Symmes, the New Jersey-born

⁶⁵ Harrison to Dayton, 1801.

⁶⁶Owens, Robert. *Mr. Jefferson's Hammer: William Henry Harrison and the Origins of American Indian Policy*. Norman. University of Oklahoma, (2011), p. 52.

Cincinnati land speculator.⁶⁷ One of the first preserved letters that Harrison sends from Vincennes is in July of 1801. It is long and addressed to Secretary of War, Henry Dearborn.

In this report are one of the two descriptions of the murders of James Galloway, George, and Lënapèxkwe. The description is short and with only a few details. Before delving into an analysis of those details, however it is important to recognize what the broader context. Harrison opens the letter by saying he has for “the last ten to twelve weeks...been constantly engaged in receiving visits from the Chiefs of most of the Indian nations.” He goes on to say, they “make heavy complaint of ill treatment on the part of our Citizens.” Among the issues brought to his attention by the Indigenous leaders were murders, squatting, poaching, and swindling. Among the Lenape leaders Harrison referred to likely included Tetapachksit (Turtle clan and principal leader of the White River Lenape, often referred to as the “Grand Glaize King”) Buckongahelas (Turkey clan and celebrated general of Lenape forces in the Northwest Confederacy), and Hockingpomska (perhaps the Lenape leader most friendly to Moravian missionaries at this time). They highlighted six murder victims for whom they sought justice. To the sakima, according to Harrison, “the case which seems to have affected the Indians more than any other is the murder of two men and one woman...about three years ago.” It is this moment that marks the initial creation of the written archival record of this case. The details go on to reveal horrific violence, but their vagueness and incompleteness produces silences and raises questions. Despite these silences the description of how the murder enters the archive points to a counter-repository as outlined in the previous chapter. The Lenape sakima not only held on to the memory and loss of James Galloway, George, and Lënapèxkwe for over three years, they preserved the information. When finally there was someone to listen, they pressed their case. This is not just a plea for

⁶⁷ Symmes, letter to Harrison, 3/30/1801.

justice it is a demonstration of an unwritten and fragile oral archive “folded” into a traditional collection of documents.⁶⁸

Harrison waited nearly half a year to hear back from Dearborn. The mail was still very slow to arrive. In the meantime, Harrison wrote to his friend, Jonathan Dayton, a Senator from New Jersey in November of 1801. Harrison described the landscape around the Wabash River. He writes of the prairies, groves, and rivers. To him they hold the “finest prospects in the world.”⁶⁹ These were not idle words to an old friend. Dayton was a prominent land speculator and was largely responsible for the boom in settlement around Fort Washington, which grew to become the city of Cincinnati and Harrison’s previous home. The city of Dayton, Ohio was named for the New Jersey politician. It is clear that Harrison was priming his old influential friend for investment in land development in the Wabash Valley. There was nothing unseemly about blending personal land speculation with the matter of state. After all George Washington had built a military and political career out of the combination.⁷⁰ The interesting part of the letter in respect to the administration of justice in the new territory followed a flowery description of the “prospects” in the area. Harrison dismisses the matter of justice as likely of no interest to Dayton.

We have, indeed, executed an Indian for the Murder of a white man—this is
Considered by the neighboring Spanish Government a very bold step—poor
devils would not dare punish an Indian for anything...(T)he Governor of Upper

⁶⁸ Dubcovsky, p. 31. Here the idea of an Indigenous archive within a colonial archive is married to the notion of a historical orality also present. Attention to these unwritten archival sources is called for in the study of early America by Noelani Aristis in her study of Hawai’ian legal systems: Arist, Noelani. *The Kingdom and the Republic: Sovereign Hawai’i and the Early United States*. United States: University of Pennsylvania Press, (2021), p. 13.

⁶⁹ Harrison to Jonathon Dayton, November 30, 1801. In Clanin, Douglas E. Editor. “William Henry Harrison Papers, Microfilm Reel 1: December 2, 1799-October 30, 1804.” *The Papers of William Henry Harrison, 1800-1815*. Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Society. Microfilm. 215-216

<https://images.indianahistory.org/digital/collection/dc050/id/4442/rec/6>. Accessed on 2/19/2025.

⁷⁰ See Calloway, Colin. *The Indian World of George Washington: The First President, The First Americans, and the Birth of the Nation*. New York, Oxford University Press, (2018), p. 243-244.

Louisiana offered to bet that the Indian would be pardoned after
Condemnation...⁷¹

The Lenape man that was hanged was named Wapikiniamouk, according to the Kentucky Gazette's article. He and another Lenape, Matihiakin, had murdered Jesse Harrison, an American settler (no relation to the Governor Harrison). The court relied on testimony from a third Lenape man, named Johnny, who related the entire story during his testimony in Kaskaskia, the town (in present day Illinois) in which the trial and hanging was held.⁷² The case follows a familiar narrative arc similar to our case, but the repercussions of this execution drove the region into turmoil. Catching and trying the Williamses and Crutchlow was one way Harrison and the older Lenape sakima hoped to calm the situation.

Like the murder of Lënapèxkwe and her companions, the narrative of this execution began peacefully. Jesse Harrison encountered Wapikiniamouk, Matihiakin, and Johnny while hunting in western Kentucky. The four hunted together and the Lenape men invited Harrison to accompany them on their way to Kaskaskia. Harrison agreed. They took turns riding the one horse between the four. According to Johnny, after several days the mood soured over hurt feelings in a friendly wrestling match. As the four neared Kaskaskia, Wapikiniamouk and Matihiakin plotted to kill Harrison and take his horse and rifle. They shot him in the back and forced Johnny to also fire at Harrison (though he was already dead).⁷³ It seemed plunder was still a viable economic activity for Indigenous men as well at the time. The three Lenape men made their way to their homes in Spanish Louisiana. They belonged to a community of Lenape and

⁷¹ Harrison to Janothan Dayton, November 30, 1801. In Clanin, 215.

⁷² Kentucky Gazette, Lexington, Kentucky. Thursday, December 3, (1801), 2.

⁷³ Kentucky Gazette. Lexington, (11/6/1801), 2.

Shawnee near Cape Girardeau (in present day Missouri).⁷⁴ Upon returning home, Johnny admitted the crime to his sakima, Takinowtha (Captain Allen). He and the French born Shawnee trader Louis Lorimier negotiated the capture and surrender of Wapikiniamouk to American authorities.⁷⁵

What was the purpose of handing Wapikiniamouk over to face American justice? What did Takinowtha and Louis Lorimier hope to gain by sacrificing one of their own? The French-born Lieutenant Governor of Upper (Spanish) Louisiana, Carlos de Hault de Lassus, was astounded by the mere notion of an execution.⁷⁶ In a report to his superior, he seemed under the impression that the murdered Jesse Harrison was a US government official. However, no suggestion of this was made in the newspapers or correspondence on the American side. Harrison's description of De Lassus's reaction suggests part of a possible answer: neither the Spanish authorities nor the Lenape and Shawnee leaders thought the Americans would actually carry out the execution. Such a killing might disrupt the delicate balance in the borderlands. The Spanish administrators in many ways inherited the philosophy as well as the actual officials of the French colonial system. Once described as a "middle ground" where Indigenous and European customs and norms reached an organic compromise, most scholars understand this now as more solidly rooted in Indigenous notions of diplomacy, economy, and justice, a Native

⁷⁴ These communities began migrating west in the 1780s as violence between American settlers and Indigenous towns in Ohio intensified. More and more groups joined them and in 1793 the Spanish Government granted the Shawnee and Lenape land in exchange for their support in defending Spanish Louisiana against the Osage to the west as well as the Americans pushing closer and closer from the east. Warren, Stephen. *The Shawnees and Their Neighbors 1795-1870*. Urbana, University of Illinois Press, (2005), 75-76.

⁷⁵ Pierre-Louis de Lorimier or sometimes Peter Loramie is an interesting figure. He was born in Montreal in the 1740s. He and his father started a trading post amongst the Shawnee communities on the Miami River in present day Ohio. He participated in Shawnee attacks on Kentucky settlers during the American Revolution. Reprisal attacks burned his trading post leading to his relocation to further west eventually in Spanish Louisiana. In 1792 he and his Shawnee and Lenape neighbors were granted land by the Spanish Empire. His cooperation with US government in the Wapikiniamouk case seems surprising given his previous antagonist relationship. Perhaps his acquiescence is further testament to the disbelief that Harrison would go forward with the execution.

⁷⁶ Harrison to Jonathon Dayton, November 30, 1801. In Clanin, 216.

Ground or a Native New World.⁷⁷ At the time, the Spanish feared American expansion. They also feared Osage predations on their western flank. The Americans feared French or British intrigue involving Louisiana. Spanish power seemed to be receding, so none of the other rivals seemed anxious about them. The Lenape, Shawnee, as well as American settlers and politicians, maneuvered between these fears. A ham-fisted Harrison did not hold these same anxieties about upsetting this balance, whether out of confidence, arrogance, or ignorance, it is unclear.

The hanging of Wapikiniamouk alarmed Henry Dearborn. His irritation and anxiety are apparent in his reply to Harrison when it finally arrived. Written on December 22nd, it is unclear when Harrison received it in Vincennes. Dearborn (and presumably President Jefferson) had heard of the hanging through the *Kentucky Gazette*, as Harrison's message from the third of December did not reach Washington before the newspaper from Lexington.⁷⁸ The mail route along the bison road to the Falls was still slow. As Secretary of War, Dearborn was responsible for Indian Affairs. Harrison had instructions to report to Dearborn on matters of significance to Indigenous negotiations. When Dearborn received Harrison's description of the murder of James Galloway, George, and Lēnapèxkwe he consulted with Jefferson, who in turn sought the advice of Attorney General Levi Jackson. His response directed Harrison to "use every means in your power for apprehending" the murderers and bringing them to justice.⁷⁹ Dearborn's urgency seems to demonstrate that he understood the need for balance. Harrison's July 1801 letter and Dearborn's December response signaled the beginning of an earnest effort to capture the Williamses and Crutchlow.

⁷⁷ Duval (2006), 7.; Witgen, Michael. *An Infinity of Nations How the Native New World Shaped Early North America*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, (2012), 17.

⁷⁸ *Kentucky Gazette*. Lexington, (11/6/1801), 2 Dearborn to William Henry Harrison, December 22, 1801. In Clanin, 219.; Harrison to Henry Dearborn, December 3, 1801. In Clanin, 217.

⁷⁹ Dearborn to William Henry Harrison, December 22, 1801. In Clanin, 219.

Despite Harrison's reassurance that the execution of Wapikiniamouk would not cause the Lenape or other nations to go to war with the United States, tensions were high throughout the fall, especially in Kaskaskia and across the river in Lenape communities near Cape Girardeau. Takinowtha, the sakima of the condemned man, had expected a pardon from the court in Kaskaskia as a reciprocal act typical of Indigenous justice systems. He had submitted to US justice according to the Treaty of Greenville Article Nine. Unfortunately, a record of his words to the court and later to Harrison does not survive. A paraphrased description created years later by Moses Dawson, a Harrison booster and Cincinnati newspaper man, captures at least part of Takinowtha's sense of justice.

After he (Wapikiniamouk) was convicted and sentence passed upon him by the judge, Allen (Takinowtha) stood forth, and intreated for his pardon, upon the principle, that as many murders had been committed against the Indians, and not one of the murderers had suffered, he did think that this man should be pardoned.⁸⁰

While the description is filtered through a Euro-American perspective several years later, the principles of reciprocity and Indigenous justice are evident in Takinowtha's argument. His own son had been killed in the streets of Vincennes, likely in 1800, and the murderers were never captured.⁸¹ As a signatory of the Treaty of Greenville he knew that the new order called for a hybrid justice system. When a settler committed a crime against an Indigenous person the leaders of that signatory group appealed to the President, or his Superintendent of Indian Affairs for that territory. When an Indigenous person committed a crime against a settler, the federal government appealed to that community's leader. In both cases, leaders took "prudent measures" to preserve

⁸⁰ Extract of letter to Thomas Jefferson. In Clanin, 193-195.

⁸¹ *ibid*

the peace.⁸² Takinowtha had lived up to his obligation as a signatory. It seems that he, and other Lenape, felt that hanging did not meet their definition of prudence in this case.

John Edgar, a prominent trader and politician in Illinois, wrote a panicked message to Dearborn. Lenape men had assembled on the west side of the Mississippi from the town of Kaskaskia and threatened invasion and to “kill every white man they met with.” Furthermore Edgar wrote that even friendly Indigenous people or “our own Indians” disagree with hanging rather than a firing squad.⁸³ The fear in Kaskaskia and elsewhere in the western parts of Indiana Territory grew. On December 30th Harrison forwarded a petition from the people of Kaskaskia for federal troops to protect their town. He portrayed the fears as real but exaggerated, suggesting instead that the “Delaware Nation generally” will not go to war. He blamed the trouble, or “petty depredations,” on “a Banditti composed of outcasts from all the tribes.”⁸⁴

With hindsight this is a pivotal moment in the history of region and possibly the country. The “banditti” Harrison described were not a criminal gang, as the term seems to imply. They were disaffected young men from Indigenous communities throughout the region. They saw what the compromise of the Treaty of Greenville brought—cold Euro-American justice blind and deaf to the needs of the community. The trust in their own leaders, who signed the treaty, eroded. Whether it was these same men who grew into the core of Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa’s militant movement is difficult to determine, but clearly similar forces were already at work. We do not know whether he ever understood the rise of the militant movement as a result of his personal

⁸² Kent, Charles A. *The Treaty of Greenville August 3, 1795*. Springfield, IL, Schnepf & Barnes, State Printers, (1919), PDF Accessed through <https://www.loc.gov/item/19013726/>. On 2/14/2025.

⁸³ “From Thomas Jefferson to the Senate and the House of Representatives, 27 January 1802,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-36-02-0289>. [Original source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 36, 1 December 1801–3 March 1802, ed. Barbara B. Oberg. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009, 440–443.]. Accessed on 2/14/2025. National Archives notations on the exerted letter by Edgar indicate the original and full text is unlocated.

⁸⁴ Harrison to Thomas Jefferson, December 30, 1801. In Clanin, 231-232.

decisions, like hanging Wapikiniamouk, or his failure to deliver justice in the case of Lēnapèxkwe. From the dismissive tone in his letter to Jefferson, Harrison's ignorance of the threat to his power took him a decade. In 1802 he closed the letter with a plea to the president to send him "commands" on how to handle the "wretched Indians."⁸⁵ He was in over his head and in search of guidance it would seem.

The timing of the trial and hanging of Wapikiniamouk and the commencement of the hunt for John and Martin Williams and Crutchlow suggest that Harrison, and perhaps Dearborn and Jefferson, intended the two demonstrations of justice to work together. By hanging a Lenape who murdered a settler and then also capturing, trying, and possibly hanging a settler (or three) who murdered Lenape, Harrison could illustrate the power and fairness of the federal government. Over the course of 1802 he employed the power invested in him to do so. Adding to the pressure, the Lenape and Shawnee, their demands of new federal administration in Indiana left unheard, took matters into their own hands. They traveled unbidden to Washington to meet with President Jefferson, making their case to the chief executive.

Indiana Territory was primed for revolution. Harrison and the Lenape sakima were not the only ones looking to Jefferson for solutions. In December and January 1803, the principal leader of the Myaamia, Mihšihkinaahkwa (Little Turtle), traveled to Washington D.C. to meet with the president. He was accompanied by William Wells, his son-in-law, interpreter, and Indian Agent. He delivered a message to Jefferson outlining the needs of the Indigenous communities in Wabash Valley region and claimed to speak for the Myaamia, Lenape, Shawnee, Potawatomi,

⁸⁵ *ibid*

Wea, Piankeshaw Kickapoo, Kaskaskia, and Eel River.⁸⁶ In his speech, Mihšihkinaahkwa asked that boundaries be set between Indigenous land and settler land. He worried that disputes may arise leading to violence. He also asked that someone be sent to Vincennes to explain the boundaries and other rules of the Treaty of Greenville.⁸⁷ Apparently, to Mihšihkinaahkwa, Harrison was not excelling at explaining the “parts of the treaty not understood.”⁸⁸ It is clear that Harrison had not earned the respect of Mihšihkinaahkwa. In his speech he does not talk about violence or specific events. It is unclear if he reserved those issues for his subsequent meetings with Dearborn. This would not be the case with the other Indigenous leaders who arrived after him.

During the conference with the Myaamia delegation, Dearborn received word from an Army quartermaster in Pittsburgh that another Indigenous group was on their way to Washington to meet with Jefferson.⁸⁹ This was not expected. Apparently Mihšihkinaahkwa did not speak for all the groups he claimed. Shawnee principal leader Catecahassa (Black Hoof) led the group but Lenape leaders Tetapachksit and Buckongahelas were also in the party. The White River Lenape and the Shawnee in western Ohio had different priorities than the Myaamia. There is no record of a speech by Tetapachksit or Buckongahelas, but their actions speak volumes. The inclusion of justice for violence against their people in communications between US officials afterwards suggests that the general issue of murders if not the specific murder of Lēnapèxkwe, James

⁸⁶ “I. Address of Little Turtle, [4 January 1802],” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-36-02-0168-0002>. [Original source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 36, 1 December 1801–3 March 1802, ed. Barbara B. Oberg. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009, pp. 280–286.] Accessed on 2/14/2025.

⁸⁷ *ibid*

⁸⁸ *ibid*

⁸⁹ Wilkins, John, Jr., letter to Henry Dearborn, 1 December 29, 1801. Cited in “Editorial Note: Conference with Black Hoof, 5 February 1802,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-36-02-0331-0001>. [Original source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 36, 1 December 1801–3 March 1802, ed. Barbara B. Oberg. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009, pp. 513–516.]

Galloway and George was an agenda item. Buckongahelas, one of the great generals of the Northwest Confederacy, had fought Americans longer than most Lenape. Buckongahelas was about eighty years old by that time. Travel in winter across the eastern half of the continent likely required significant effort and discomfort. Making the trip was clearly important for him and his people.

Catecahassa's address is very different than Mihšihkinaahkwa's. Perhaps some of the differences are due to the skill and agendas of their interpreters or the clerks rendering their speeches into the written word. However, many of the contrasts are big enough to shine through the filters inherent in the archive. Catecahassa makes sure to triangulate himself, the people he represents, and the president by addressing Jefferson as "Brother."⁹⁰ Mihšihkinaahkwa had used the term "Father" to speak to Jefferson.⁹¹ This is indicative of the tone of each address. The Myaamia grievances called for better explanations of the treaty provisions, clearer boundaries mark, damaged annuity goods, the lack of regular trade in their area, and the unregulated alcohol trade. Placing a government trader in Fort Wayne, where Mihšihkinaahkwa and William Wells reside, would solve much of the latter two problems according to Mihšihkinaahkwa.⁹² Catecahassa's address paints a darker picture of life in the Shawnee and Lenape towns. "(I)f you will turn your head back you will hear the lamentations of our women and children distressed for want of clothing and by hunger."⁹³ His first request is for better land with defined boundaries for Shawnee. This is not dissimilar to Mihšihkinaahkwa, but reveals the liminal position of the

⁹⁰ "I. Address of Black Hoof, [5 February 1802]," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-36-02-0331-0002>. [Original source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 36, *1 December 1801–3 March 1802*, ed. Barbara B. Oberg. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009, pp. 517–522.]

⁹¹ Little Turtle to Thomas Jefferson, January 4, 1802.

⁹² *ibid*

⁹³ Black Hoof to Thomas Jefferson, February 5, 1802.

Shawnee, who, like the Lenape, were migrants to the area. In addition to asking for a designated homeland, Catecahassa requested for a deed to a salt spring near the confluence of Wabash and Ohio Rivers, where the Shawnees “formerly lived” and for help developing the spring into commercial salt works.⁹⁴ He continues on listing other grievances including poaching, horse thievery, poor quality annuities and provisions, and the machinations of William Wells.⁹⁵ He also asks for the president’s help in the matter of a kidnapped Shawnee girl. She had been taken by Kentucky settlers, who ostensibly believed she was a captive remaining from the war with the Northwest Confederacy. The contrast between Mihšihkinaahkwa and Catecahassa’s address to Jefferson is stark and points to growing tensions between the Myaamia and Lenape and Shawnee, at least on the leadership level.

While Catecahassa does not mention justice for the Lenape murder victims, the other issues highlighted in his speech, the salt spring and the kidnapped girl arise in future correspondence and negotiation with Lenape, Shawnee, and William Henry Harrison, alongside discussions of the murder of Lēnapèxkwe. Overall, the grievances listed amounted to an inability for the Shawnee and Lenape to provide for resources and security for their women and children. Their means of social reproduction were breaking down. Catecahassa’s requests are essentially a plea for protection of Shawnee and Lenape interests from the Myaamia hegemony.

⁹⁴ *ibid.* This is the Wabash Salines. This is the first time Jefferson hears of them, and it quickly becomes an object of desire for him and the federal government. William Henry Harrison later claims the Shawnee have no claim to the area. He was wrong. It may be that Catecahassa lived in the villages near the springs that were attacked in the 1780s by Kentuckian led by William Hardin. Catecahassa was part of a group of Shawnee that migrated from Eskippakithiki in Kentucky to Alabama to southern Illinois through the eighteenth century. They were led by Pete Chartier, of mixed Shawnee French ancestry. They fought with the Illinois and Myaamia groups for control of the area around the salt spring in the 1740s and 1750s. Warren (2014), 217

⁹⁵ Black Hoof to Thomas Jefferson, February 5, 1802.

Jefferson was surprised with the unannounced visit by the Shawnee and Lenape leaders.⁹⁶ Despite this irritation however, he greeted Buckongahelas and Catecahassa quite warmly, recognizing them as “some of your most antient (sic) and greatest warriors, of whom I have heard much good. It is a long journey which they have taken at their age, and in this season.”⁹⁷ Jefferson took their effort as a sign of friendship with the United States. Given the reality of life in Indiana Territory, events unfolding under the auspices of his territorial governor, and the grievances cataloged by Catecahassa. Jefferson should have seen their visit for what it was, a forceful request for justice and assistance. The lack of security, clothing, and food was a problem for Shawnee and Lenape women, children, and men. They brought these issues to the President, along with potential solutions. Jefferson and Dearborn turned to Harrison to solve some of them.⁹⁸

On the day that Dearborn wrote to Harrison, adding the matter of the salt spring and Shawnee girl to his duties, the territorial governor was busy appointing a special deputy to travel to Kentucky and demand surrender of the Williamses and Crutchlow. While these issues seem unrelated, the mounting pressure on Harrison to perform and the Lenape and Shawnee leaders to deliver justice and sustenance to their communities pulled these issues together in the late winter and spring of 1802. Unfortunately for both the sakima and the governor the loyalties of Kentucky settlers, stood between them and solutions to these problems.

⁹⁶ Dearborn to William Henry Harrison, et al. 1/14/1802. In Clanin, p. 239-240.

⁹⁷ Jefferson to Black Hoof, February 10, 1802 “II. Jefferson’s Reply, 10 February 1802,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-36-02-0331-0003>. [Original source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 36, *1 December 1801–3 March 1802*, ed. Barbara B. Oberg. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009, pp. 522–523.]

⁹⁸ Dearborn to William Henry Harrison, February 23, 1802. In Clanin, 265-267.

Harrison's first concrete step was the appointment of Davis Floyd in February of 1802 to go to Kentucky and "demand" the surrender of the murderers.⁹⁹ Floyd was a rising political star in Indiana Territory.¹⁰⁰ In April, Floyd returned to Vincennes with one of the murderers, John Williams. Harrison sent a quick note to Dearborn on April 26th to announce the capture of one of the "Offenders."¹⁰¹ Harrison must have felt that his plan to demonstrate the fairness, blindness, and efficiency of American justice was coming to fruition. He also must have hoped that this success would please Jefferson. Any satisfaction Harrison felt evaporated quickly. Just over a week later, however, on May 5th he issued a proclamation offering a three-hundred-dollar reward for the recapture of John Williams. The accused murderer had escaped the jail in Vincennes and judging from the text of the proclamation, he had help.

...there is great reason to believe the said Williams was assisted by some Villain or Villains in making his Escape, the Governor offers a further reward of one hundred dollars...¹⁰²

The archives do not reveal how Williams escaped or who may have helped him. The fact that construction was already underway on a new jail in Vincennes suggests that the facilities that held Williams may not have been adequate.¹⁰³ This would fit well with an assessment of facilities throughout Indiana Territory during these first years of federal administration. As part of the Northwest Territory communities like Vincennes and Kaskaskia were remote outposts compared

⁹⁹ Harrison, Appointment, February 23, 1802. In Clanin, 268.

¹⁰⁰ No doubt his appointment by Harrison on the special errand to extradite the Williamses and Crutchlow helped buoy his career. Within a few years he served on the Territorial Legislature and was elected Sheriff of Clark County. In 1805, Floyd's star diminished when he was accused of conspiring with Aaron Burr to embezzle funds from a canal building company and possibly invade Mexico. "To James Madison from Joseph Hamilton Daveiss, 16 November 1806," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/02-13-02-0060>. [Original source: *The Papers of James Madison*, Secretary of State Series, vol. 13, 1 November 1806–31 March 1807, ed. Tyson Reeder, J. C. A. Stagg, Anne Mandeville Colony, Ellen D. Goldlust, Mary K. Wigge, and Katherine E. Harbury. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2024, pp. 53–57.] Accessed on 2/14/2025.

¹⁰¹ Harrison to Dearborn, April 26, 1802. In Clanin, 294.

¹⁰² Harrison, Proclamation, May 5, 1802. In Clanin, 296.

¹⁰³ "Contract for building Knox County Jail," *Early Vincennes Collection*, Knox County Public Library, 3/9/1901.

to the growing center of Cincinnati. There had been little investment into infrastructure in these communities which once flourished under Indigenous, French, and British stewardship.¹⁰⁴ Many of the buildings occupied by the new territorial government were dilapidated remnants of the French colonial period now forty years old. Escaping from a post and pier, vertical log structure in disrepair might have been easy.¹⁰⁵ With assistance from local friends or family, it is a wonder that Harrison was able to hold Williams for the week he did.

Much is made in the correspondence between federal officials of the unlikelihood of Kentuckians punishing a man for murdering Indigenous people even in cold blood.¹⁰⁶ It seems that at least some people in Vincennes also felt that the act did not deserve imprisonment, trial, or especially hanging. Perhaps seeing a difference between Kentuckians and residents of Vincennes is a false distinction. After all Kentuckians had a history of running roughshod over federal authority in the Wabash River town. During the 1780s Kentucky militia occupied the town, attacking friendly Wea and Piankeshaw towns. The US military commander in Vincennes acknowledged his impotence to control the Kentucky militia at the time.¹⁰⁷ Whether Williams was broken out of the Knox County jail by sympathetic Hoosiers or Kentucky friends or family

¹⁰⁴ Austin, Moses. "The Journal," *The American Historical Review*, Volume 5, Number 3, (April 1900), p 529.; Collot, Georges-Henri-Victor. *A journey in North America: containing a survey of the countries watered by the Mississippi, Ohio, Missouri, and other affluing rivers, etc.* Paris: A. Bertrand, 1826. Pdf. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/2004622181/>., 179.

¹⁰⁵ Tharp, Wade Terrell. "A Sequence of French Vernacular Architectural Design and Construction Methods in Colonial North America, 1690-1850." MA Thesis, (Illinois State University, 2014), 36-37. If the courthouse or jail in Vincennes was like other government buildings at the time in former French colonial towns in the region it was likely built of vertical logs place on the piers or a sill or even on the ground. A reconstructed example is the Old Cahokia Courthouse in Illinois.

¹⁰⁶ Harrison to Harry Innes, August 4, 1802. In Clanin, p. 345-346. Innes, Harry. "Harry Innes to Joseph Crockett, August 23, 1802," Alice Balfrey Collection 1783-1885. Kentucky Historical Society (KHS), Frankfort, Kentucky, (1802).

¹⁰⁷ Hamtramck to Harmar, August 14, 1789. In Thornbrough, Gayle, editor. *Outpost on the Wabash: 1787-1791: Letter of Brigadier General Josiah Harmar and Major John Francis Hamtramck and other letters and documents selected from the Harmar Papers in the William I. Clements Library*. Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Society Publications, Volume 19. (1957), 183.

come north for the purpose is unknown. Much more is known about his second escape from authorities, this time in Breckenridge County, Kentucky.

There are several reasons why John Williams wound up in Breckenridge County, despite that it was not his home. The first is that fleeing from Vincennes, the easiest route was on the major road toward the Falls of the Ohio. Travelling along the main road, overlaid on the bison-created path, between populations centers however, presented a risk. With a three-hundred-dollar price on his head this would have made the journey on such a prominent path dangerous. The journey along the road from Vincennes to Louisville was over one hundred miles and could take several days with a horse—it seems unlikely that Williams had such a luxury.¹⁰⁸ Another option for John Williams would be to branch off of the bison road and take a more direct route south to the rustic settlements at Redbanks (present day Henderson) or Yellowbanks (present day Owensboro). From the description of a French revolutionary official travelling through the area in 1796, Redbanks was a particularly rowdy place full of gambling and “foresters” that engaged in feats of strength and daring.¹⁰⁹ While several years had passed since the assessment, there is nothing to suggest that the inhabitants would look past a three-hundred-dollar payday to capture John Williams, likely a stranger to them. Perhaps the same was true for Yellowbanks. The final option of a path south to Kentucky was another bison path, likely improved by Indigenous people over the years, to a place across the Ohio River from Stephensport, Kentucky. Today this area is known as Rome, Indiana. Williams was almost certainly familiar with the area. The area across from Stephensport was one of the locations Harrison suggested as the murder scene in

¹⁰⁸ Snell, Samuel P., Ryan L. Jackson, and Angie R. Krieger, “Lost and forgotten Historic Roads: The Buffalo Trace, a case study,” Indianapolis, Indiana, Civil and Environmental Consultants, Inc. (Unknown), p.5. https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/hoosier/specialplaces/?cid=fsbdev3_017492. Accessed on 2/14/2025.

¹⁰⁹ Collot, 172.

1797. The other two, Oil Creek and Blue River, lay upstream, but not too far. Also, the depositions of Samuel Rice, the trader who recognized his calico and a resident of that area, support the notion that Williams was familiar or had connections in the area. There was another reason Williams might have headed for Breckenridge County—William Hardin.

Variously called Old Hardin, Big Bill, or Indian Bill, William Hardin was a legend in his own time. Like his contemporary, Daniel Boone, the stories of his actions during the early occupation of Kentucky have a mythic quality, at least as they are retold in popular histories from the mid-nineteenth century to today. One history assures the reader that he was a man of “dauntless courage and resolution” and “insensible to fear, and impregnable to pain.”¹¹⁰ Hardin earned his reputation fighting Indigenous people during the 1780s effort to settle Kentucky. Although he was not a part of George Rogers Clark’s Kentucky County Militia like many other settlers, Hardin had served as a regular private in Virginia regiments in the east.¹¹¹ This entitled him to warrant lands according to Virginia law. Accounts vary as to when Hardin came into the area. Some say as early as 1779 others suggest not until 1786. What the accounts agree on is his animosity toward Indigenous people. A sensationalized account of a raid he organized against Shawnee towns at the salt springs around 1786 claims dozens Shawnee killed and driven off, making the settlements stretching into western Kentucky safe for settlement by Euro-Americans.¹¹² In the firsthand account of John Dial, a participant in the raid, recorded by John Shane in 1840s, the engagement is far less dramatic—resulting in plunder of horses and a curious calvary sword.¹¹³ The informant goes on to elaborate that a Shawnee leader later told him that the

¹¹⁰ Collins, Lewis and Richard Collins. *Collins’ Historical Sketches of Kentucky: History of Kentucky*. Volume II. Covington, Kentucky. Collins and Company. (1878), 97.

¹¹¹ *ibid*

¹¹² *ibid*

¹¹³ State Historical Society of Wisconsin, *Lyman C. Draper Manuscript Collection* (microfilm edition 1980), Kentucky Papers, John Shane Interview, Capt. John Dial, Series 13CC 228.

real prize was dozens of pack horses laden with beaver and other fur on the other side of the town that the settler forces did not seize.¹¹⁴

In another story recorded about Hardin in the early nineteenth century an Indigenous family came to stay with him, based on his reputation as hunter and strong leader. Hardin heard of their inquiry about him and their possible desire to join his settler community on Sinking Creek. He murdered them all later that night.¹¹⁵ Some of these stories strain credulity or very least lack detail and nuance that might lend validity to these tales, but it is these stories, tall tales or truths, that circulated in the early and mid-eighteenth century and likely loomed large in the mind of a young man fleeing the law for killing Indigenous people like John Williams. He may have fled to Breckenridge County because he knew Hardin could protect him from federal authorities. He was right. He may also have fled to Hardin's protection because the murder had been Hardin's idea all along. Like the raid far to the west to strike at a Shawnee village. It seems possible that he could have inspired if not incentivized the murder of James Galloway, George, and L  nap  kkwe in their hunting camp just opposite his newly created county. Whether the inspiration for murder was implicit or explicit, at this point in the narrative is irrelevant. John Williams knew he could find sanctuary in the county and community of William Hardin. At this time in Kentucky history the county was the seat of power which mattered most in the lives of everyday people. Local elites, like Hardin, operated like feudal lords in many respects.¹¹⁶ One need only look at the name of the county seat, Hardinsburg, to understand who held the power in the area.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.* It seems possible that this leader could have been Catecahassa.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, 13CC 227.

¹¹⁶ Ireland, Robert M. *The County in Kentucky History*. Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, (1976), Preface.

John Williams may have initially regretted his decision to head for Stephensport. Sometime between Williams's escape in Vincennes and the seventeenth of May, he was caught again. This time he was confined in Hardinsburg, most likely in the new log-built county courthouse.¹¹⁷ The new construction would make escape difficult, but the most important obstacle to Williams's liberty was the presence of Christopher Bush, constable of the neighboring Hardin County.¹¹⁸ Bush was another early settler to the region. Popular historical sources indicate that he and William Hardin had explored and settled the area at about the same time. Bush also likely participated in the raid against the Shawnee community led by Hardin. It is unclear why the constable of the neighboring county was guarding Williams. Perhaps Bush was operating independently. There was a sizable bounty to collect after all. Nonetheless, Hardin, and two or three others—confronted Bush in Hardinsburg. The county court order books are vague on the details, but the entries indicate a fight between Bush and Hardin took place. In the end John Williams was freed from custody.

While the Grand Jury dismissed charges of “breaching the peace” against both Bush and Hardin, they did find Hardin guilty of “profane swearing” and fined him five shillings.¹¹⁹ The state did not pursue serious charges against Hardin. He and Bush both filed suits and counter suits. Each accused the other of assault and trespass. In Hardin's he claims first that Bush should not have been in the area in the first place. Therefore, there was no trespass. Second, in regard to

¹¹⁷ Popular history websites describe the Breckinridge County Courthouse as a “log-built” structure dating to 1799 or 1800. Goodman-Snively, Guida. “Breckinridge County, Kentucky History” Elizabethtown, Kentucky. *Ancestral Trails Historical Society*, (2005), 114-116. <https://wckyhhistory-genealogy.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Breckinridge-County-KY-Courthouse-Fire.pdf> . Accessed 2/14/2025.

¹¹⁸ This can be confusing since Hardinsburg is in Breckenridge County and Hardin County is adjacent. The latter is named for a relative of William Hardin, John Hardin—a militia leader who led forces in the Northwest Confederacy War and was later murdered on a diplomatic mission.

¹¹⁹ Breckinridge County Court (BCC), *Breckinridge County Circuit Court Order Book #1*, “Kentucky v. Hardin” and “Kentucky v. Bush,” May 17, 1802, 60-61.

the assault charge, Hardin claimed that he acted in self-defense. Stating that Bush would have “beaten, wounded, and ill treated” Hardin had he not fought back.¹²⁰ Furthermore, William Hardin claimed that all of his actions were only meant in defense of Williams. While the order books offer few details, it appears that there was a confrontation involving Bush, Hardin, Williams, and others. The result of the confrontation is that Williams was freed and Hardin was directed to pay Bush five dollars and court costs.¹²¹ This incident caught the attention of federal officials, opening a new chapter in the hunt for the Williamses and Crutchlow.

When word of the second jailbreak of John Williams reached Henry Dearborn, he was unsure of how to advise Harrison to proceed. The question of how to handle such a flagrant flaunting of federal authority by a prominent man like William Hardin required consultation with the Attorney General of the United States, Levi Lincoln. The result of the consultation is that Lincoln advised the prosecution of “Old Hardin” and handed the matter to US District Attorney for Kentucky, Joseph Daveiss. The choice to move forward a case against Hardin was politically complicated and controversial. Despite the overwhelming support of Jefferson’s Democratic-Republican party in Kentucky, Daveiss was a staunch Federalist. Several years later he would gain fame and become wildly unpopular for his failed prosecution of Aaron Burr. As a Federalist he must have jumped at the chance to make an example of William Hardin. However, he had to convince Federal District Judge Harry Innes that federal law even covered the charges of disturbing the peace at a remote county courthouse.¹²² Daveiss, Lincoln, Dearborn, and Harrison seemed to reach the limits of federal control in Kentucky. For Harrison and Dearborn this

¹²⁰ BCC, May 18, 1802, 69-70.

¹²¹ BCC, November 19, 1802, p. 151-152.

¹²² Tachau, Mary K Bonsteel. *Federal Courts in the Early Republic: Kentucky 1789-1816*. Princeton. Princeton University Press, (1978), 96 and 131-132n.

jeopardized their goals in negotiation with the Lenape and other Indigenous groups north of the Ohio River. While none of the letters between Dearborn, Harrison, or Jefferson explicitly indicate that prosecution of the murderers was a negotiation tactic with the Lenape, the relationship between the two initiatives was impossible to miss. Dearborn wrote to Harrison in July clarifying the connection.

I am directed by the President of the U. States to request you to continue your exertion, for apprehending those persons who have been supposed guilty of committing murder on the Indians within the Indiana Territory and directing you to ascertain the Smallest sum for which the Nation will convey the salt spring, and eight or ten Thousand acres of land, near the mouth of the Wabash, so that the subject may be laid before Congress at their next Session.¹²³

The Shawnee leaders wanted assistance from the federal government in leasing the spring to an operator that would develop salt works to benefit the Indigenous nations.

After the Hardinsburg jailbreak the matter of finding and prosecuting the Williamses and Crutchlow took on a new intensity. Harrison appealed directly to Governor Garrard for assistance, who then turned to Harry Innes for help. During the early summer of 1802 there is little documented about the manhunt, but events suggest there were undocumented conversations. In late July Innes wrote to Harrison with good news. One of the murderers, Martin Williams surrendered to Innes in Frankfort. Astonishingly, for a case of such importance, Innes allowed Martin to post bail if he agreed to appear in court during the upcoming November term. In this letter Innes also indicated that John Williams and John Crutchlow would be given a month to also surrender to Innes.¹²⁴ Innes also made it clear to Harrison that the trials will occur in his

¹²³ Dearborn to William Henry Harrison, July 3, 1802. In Clanin, 326.

¹²⁴ Harry Innes to William Henry Harrison, July 22, 1802, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., U.S. District Court Case, U.S. vs. Williams and Crutchlow, Library of Congress, Box 10, Legal Files, (1767-1823).

Kentucky courtroom or as he says the “the court of the U.S. for this District.”¹²⁵ The mechanics of federal law and the justice system were in flux at this moment but there does not seem to be a legitimate reason for not conducting the trials in Indiana. Dearborn and Jefferson had made it clear to Harrison that expense was not a factor in bringing the murderers to justice. Innes claiming the case seems a ploy to ensure he could control the outcome and protect the murderers from the unknowns of a trial in Indiana Territory with the families and community leaders of those murdered in attendance. Harrison laments the latter. He had hoped for the performative value of American justice to help his treaty making agenda.¹²⁶

The irony is there was legal justification for Innes to take control of the case. Lēnapèxkwe was likely murdered in a canoe and her body disposed of in the Ohio River. Even if they had been just a few feet from shore that would mean the murder, or the concealment of the body occurred in Kentucky and therefore Innes’s jurisdiction. The Ohio River, which separates Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois from Kentucky, belongs to Kentucky up to the high-water mark. This was a feature of the statehood of Kentucky enacted to ensure sovereignty over river navigation on the Ohio when the northern shore was still considered Indigenous. If Innes needed a legal reason to take control of the case he would have well known about this detail as he had sat on the constitutional conventions for the state, all ten of them. That Innes did not deploy this factor suggest that he did not need to legally justify his assertion of authority. Innes possessed the power to claim the case without answering to any other authority. Perhaps Harrison, a young military man, did not understand the intricacies of the law enough to insist on extradition. Or

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Harry Innes to Henry Dearborn, October 14, 1802, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., U.S. District Court Case, U.S. vs. Williams and Crutchlow, Library of Congress, Box 10, Legal Files, (1767-1823).

maybe he acquiesced because he understood that allowing Innes to handle the trial was the only way any semblance, or performance, of justice might be done.

After a month without a sign from John Williams or Crutchlow, Innes dispatched US Marshall Joseph Crockett with instructions to raise a posse and bring the Williamses and Crutchlow to Frankfort.¹²⁷ Innes's instructions reflect three realities of politics in Kentucky at the time. The first is a sentiment already reflected by Harrison, that it seemed likely that Kentuckians would not find fault with the murder of Indigenous people. The second is less obvious but demonstrated the lack of authority of the federal government in the state. Innes suggested that Crockett draw the posse from a county other than Breckenridge stating, "...I have strong reasons to believe that the people of the county...are opposed to their prosecution."¹²⁸ While Innes feigns ignorance of any assistance provided by Hardin or other members of the public in Breckenridge, it is difficult to imagine that he had not understood the situation from the start. Whether the Williamses and Crutchlow were guilty or not was beside the point. Local loyalties were stronger than federal law. The significant third instruction that Innes gave Marshall Crockett was to make sure he drew the posse from a middling class.

They aught to be men of respectability...and visible property, this last requisite is essential because if they refuse to obey you they may be made to feel the effects of their disobedience by Fine as well as Imprisonment.¹²⁹

Innes understood that the only way to ensure compliance with federal orders when it came to Kentucky settlers pressed into service in this case was to threaten financial punishment.

Law enforcement in Kentucky was ineffective, especially against those accused of crimes that did not violate community standards of behavior. Innes himself understood and

¹²⁷ Harrison to Innes, August 4, 1802. In Clanin, p. 345-346.; Innes to Joseph Crockett, August 23, 1802.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

contributed to this ineffectiveness. One need only examine his record enforcing the Whiskey Excise Tax in the 1790s.¹³⁰ He had also been accused of being part of a number of schemes which more broadly threatened federal authority and control in Kentucky. Most famously, he was suspected of involvement with General James Wilkenson's plot to separate Kentucky from the United States with the help of the Spanish Empire.¹³¹ Innes was in good company when it came to conspiracies and questionable loyalty to the United States in the west during this period. Some plots like Wilkenson's manifest in actual plans and payments. Other plots, though famous, like Burr's or Tennessee's William Blount's conspiracies remained nebulous. Other actions of disloyalty to the federal government were more personal like Andrew Jackson's pledge of loyalty to King Carlos IV of Spain at Natchez in 1789.¹³² Innes was of a generation of American who migrated west before the creation of a federal government and despite being an actual servant of that government, Innes's own obedience to federal law and authority did not extend beyond his sympathy to other settlers. He certainly might not have felt like punishing younger men for murdering Indigenous people. For decades in Innes's mind Indigenous people had "always been the aggressors."¹³³

Before long the November session of Innes's court was at hand. Martin Williams and a parade of witnesses were arranged to attend. Justice was perhaps nigh.

¹³⁰ Tachau, 100-101.

¹³¹ Whitaker, Arthur. "Harry Innes and the Spanish Intrigue, 1794-1795," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Volume 15. Number 2, September 1928. 241.

¹³² Stearns, Susan Gaunt. *Empire of Commerce: The Closing of the Mississippi and the Opening of Atlantic Trade*. Charlottesville. University of Virginia Press, (2024), 10.

¹³³ As quoted in Aron (1996), 52.

Chapter 3: The Trials

This chapter looks inside the administration of American justice in the early nineteenth century lower Ohio Valley as the murderers and their community allies face state and federal law. It also illustrates how the murder fit within a climate of growing crises as Indigenous societies attempted to transition to new economic and social structures. This tumultuous transition demonstrates that American justice was not the only law in the borderlands. Leaders and nonelite members of Indigenous society, in the face of profound change, sought renewal and also applied their own form of justice in an attempt to navigate to a stable, sovereign, and sustainable future.

The order books of the US District court in Frankfort, Kentucky indicate that Martin Williams appeared before Judge Harry Innes on Monday November 15th, 1802. He stood accused of the murder of Lēnapèxkwe, James Galloway, and George. The charge was based on the deposition of Abraham Hiley of Breckenridge County. Martin was alone. John Williams and John Crutchlow escaped Joseph Crockett and the posse.¹³⁴ The order books do not reveal many details of the case and Hiley's deposition appears to be lost. Harrison's description from his letters to Dearborn and Innes remain the best representation of the murder in 1797. There is one detail in the terse text of the order books. However, before the court, Martin Williams is described as a "yeoman of the county of Hardin."¹³⁵ Between the murder and November 1802 Martin had become a landowner. In 1797 he had been listed among people without taxable property in Bullitt County, living to the north of the Salt River. This location and the lack of property suggests that Martin Williams worked in some capacity at or around the salt works at

¹³⁴ There is no evidence to suggest that Martin's surrender was coordinated with Innes in order to let John Williams and John Crutchlow evade a trial, but it seems entirely possible that an arrangement had been worked out between Martin and Innes.

¹³⁵ U.S. District Court, Kentucky, Order Books, Book C, Nov. 24, 1800-Dec. 4, 1802. Microfilm. M-680, Box 2. University of Kentucky Special Collections. 337-341.

Bullitt's Lick. Five years later he lived in a different county, to the south and west, and owned enough land to be described as a yeomen.

While Kentucky conferred some political rights to landless men in 1790s, property ownership conveyed further political power. This status was important before the law. As evident from Innes's instructions to Joseph Crockett on assembling a posse examined in the previous chapter, "visible property" made men subject to the law in ways a propertyless man was not.¹³⁶ Having property meant Martin Williams had something to lose or something the law could take away if he did not comply. It is the additional threat of a fine that ensures obedience. Men in Kentucky did not fear imprisonment sufficiently to obey the law. Perhaps the reason for John Williams and John Crutchlow's absence before the bench had more to do with their status rather than the abilities of federal law enforcement. If neither had property to threaten, the law held little leverage over them.

The power of the federal government to threaten one's property is also reflected in the bail set for Martin Williams, as well as the witnesses in the case. Martin and his lawyer, Henry Crist¹³⁷, had to put up one thousand dollars apiece to post bail. If they refused to appear the court could extract the value of the bail from the "goods, chattels, lands, and tenants" of both Williams and Crist.¹³⁸ The witnesses who appeared in November, Richard Pile, James Hendricks, and William Walker were all bailed too—each for five hundred dollars. Abraham Hiley, the star witness for the prosecution, was bailed for one thousand dollars. Innes believed that the witnesses might not appear without being bailed. None of them, it seemed, had any other

¹³⁶ Innes to Joseph Crockett, August 23, 1802.

¹³⁷ Henry Crist was an early settler around Bullitt's Lick and became wealthy and influential running his salt works. At the time of the trial, he was a State Senator. Several years later he would serve in the US House of Representative.

¹³⁸ US DC, Order Book C, 337.

incentives to testify against the Williamses and Crutchlow. But there was more to the relationship between at least one of the witnesses, Hiley, and the Williamses and perhaps Crutchlow. It is difficult to see the precise contours of the relationship, but several incidents reveal perhaps a deeper animosity between Hiley and the Williamses. Part of the men's animosity toward one another played out in a different courtroom at about the same time as the federal case.

In 1799 Jonathan Irons purchased one hundred acres of land from Jacob Bowman. The purchase agreement stipulated the price as three hundred and thirty-three dollars. The acute shortage of currency in the United States was even more acute on its western fringe. Therefore, the two agreed that the sum could be paid in salt. This was common practice in the area at the time. The land was bounded on one side by the Salt River and near the industrial salt works at Bullitt's Lick. The price seemed to be the last time Bowman and Irons agreed about anything. The two spent the next several years suing and counter suing each other over the land in the Nelson County Chancery Court. Salt was the foundation of the disagreement. Irons complained that Bowman refused to accept an installment payment at one point. Bowman reported that he was not prepared to take the salt away as the dozens of bushels amounted to well over one ton and he did not have a wagon to haul it at the time.¹³⁹ One of the foremost researchers into the history of the salt industry at this time and region called the use of salt as currency "a bewildering method of exchange."¹⁴⁰ The heart of the dispute however involved the salt spring that Irons later developed on the property and the deposition of one man, Abraham Hiley.

¹³⁹ Nelson County Chancery Court (NCCC), "Bowman vs Irons, Irons vs Bowman," 1804. Microfilm, Kentucky Department of Library and Archives, Frankfort.

¹⁴⁰ McDowell, Robert E. "Bullitt's Lick, The Related Saltworks and Settlements," *The Filson Club*, Louisville, Kentucky, (1956), 255.

Jonathan Irons developed salt works on the land he bought from Bowman in 1799. At the time it seemed that Bowman was unaware that there was a salt spring on the property. The location was known to be a preferred crossing point on the Salt River by animals and humans, even being referred to as a “great buffalo crossing.”¹⁴¹ One early settler recalls that it was a less dangerous place to cross the Salt River during the years of violence with the Indigenous communities north of the Ohio prior to 1795.¹⁴² That there was a salt spring in the river bed seemed less than common knowledge. Bowman accused Irons of hiding the fact of the salt spring from him until the sale was complete. It was the deposition of Abraham Hiley that drove Bowman’s suit against Irons. Hiley claimed that he saw Irons and two other men—one may have been John Williams, digging in the riverbank near the site of the spring in 1798.¹⁴³ The implication was that hiding the spring’s existence from Bowman allowed Irons to get a lower price for the land. Hiley’s deposition was taken in September 1802 by Hardin County Justice of the Peace, Samuel Rice—the trader who offered evidence against the Williamses and Crutchlow regarding the calico they plundered after the murder. Hiley testified against Irons and insinuated that John Williams aided Irons in the deception at the heart of the dispute. While there does not seem to be a direct connection between the murder and the land dispute, the appearance of Hiley and John Williams on opposite sides of the dispute suggests that there may be more to the animosity between the two. Further suggestion that there was more to Hiley’s testimony than just civic duty, was that Jonathon Irons was married to Agnes Crutchlow, John Crutchlow’s younger sister.

¹⁴¹ NCCC, *Irons v Bowman*, etc. 1804.

¹⁴² *ibid*

¹⁴³ *ibid*

Circumstantial though it may be, it appears that it was no coincidence that Hiley and the murderers wound up on opposite sides of this land dispute. The archive does not reveal details, but court documents indicate that Irons and his bloc made undermining Hiley's character the prime objective of their defense strategy. The suit and counter suit dragged on in chancery court until 1804. During the final year of the case Irons produced a parade of deponents who questioned Hiley's character. John M. Hath testified that Hiley's "character was that of being a bad man and that very little confidence could be placed in him or anything that he would say" and he had heard Hiley passed counterfeit banks notes.¹⁴⁴ John Barbee called Hiley "a man of very bad character" and repeated the counterfeiting accusation.¹⁴⁵ Samuel Bush just said of Hiley "is bad" and Benjamin Helen agreed that he was of "a bad character from general reporting."¹⁴⁶ James Crutcher agreed with this assessment. The Irons team also solicited a deposition from John Williams, whom Hiley had said was present in 1798 when Irons was prospecting for salt. Williams answered frankly that he was not there.¹⁴⁷ Bowman attempted to undermine John Williams' character by bringing up the murder accusations. In the deposition of Benjamin Stansberry Bowman asks about the character of John and Martin Williams. Stansberry, who had been in a long running violent dispute with salt makers illegally cutting from his woodlands, recalled "that they killed some Indians in a time of peace" and were on that account "shy of company."¹⁴⁸

Irons and his crew had a lot of allies in Bullitt County and the surrounding area. His position as an operator of a salt works and his reputation as a generous man likely elicited support from

¹⁴⁴ NCCC, Irons v Bowman, etc. 1804.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*

many of his neighbors. Hiley on the other hand seemed to be the target of distrust and animosity. That is except from one of the most powerful men in the greater region, William Henry Harrison. On the twenty-ninth of October 1808 Abraham Hiley mounted the stage in Vincennes. Hiley stepped over the trap door and the executioner placed the rope around his neck. Hiley had been found guilty of murder and sentenced to hang. At the last moment however, Governor Harrison delayed and then cancelled the execution, giving Hiley a “full and Perfect Pardon.”¹⁴⁹ No explanation is given in Harrison’s papers. Perhaps it was Hiley’s testimony against the Williamses and Crutchlow that engendered mercy. As the story of the Irons and Bowman suits, the effort to bring the Williamses and Crutchlow to justice, and the pardon of Abraham Hiley, demonstrates personal loyalty and local allegiances often mattered more than the letter of the law even at the federal level.

Martin Williams’s case was postponed in the spring of 1803, likely because the star witness, Hiley, did not appear on the fifteenth of November or the next several days. He was brought into Innes’s court on the twenty-ninth of November in custody of the US Marshall, likely Joseph Crockett. Innes instructed Hiley to return in March like Martin and their other witnesses. Hiley was also bailed for one thousand dollars, either as a sign of his importance to the case or for fear he would skip bail. Innes also excused him from disobeying the initial subpoena. The reason is not given but a later document, related to his military pension application, suggests that Hiley’s home in Hardin County “was burned” around this time.¹⁵⁰ Houses seemed to burn down, consuming records, with startling frequency in the area. It is unclear if Hiley’s burned

¹⁴⁹ Woolen, William Wesley, Daniel Wait Howe, and Jacob Piatt Dunn, editors. *Executive Journal of Indiana Journal*, 1800-1816. Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Society Publications, (1900), 150.

¹⁵⁰, “Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application File S. 31744 Abraham Hiley, Penn.,” War Department, Office of the Secretary, 1789-1947. National Archives Catalog, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/54872887?objectPage=2>, Accessed on 2/16/2025.

intentionally—perhaps to intimidate or distract him from testifying. The phrasing “was burned” is vague but suggests some human agency.

The same day that Hiley straggled into court, two weeks late for the initial trial, William Hardin stood before Innes for his charge of disturbing the peace during the jailbreak of John Williams back in May. There was some confusion about whether a common law charge could be filed in federal court. Daveiss, the prosecutor and a rare federalist in Kentucky, may have been inclined to proceed but Innes declined to hear the case and dismissed all the charges.¹⁵¹ Similarly, Martin Williams, Hiley, and the other witnesses returned in March 1803 for an anticlimactic end to the search for justice. In a brief entry in the order book for the first day of the March session, the case against Martin Williams was rendered “*nolle prosequi*.”¹⁵² In other words, Innes and Joseph Daveiss refused to prosecute Williams and all were dismissed. Drama of jailbreaks, possible arson attacks, and political intrigue characterized the unsuccessful attempt to apply federal law to the murder of Lënapèxkwe, James Galloway, and George. In the end the case faded to an anticlimax. Aside from brief and random mentions in local court cases, like that of *Irons v Bowman*, the death of Lënapèxkwe and her companions is seemingly forgotten.

While the courts and archives might have dismissed and forgotten the murders, the Lenape communities along the White River added the failure of the US government and their own leaders to provide justice to a growing list of grievances. The growing crises of confidence in their leaders to provide security and navigate the changing political and economic systems being forced upon them resulted in trials of their own, literal and figurative. The sakima’s attempt to appeal directly to Jefferson was one of the ways Lenape attempted to confront the crises. Another

¹⁵¹ US DC Order Book C, 412; Tachau, 130.

¹⁵² U.S. District Court, Kentucky, Order Books, Book D, Nov. 24, 1800-Dec. 4, 1802. Microfilm. M-680, Box 2. University of Kentucky Special Collections, 103.

was the splintering of militant young men from their community leaders like described after the execution of Wapikimouak. Another response to the dramatic changes wrought by tightening colonial boundaries, encroaching settlers, and the waves of diseases killing indiscriminately was to seek out the perceived evil within their own communities. In 1802 Lenape sakima accused, convicted, and executed two women, a Nanticoke and a Seneca living among them. They accused the women of spreading disease through witchcraft. These women may have been likely targets for witchcraft accusations as they were relative outsiders. The missionary diarists suggest that most Lenape blamed the Moravian missionaries for the illness sweeping their communities, but that the sakima focused the accusations on the Nanticoke and Seneca woman.¹⁵³ The difference in opinion between the leaders and the people likely added to the mounting crises. These were not to be the last witch trials among the Lenape.

The Lenape were not the only group experiencing unrest as they faced the accelerating and invigorated colonial efforts of the United States. Evidence of the widespread dissatisfaction with their current leaders, the changing economy, and loss of land and sovereignty was the rise of the Shawnee visionary Tenskwatawa. His movement and his brother, Tecumseh's corresponding political strategies dominate the popular historical memory of this period in North American history. Together their efforts are part of the narrative of the United States march to renewed war with Great Britain and an example of pan-Indigenous political and military solidarity to resist Euro-American empire, like Neolin, Pontiac, Metacommet, Wovoka, and Leschi. Like a lot of popular histories this is an oversimplification of complex historical and cultural forces. In the case of early nineteenth century Ohio Valley the focus on Tenskwatawa and Tecumseh obscures important and unique characteristics of the crisis in the region. First, while the spiritual revival

¹⁵³ Gipson, 194-195.

led by Tenskwatawa drew on a long history of Indigenous visionaries like the Lenape Neolin, it was also part of a broader spiritual awakening in the early nineteenth century that touched communities across North America. In Protestant societies this is known as the Second Great Awakening. It is not a coincidence that tens of thousands of Christians gathered in camp revivals in Kentucky and elsewhere to worship in new energetic ways at the same time that Indigenous people sought spiritual answers of their own. The second element of the spiritual revival of the period is that among Lenape it was led by a woman. This Lēnapèxkwe shared a vision very different than Tenskwatawa's.

Her name was Beata, a German name for "blessed" given to her by Moravian missionaries. It was a name often given sickly girls who were not expected to live long. Her Indigenous name is not recorded in missionaries' diaries from which the only record of her survives. Despite the vehement animosity the Moravian diarists felt for Beata, their descriptions of her visions and activities illustrate a unique moment in Lenape history and one very different than their Native neighbors. Missionaries recorded Beata's first vision in February of 1805. One evening while Beata was in front of her house, two Lenape men approached her. She did not recognize them but soon realized she was the only one who could hear them speak. These were spirits. They chastised her on behalf of all Lenape for not practicing ceremonies in the old ways. The spirits exclaimed that Lenape did not keep separate ceremonial spoons to stir the ceremonial meals.

Having said this, they threw down seven wooden spoons and continued: "You Indians will have to live again as in olden times, and love one another sincerely. If you will not do this, a terrible storm will arise and break down all the trees in the woods, and all Indians shall lose their lives in it. As a sign that our words are true, a child will be born that shall speak in the very beginning..."¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Gipson, 333.

The vision continued with the two spirits arguing about the whether the sign should be a speaking baby or a Lenape hero from generations past. They agreed that a speaking baby would be ridiculous, and no one would heed the sign. This is a clear and humorous critique of Christian cosmology that seems to pass undetected through the pen of the Moravian diarist. The spirits also reject a hero from long ago because no one living would recognize them. So, they agree that a recently deceased sakima would be the best messenger.¹⁵⁵ Aside from the obvious humor, Beata's vision also centers material culture in a unique way. Unlike Tenskwatawa's doctrine, the spirits do not command that the people reject all modern material culture, only that they keep ceremonial objects separate and use wooden spoons as opposed to metal ones for ritual purposes. Beata found support for her message of Indigenous spiritual and cultural renewal in Buckongahelas. He erected a new place of worship in his town and hosted the rejuvenated ceremonies at the heart of the new Lenape spiritual and community practice.¹⁵⁶ Over the year Beata had more visions, further catalyzing a movement that would come to change the direction and leadership of the Lenape communities in Indiana.

At approximately the same time as the attempted trial in Frankfort and as the crises compounded along the White River, William Henry Harrison was facing his own judgement. His trial, however, was not in a courtroom or council house. Harrison's character and ability to deal fairly and effectively with Indigenous Nations was being evaluated by both the Indigenous people and his superiors in Washington. A month before the executions of the Nanticoke and Seneca women among the Lenape on the White River in October of 1802, Harrison called a council to begin discussions on land cessions in Indiana Territory with the various Nations in the region. There were several priorities. First was the so-called Vincennes Tract. This area,

¹⁵⁵ Gipson, 334

¹⁵⁶ Fur, Gunlög. *A Nation of Women: Gender and Colonial Encounters Among the Delaware Indians*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, (2009), 151-152

surrounding the town, had been negotiated by French settlers in the early eighteenth century but never surveyed. The Wabash Salines or the large salt springs in present day Illinois were another top priority for the US government to procure. The council began in September. Myaamia groups, Eel River, Wea, and Painkeshaw, Potawatomi, Kickapoo, and Kaskaskia leaders participated. Mihšihkinaahkwa (Little Turtle) the principal leader of the Myaamia subgroup, Atchakangouen, refused to attend the council. Instead, he called a separate council with Lenape, Ottawa, and Shawnee leaders. The leaders who did negotiate with Harrison in September reluctantly agreed to authorize Mihšihkinaahkwa to sell the salt spring and land around Vincennes, but their rhetoric illustrates their displeasure with the lack of protection from the federal government. Lapoussier, a Wea leader, cataloged the failures of the new federal administration to fulfill the promises at the Treaty of Greenville.

we were glad to hear you say that justice sleeps but never dies--our blood is yet in
The streets of Vincennes you have murdered us—when you passed through the
Town we have to turn our eyes aside—at the falls a child was taken from the
breast.¹⁵⁷

While Lapoussier spoke for his own people's experience his words echo the sentiment of Lenape during this period as they attempted to seek justice for Lēnapèxkwe and Shawnee leaders as they attempted to secure the return of a girl kidnapped by settlers.

Harrison was struggling to extend federal authority over settlers at the same time he was failing to build a level of trust among the Lenape. Trust was critical in the new directive delivered to him in early 1803 in a letter from Jefferson. In this letter, designated as a private

¹⁵⁷ "Negotiations at Indian Council," in Clanin, 380

correspondence to Harrison, the president outlined his strategies for a new “Indian policy” for the United States.¹⁵⁸

we shall push our trading houses, and be glad to see the good & influential individuals among them run in debt, because we observe that when these debts get beyond what the individuals can pay, they become willing to lop th[em off] by a cession of lands¹⁵⁹

This was a new type of treaty making. As one Lapoussier pointed out treaties and annuities were in exchange for friendship and peace not for land.¹⁶⁰ Jefferson saw the eventual circumscription of Indigenous lands and assimilation of Indigenous people into Euro-American dominant communities as “certainly the termination of their history most happy for themselves.”¹⁶¹ This was the new political economy of plunder that would form the basis of federal policy toward peaceful Indigenous Nations for over the next two hundred years. Jefferson spelled it out clearly. It was now Harrison’s responsibility to set the policy into motion.

In the November of 1804 Thomas Jefferson delivered his annual address to the United States Congress. In the report he described a treaty awaiting Senate approval.

On this side the Missisipi {sic} an important relinquishment of native title has been Receiv’d from the Delawares. That Tribe, desiring to extinguish in their people the spirit of hunting, and to convert superfluous lands into the means of improving what they retain, have ceded to us all the country between the Wabash and Ohio, south of, and including the Road from the Rapids towards Vincennes.

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¹⁵⁸ “From Thomas Jefferson to William Henry Harrison, February 27, 1803,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-39-02-0500>. [Original source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 39, *13 November 1802–3 March 1803*, ed. Barbara B. Oberg. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012, pp. 589–593.]

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁶⁰ “Negotiations at an Indian Council,” in Clanin, 394.

¹⁶¹ Jefferson to William Henry Harrison, February 27, 1802.

¹⁶² “XI. Annual Message to Congress, November 8, 1804,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-44-02-0592-0012>. [Original source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 44, *1 July to 10 November 1804*, ed. James P. McClure. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019, pp. 680–685.]

The Treaty of Vincennes was negotiated in August of 1804. In the winter of 1805, the sakima brought a copy of the treaty to Moravian missionaries. The sakima asked the missionaries to read the text of the treaty back to them. Apparently, they did not trust the traders in their own towns to read the document accurately or truthfully.¹⁶³ Immediately after hearing the terms read the sakima dispatched Billy Patterson, Tetapachksit's nephew, to take a message to William Wells and Mihšihkinaahkwa (Little Turtle), asking him to intercede on their behalf to reverse the cession of the land between the Wabash and Ohio Rivers, south of the bison road between the Falls and Vincennes. The message began:

My Chiefs declare to you that they are not willing to sell the lands on the Ohio from the mouth of the Wabash to Clarks Grant at the Falls and that they consider it out of their power to do any such thing...¹⁶⁴

Clearly this sequence of events indicates that the sakima did not know or understand the content of the treaty. Furthermore, they did not trust Harrison to explain the terms truthfully. Also, they did not trust the Euro-American and mixed-race traders attached to their communities to interpret the treaty accurately either. They also recognized that Myaamia were displeased with their sale of land that had only been lent to Lenape to use decades before. While the Lenape sakima certainly regretted the loss of land and the souring of their relationship with the Myaamia, they also may have begun to fear their own ability to remain in positions of power within their own communities. It was not a coincidence that the crises caused by the coercive treaty making grew at the same time as Beata's visions and her call for renewal spread throughout the region. Nor is

¹⁶³ Gipson, 325.

¹⁶⁴ "William Patterson to William Wells," in Esarey, Logan, ed. *Governors Messages and Letters: Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison, Volume I, 1800-1811*. Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Commission, (1922), 121-123.

it by chance that other movements and other communities called for reform and renewal at the same time.

Overshadowing Beata's movement among Lenape in more general histories of the period is Tenskwatawa. He offered a different vision of Indigenous cultural and spiritual revival than Beata's. While we only glimpse Beata's visionary teachings and influence through the eyes of admittedly biased missionary sources, Tenskwatawa's prescription for renewal is recorded from a variety of sources. There are many similarities to the two visions. Abstinence from alcohol was one, but that was a feature of many, if not most, second great awakening spiritual movements. A renewal of Indigenous identity through ceremony and material cultural practices was central to both visions with some important differences. First, Beata's vision promoted a coalescence of Lenape people through a return to older ceremonial practice. This differed from Tenskwatawa's new religion which required abandonment of distinct cultural practices from the past and certainly Tecumseh's pan-Indigenous politics.¹⁶⁵ Second, Beata's revival of Lenape spiritual practice placed women at the center of that practice. Some scholars suggest this is a departure from traditional practice for the Lenape.¹⁶⁶ Regardless of whether it was a new development or not, the role of women Lenape spiritual life and political coalesced at this time, a stark contrast to the male focused doctrine of Tenskwatawa.¹⁶⁷ Indigenous women throughout the Ohio Valley rejected Tenskwatawa's movement. Finally, both doctrines admonished the present material cultural practices in Indigenous communities in Ohio Valley. Tenskwatawa preached a rejection of all, or most, Euro-American cultural items including food and clothing. In Beata's first vision the two spirits admonished Lenape for not using

¹⁶⁵ Duval (2024), 309.

¹⁶⁶ Fur, 153.

¹⁶⁷ Fur, 205.; Duval (2024), 322.

traditional wood spoons for ceremonial purposes, in essence for not separating traditional cultural practice from the profane or quotidian modern life.

The difference between these prescriptions is important. Tenskwatawa's doctrine is a not only a rejection of Euro-American goods and practices but also the Indigenous adaptations of those goods and practices that Lenape, and others, created over two hundred years. Tenskwatawa rejected the modern Indigenous as well as settler culture. Beata's vision offered a place for the continuance of both traditional religious practice but also of Indigenous modernity with women in prominent economic, political, and cultural roles.¹⁶⁸ One of the primary features of that Indigenous modernity was the clothing created by Indigenous women, like that Lēnapèxkwe perhaps intended to make with her "piece of calico." Shirts, blouses, dresses and other Indigenous fashion from the eighteenth century continues to be an important cultural signifier for Indigenous people today. That these fashions use modern materials, then and now, makes them no less Indigenous. Retention of modern Indigenous material culture and economy within her revival highlights the importance of maintaining a feminine center in the changing world. This nuanced embrace of modernity in Beata's vision might explain the longevity of her vision. Lenape groups continued the practices Beata revived for more than a hundred and twenty years after her movement began.

During the midst of the rise of both of these visionary movements and the controversy over the Treaty of Vincennes, Buckongahelas died in the spring of 1805 at the age of 85. The hero had served long after his warrior days passed. He likely helped steer Tetapachksit and the other sakima away from more disastrous decisions. In his final months he endorsed the cultural and spiritual revival begun by Beata, hosting her in his town, Woapikamikunk. His death, despite his advanced

¹⁶⁸ Fur, 153.

age, inspired suspicion of foul play. During the following winter new witchcraft trials began. This time the sakima were not in charge, rather they were the accused. According to one missionary observer Buckongahelas's death brought about a "veritable revolution" with suspicion resting on Tetapachksit and others close to the missionaries themselves.¹⁶⁹

Beata began the renewed witchcraft investigation and trials, however Tenskwatawa took over in spring of 1806. The missionary's description of this transition is frustratingly vague. It insinuates that Beata's gender somehow prevented her from finishing the task which included the conviction and execution of Tetapachksit, Billy Patterson, Kaltas Ann Charity (an elderly Moravian convert), and Joshua (a trusted Moravian translator, helper, and musician). In reality Lenape insurgents may have used the Shawnee Tenskwatawa to distance them from the killings. The killing of Joshua and Kaltas clearly illustrated a growing distrust of Moravians among the community and cultural changes they brought. One scholar of the event suggests that Kaltas was killed for her tendency to keep house like a Euro-American woman.¹⁷⁰ On the other hand the deaths of Tetapachksit and Billy Patterson seem to be more politically motivated. As principal leader of his people Tetapachksit had signed away hunting land, a valuable salt spring, and worked closely with both missionaries and US government officials. Yet for all his accommodation, among other promises, his efforts to compel the settlers and their government to deliver justice for James Galloway, George, and Lënapèxkwe failed. This must also have contributed to his demise.

The execution of Tetapachksit ushered in a new generation of leadership for the Lenape on the White River. Kikthawenund Willam Anderson succeeded him and guided Lenape through the tumultuous decade ahead. The brutality of the executions and the distaste for abandoning cultural

¹⁶⁹ Gipson, 358

¹⁷⁰ Miller, 255.

and religious practices that defined them as Lenape soured many people to Tenskwatawa's doctrine as well as Tecumseh's new Native politics.¹⁷¹ Under Kikthawenund's leadership most Lenape remained neutral during William Henry Harrison's war against Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa—as did many Shawnee. Individuals from both the Lenape and Shawnee actually fought alongside the United States in the War of 1812. Eventually Kikthawenund and other Lenape leaders on the White River ceded the remainder of land in Indiana for the promise of continued sovereignty and other lands west of the Mississippi. Jefferson's strategy he first outlined in his 1803 letter to Harrison, worked. In exchange for lands in the west, continued annuities, and forgiveness of debts, the Lenape sakima agreed to leave their Indiana homes. Many Lenape had already migrated west by the Treaty of St. Mary's in 1818. In 1821 Kikthawenund, his influential daughter Mekinges Conner, and about fifteen hundred Lenape left the Ohio Valley. Their descendants are known today as the federally recognized Delaware Tribe of Indians based in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Although the archives do not mention Beata again, her visions and movement clearly persisted. Lenape practiced the ceremonies she inspired for generations after their migrations to Oklahoma. Like women in other Indigenous communities, Lēnapèxkwe kept the material and cultural practices of the past alive so that they continue to define Lenape identity and sovereignty.

¹⁷¹ Duval (2024), 324.

Conclusion

The preceding narrative illustrated how the murder of Lënapèxkwe, James Galloway, and George and the effort to bring them to justice became entangled in the diplomatic and political crises of the early years of Indiana Territory. At the start of the story in 1797 the area was an Indigenous homeland, though under threat, Lenape and other people continued a political economy of seasonal subsistence and trade based on women's productive labor. At the same time the murderers continued to reside within a "frontier" culture or rustic political economy of plunder, where killing and robbing Indigenous people was considered a legitimate economic pursuit for Euro-American settler men. Over the eight years covered by the majority of the narrative things had changed for both groups as a result of the application of federal authority. This authority came in different forms, applied with unequal pressure and with varying degrees of effectiveness.

Both settler and Indigenous communities responded in varied ways to what was a new power bloc in the region. The Lenape communities on the White River struggled to survive the new exploitative treaty and annuity system at the heart of Jefferson's gentile method of economic plundering. Migration did not bring an end to that system. Nor did extended or increased federal authority bring security to Indigenous women. Other Indigenous groups and individuals continued to resist the changes to their way of life being forced on them by the treaty system. These people, mostly young men, gathered under the guidance of Tenskwatawa and the leadership of Tecumseh. Harrison met this group with violence in 1811. The continued tension in the wake of the attack at Tippecanoe helped push the country to open conflict in the west with Britian and Indigenous groups. Most Lenape, as well as Myaamia and Shawnee, remained neutral or even fought with the United States.

The War of 1812 brought Kentuckians closer to the federal government, perhaps more than ever before. After word of the crushing defeat of the Battle of the River Raisin, in which hundreds of Kentucky militiamen died, reached Kentucky enthusiasm for federal service soared. Within a few months future Vice President of the United States Richard Mentor Johnson was commissioned to raise a new brigade of Kentucky Mounted Infantry. He asked for nine hundred men, three thousand volunteered. Their battle cry at the Battle of the Thames was “remember the raisin.”¹⁷² Whether it was a generational shift in loyalties that signaled the change or a chance to avenge fellow Kentuckians or both is unknown-able. Newfound loyalties to federal authorities however did not prevent Kentuckians from disobeying direct orders and looting and mutilated the corpses of the enemy dead according to scandalized Ohio infantrymen.¹⁷³ Loyal to the federal government or not, the rustic political economy of plunder still held some influence over Kentucky men.

In the end many historians may interpret the murder of Lënapèxkwe and her companions as an example of a declension narrative of Indigenous women, economy, and politics and culture. Certainly, her death is one of literally countless murders of Indigenous women whose perpetrators never face justice for their crime. Like in the case of contemporary missing and murdered Indigenous women what precisely happened is often unknown or not documented by the state. But scholars have shown that Indigenous women and their labor and politics were central to the Indigenous economy of the Ohio Valley of the late eighteenth century. Lënapèxkwe was not just the wife of James or George. She was not just a “squaw,” as Harrison called her.¹⁷⁴ Nor was she just a part of a kin network, though that is an important part of who she was. Lënapèxkwe was part of an

¹⁷² Anderson, Joel. “Conquerors or cowards: the role of the Kentucky militia in the Indian Wars from 1768 to 1841,” MA Thesis, (University of Louisville, 2018), 67.

¹⁷³ The recollections of Captain George Sanderson of the Ohio Militia. “Memorandum and Notes by the Late Alfred T. Goodman,” *Western Reserve Historical Society Tracts No. 36*, (January 1877), pp. 1-4.

¹⁷⁴ “Harrison to Innes,” 1802.

economic system that protected and projected Indigenous sovereignty in the Ohio Valley and beyond. That system was under assault from different directions and at different scales in the late 1790s and early 1800s. Government officials wanted Indigenous women to remain in their towns all year long to break the seasonal subsistence patterns of life. Missionaries working in concert with the government wanted to curtail women's role in religious affairs. The role of women and the subsistence patterns at that heart of the Indigenous economy were also under assault by Euro-American poachers, through thrill hunting of large game and direct violence against their families and their bodies. While the Williamses and Crutchlow may not have conceived of their actions as part of a broad-based attack on an alternative to the emerging capitalist economy of the Atlantic World, they inhabited a settler society that encouraged violence, sometimes passively or sometimes actively, against the systems that stood beyond its control, like Indigenous property rights, undomesticated animals, and Indigenous gender roles.

The "piece of calico" might be just a scrap of fabric that Lënapèxkwe left in the historical record. Yet it is not just a piece of evidence. It is an important through-line—a tangible link to the past. The clothing that she would have made with it would be recognizable and valuable in multiple ways today. Lenape clothing and the techniques and styles of her period endure. In some ways a piece of calico can be one of the most durable elements of history. Like language, material culture is more precious than many other things.

The ceremonies that Beata helped revive continued for another century.¹⁷⁵ Contemporary Lenape men and women recalled the last Big House Church ceremonies held in Bartlesville in the 1920s in interviews in the 1960s and early 2000s. In these interviews some of the collaborators

¹⁷⁵ Brown, James T. and Rita T. John. *Long Journey Home: Oral Histories of Contemporary Delaware Indians*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, (2008), 61; 354

explain the decline of the traditional ceremony as a clash with Christianity, others describe a slow act of forgetting the songs and stories that filled twelve days of sacrifices.¹⁷⁶ Some of the elements of the ceremonies continue to live on in some ways in Lenape cultural and spiritual practice. However, an area that continues to define Lenape identity is through material culture. Lenape clothing is worn during powwows or ceremony or by living historians. The clothing made by contemporary Lenape does not replicate the styles of seventeenth century Lenapehoking. The garments that Lenape women design, sew, and wear today to honor their ancestors are made of cotton, silk, and wool as well as fur, silver, and other materials.¹⁷⁷ These are clothes of an eighteenth-century Indigenous modernity that would be familiar to Lënapèxkwe. They survive and persist in a vital way two centuries later.

In John Lewis Crutchlow's last will and testament, dated September 17, 1832, he divided his estate between a brother and sisters and their children. He gives each a dollar from his estate to be paid after his debts and funeral expenses were covered. He conveys two tracts of land, one of a hundred acres and the other of an unspecified amount, to his sisters' or their heirs, though one tract seems to be partially encumbered. Crutchlow's wealth is modest by most standards but large enough to warrant a will. Finally he bequeaths his personal possessions including "all my household and Kitchen furniture...and every species of personal property belonging to me" to his sister Nancy Moore.¹⁷⁸ While his probate inventory does not specify an article of calico fabric, one may wonder if among those things passed to his nephews or nieces was "a piece of calico" or a part of "the trifling equipage of a savage camp."¹⁷⁹ John Crutchlow rose from a propertyless and indebted worker and then avoided judgement in life for a murder in which he participated that same year. At his death he

¹⁷⁶ Brown, 59, 348.

¹⁷⁷ Andreson, Billie, Archivist, Delaware Nation, Personal Communication. "RE: Historical Research," banderson@delawrenation-nsn.gov, June 6, 2024.

¹⁷⁸ Bullitt County Kentucky, Will Book B, 320-321., 330.

¹⁷⁹ Harrison to Henry Dearborn, July 15, 1801.; Harrison to Harry Innes, August 4, 1802.

had achieved at least a small part of the Jeffersonian dream of landownership. As he prepared to die, one wonders if he recalled the events of 1797 and worried about the afterlife. The language in his will seems confident but hints at a need for forgiveness: “I give my soul to God hoping and Trusting that he will judge it in mercy.”¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Bullitt County Kentucky, Will Book B, 320-321

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Vita

Andrew Washburn is a veteran cultural heritage worker, who returned to academia out of boredom. Frustrated with the lack of intellectual rigor in the museum world, Washburn initially wanted to understand the nature of the gulf between public history, academic history, and popular history or folklore. Washburn worked in multiple municipal, state, federal, and private non-profit organizations and agencies, primarily as a collections management professional at history, archeology, and ethnography museums, before returning full time to study so-called early American history.

Washburn is originally from suburban Chicago but has lived in seven states for significant periods of time during his professional and academic career. Though a midwesterner by birth, he was born to two members of the Appalachian diaspora from West Virginia. These cultural roots are a profound influence on Washburn's academic and cultural interests.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts in History from Kenyon College, received in 2000. His area of focus was Appalachian labor history with significant work in Indigenous history and anthropology. He earned his first Master of Arts degree from San Francisco State University in Museum Studies in 2007. In addition to his museum collections management experience, Washburn also spent years engaged in developing, managing, and delivering maritime heritage programs at multiple sites in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. These experiences imparted to him the power of hands-on learning and experiential education informing his ongoing interest in historic watercraft, sensory history, and material culture.