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Savagism, silencing, and American settlerism: commemorating the Wyoming battle of the American Revolutionary War

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the role played by savagism in American historical consciousness, focusing on its appearance in settler accounts of the Battle of Wyoming (1778) of the Revolutionary War. The story of Wyoming is told each year in the small town of Wyoming, Pennsylvania in one of the longest-running historical commemorations in the United States. Rather than emphasizing a British foe, however, these celebrations revel in gruesome descriptions of alleged Indian forms of warfare. This article explores the political uses of savagism in these accounts. The savage trope has long served settlers in deflecting attention away from their own actions and in justifying conquest. In Wyoming narratives, savagism instead serves to deflect attention away from a deeper intra-colonist conflict that pitted two factions of colonists against each other in a bitter war that lasted decades. I conclude by considering the unifying functions of savagism in the advance of early American settlerism.

KEYWORDS

Social memory; silencing; public history; commemoration; anti-Indian sublime; savagism; replacement narrative; American Revolution; massacre; Wyoming Valley; settler memory

Introduction

The Revolutionary War (1775–1783) plays a central role in American historical consciousness. This foundational conflict is recounted in song and poetry, and has been described by historian Michael Kammen as 'the single most important source for our national sense of tradition'.[1] Episodes of the war have been the focus of commemorative fanfare across centuries and these commemorations are often principal elements of local and regional identities. The Battle of Wyoming (1778) is a case in point. The story of this Revolutionary War battle is retold each year in the small town of Wyoming, Pennsylvania, now part of the Wilkes-Barre urban area (see Figure 1). Held regularly since at least the 1830s, it is one of the longest continually-running historical commemorations in the United States. The battle has been further memorialized in poetry, literature, and artwork, and inspired the naming of the US territory (and, later, the state) of Wyoming.[2] And yet in these retellings, the battle's connection to the Revolutionary War is overshadowed by its portrayal as an Indian massacre.

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Figure 1. Commemorating the Battle of Wyoming at the Monument's Base. 4 July 2018. Image by the Author.

The Battle of Wyoming occurred at a tenuous time in the Revolutionary War. Devastating losses at the Battles of Oriskany and Saratoga of 1777 led the British and their Six Nation allies (also known as the 'Iroquois' and today as the Haudenosaunee) to shift strategies to guerrilla attacks on civilian centers.[3] British Deputy Indian Commissioner Colonel John Butler created a guerilla Ranger Corps to conduct raids on frontier settlements.[4] In early July 1778, hundreds of British troops, mostly Butler's Rangers and their Six Nations allies, descended on the fortified Wyoming Valley that was defended by some four hundred patriots. After the patriots marched out of a fort into an ambush, chaos followed and more than half of the patriot fighters were killed while the British side suffered only a few losses.[5]

It is understandable that surviving families would mark this battle with solemn public ceremonies recognizing the crushing war dead. What they also highlighted was the way in which the men were killed, and by whom. The event is known in local parlance as the 'Wyoming Massacre' and commemorations throughout the years have emphasized the role of Native troops and alleged 'Indian' forms of warfare, with the iconic tomahawk and acts of scalping front and center.[6] In the process, the British connection to the battle is deemphasized and the narrative shifts from an episode of the complicated and many-sided Revolutionary War to a simple settler-Indian binary. This article, based on ethnographic and archival research, examines further this reframing of the Wyoming battle to elucidate the replacement narrative it develops, the role played in that narrative by depictions of savagery, and the political use of savagism to advance early American settlerism.[7]

Denial and containment in settler historical narratives

In her discussion of settler aesthetics in contemporary Hawaii, artist Karen Kosasa discusses a 'settler imaginary', concepts and images that help settlers 'imagine, guide and navigate' their lives.[8] The settler imaginary encourages settlers to 'misrecognize the colony as a democratic space of opportunity'.[9] She identifies an aesthetic of 'blankness' generated through 'acts of erasure' that works to eliminate references to colonialism, creating 'a perplexing situation where many settlers are unaware of the existence of colonialism and their participation in it'.[10] She asks, 'how are settlers educated *not* to see the colony and its colonial practices? How does their "failure of vision" prevent them from seeing the political difference between themselves as colonizers and indigenous people as colonized?'[11]

The answers to these questions lie partly in ways of managing and narrating the past, in a settler-colonial 'historical consciousness', or the ways historians and everyday people understand the past.[12] People in societies founded on the seizure of another people's land will find it difficult to establish an identity as a moral nation without engaging in processes of deflection, rationalization or outright denial of their ancestors' actions, as Bain Attwood has argued.[13] As a result, a settler historical consciousness will include national mythologies, shared cultural icons, and 'acts of erasure', patterns of aversion that include the denial, disavowal, and silencing of the violence of colonial conquest, as literature in settler colonial studies has demonstrated.[14] In *Empire of the People*, Adam Dahl emphasizes the active production of forms of denial in American democratic thought, distinguishing 'disavowal', a refusal to acknowledge, from amnesia or forgetting, which he considers more passive acts.[15] As he explains, the absence of Native conquest is 'not assumed or forgotten' but rather 'discursively produced'. This discursive production may include subtler forms of denial such as euphemism, as well as what Patrick Wolfe called 'glaring aporias', such as the refusal to acknowledge agricultural or sedentary Natives, or the basic fact 'that settlers come from somewhere else'.[16] Frontier violence is rationalized, justified, or even glorified in popular culture while also allowing settler-colonialists to see that violence as 'exceptional', or its instigation attributed to the victim.[17] The following study explores the erasure not of Indigenous conquest, but of conflicts between settlers in a replacement narrative developed around a story of alleged Indian savagery.

A useful concept allowing for fruitful comparison of settler-colonial representations of the past is that of the 'replacement narrative' developed by Anishinaabe historian Jean O'Brien, in which settler-colonists explain to themselves how they came to replace a territory's Indigenous inhabitants.[18] O'Brien demonstrates that nineteenth-century New England replacement narratives developed in local historical texts involved the rhetorical strategies of 'firsting' and 'lasting'. New Englanders presented themselves as the 'first' people worthy of note, and engaged in 'lasting', lamenting the loss of the 'last remnant' of this or that Indian nation, a settler fantasy that was sometimes repeated many times in the same village or town, because, of course, local Indians did not vanish but persisted.[19] These New England texts took pains to show that English settlers came to the land in a just way, with 'all variety of land transactions' being a frequent item of discussion.[20]

Replacement narratives will vary not only from one country to the next, but also regionally. Settlers of different national and religious origins facing quite different Indigenous peoples with their distinct forms of interaction and resistance will develop unique mythological histories. There is little comparative research conducted expressly on this topic and

this article is offered as an initial move in this direction. The state of Pennsylvania's founding myth of Quaker William Penn's 'Peaceable Kingdom', like the New England accounts elucidated by O'Brien, emphasizes an exceptional religious ethos and the 'peaceful acquisition of land', achieved through the multiple land deals Penn and his family carried out with Lenni Lenape (Delaware) Indians, leading to their dispossession.[21] A wholly different replacement narrative is developed in the same state at annual celebrations of the Battle of Wyoming. Rather than reproducing fantasies of the 'vanishing' noble Indian or stories of 'just' property transfers, accounts of the Wyoming battle center on acts of alleged Indian savagery.[22] In these narratives, Indian vanishing is not mourned but is celebrated.

The ideology of savagism has played a significant role in settler replacement narratives, and settlers have regularly manipulated representations of Native violence in order to deflect attention from their own actions and to justify Indigenous dispossession.[23] In colonial America, European and Euro-American settlers were describing Native Americans as 'savages' by the seventeenth century, and the Indian-as-savage stereotype solidified into a figure against which they could 'image a civilized national Self'.[24] In this formulation, Indians signified 'not what they were, but what Americans should not be;' as Roy Harvey Pearce put it, 'Americans were only talking to themselves about themselves'.[25] The savage trope was not merely a rhetorical flourish, however, but a device that proved a potent ideological tool. As Philip Deloria has written, 'Indianness was the bedrock for creative American identities, but it was also one of the foundations … for imagining and performing domination and power in America'.[26] Replacement narratives that reproduce images of Indian savagery deny the foundational violence of settler society by blaming the victim while deflecting attention away from identical or more gruesome acts carried out by Euro-Americans. As Deloria observes, savagery 'justifies (and perhaps requires) a campaign to eliminate barbarism'.[27]

Settler war stories are rife with the savage trope and are often replacement narratives in disguise. Disguised as a heroic story about a specific event, centuries of background context are never mentioned or collapsed to a few paragraphs. Silences such as these are an integral part of the historical process, as anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot observed. Because not all details of any one historical event can be included in a readable narrative, elements are left out or 'silenced' so that a narrative can be tellable. In choosing which topic to narrate, conventional periodicities and emplotment structures may lead historians to necessarily select out the content that doesn't fit.[28] In her award-winning, *Our Beloved Kin,* on the seventeenth-century 'King Philip's War', Lisa Brooks documents this kind of silencing, or what she refers to as 'modes of containment'.[29] She demonstrates that even the act of naming 'contained' the war, making it appear to be about one man (the Wampanoag leader, Metaman, or 'King Philip'), instead of an 'ongoing, multifaceted Indigenous resistance'.[30] Later historians continued to 'contain' the war within what she terms an 'orderly chain-of-events argument;' we might extend this insight to any other settler war story involving Indigenous opponents.[31] The end point of King Philip's War is also 'contained' when most accounts typically end in the summer of 1676, a periodicity that implies Native extinction, and certainly discounts the century of resistance that continued after 'the war' was over.[32]

Practices of selection, silencing, and containment are evident in stories of the Battle of Wyoming as well. Its renaming as the 'Wyoming Massacre' channels interpretations along

a single and inevitable track. In contrast to the standard King Philip's War narrative that 'contain' the ongoing resistance that followed Metacom's death, Wyoming narratives offer a misleading beginning. Most accounts start the story at the battle rather than the decades that preceded it that involved an intense intra-settler conflict known as the Yankee-Pennamite War. Narratives of the 'Wyoming Massacre' engage in 'mnemonic decapitation', the removal from view of this deeper history.[33] The violence settlers carried out against each other fifteen years before and after the battle is 'contained', overshadowed by the figure of the barbaric Native. When we narrate the battle of Wyoming in a wider context that includes the Yankee-Pennamite War, however, its meaning shifts, and we find how the savage trope served not only to justify conquest, but also to unify a fractious settler population and thus advance the cause of American settlerism.[34]

Intra-settler war

Well before the start of the Revolutionary War, European immigrants of the colonies of Pennsylvania and Connecticut fought over the lush bottomlands of the Susquehanna River. Each side appealed to the British Crown and later the Continental Congress for help in resolving the intractable conflict, which lasted from the 1750s to the early nineteenth century. The dispute originated in overlapping land claims. English King Charles II had granted the Connecticut colony a strip of land from the Narragansett Bay to 'the South Sea' in 1662 and then granted part of the same strip (between the 41 and 42 degrees latitude) to William Penn in 1681. While any territory along these latitudinal lines could have been at stake, what was fought over was principally the northern Susquehanna River Valley.[35]

The Susquehanna River descends into the Chesapeake Bay, and its meandering northern branches stretch across resource-rich mountains.[36] Native people had been living there for thousands of years in settlements that prospered from the abundant river and forest resources and rich soils for agriculture.[37] The Susquehannocks, an Iroquoian people, lived in a vast area of the watershed in a territory that overlapped with the southern portions of Iroquoia.[38] They moved south in the seventeenth century at a time of relentless warfare with colonists.[39] The Iroquois hoped to keep the region settled, and many nations displaced from colonial wars moved into the region, including Conoys, Nanticokes, Tutelos, Shawnees, and Delawares.[40] When thousands of Tuscaroras fled North Carolina to become the sixth nation of the Iroquois league, many settled in the northern stretches of the Susquehanna River Valley in the 1760s.[41] Multi-national Native settlements grew healthy crops of corn, beans, and squash in the fertile river soils.[42] The 'flat green plain' of the Wyoming Valley of the Susquehanna River was claimed by the Iroquois since 1675 and inhabited by Delawares, Mahicans, and Nanticokes by the 1750s.[43] 'Wyoming', is likely derived from the Munsee (Delaware) word, *xwé: wamənk,* 'at the big river flat'.[44]

The competing land claims between the Connecticut and Pennsylvania colonies caused little conflict until the 1750s, when Connecticut colonists created three land companies, including the Susquehannah Company, formed with the express purpose of colonizing Susquehanna Valley lands.[45] Pennsylvania officials were alarmed and feared that such a move might upset the balance of power and the British/Iroquois alliance.[46] A Congress held at Albany in 1754 was partly designed to address these concerns and to renew

relationships between the British and Indians.[47] At this meeting, delegates of both Connecticut and Pennsylvania made private deals with different Six Nations groups who were theoretically in control of Wyoming Valley lands. The Susquehannah Company hired a trader who obtained title to millions of acres illegally.[48]

The Seven Years War interrupted the Susquehannah Company's settlement plans. Meanwhile, Six Nation leaders and Pennsylvania authorities encouraged additional Native people to move onto Wyoming Valley lands. Delaware leader Teedyuscung moved there in 1754 with other Moravian Indians then living at Gnadenhütten, PA, and Quakers soon helped Teedyuscung build houses at the settlement called Wyoming [see Figure 2].[49] But groups of Connecticut settlers were also moving onto Wyoming Valley lands. Teedyuscung and his allies repelled the first waves of Susquehannah Company settlers, but he was burned to death in his home in the spring of 1763 by a mysterious fire that destroyed his town and caused survivors to flee.[50] Many scholars now believe Connecticut settlers likely started the fire, and note that ten to twelve Connecticut families moved onto Teedyuscung's village site less than two weeks after it was destroyed.[51]

As European settler/Indian tensions were igniting into violence across the wider northeast, colonial authorities held meetings in 1763 and 1768, setting boundaries that European immigrant were not to cross.[52] The 1768 Stanwix Treaty involved huge land cessions to Pennsylvania and New York and moved the boundary of white settlement west, supposedly to protect Indians, but also providing a green light to settlers interested in lands to the east of the Treaty line.[53] This was precisely where Susquehannah Company members intended to colonize, and Company immigration picked up almost immediately.[54] Pennsylvania authorities were prepared. Arriving Connecticut immigrants encountered Governor Penn's representatives, who ordered them to leave and marched their leaders to a Northampton County jail.[55]

The next several years involved the movement of Connecticut settlers onto Wyoming Valley lands, their expulsion by Penn representatives, and vice versa, with the Valley changing hands several times. When Susquehannah Company members (or 'Yankees') began arriving in large groups, they drove from 'their' lands people whose titles were backed by Pennsylvania law, whom they referred to as 'Pennamites'. There was jurisdictional chaos: surveyors representing both Governor Penn and the Susquehannah Company were operating in the same region at the same time and were sometimes harassed by members of the other side.[56] The conflict periodically erupted into total war, as Pennamites and Yankees 'systematically targeted each other's homes, crops, and livestock'.[57] Since each side recognized that occupying the land was the first step in controlling it, they carried out vicious scorched-earth raids, burning each other's houses, fields, and 'forts' alike.[58] The Yankee-Pennamite War had begun.

Pennamite/Yankee animosity is sometimes attributed to cultural differences: many of the 'Pennamites' had German or Dutch ancestry, while the Connecticut settlers were almost all of British ancestry (and certainly New Englanders).[59] Differences in colonial settlement policies were also key. Pennsylvania's methods of distributing land have been described as 'feudal' and 'universally disliked'.[60] Only the Penn family (the Proprietors) could purchase land from the Indians. They chose the best lands for themselves and opened up others for sale through a quit-rent system that encumbered buyers for perpetuity.[61] Speculation was rampant. Individuals bought land from the Penn family or from speculators, while others squatted, hoping to gain title that way.[62] Lands weren't put on

the market regularly but disposed of 'to whom, on what terms, in such quantities and locations as the proprietor or his agent thought best'.[63] These tactics exasperated people seeking farm ownership. The practices of the Susquehannah Company contrasted greatly. As a private company of land speculators, it offered land at a flat fee. It also followed a highly centralized system that planned out whole townships before settlers even left Connecticut. Identical townships governed through democratic procedures were 5 miles square, and divided into 53 lots, with 50 reserved for settlers, one for schools, one for the church and one for the minister.[64]

In many ways, the Connecticut Yankee/Pennamite split was a miniature version of the larger conflict between patriots and the British that culminated in the settler revolt that was the American Revolution.[65] Pennamite settlement practices resembled practices of prior feudal social orders while the Susquehannah Company epitomized the new American settlerism ideology as elucidated by Aziz Rana. This ideology combined ethnic nationalism, Protestant theology, and the seventeenth-century English republican ideas that saw economic independence through land ownership as the basis for free citizenship.[66] As Rana points out, the 'engine' of these freedoms was territorial expansion, and these freedoms were not available to all.[67] While in some American colonies, freedoms were limited especially by race, in the Pennamite/Yankee feud, only people willing to commit to the Susquehannah Company/Connecticut Colony settlement vision were considered worthy participants. The Connecticut Yankees disdained what they saw as unjust Pennsylvania land policies and claims.[68] The Yankees' planned democratic utopias, predicated on 'free' lands that were obtained by deception and force, were culturally homogenous and difficult for non-Yankee Europeans to join. Company settlers were often interrelated or knew each other before leaving Connecticut, and they selected the best lots for themselves or their fellow New Englanders.[69]

The balance of power shifted to the Yankees in 1770 when Susquehannah Company representatives made a deal with Lazarus Stewart and the Paxton boys, known vigilantes originally from the Lancaster, PA area, who were wanted by the Pennsylvania colony for their brutal massacre of their peaceful Susquehannock neighbors in Conestoga in December 1763.[70] In exchange for their help in expelling the Pennamites, the Company offered Stewart and his 50-person gang a six-square-mile township, and it is no surprise that violence increased with their arrival.[71] By the spring of 1771, Company settlers were moving in by the hundreds. By 1772 the last of the Susquehanna Delawares left their homes in the upriver settlement of Wyalusing.[72] Connecticut establishments multiplied so quickly that in 1774, the Connecticut Assembly created the town of Westermoreland that spanned a vast area from the Delaware River to 15 miles west of Wilkes-Barre, and made it part of Litchfield County, CT.[73] Westmoreland included parts of Northampton and Northumberland Counties of PA, established in 1752 and 1772, respectively (Figure 2).[74]

After a failed Pennsylvania attempt to remove the Yankees in December 1775, Congress gave the Connecticut settlers temporary jurisdiction, which led to eight years of de facto Connecticut rule.[75] Yankee harassment of Pennamites was continual at this time. Company settlement leaders wielded considerable power and could remove inhabitants' settling rights and even confiscate their property. They perceived holding land through Pennsylvania title as 'unfaithfulness' and punishable by expulsion.[76] As historian Anne Oustermout observes, Company partisans were determined to prevent 'any more people that they

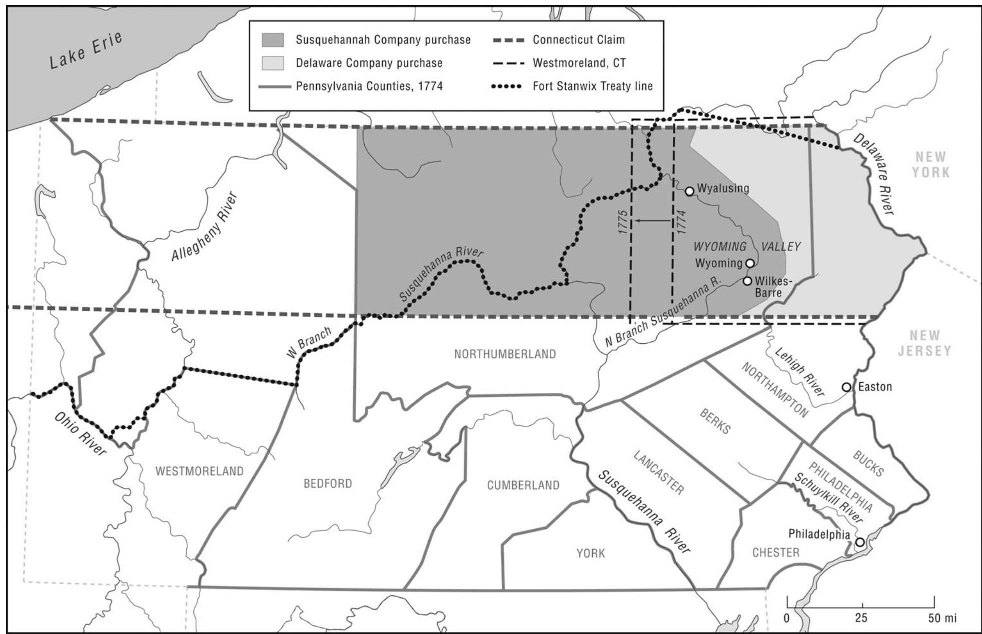

Figure 2. Pennsylvania Counties (circa 1774) and Connecticut Claims in the Susquehanna River Watershed. Map by Erin Greb.

called Pennamites from moving into the area, to expel those already there, and in general to enforce Connecticut's laws'.[77]

Impending war with Britain only intensified conflict between the Yankees and Pennamites. When Connecticut created its first military association in the area in March 1776, it was not to fight the British but to fend off raids by Pennamites and the creation by Connecticut settlers of Committees of Correspondence and of Inspection gave them further means to harass Pennamites. The Westmoreland Company's Committee of Inspection even required all inhabitants to sign an oath promising to follow Connecticut colony laws and anyone who did not was considered a counter-revolutionary.[78] Over time, the Yankee/Pennamite binary became conflated with Revolutionary-era social categories, and Connecticut settlers of the Wyoming Valley began to equate 'Yankee' and 'Patriot', while 'Pennamite', 'Loyalist', and 'Tory' became synonymous terms. People who held land under Pennsylvania title were censored, called 'Tories', and even expelled, sometimes moving to less developed areas upriver.[79]

Anne Ousterhout explores why so many of Pennsylvania's disaffected (or 'Loyalists') came parts of the colony with border conflicts such as the Wyoming Valley.[80] She reasons that this was less due to their 'loyalty' to the Crown and more due to their dissatisfaction with their treatment by their neighbors before the war, writing that antagonisms were rooted 'largely in arguments over land ownership and other differences that had arisen in the late 1760s and early 1770s'.[81] In the Wyoming Valley, some disaffected Pennamites felt so harassed that they decided that their only recourse was to join the British. A measure of the level of desperation they experienced is indicated by the fact that many families made the risky journey north to join the British forces in Niagara in the treacherous winter months of 1778.[82]

Battle in Wyoming Valley, 3 July 1778

The Battle of Wyoming erupted during the unfinished Yankee/Pennamite conflict.[83] The Wyoming Valley was an obvious target for the British and their Indian allies: Delawares and Iroquois had long complained about white encroachment on these lands, and the heavily fortified valley posed a real threat to the Iroquois as it was along water routes into Cayuga and Seneca territories.[84] In late June, hundreds of troops led by British (loyalist) Colonel John Butler traveled from Fort Niagara for the assault. Attacking forces included members of nearly a half-dozen Native nations, including Senecas, Cayugas, Onondagas, and Delawares, who were directed by Seneca leaders Sayenqueraghta (Old Smoke) and Cornplanter; over a hundred of Butler's Rangers, mostly Loyalists; and a Loyalist detachment of the 'Royal Greens', the King's Royal Regiment of New York. Defending the Valley were some 400 men under the direction of Connecticut leaders, Zebulon Butler and Nathan Denison.[85]

As the British forces approached, defenders of two Wyoming Valley forts, Wintermoot and Jenkins, quickly surrendered. Colonels Zebulon Butler and Nathan Denison were in a third fort, Forty Fort, with the majority of the rebel troops and many civilians seeking refuge. They refused an order of surrender, however, hoping to hold out for reinforcements. Had they remained there, the outcome would likely have been quite different. However, British leader John Butler ordered the Wintermoot and Jenkins forts burned, anticipating this would lead the rebels into thinking that British forces were departing, and lure them out of Forty Fort's safety. The plan worked, and the rebels marched out into an ambush. After a rebel command was misinterpreted as a call for a retreat, the militiamen fled in all directions, and mass chaos and carnage followed. Colonel Zebulon Butler fled with his family on horseback but the majority of their troops were killed.[86]

After the battle, Colonel John Butler's articles of capitulation mandated the surrender of rebel troops and dismantling of their forts, and in return promised that civilians and their property would be protected.[87] Civilians did not wait to see if the promised protections would be respected and fled out of the Valley in all directions in what was later termed the 'Great Runaway'. The victors plundered property, fields and livestock, and battle casualties were extremely uneven in the end, as we have seen.[88]

From battle to massacre and the anti-Indian sublime

In its immediate aftermath, the Battle of Wyoming became a tale of sacrifice and valor that was widely recounted in the colonies. Early newspapers published graphic 'eye-witness' accounts that strayed wildly from British commander Butler's assertion that the only people killed were men in arms.[89] Solomon Avery, a man from Connecticut who was not at the battle, 'testified' that the entire settlement was set ablaze, incinerating 2,000 people, including half of the valley residents. An account published in the New-York Journal on 20 July 1778, reporting false stories of women and children burned alive in their homes, was republished in nearly every American paper, and would 'live on for decades in the American imagination'.[90] Papers recounted horrific tales of Indian barbarism, including an incredible story of an Indian woman, 'Queen Esther', who was alleged to have brained nearly a dozen prisoners on a rock.[91]

These gruesome accounts followed an early American rhetorical formula, the 'anti-Indian sublime'. Historian Peter Silver details the use of this formula in the Middle Atlantic colonies in the mid-1750s, when small groups of Indians carried out carefully planned farm-by-farm attacks followed by the capture people and animals, 'the showy slaughtering of the rest', and the burning of crops and homes, attacks designed to 'induce the greatest fright possible' (and which often prompted a mass 'unsettling' of the countryside as immigrants fled in terror).[92] Early publishers filled mid-century newspapers with lurid accounts of these attacks with such 'rich, hallucinatory detail that they could themselves become mildly traumatic to read'.[93] These accounts settled into a narrow set of images, with scalping as the standard icon of Indian forms of warfare.[94] As Silver described,

> article after article included both references to scalping as well as careful descriptions of bashed-in skulls and cut-out tongues, … the continual requoting of such passages cemented an idea of Indian violence as peculiarly vicious, able to be told at a glance by its injuries.[95]

Silver argues that these accounts were engaged in the aesthetics of the sublime, an aesthetics characterized by a fascination with strong feelings, 'the feeling of being awed, struck with wonder–or horror–at something outside oneself'.[96] The American variant, the 'anti-Indian sublime', included an insistence on making the audience look at distinctively 'Indian' injuries such as scalpings, and in this way, commanded the readers' sympathetic sorrow and anger.[97] This kind of writing was so effective that it quickly spread, and writers deployed it to make arguments against other populations such as Quakers.[98] After several decades of its perfection, this 'electrifying' set of images was applied to the Revolutionary War, with reports of the Wyoming battle a prime example.[99] We shouldn't overlook the role such accounts played in the patriots' war effort, as Parkinson demonstrates in his book, *The Common Cause*. There was deep ambivalence during the war, which some scholars refer to as America's 'first Civil War'.[100] Because so many colonists were unwilling to commit to a side in the conflict, patriot political leaders used the press as a tool to destroy 'as much of the public's affection for their ancestors as they could'.[101] When Britain's plans to recruit Indians and Africans in the war effort became known, patriot publicists exploited this fact and conflated these 'alien' groups with the British to drive a wedge between settlers and the British. Desperate to bring settlers to their side, patriot leaders embraced 'the most powerful weapons in the colonial cultural arsenal', stereotypes, prejudices, and fear of Indian and African violence.[102] Anti-Indian savagism and prejudice, inflamed in gruesome narratives told with horrific detail, was as 'powerful as any cannons' the colonists might deploy.[103] This narrative style helped unite uncommitted and dissimilar immigrant families around a common fear, ultimately bolstering the patriot side.[104]

The local significance of the Wyoming story is further elucidated when we reconsider the battle within the context of the Yankee-Pennamite War. The vast majority of the men killed at Wyoming in 1778 were on the patriot side, surely, but more than that, they were almost all Connecticut Yankees who had settled with or were members of the Susquehannah Company. There were few 'Pennamites' killed because early residents with Pennsylvania titles had been expelled, harassed, fled, or moved away voluntarily, some to join the side of the British. The few people serving with the patriots who were originally from Pennsylvania had long demonstrated their fealty to the Yankee side, such as known Indian-killers like Lazarus Stewart and his gang.[105] Accounts of the battle

are often told from a Connecticut, and not a Pennamite vantage point, and sometimes further anti-Pennamite rhetoric by emphasizing the vengeful nature of the 'Tory' (read 'Pennamite') participants.[106] Many of the 'Tories' who joined Butler's forces were in fact local Pennamites who had suffered losses at the hands of Yankees. The fact that one of the articles of capitulation included the promise that 'properties taken from the people called Tories, up the River be made good, and they to remain in peaceable possession of their farms', suggests that some of the Pennamites joined Butler's forces expressly to reclaim lands they had lost to the Yankees.[107] Chroniclers also criticize Pennsylvania authorities for failing to help those besieged, stating that when Zebulon Butler called for reinforcements from neighboring Northumberland County in Pennsylvania, help was not forthcoming.[108] Given the longstanding conflict Wyoming Valley Yankees waged with Pennsylvania authorities, however, it is understandable that these same authorities would not rush to the defense of their adversaries. Another grievance of battle survivors was the fact that in the terms of capitulation, the victors had promised to respect Yankee property, but then plundered it, burning houses and destroying crops.[109] However, plundering practices of this sort were practically the norm in prior conflicts between Yankees and Pennamites. The scorched earth tactics carried out that day are thus less surprising if we view the Battle of Wyoming as a continuation of the ongoing intra-settler feud.

Post-Wyoming: the settler feud continues

The Yankee-Pennamite conflict persisted well after the Battle of Wyoming. Many Yankee settlers fled back to Connecticut, never to return, while those who stayed behind were so impoverished that they petitioned the Connecticut General Assembly for assistance in 1780–1.[110] Yet conflict with the Pennamites remained the primary concern of the Pennsylvania-based Yankees. In 1779, the State of Pennsylvania submitted a complaint to the national government. Lawyers met at a national court in Trenton and determined that the land was indeed under the jurisdiction of the State of Pennsylvania with the Trenton Decree of December 30, 1782.[111] By this time, the Susquehannah Company had developed seventeen townships that were spread out to include as much of the fertile river valleys as possible.[112] As local historian Louise Welles Murray wrote, if Connecticut, *as a State*, acquiesced, the settlers under the Susquehannah Company *did not*'.[113]

The last phase of the war commenced after the 1782 Trenton Decree as Connecticut settlers aimed at all costs to hold onto their lands. Some settlers mobilized through written appeal, sending petition after petition to Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Congress, and found it expedient to reiterate well-known Wyoming battle horrors in these pleas. Others chose outright violence. Backcountry residents, who became known as 'Wild Yankees', mounted a twenty-year resistance movement as they fought not only other settlers but also the State of Pennsylvania.[114] Paul Moyer outlines a litany of events: a Pennamite gang led by Henry Shoemaker entered Connecticut claimant Dorcas Stewart's home, threw her effects outside and tore the house down; Connecticut man Waterman Baldwin allegedly accosted Pennamite William Lantarman while he was harvesting grain and said that he would scalp him; Yankee Daniel Gore allegedly confronted Pennamite Nicodemus Travis over a wagon of oats. When Catherine Bowelane's family fled due to 'Yankee violence', her husband returned to harvest their grain, only to be killed.[115] By January 1785, an estimated 600 Pennamites had been forced off their property by Yankees.[116]

In the final phase of the conflict, Company officials dramatically accelerated their colonization program and even began moves towards the creation of a separate state. Ethan Allen was offered land and a prominent position in the Susquehannah Company, and asked to recruit 'hardy Vermonters' to the cause.[117] The Company changed its internal structure in 1785 and began to offer 300 acres free to anyone able to move there quickly, stay three years, and defend their claims.[118] New town creation accelerated dramatically. While only a few towns were created between 1786 and 1793, sixteen were formed in 1794, and a remarkable 218 new towns were established in 1795.[119]

When rumors of a separatist movement reached Pennsylvania authorities, they passed an act in March 1787 designed to divide Yankee interests.[120] The Confirming Act recognized the tenures of people with Connecticut claims who were on these lands before the 1782 Trenton decree, but not the claims of nonresident landowners and people who arrived after 1782. This clever tack 'reshaped the geography of resistance': the Wyoming Valley where Yankees first settled became the domain of a more established, moderate faction hoping to work with the state, while the newer settlements north of the Tunkhannock Creek that were established after 1782 became the domain of the 'Wild Yankees'.[121] Pennsylvania also divided Northumberland County to create the new county, Luzerne County, that encompassed the area where most of the Connecticut claimants lived. As Moyer notes, 'Yankee hardliners opposed the move, fearing that it would bring state authority closer to their doorsteps'.[122] 'Wild Yankee' leader John Franklin attempted to disrupt the formation of the Luzerne County militia in 1787 with a group of armed followers. When he was arrested for treason and brought to jail, his followers kidnapped Luzerne County clerk Timothy Pickering from his Wilkes-Barre home in June 1788 and held him hostage for a month in an unsuccessful attempt to force Pennsylvania authorities to free Franklin.[123]

The dispute dragged on until the early 1800s.[124] The State of Pennsylvania passed a series of acts that were in turn, aggressive and conciliatory, while Connecticut families turned to the Pennsylvania political system to secure power by electing pro-Yankee leaders. They filled juries in the county courts with Yankee partisans, which led to the dismissal of cases against Yankee insurgents. Even 'Wild Yankee' John Franklin of the Pickering kidnapping fame was elected sheriff of Luzerne County and to state legislature after being released from jail.[125]

Yankee settlers living in Susquehannah Company-sponsored towns prospered.[126] A rising class of elites, 'Yankee notables', emerged by the early nineteenth century, with special prestige granted men with extensive kin networks who were a settlement's founding father, the 'pioneer' or alleged 'firsts'.[127] The center of Yankee Pennsylvania remained the Wyoming Valley, with the city of Wilkes-Barre serving as the heart and soul of the community. Over time, Yankee descendants would turn their attention to writing their stories into local histories.[128]

Commemorating Wyoming: from revolutionary battle to 'Indian massacre'

Although Yankees living in Pennsylvania ultimately accepted Pennsylvania jurisdiction, they did not forget the Battle of Wyoming, and from 1778 on, the battle played a key role in local social life and Yankee identity. The mass grave was the site of solemn

annual recognition, and news articles as early as 1809 appealed to locals to raise money for a marker.[129]

Speeches given at the battle's 54th anniversary in 1832 provide a window into how local understandings of the battle had evolved. Speakers minimized links to the Revolutionary War and instead emphasized local heroism in the face of alleged Indian savagery. As Reverend James May explained, 'The battle fought in this valley on the 3rd of July, 1778, was *not* one of great political moment in the controversy then pending between the United States and Great Britain'. Instead, he continued,

> It was the struggle of *fathers, and husbands, and brothers*, for the protection of their property and of their families, and for their own lives, against *savages* who were descending upon their homes, coveting the price of scalps and thirsting for plunder.[130]

He explained that in that region, it was better known as the 'Indian battle'.[131] May described the conflict as one between kin and Indian, understood locally as an Indian 'massacre'. May so downplayed the intra-settler struggle that, in his telling, Pennamites and even the British had largely disappeared from the story altogether. What mattered in this telling was the fact that so many of the dead were *scalped*.

N. Murry spoke next, calling on his fellow citizens to help raise funds for a monument 'over the bones of the patriots murdered at the battle of Wyoming'. His speech was dramatic: Why should they contribute to this fund? 'Let this scalped skull answer!' he exclaimed, holding up a skull exhumed at the site. It was the message found on the marks on the deceased men's bones that communicated most loudly: despite the fact that scalping and even beheading were early English practices, scalping had become the symbol of barbarism in the nineteenth-century American mind that brought into relief the contrasting 'civilized' humanity of the victims' descendants gathered that day.[132]

Monument construction began in the 1830s and the 62-foot-obelisk was completed in 1862 by a Ladies Wyoming Monumental Association.[133] When the commemorative exercises were placed in the hands of a committee of seventeen men for a centennial celebration, they developed a commemorative form that persists into the present day.

A centennial affair

> To say that the entire valley of Wyoming, from Pittston to Nanticoke, was in a blaze of glory on the 3rd and 4th of July would be feebly describe the reality. Nothing approaching the magnificence of the display has ever before been witnessed (*Wyoming Democrat*, 10 July 1878, 3)

The Battle of Wyoming's hundredth anniversary in July 1878 put the story of the Wyoming Battle into the national spotlight. As in other communities across the country, patriotic fervor surrounding the centennial of the nation's beginnings was partly prompted by a desire for national unity following the Civil War.[134] Along with throngs of people, US President Rutherford B. Hayes, the Secretary of the Treasurer, and several governors attended.[135]

The 1878 Wyoming centennial celebration blended public and private historical tradition and national with local concerns. It was also this year that the 'massacre' moniker became part of the event's official label. Even as the centennial ceremonies attracted national leaders, it was developed and designed by a close-knit group of 'massacre'

victim descendants who manifested a decidedly pro-Yankee vantage point. The previous year, a group of men met 'informally' at the courthouse at the 99th anniversary to start their planning. With Judge Steuben Jenkins at the helm, they decided to form a committee of seventeen, 'all lineal descendants of the participaters [sic] in that disastrous massacre', offering in the *Scranton Daily Times* details about each man to provide their 'credentials'.[136] Steuben Jenkins, for instance, was descendant of John Jenkins, Susquehanna Company surveyor and one-time 'Wild Yankee'. Why *seventeen* members? To commemorate the Susquehannah Company's original *seventeen* townships. The *Daily Times* described this group's goals in the following way:

> This movement was initiated, as was proper by the descendants of the old settlers, and the committee was made to consist of seventeen to correspond with the number of Connecticut townships in the old land company's grant, and each committee-man is supposed to represent a township. But the object is to make a national celebration. The story of the atrocities of the Wyoming massacre, was heard round the civilized world.[137]

Jenkins' committee was placing a Yankee reading of the event onto the national stage. The emphasis on the number seventeen, which was sacred in Susquehannah Company lore, was such that when they decided to add a 'committee of ladies' to work with the decoration committee, they asked the chair to add exactly *seventeen* women.[138] This focus on symbolic names and numbers connected to the region's Yankee heritage is evident in other local naming practices. 'Forty' Fort was named after the first forty Susquehannah Company settlers; local towns, creeks, and streets bear the surnames of founding Susquehannah Company men; and the Westmoreland Club, an exclusive club in downtown Wilkes-Barre, was named after the old Connecticut town.

One of the first decisions the committee of seventeen made was regarding the naming of the event. Although a soldier had called it 'the Battle of the Two Butlers' in his 1779 journal, locals referred to it as a massacre or as the 'Indian battle', as we have seen.[139] The committee of seventeen voted to add the words, 'and massacre' to its official title. Committee members noted 'it is true that there was a battle', but added that after the battle,

> There was a terrible massacre of the unresisting prisoners, of whom none escaped that day of blood upon the plain. All perished who fell into the hands of the blood thirsty savages on the evening of that fatal day. It was not only a nobly fought battle, but the night of that terrible day witnessed such horrid scenes of rapine and murder and outrage upon the conquered, that the story of our wrong was heard around the world and inspired the theme for one of the most beautiful poems in the English language and served to adorn many a historic tale.[140]

'Blood thirsty savages'. 'Horrid scenes of rapine and murder'. In these discussions, committee members emphasized the actions of the *Indian* (but not the *British*) foe, as had May several decades earlier, in language reminiscent of the 'anti-Indian sublime'. When put to the vote, it was unanimous: it will 'now be "100th anniversary of the battle and massacre of Wyoming"'.[141] The two-day centennial event was enormous, with an estimated 60,000 people in attendance.[142] The day was sweltering and the crowds 'immense', with trains 'pouring their thousands from north and south with astounding rapidity', with Wyoming village and its vicinity 'one living mass of hurrying and perspiring humanity'.[143] *The Daily Times* reported that the

> sun poured down his hottest rays from the early hours. Blinding clouds of dust on all the approaches to the grounds filled eyes, ears and mouths, while every hour added to the immense throng that gathered at the Lexintong tent, a capacity too woefully small for the ever increasing crowds (sic).[144]

The ambitious program was intended to involve morning and afternoon sessions with band music, prayers, opening addresses, poems prepared for the occasion, no fewer than four historical addresses, and additional benedictions. The heat was so extreme and 'the crowd so utterly unmanageable' that they cut the original program by a third. The crowd perked up with the arrival of 'eighteen Onondaga Indians in full war paint and feathers', described in the local press as 'being the direct descendants of the redskins who perpetrated the massacre'.[145] Speeches emphasized the sacrifice of the patriot victims and the brutality of their victors. Key positions in the program were given to people descended from men killed at the battle, and many speeches and poems described the violence in grotesque detail.[146] Even the opening prayer, given by Rev. D. J. Waller, a descendant of a family 'that suffered severely in the massacre', was grisly. He proclaimed, 'Help us, O Lord today, … recall the scenes of carnage and sounds of wailing'.[147]

President Hayes' speech was brief and offered a broader vantage point. He pointed out that similar centennial ceremonies were being carried out across the country, adding, 'But the celebration of to-day is peculiar. It is not the celebration of great military achievements or wonderful statesmanship'.[148] The president reframed the battle much in the same way May had done decades before: 'It is a pioneer celebration, in honor of the men and women who settled this valley, reclaimed the wilderness and made it fitted for civilization'.[149] He discussed how 'almost every part of the United States has its similar celebration in honor of the pioneers'. He concluded with what may have seemed a startling aside for local residents used to viewing 'Indian wars' as located in a distant past when he 'paid an eloquent tribute *en passant* to the gallant Custer, and said in case war with the Indians could not well be avoided it should be short, sharp and decisive'. He ended his speech by 'recommending that the Indian be dealt with fairly as a neighbor, and at the same time that the military forces be kept on a good war footing'.[150] Clearly, other Indian wars were on his mind that day.

Homes in town were elegantly decorated, and families displayed their connection to early Valley history in creative ways that often highlighted conflicts with Indians. One man displayed a portrait of his relation, France Slocum, a famous white captive, while another displayed the painting, 'the last scalp', depicting the killing of his ancestor, Lieutenant John Jameson on 8 August 1782, 'he being the last man killed in Wyoming by the Indians'.[151]

Two days after the centennial festivities concluded, the Executive Committee decided to keep the Wyoming Centennial Association composed of Connecticut Yankee battle victim descendants as a permanent organization, renaming it the Wyoming Commemorative Association (WCA), and this organization has helped run the event ever since.[152]

The commemoration of the Wyoming battle persists relatively unchanged into the present day, and it remains the most fervent patriotic ritual in this part of Pennsylvania. The Wyoming Monument's future was uncertain after a lightning strike in August 2008 broke a plaque listing the names of battle survivors. Thanks to a $100,000 gift from

Joseph Mattioli, owner of the Pocono Raceway, the Wyoming Monument Association received enough money to repair the damage. Associated news reports provide a glimpse into how the monument's meaning shifted. Paul Kanjorski, the Congressman who supported a National Register application, explained, 'Everyone in the Wyoming Valley should be grateful for the long efforts of the Wyoming Monument Association to honor those who gave their lives fighting for freedom'. Racetrack owner Mattioli explained his involvement this way: 'For years … I passed that monument hundreds of times. It's an important historical structure, and it should be around forever to remind people of the sacrifices made by so many brave people who fought to create this country'. Frank Conyngham, then president of the Wyoming Commemorative Association (in possession of a surname immediately recognizable to Wyoming elite as a member of the founding Yankee elite), discussed his family connections to the area: 'My ancestors are on that monument as are hundreds of others from the community. I just want to express my sincere appreciation to the Mattioli family for making this donation'. Marcella Starr, president of the Wyoming Monument Association, added, 'I am so happy that future generations will be able to visit the monument and remember what happened there so long ago'.[153]

In these twenty-first-century statements, universal themes common to other war memorials appear, such as 'fighting for freedom', 'bravery' and 'sacrifice'. However, keynote speeches and newspaper articles continue to reproduce the graphic eighteenth- and nineteenth-century accounts. O'Boyle's 2010 article in the *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader* about the Mattioli bequest ends with a brief historical summary that repeats well-worn (and erroneous) graphic accounts:

> According to historic accounts of the Battle of Wyoming: On July 3, 1778, 360 Americans faced an attack by a combined 900 enemy combatants … More than 227 Americans were horrifically killed, compared to only one dead and two wounded on the British side. Two-hundred Wyoming Valley Americans were scalped, others were thrown on beds of coal, and others burned alive when the fort was set ablaze.

Icons of Indian warfare were again emphasized in the keynote address held at the annual gathering on 4 July 2015. Before an audience of over five hundred people gathered at the base of the monument, art historian Dr. Lewis from Williams College discussed the monument's aesthetic features and told the audience that it was placed 'Where the bones were found', referring to the bones of the men whose lives were lost in the battle and which are buried at the base. He went on,

> Our subject today is the witness of those bones and what they have to teach us … [Their location] gives us a fixed reference point to orient ourselves with all of the testimonies since those first breathless survivors … choked out their shocking stories.

These stories 'shock' because of alleged Indian atrocities. As Lewis explained,

> Every early account agrees that patriot prisoners captured by Indians were put to death. These atrocities weren't incidental to the Wyoming Massacre; they were the central event: that is the reason why in this valley, we don't refer to the *Battle of Wyoming*, but the *Wyoming Massacre*.

According to Lewis, the 'bodies laid strewn about this battlefield, scalped, ripped, rotting, unburied'. When local residents gathered the remains together at the monument

in 1832, the exhumed bodies were, in Lewis's words, 'Gruesome'. He continued: 'Every single one of them bore the marks of the tomahawk, the act of scalping'.

Removing context, removing complicity

The persistence into the contemporary era of public ceremonies reproducing vivid imagery of alleged Indian savagery should give us some pause and certainly merits further examination. Savagism has played a longstanding role in settler disavowal of the violence of settler-colonialism, as we have seen. What is the specific work achieved by the savage trope in narrations of the Wyoming battle?

Eighteenth-century accounts of Indian savagery and Indian-style warfare presented in exceptionally graphic language were remarkably successful in garnering readers' sympathy; what can be overlooked is just how much these accounts helped to erase, to actively silence.[154] In his study of conspiracies of silence, cognitive sociologist Eviatar Zerubavel has shown how changing the subject can be an effective social silencing strategy.[155] People are socialized to learn what is legitimate to notice and what must be ignored, and those with greater power can gain control over other peoples' attention simply by controlling an agenda. By focusing attention on something else in a conversation or in a text, it is possible to shift awareness away from a forbidden topic. As Zerubavel observes, 'almost paradoxically, a silence is often covered up with sound'.[156] The rhetorical style Silver terms the 'anti-Indian sublime' was quite effective at overwhelming all other possible narrative threads. By forcing the focus so intently on a graphic, horror-filled foreground, the background with all its complexities remained unseen. As Silver put it, the anti-Indian sublime removed context:

> Long chains of cause and effect had led to the scenes that provincial writers kept describing. But with one sight – a mutilated corpse–forever swimming into view, the back stories faded. The high emotion of this kind of writing was, on its own terms, unanswerable.[157]

By focusing readers' attention on peoples' suffering, the same sufferers' *prior* acts became irrelevant; anyone who tried to 'deny its force' could be charged with 'indifference to the pain of the people'.[158]

In renditions of the Battle of Wyoming as expressed in poetry, historical texts, petitions to Congress and the Connecticut Assembly, and commemorations, the marks of the tomahawk, the scalping of the dead, visions of burning children and gruesome tortures are conjured up again and again, epitomized by the image of 'Queen Esther' dashing men's heads with a rock in a maniacal frenzy. The wider 'context' that involved different European and Euro-American factions battling each other is downplayed and the 'real' foe revealed. Not only is the Yankee/Pennamite conflict dropped out of the typical narrative, but so too are clear links with the Revolutionary War. In 1832, commemorators heard that the battle was 'not one of great political moment in the controversy then pending between the United States and Great Britain', but instead that it was known locally as the 'Indian battle'. In 1878, the President of the United States explained that the battle was 'not the celebration of great military achievements', and instead described it as a 'pioneer celebration'. In each case, the intra-settler war and the battle's relationship to the Revolutionary War are minimized. The story of two white factions fighting over Indian

land is not the focus, and the many-sided struggle becomes a simple binary between brave pioneers and marauding Indians. Pennamites, if they appear at all, are dehumanized as faceless 'Tories'. In the process, the figure of the Connecticut Yankee has shifted from early aggressor of other settlers (and perhaps even murderers of Teedyuscung, burned alive in his sleep) to exalted and martyred victims. Not only that, in clearing the story of their conflict with Pennamites, Connecticut Yankees discursively secure the place of 'firstness' for themselves.

Graphic renditions of savagism helped to shift awareness away from background context and served to erase sociocultural difference. Certainly depicting diverse Indigenous communities as a monolithic 'savage' bloc is an important step in their racialization.[159] What is sometimes overlooked is how the same trope has also facilitated the erasure of intrasettler distinctions as well, a significant move in extending American settlerism beyond a distinct ethno-religious population. Depictions of alleged Indian-style warfare served patriot publicists during the Revolutionary War in their efforts to unite settlers of disparate nationalities, religions and languages, as we have seen. In local histories of the Mohawk Valley, New York, the 'indiscriminate killing and mutilation of women and children' during the Revolutionary War became a 'powerful leitmotif' that crowded out other versions of the past.[160] James Paxton points out that ethnic and racial diversity in this region was greatly reduced after the war with the departure of loyalists and Mohawks. The Othering of former Native neighbors 'became a necessary stage in healing internal divisions and redrawing community boundaries after the Revolutionary War', boundaries redrawn along racial lines.[161] Accounts of war-time violence helped solidify a settler/Indian binary in the post-war era in a regional setting that had been more culturally heterogeneous before the war, galvanizing an American settler political identity.

The ideology of savagism has served different functions for Americans since the fifteenth century. As O'Brien pointed out, representation of Indians as 'pre-modern' served New Englanders in their attempts to relegate Native populations to the deep past and present themselves as the 'first' people worthy of note. In other circumstances, positioning themselves against 'Indian savagery' served to unite an ethnically diverse population in the aftermath of great social flux as in the Mohawk Valley after mass depopulation. In the case of Wyoming narrations, that brutal savages murdered women and children is about the one 'true' thing residents know, even though that is not what happened. The focus on savagery in 'contained' narratives that emphasize one battle rather than a much wider series of events allowed Yankee tellers to downplay their cessionist past and prove their belonging to their new state through their martyrdom. In contrast to the New Englanders O'Brien studied, whose replacement narratives developed a 'noble' -yet vanishing Indian, in the Wyoming replacement narrative, there is no romantic nostalgia for the Indigene, but rather a celebration of their supposed departure. Celebrating Yankee suffering may have allowed participants to evade uncomfortable thoughts about their ancestors' own actions as they forcibly established themselves in the Valley, and helped turn what Pennsylvania authorities had considered dangerous renegades into heroes of the new settlerism ideology and of the new nation it helped create.

Notes

1. Ray Raphael, *Founding Myths: Stories That Hide Our Patriotic Past* (New York: New Press, 2004); Michael G. Kammen, *A Season of Youth: The American Revolution and the Historical Imagination* (New York: Knopf, 1978), 256.
2. House of Representatives, 38th Congress, 2nd Session, Bill 633. A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: US Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774–1875, Library of Congress. https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llhb&fileName=038/llhb038.db&recNum=3792.
3. Max M. Mintz, *Seeds of Empire: The American Revolutionary Conquest of the Iroquois*, The World of War (New York: New York University, 1999), 44–5; on Oriskany, see Joseph T. Glatthaar and James Kirby Martin, *Forgotten Allies: The Oneida Indians and the American Revolution* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), 168–9.
4. Butler was a loyalist from the Mohawk Valley, New York. Glatthaar and Martin, *Forgotten Allies*, 103.
5. John Butler wrote that the only people his men killed were those in arms. Indians in his service took 227 scalps. It is unlikely an exact accounting of the rebel losses will ever be made Glatthaar and Martin, *Forgotten Allies*, 222.
6. On scalping as icon of Indian warfare, see Scott Manning Stevens, 'Tomahawk: Materiality and Depictions of the Haudenosaunee', *Early American Literature* 53, no. 2 (2018): 475–511.
7. Ethnographic and archival research conducted since 2013 for the wider project, *Celebrating Sullivan* has been supported by a postdoctoral grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, an Academic Research Committee Small Grant, and the Richard King Mellon Fellowship, Lafayette College. On American settlerism, see Aziz Rana, *The Two Faces of American Freedom* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2010).
8. Karen Kosasa, 'Sites of Erasure. The Representation of Settler Culture in Hawai'i', in *Asian Settler Colonialism. From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawai'i*,ed., Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Y. Okamura (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 196.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., 197, 196.
11. Ibid., 197, emphasis added.
12. Peter Seixas, *Theorizing Historical Consciousness* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 10. See also Andrea L. Smith, 'Settler Historical Consciousness in the Local History Museum', *Museum Anthropology* 34, no. 2 (September 1, 2011): 156–72.
13. Bain Attwood, 'Denial in a Settler Society: The Australian Case'', *History Workshop Journal* 84, no. 1 (25 October 2017): 24–43, 24, 29.
14. Kosasa, 'Sites of Erasure', 197; Lorenzo Veracini, 'Settler Collective, Founding Violence and Disavowal: The Settler Colonial Situation', *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29, no. 4 (2008): 363–79, 367. The literature on omissions and distortions in settler colonial historiography and historical consciousness is rich and growing. Key sources include Attwood, 'Denial in a Settler Society'; Annie E. Coombes, *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press); Lorenzo Veracini, 'Settler Collective, Founding Violence and Disavowal', 363–79; Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Houndmills, Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
15. Adam Dahl, *Empire of the People: Settler Colonialism and the Foundations of Modern Democratic Thought* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2018), 4.
16. Patrick Wolfe, 'Structure and Event: Settler Colonialism, Time, and the Question of Genocide', in *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses (New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2008), 113.
17. Veracini, 'Settler Collective, Founding Violence', 366; Mark Rifkin, 'The Frontier as (Movable) Space of Exception', *Settler Colonial Studies* 4, no. 2 (3 April 2014): 176–80.
18. Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England*, Indigenous Americas (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

19. On the 'vanishing Indian' syndrome, Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and US Indian Policy* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), 12.
20. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 26, 36.
21. Kevin Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost: The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn's Holy Experiment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 12–3. On Penn's 'holy experiment', see 15–9. On Delaware/Lenape social categories, see Amy C. Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys: The Odyssey of the Delaware Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 3.
22. On the flexible ideology of the 'noble savage', see Philip Joseph Deloria, *Playing Indian*, Yale Historical Publications (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 4; see also Robert F. Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Knopf, 1978).
23. Attwood, 'Denial', 32; Veracini, 'Settler Collective', 366. Early sources on American savagism include Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*; Dippie, *The Vanishing American*. A helpful literature review is in Pauline Turner Strong, *American Indians and the American Imaginary: Cultural Representation across the Centuries* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2013), 5–15. On savagism and replacement narratives, see O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting* and Lisa Tanya Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip's War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).
24. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 3.
25. Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization,* 232.
26. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 8.
27. Ibid., 4.
28. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, Mass: Beacon Press, 1995). On narrative emplotment, 6; on moments of silencing, 26–7. Trouillot demonstrates that silencing is typically a strategic process and not necessarily passive, as Dahl suggests (*Empire*, 4).
29. Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin*, 6.
30. Ibid., 8.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., 346, 302.
33. Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 93–4.
34. Rana, *The Two Faces of American Freedom*.
35. Paul Benjamin Moyer, *Wild Yankees: The Struggle for Independence along Pennsylvania's Revolutionary Frontier* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 16–7.
36. Peter C. Mancall, *Valley of Opportunity: Economic Culture along the Upper Susquehanna, 1700–1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), chapter 1.
37. Ibid., 27–8.
38. Ibid., 30.
39. Ibid., 31.
40. Ibid., 34–6; Anthony F. C. Wallace, *King of the Delawares: Teedyuscung, 1700–1763* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949), 48–51.
41. Mancall, *Valley*, 35.
42. Ibid., 39.
43. Ibid., 37; Wallace, *King of the Delawares*, 48–50, 53.
44. William Bright, *Native American Place Names of the United States* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 576.
45. This controversy is discussed at length in Charles Miner, *History of Wyoming, in a Series of Letters, from Charles Miner to his Son William Penn Miner* (Philadelphia: J. Crissy, 1845). The Susquehannah Company was a joint-stock company based in Windham, CT. The other companies were the First and Second Delaware Companies. See Mancall, *Valley of Opportunity*, 76–7; see also Moyer, *Wild Yankees,* 16–7.
46. Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost*, 57–78.

47. On the Albany Congress, see Timothy J. Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire: The Albany Congress of 1754* (Cooperstown: New York State Historical Association, 2000).
48. Moyer, *Wild* Yankees, 19–21. James Hart Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: Norton, 1999), 15. By the mid-eighteenth century, there were clear practices to follow in order to purchase Indian land. Since these lands were considered 'tribal trusts', the entire group that controlled them needed to agree. Company envoy John Lydius ignored protocol and instead got a few individuals drunk and sign away the land. Six Nations leaders saw the agreement as fraudulent. Mancall, *Valley of Opportunity*, 77–8.
49. Wallace, *King of the Delawares*, 184–9.
50. Mancall, *Valley of Opportunity*, 89; Wallace, *King of the Delawares*, 258–9.
51. Wallace noted that although the Six Nations are often blamed for the fire, it was in their interest for him to remain alive to help protect their land. *King of the Delawares*, 259–61. See also Moyer, *Wild Yankees*, 22.
52. In the Proclamation Treaty of 1763, settlers were asked to stay east of the crest of the Appalachian Mountains, an agreement that proved impossible to enforce. Mancall, *Valley of Opportunity*, 90. On the implication of the 1763 treaty in the settler revolt that become the American Revolution, see Rana, *The Two Faces of American Freedom*, 65–7, and Adam Dahl, *Empire of the People: Settler Colonialism and the Foundations of Modern Democratic Thought*, American Political Thought (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2018), 30.
53. The Fort Stanwix Treaty meeting was a massive affair involving over 2,200 Indians, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, dignitaries, and colonial leaders seeking land in central NY and PA. Indians agreed only once the Treaty included provisions to protect their settlements and livelihoods. On the treaty, see Mancall, *Valley of Opportunity*, 90–4; Merrell, *Into the American Woods*, 3.
54. Moyer, *Wild Yankees*, 23.
55. Miner, *History of Wyoming*, 108.
56. Anne M. Ousterhout, 'Frontier Vengeance: Connecticut Yankees vs. Pennamites in the Wyoming Valley', *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 62, no. 3 (1995): 330–63, 339–42.
57. Moyer, *Wild Yankees*, 31.
58. Ibid., 31.
59. Ibid., 51–2; Anne M. Ousterhout, *A State Divided: Opposition in Pennsylvania to the American Revolution* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 245.
60. Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost*, 19. Ousterhout, *A State*, 247.
61. For a clear account of Penn's land policies, see Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 18–20.
62. Ibid.; Moyer, *Wild Yankees*, 158.
63. Louise Welles Murray, *A History of Old Tioga Point and Early Athens* (Athens, PA, 1908), 235.
64. For a discussion of the different kinds of Susquehannah Company land rights, see Murray, *A History*, 230.
65. On the American Revolution as the first successful settler revolt against metropolitan rule, see Rana, *The Two Faces of American Freedom*, 11.
66. Ibid., 12.
67. Ibid.
68. Parallels with the Pennamite/Yankee conflict and that between the Vermont independence movement and New York's landed elite are striking. The writers of the Vermont Constitution declared independence from both New York and the British Empire, claiming that the governors of New York used fraud and deceit to make 'unjust claims to those lands'. See Dahl, *Empire of the People*, 51–4.
69. Ousterhout, *A State Divided*, 246.
70. Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost*, 143–4. On the attack on Conestoga Indiantown, see 135–9; 140–6. Kenny details the social and political disruption that ensued when the many proclamations and rewards offered for the Paxton Boys' arrest proved ineffective. On the Conestoga massacre see Merrell, *Into the American Woods*, 284–8; Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground:*

Indians, Settlers and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 30–1.

71. Kathryn Shively Meier, '"Devoted to Hardships, Danger, and Devastation": The Landscape of Indian and White Violence in Wyoming Valley, Pennsylvania', in *Blood in the Hills*, *A History of Violence in Appalachia* (University Press of Kentucky, 2012), 61–3; Moyer, *Wild Yankees*, 27. After Stewart killed Nathan Ogden, Northampton County Deputy Sheriff and brother of Amos Ogden, a Pennsylvanian who had a trading post in the Valley since the mid-1760s, the gang hid out in Connecticut where they were offered refuge and even an allowance. Meier, 'Devoted to Hardships', 62; Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost*, 224.
72. Wallace, *King of the Delawares*, 265.
73. The next year the Connecticut Assembly deemed Westmoreland a county located outside the state. Moyer, *Wild Yankees*, 41.
74. Ousterhout, 'Frontier Vengeance', 338.
75. Moyer, *Wild Yankees*, 41.
76. Ousterhout, 'Frontier Vengeance', 340–2.
77. Ibid., 339.
78. Moyer, *Wild Yankees*, 51.
79. Ousterhout, 'Frontier', 342–4, Moyer, *Wild Yankees,* 51.
80. Ousterhout prefers 'disaffected' to 'loyalist' as the latter usage didn't appear in Pennsylvania until later in the war, and the former shifts attention from Britain to the colonies. *A State Divided*, 3–5.
81. Ousterhout, 'Frontier Vengeance', 337, 348. Ousterhout, *A State Divided*, 5.
82. Ousterhout, *A State Divided*, 240–1.
83. Many works recount this battle. An excellent summary can be found in Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1972), 167–74. A classic source is Miner, *History of Wyoming*. The following narration is drawn primarily from Graymont and Max M. Mintz, *Seeds of Empire: The American Revolutionary Conquest of the Iroquois* (New York: New York University, 1999), 44–56. An important new source that carefully analyses settler accounts of the battle appeared after this article was in review. See Eileen Palma, 'The Battle of Wyoming, 1778: Legends of Atrocities,' Iroquoia 5 (2019): 119–145.
84. Glatthaar and Martin, *Forgotten Allies*, 222.
85. Graymont, *The Iroquois*, 167–74; Mintz, *Seeds of Empire*, 44–56. Zebulon Butler was no direct relation to the British officer with the same surname.
86. For a detailed account, see Miner, *History of Wyoming*, 219–28. See Miner, *History of Wyoming*, 242–44, for a list of the dead. John Butler wrote that the only people his men killed were those in arms. He first identified 301 patriot dead, and later, 376. On this discrepancy, see Graymont, *The Iroquois*, 171; see also Glatthaar and Martin, *Forgotten Allies*, 222.
87. For articles of capitulation, see Graymont, *The Iroquois*, 171.
88. Graymont estimates that approximately 1,000 homes were burned; Butler's losses were 'killed one Indian, two Rangers and eight Indians wounded', in Graymont, *The Iroquois* 172.
89. Robert G. Parkinson, *The Common Cause: Creating Race and Nation in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 412.
90. Parkinson, *The Common Cause*, 413, 414–6.
91. Miner, *History of Wyoming*, 226, Appendix 53–55; on Queen Esther legends, see also Palma, 'The Battle of Wyoming'.
92. Peter Rhoads Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York: WW Norton, 2008), 44. 41, 69.
93. Ibid., 45.
94. Ibid., 74, 78
95. Ibid., 79–80.
96. Ibid., 83.
97. Ibid.,, 84.
98. Ibid., 86–8.
99. Ibid., 94.

100. Thomas B. Allen, *Tories: Fighting for the King in America's First Civil War*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper, 2010). For an overview that makes a similar point, see also Alan Taylor, *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750–1804*, 1st ed. (New York: WW Norton & Company, 2016), 3–6.
101. Parkinson, *The Common Cause*, 21.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid., 10.
104. Ibid., 21.
105. Ousterhout noted that while Wyoming Valley historian Charles Miner claimed that many of the disaffected moved to the Wyalusing area *after* the conflict with the British, she found that it was the other way around: many of these people were on the tax rolls between 1770 and 1776, well before the conflict was underway. *A State Divided*, 244–5.
106. Murray, *A History of Old Tioga Point*, 310.
107. In Ousterhout, *A State Divided*, 244; Graymont, *The Iroquois*, 171.
108. Oscar Jewell Harvey, *A History of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania: From its First Beginnings to the Present Time, Including Chapters of Newly-discovered Early Wyoming Valley History, Together with Many Biographical Sketches and Much Genealogical Material*, vol. 2 (Wilkes-Barre: Raeder Press, 1909), 995.
109. Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution*, 171.
110. *Susquehannah Company Papers* VII, xvii.
111. Moyer, *Wild Yankees*, 41–2.
112. Murray, *A History*, 227.
113. Ibid., 228; emphasis in the original.
114. Moyer, *Wild Yankees*, 4–5.
115. Ibid., 56–60.
116. Ibid., 57.
117. In Ibid., 78.
118. Ibid., 79–80.
119. Ibid., 102.
120. Ibid., 68.
121. Ibid., 69.
122. Ibid., 68.
123. For a riveting account of Pickering's capture, see Ibid., 65–93.
124. Reconciliation between the Yankees and the state of Pennsylvania was achieved in the courts with cases that concluded in 1827. Moyer, *Wild Yankees*, 179, Murray, *A History*, 233.
125. Even when wealthier Connecticut families were relinquishing claims and purchasing Pennsylvania titles, land agents in the backcountry were still being scared off by gunfire. Moyer, *Wild Yankees*, 151; Franklin was also elected representative to the State legislature multiple times (1795, 1796, 1799–1803). Ibid., 117–8.
126. Ibid. 163.
127. Ibid., 179–88.
128. There are several accounts penned from a Yankee perspective. Miner is unapologetic about his partiality. Miner, *History of Wyoming*, 478.
129. Ibid., Appendix, 69.
130. *The Wyoming Herald*, Wilkes-Barre, 11 July 1832, 2, emphasis added.
131. Ibid.
132. Gruesome English practices in early Massachusetts included drawing and quartering and beheading. Brooks, *Our Beloved*.
133. The Ladies Monumental Association changed its name to the Wyoming Monument Association (WMA) in 1860. This organization still owns and maintains the monument, which is located on an acre lot at the corner of Wyoming Avenue and Susquehanna Street in the Township of Wyoming. 'Wyoming Monument gets historic Listing', *Citizens' Voice* 5/23, 2002. Monuments folder, Luzerne County Historical Society, Wilkes-Barre, PA (Hereafter, LCHS), *Republican Farmer and Democratic Journal*, Wilkes-Barre, 31 May 1843, 3.

134. Michael G. Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1991), 105–6.
135. 'The Wyoming Massacre. Centennial Anniversary of the Event', in *National Republican* (Washington, DC, 4 July 1878), 1.
136. 'Keep their Memory Green', Wilkes-Barre Correspondence, *Scranton Daily Times*, July 4, 1877. News clipping in 'Wyoming Memorial Battle and Massacre Scrapbook, 1778–1878', prepared by FC Johnson, LCHS, 1.
137. 18 July 1877, Wyoming Memorial Scrapbook, 2.
138. Ibid., 7.
139. Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Dearborn of New Hampshire. Cook and New York (State). Secretary's Office, *Journals of the Military Expedition of Major General John Sullivan against the Six Nations of Indians in 1779*, 64.
140. 12 November 1877 newsclipping, 'Wyoming Memorial' scrapbook, 5.
141. Scrapbook, 5. 12 November 1877.
142. 'Wyoming Centennial', *Boston Post* (Boston, MA), July 4, 1778, 2.
143. 'Wyoming', *Record of the Times* (Wilkes-Barre, PA), July 4, 1878, 1.
144. 'Wyoming', *Daily Times*, July 4, 1878. Scrapbook, 37.
145. Ibid., Scrapbook, 38.
146. Steuben Jenkins, a descendant of Wyoming Valley icon, John Jenkins, and Rev. W. P. Abbott, of New York City, 'a descendant of the brave patriots of 1778' gave orations. 'Wyoming', Scrapbook, 39.
147. 'Wyoming', Scrapbook, 37.
148. 'Immortal Wyoming', *The Republican* (Scranton, PA, July 4, 1878). Scrapbook, 57.
149. Ibid.
150. Ibid.
151. Wyoming Memorial Scrapbook, 87.
152. Ibid., 47. *Reports of the Proceedings of the Wyoming Commemorative Association, on the Occasions of the Anniversaries of the Battle and Massacre of Wyoming, for Years 1889–92* (Wilkes-Barre, PA: Press of the *Wilkes-Barre Record*, 1909), 3. 'Wyoming Monument gets Historic Listing'. *Citizens' Voice*, May 23, 2002. From 1877 to 1929, presidencies were under the guidance of three descendants of Colonel George Dorrance, the person 'highest in rank of those who fell in the battle'.
'The Story of Wyoming: An Oft-told Tale Retold', William Alonzo Wilcox. In *Proceedings of the Wyoming Commemorative Association. On the 151st Anniversary of the Battle and Massacre of Wyoming, July 3rd, 1929*, (Wilkesbarre, PA: WCA. Courtesy Wyoming County Historical Society), Tunkhannock, PA, 8.
153. On the Conyngham family, see Edward J. Davies, *The Anthracite Aristocracy: Leadership and Social Change in the Hard Coal Regions of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1800–1930* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1985), 22–4; Bill O'Boyle, 'A Truly Monumental Bequest', *Timesleader.com*, Wilkes-barre, PA, July 13, 2010.
154. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, Mass: Beacon Press, 1995).
155. Eviatar Zerubavel, *The Elephant in the Room: Silenceand Denial in Everyday Life* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
156. Ibid., 53.
157. Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 85.
158. Ibid., 74.
159. On the racialization of Indians in the 1670s, see Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin*, 190.
160. James Paxton, 'Remembering and Forgetting: War, Memory, and Identity in the Post-Revolutionary Mohawk Valley', in *Remembering the Revolution: Memory, History, and Nation Making from Independence to the Civil War*, ed. Michael McDonnell et al. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), 180.
161. Ibid., 190.

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