CHAPTER 1

Paradise Lost, Paradise Found

Sell a country! Why not sell the air, the clouds and the great sea, as well as the earth? Did not the Great Spirit make them all for the use of his children?

Tecumseh

One pleasant May morning in 1781, Hannah Alder sent her eight-year-old son, Jonathan, and his teenage brother, David, into the woods surrounding the family's log cabin in Wythe County, Virginia, to round up a mare and colt that had strayed from the homestead. Living in the relative isolation of the wilderness frontier, the Alders often let the animals loose to feed in the shelter of the surrounding forest.[1] On this day, however, a small band of Mingo Indians from central Ohio also searched the forest for horses, or for human captives.

The boys were jumped by the Indians. David was speared, scalped, and killed, and young Jonathan was taken captive nearby. The attackers then went in search of the boy's cabin but found, instead, the Martin homestead several miles from the Alders. There they kidnapped Mrs. Martin and her older child and murdered Mr. Martin and the couple's infant.

The band set off for its village, promising its terrorized captives it would take them to "a fine country, and take good care of them, and they could live easy, and need never work."[2] True to that promise, young Alder was adopted by the chief of the small community and began a new life. His new father, Succopanus, was a Mingo Indian, and his new mother, Winecheo, a Shawnee. Young Alder adapted well to Indian life and became a cherished member of the village. For twenty years he lived happily as an Indian around the headwaters of the Big Darby, Scioto, Maumee, and Mad Rivers, farming the rich till soils and

alluvial bottomland and hunting in the surrounding forest, bur oak savanna, and prairie openings. Even though he had the opportunity to return to the white world, he chose to remain with his adopted family; such behavior was not uncommon among white captives, for life with the Indians was to some an attractive alternative to the hardships of frontier life. There he also witnessed firsthand the growing conflict over land between the natives and settlers. As Alder approached manhood, he grieved Winecheo's, and later Succopanus's, death as if each were his biological parent.

By the 1790s, as Alder entered his twenties, he was "a little over six fet [*sic*] in height, and straight as an arrow ever was. His hair and eyebrows were as 'black as coal,' his complexion dark and swarthy, his face large and well formed, denoting strength of character and firmness of purpose; his eyes were bright and piercing, while his whole appearance, gait and actions were characteristic of the Indian." In 1795 he married Barshaw, an Indian woman, and "got us a brood mare apiece and packed our goods and safely landed on Big Darby or Crawfish Creek, as it was then called. . . . " The couple built the first cabin in the county and "commenced life in good earnest" because the "Darby . . . was the greatest and best hunting ground of the whole Indian territory."[3]

Other whites soon began to settle along the Big Darby as hostilities were temporarily halted by the Treaty of Greenville: first Benjamin Springer, then Usual Osborn. Richard Taylor, Joshua Ewing, John Story, and others arrived the next spring, bringing horses, hogs, and cattle that thrived on the luxuriant prairie grasses and plentiful mast from the oaks, hickories, and beech. Alder went into the livestock business, selling horses and hogs to the whites, milk and butter to the Indians, and furs and skins to the traders. He wrote, "I was now in a manner happy. I could lie down at night without fear, a condition that had been rare with us[,] and I could rise up in the morning and shake hands with the white man and the Indians all in perfect peace and safety. Here I had my own white race for neighbors and the red-man that I loved all mingling together. Upon the whole I felt proud over it."[4]

Alder's knowledge of the land, its native people and wildlife, made him a favorite of those first white settlers. He acted as an interpreter between the two cultures and assisted whites during their initial seasons of hardship as they struggled to adapt the wilderness to their vision of permanent homesteads, fields, and pastures. Often that vision overlooked the simple means Alder and the Indians used to harvest the land's riches and survive with relative ease in paradise. Alder wrote, "And as

for work, I did but very little for I did not know how to work. I pretty much hired all my work done and I was forced to hire white men[,] for the Indians were like myself and didn't know how or couldn't work. If they had known how they wouldn't have worked, for it is not natural for an Indian to work."[5]

Barshaw did not adapt well to the couple's lifestyle that mixed white ways with Indians ways, and they soon separated. Afterward Alder lived alone for several years, content to be an intermediary between the two peoples. In 1802, though, all that changed quite by accident on a crisp summer Sunday. On that day, Alder met John Moore lounging in the shade under a tree near Alder's cabin. The conversation soon centered on Alder's captivity and his faint childhood memories of Virginia. He vaguely remembered having heard the word *Wyth,* but did not know what it meant; and he recalled that the family had lived near a lead mine in a place called Green Brier. The name of the only neighbors he could recollect were the Gullions. Amazingly, Moore responded that he was familiar with Wythe County, Greenbrier Township, Virginia, and had even spent a night at the home of a man named Gullion. And, coincidentally, Moore was heading back to the area the coming fall; he agreed to make inquiries for Alder regarding the fate of his family.

Unfortunately, he was unable to locate the Alder family. Yet while in Virginia, Moore had spread the word about Alder's interest in tracing his family in the hope the message might eventually reach the Alders or at least someone who knew their fate. Even that appeared to have been in vain as 1803 passed with no news.

As fate would have it, though, Moore and Alder stumbled upon one another in 1804, nearly a year after Moore's return from the South. Both were in nearby Franklinton on personal business when they met by accident. As they talked, Alder was told by another that he had a letter waiting at the post office. Together Alder and Moore went to pick it up. The letter was from his long-lost family in Virginia.

Events happened quickly for Alder. In 1805, he returned to Virginia and met his mother and other remaining family members, whom he then moved to his home in Madison County as soon as affairs were settled the following year. There he and his biological family lived near his former Indian family. He tried his hand at marriage a second time too, this time to Mary Blont, a white woman. The couple prospered and raised a large family, and Alder became a leader of the fledgling white community.

Jonathan Alder, the first long-term white resident of the county, died

in 1849. Before he died, he dictated his memoirs to his son, giving readers today a fascinating firsthand account of central Ohio as it was transformed by Euro-American contact. Through such accounts of captivity, as well as early accounts of pioneer life, we better sense Native American cultures, their significant variation, and their fundamental differences with European cultures. We also sense how European contact inflicted catastrophic change on those native cultures and the landscape, contact that resulted in a range of interactions between natives and aliens, at times cooperative, conciliatory, and sensitive, but mostly competitive, suspicious, and hostile.

That contact triggered a cascade of change in the Native American societies: European diseases decimated Indian populations; the exchange of commodities and values disrupted their lifestyles; and competition for land displaced populations, leading to territorial conflicts and a domino-like effect of dislocation that spread westward. Initial contact was often economic-based for the exchange of food and other goods. During the first century of colonization along the Atlantic coast, the two peoples struggled to coexist based on tenuous cooperation and trade. But coexistence became impossible as the Euro-American population swelled and spread across more and more of the landscape. Settlement meant clearing the forest and removing wildlife. It meant parceling and partitioning the land into private property for production agriculture and pasture. Such landscape changes were incompatible with the Native American lifestyle and exposed a core conflict between the two peoples—land. Its ownership, its use, its philosophical and spiritual significance, even how it was perceived aesthetically, as much as any other difference, separated the Euro-American and Native American cultures. Alder wrote, "Such is Indian life. It is either a feast or famine, as the whites sometimes say. They (the whites) live off the fruit of farms; but sometimes their crops fail. Yet, if ever a people live on the game of the land, when it is plenty and fat, that people are the Indians. What more delicious eating could a man desire than fat deer, bear, buffalo, elk or wild turkeys, all of which the Indians frequently had in abundance? Then they were happy, and for all this prosperity, gave thanks to the Great Spirit."[6]

To Alder and most Indians, humans were an integral part of nature, little different from other species. Nature was revered as a benevolent force that sustained life. Its appreciation was central to their religion and general philosophy. Alder believed the landscape was a nurturing home shared with spirits, alive with the history of his adopted people.

Although the eastern woodland Indians acted as agents of environmental change by burning the forest, hunting, and farming, at times drastically disturbing the landscape, their impacts were localized and short-lived as a result of their small numbers and mobile, subsistence lifestyle. They accumulated little material wealth and consumed few resources, living, to a large extent, hand-to-mouth, season to season. Nature always provided for them, even though at times better than others. Compared to Euro-Americans, it might seem Indian agriculture and the Indian lifestyle made little provision for the future. Yet in many ways, both were more compatible with the indigenous landscape.

The Indian concepts of property and ownership also differed from those of the pioneers. While each community typically claimed a territory that it defended, doing so was intended to protect access to the basic resources it needed to survive. Rarely did a community claim an area greater than that necessary to supply its fundamental needs. And individuals had few personal possessions since the group was mobile, at times moving on a seasonal basis. The landscape provided all they needed or wanted free for the taking, so personal property, from a Euro-American perspective, was unnecessary. One "owned" only what one made or applied some labor to in order to obtain. Even those possessions were held loosely: if no longer useful, or if needed by someone else, they were easily given away.[7] As William Cronon noted in *Changes in the Land,* "What the Indians owned—or, more precisely, what their villages gave them claim to—was not the land but the things that were on the land during the various seasons of the year. It was a concept of property shared by many of the hunter-gatherer and agricultural peoples of the world, but radically different from that of the invading Europeans."[8]

To James Kilbourne the landscape was much different. On September 22, 1786, Josiah Kilbourne called in his fifteen-year-old son from working on the remaining portion of the family's small, run-down farm near Farmington, just west of Hartford, Connecticut. The farm was failing and the family barely able to survive in the economic depression resulting from the Revolutionary War. Josiah and his wife, Anna, had concluded their beloved James should strike out on his own in search of better opportunities.

The next day young James set out to seek his fortune. Walking into an unknown future, leaving the care and protection of his family behind on the farmstead, he wandered for several days northward along

the Farmington River until he reached the town of Granby, twenty-some miles upriver. There began a truly remarkable life that still shapes the central Ohio landscape today.

By October 1, James found a four-year apprenticeship in a clothing mill where he received room and board while he trained seven months each year; the remaining five months were his to use as he wished. Only able to return home for short stays, what James wanted to do during those long breaks was work. Fortunately the mill was adjacent to the prosperous five hundred–acre farm of Elisha Griswold. The farm needed help and James was hired. By season's end, James's industriousness and ambition were rewarded. The Griswolds invited him back the next season, and his master at the mill allowed him to continue work at the farm when production at the mill was slack.

His relations with the Griswolds quickly expanded as the family took young Kilbourne under its care. Over the next decade, James was tutored at night by his "adopted" brother Alexander Griswold, four years older than James and the second of Elisha's ten children. Unfortunately a farm accident had nearly killed Alexander at age ten, an accident that left him sickly for several years. While he recuperated, Alexander turned his energy to reading and independent study under the guidance of his favorite uncle, the Reverend Roger Viets, with whom he lived for several years after the accident. Young Alexander devoured the parish library and his uncle's extensive private collection.

Alexander was a brilliant student, and his uncle an excellent tutor. Whereas under other circumstances the young man would have attended Yale College when he reached his late teens, he was forced instead to return to work on his father's farm in the mid-1780s. The farm suffered from the same economic hardships caused by the Revolutionary War that affected the much smaller Kilbourne family farm. Besides, Alexander's elders judged his present education to be far superior to the one offered by the college.

So in 1786, when James was first hired by the Griswolds, Alexander worked all day in the fields, then read late into the night; and as the Reverend Viets had tutored Alexander, Alexander now tutored his inquisitive new friend. The same year, Alexander joined the Episcopal church of his uncle. He eventually was ordained and rose to be bishop of the four New England states.

In 1788, after two years with the Griswolds, James Kilbourne also converted to the Episcopal faith of his adopted family. Although raised like most in Connecticut as a Congregationalist, he found the Calvinis-

tic doctrine of the state-supported church unacceptable as he matured and discussed religion with Alexander. He was a willing convert to the Anglican beliefs.

Kilbourne soon married Lucy Fitch, the beautiful daughter of John Fitch, inventor of the steamboat. As a young man in his early twenties, Kilbourne was a prosperous entrepreneur in the clothing business. Success enabled him to pay off his father's debts and expand the family farm. By 1800, when not yet thirty, James Kilbourne was a wealthy businessman and civic leader noted for his contributions of time and money to literary societies and other voluntary associations. He also served as a lay minister in the church. Good fortune, goodwill, diligence, and devotion had served him well.

In just fifteen years from the day fifteen-year-old Kilbourne walked out of his parents' cabin, he had worked his way from rags to riches, from anonymity to a community leader. Yet this success was merely a prelude, an apprenticeship of sorts, for another adventure in which he would again leave behind the safety and comfort of home for unknown opportunities in an unknown place. Despite economic success, life in Granby was not easy for Kilbourne and the Griswolds. As Episcopalians, a branch of the Church of England, they were persecuted in the postwar period. Moreover, decades of exploitation and mismanagement had left much of the once fertile Connecticut landscape eroded and stripped bare of natural resources. Perhaps frustrated with those limitations, Kilbourne formed a speculative land company with seven other wealthy Episcopalian friends in 1802. Their intent was to buy land on which to start a new community somewhere beyond the Appalachian Mountains in the Northwest Territory, recently acquired by the United States from England in the treaty ending the war.

That vast territory, all land north and west of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi, was then opening to white settlement based on three key provisions. The first was the Land Ordinance of 1785, which established the basis for land survey and disbursement. The Northwest Ordinance followed in 1787, establishing the basis for governance. The third key provision was the Treaty of Greenville in 1795. Signed following General Anthony Wayne's victory over the Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, the treaty temporarily settled the conflict with the Indians by separating the territory into an Indian zone and a white zone.

The effect of the three provisions was profound. Like a hand opening a dam's floodgates, they opened the Ohio territory—the easternmost portion of the Northwest Territory, thus the first to be reached—

to a surge of settlers. In 1790, whites in Ohio numbered only 3,000, compared to about 5,000 Indians. By 1800, the first wave of settlement brought another 40,000 pioneers. By 1810, the number surged to 230,000 persons. Many in the human tide drifted down the Ohio River from Wheeling by flatboat; others entered overland, on Zane's Trace or, later, the National Road.

Where should the Kilbourne group go? The newly opened territory was extremely remote and still very dangerous despite the treaty. It was the forefront, the farthest point west in the advancing frontier boundary. Other, less remote land was available for the many westward-moving New Englanders; in particular, Oliver Phelps and Nathaniel Gorham's huge tract in the Genessee Valley of western New York was popular. But Kilbourne visited the Phelps-Gorham site and found it wanting. Instead, his group targeted the Ohio territory between the Muskingum and the Great Miami Rivers. Why there? Why risk the many threats in the western wilderness?

John Fitch, Kilbourne's father-in-law, was a surveyor in the territory during the war and was briefly imprisoned by the British at Fort Detroit. While there, he drew a detailed map of the Northwest Territory on which Kilbourne and many other pioneers relied (Fitch used the proceeds from the sale of the map to finance his invention of the steamboat). The Ohio Territory, Fitch felt, offered the greatest opportunity because the land was still cheap, uninhabited, and extremely fertile. Kilbourne was convinced, even though only Fitch was familiar with the region. Kilbourne's group subsequently named itself the Scioto Company, after the river that flowed through the heart of the region.

Over the summer of 1802, Kilbourne and a young assistant, Nathaniel Little, traveled to Ohio in search of land to purchase for the company. Following Zane's Trace from Wheeling, they arrived in Chillicothe in late August. There they met Colonel Thomas Worthington, the federal land agent, who befriended the explorers and guided their survey of the available land along the Scioto River between Chillicothe and Franklinton (now Columbus), twenty-five miles upriver. Kilbourne and Little's attitude toward the landscape is seen in Little's personal journal kept during the trip. He wrote:

> Tuesday, August 24, 1802
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> We rode on to Peirsols 21 miles and took breakfast, thence on to Pickaway plains. The prairies here are extensive[,] in many places twenty miles long and from two to four wide, with scarcely a tree to be seen on them, but they are covered with an abundant crop of wild grass. It is a grand sight to us

who were raised among the hills of New England. We crossed over the Scioto river and on to Chillicothe and put up at Wm. Keys. The lands from about 12 miles southwest of the Muskingum are in general of good soil and covered with timber[:] on the high lands white oak generally, and on the bottoms with a great variety as can be found in almost any country; such as walnut, butternut, sugar maple, elm, white, red, blue and black ash, white and yellow poplar, white, black, red, and swamp oak, hickory, honeylocust, gumtree, cherry and sycamore with a great variety of shrubbery.

The Scioto is a fine clear stream, about 100 yards wide, but very low now. About 5 miles from Chillicothe we passed one of the ancient fortifications that are found in this part of the country. It is of a circular form, enclosing a few acres of land. On the embankments and inside, the trees growing, are as large as any in the surrounding forest. In the town of Chillicothe there is a regular mound of earth, about 30′ high, on which is now growing five sugar maples of good size. Some old stumps yet remain on the mound, one that I noticed particularly, must have been a very large tree, either white oak or black walnut. The owner of the lot has an ice house inside the mound. By what information I could gain there has never been any particular examination to ascertain the contents of this mount.

Saturday, August 28, 1802

On the Franklinton road we passed an Indian camp today. Their huts are built of bark and there is a considerable number of them. As we approached the camp, which is a short distance from the road, we were met by a large number of dogs, which annoyed our horses very much. These Indians appear to live a miserable life.

Sunday, August 29, 1802

This afternoon we walked about two miles up the Scioto, where there is one of those ancient fortifications. This is of circular form, containing 30 or 40 acres. The earth that is thrown up is now about 10′ high. There are 12 gateways through the wall of earth. This grand circle is situated on a plane and is covered with heavy timber on the walls and insides. In the center of this enclosure is a mound of earth, similar to the one in Chillicothe. There are several of these fortifications or earth works, on or near the banks of the river. One in particular near the Pickaway plain, impressed us, as being very magnificant [*sic*]. These works are to my mind strong indications that many centuries ago this extent of country was inhabited by a people much farther advanced in civilization and intelligence than the present race of Indians. In many places also are found where they had wells but no traces of regular built towns are discovered.

We have seen but few farmers in this country that appear to be industrious. Generally their cabins are poor and dirty. Their improvements look slovenly, and many live on lands belonging to the public. They clear a little patch so that they can raise a little corn and the rest of their time is spent hunting and lounging around. The inhabitants of the small towns appear to be rather indolent. The tavern keepers seem to be doing the best of any of them.[9]

Little and Kilbourne, like most Euro-Americans, could not understand why the Indians and other "indolent" whites squatting preemptively in the public domain lived so "miserably" in the midst of such potential. The attitude of the two men reflected the landscape values of the day, values rooted in their Judeo-Christian, European heritage.

As Europeans left their "civilized" landscape to come to what they considered to be the vacant, virgin wilderness of the New World, they brought along their landscape values and land use practices, as well as a set of preconceptions about the New World. Those values and practices, like their general social values and religious beliefs, arose during the Enlightenment and the Reformation as their homeland cast off the manorial and feudal systems.

The New World was at once familiar and alien. Because of its familiarity, many of the traditional European settlement practices transferred intact, as did the underlying landscape values regarding the relation of people to the land and to nature. Those values shaped the new society. If the New World had been totally alien to the Europeans, if they had encountered instead a desert, tundra, or rain forest, they would have been forced to quickly abandon their values and practices as impractical. Differences between the New World and the Old did force some adaptation and change, but since Kilbourne's day American landscape values have remained remarkably constant at their core.[10]

Here Europeans found a temperate climate similar to that of the Old World, though seasonal variation in New England was much greater; in particular, the winters were harsher. Those extremes offered phenomenal seasonal abundance. The New World was a treasure trove of forest resources and game that were scarce in Europe as a result of centuries of settlement.

Here they encountered many familiar plant and animal species intermixed among the exotic. They were surprised, though, at the absence of the domesticated animals that underpinned European agriculture, such as cattle, horses, sheep, and swine. The new landscape was also devoid of many nuisances commonly associated with dense, dirty European cities. Lacking species of fly, mouse, rat, and roach, and many microorganisms that carried or caused diseases common in Europe, the New World was a pristine paradise.

Euro-Americans like Kilbourne considered the landscape a virtually limitless source of potentially valuable natural resources. It was primarily a collection of commodities viewed mostly in functional, utili-

tarian terms. The landscape was a resource for economic exploitation rather than the living element perceived by the Native Americans. Land was property that could be bought and sold. No single concept has so shaped the American landscape, nor more distinguishes it from others around the world. Private ownership of land rests at the very core of America. The famous French immigrant Hector St. John de Crèvecœur noted this in *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782):

> The instant I enter on my own land, the bright idea of property, of exclusive right, of independence exalt my mind. Precious soil, I say to myself, by what singular custom of law is it that thou wast made to constitute the riches of the freeholder? What should we American farmers be without the distinct possession of that soil? It feeds, it clothes us, from it we draw even a great exuberancy [*sic*], our best meat, our richest drink, the very honey of our bees comes from this privileged spot. No wonder we should thus cherish its possession, no wonder that so many Europeans who have never been able to say that such portion of land was theirs, cross the Atlantic to realize that happiness. This formerly rude soil has been converted by my father into a pleasant farm, and in return it has established all our rights; on it is founded our rank, our freedom, our power as citizens, our importance as inhabitants of such a district. These images I must confess I always behold with pleasure, and extend them as far as my imagination can reach: for this is what may be called the true and the only philosophy of an American farmer.[11]

While our European heritage recognized several fundamental bases of land ownership, including royal grant, or inheritance, the most important, for my purpose, was fee simple purchase and, underlying it, the basic right of ownership derived from occupancy and improvement of the land.[12] Occupancy meant the construction of a permanent farmstead or settlement, and improvement meant the clearing of the forest to create an agricultural landscape of permanent fields and pastures. Since the Indians did neither of those things, people like Kilbourne did not recognize their title to the land. Indians were merely temporary occupants who could be legally displaced. Colonists often considered treaties and land purchase agreements with Indians as ceremonial rather than as legally or morally binding. The failure to recognize Indian property rights trivialized the Indian way of life and opened the door to its destruction.[13]

Colonial theorist John Winthrop posited two fundamental ways of owning land, one natural and the other civil. The natural right, Winthrop argued, existed at some past time "when men held the earth in common[,] every man sowing and feeding where he pleased." That

was the basis of Indian rights. However, he felt that primitive right was superseded by another, superior civil right when people began to raise crops, keep cattle, and improve the land by enclosing it: "As for the natives in New England, they inclose noe Land, neither have any setled habytation, nor any tame Cattle to improve the Land by, and soe have noe other but a Naturall Right to those Countries[;] . . . the rest of the country lay open to any that could and would improve it."[14]

Similarly, the colonial minister John Cotton wrote, "In a vacant soyle, hee that taketh possession of it, and bestoweth culture and husbandry upon it, his Right it is."[15] In 1831, Timothy Flint rationalized the displacement of New World aborigines on similar bases in his influential description of the Mississippi Valley:

> It is no crime of the present civilized races [Euro-Americans], that inhabit these regions, that their forefathers came over the sea, and enclosed lands, and cut down trees, where the Indians had hunted and fought. If they will not, and cannot labor, and cultivate the land, and lead a municipal life, they are in the same predicament with a much greater number of drunkards, idlers and disturbers of society, who are a charge and a burden upon it, in all civilized communities. Like them, they ought to be treated with tenderness; to be enlightened and reclaimed, if possible; and, as far as may be, to be restrained from hurting us, and each other. But it is surely as unjust, as it is preposterous, to speak of the prevalence of our race over theirs, as an evil; and, from a misjudging tenderness to them, do injustice to our own country, and the cause of human nature.[16]

Native Americans held much different beliefs. Wilderness was a familiar, nurturing home whose geographical and seasonal diversity, whether manipulated or not, meant stability and an abundance of the necessities and luxuries of life. For many, mobility was the key to both the exploitation and preservation of that diversity. Villages were not fixed in size or location, rather they were moved and reassembled to match changing social needs and the ecological patchwork of the land. As a result, their subsistent, mobile lifestyle limited their population as well as the degree of their long-term landscape disturbance.[17]

In contrast, wilderness posed a direct threat to the pioneers' survival and their preferred form of society and landscape management. Wilderness was an alien place, not a nurturing provider, even though initially European colonists often used a subsistence form of agriculture not dissimilar to that of the Indians. That technique soon evolved into the familiar row crop and livestock bases. By Kilbourne's day, Euro-America was based on the accumulation and consumption of far more resource-

derived commodities than was native America. The resulting form of settlement was incompatible with the wilderness. The magnificent forest, prairies, wetlands, and floodplains of the new land were not hospitable to their row crops and livestock, so the wilderness had to be modified. That malevolent attitude was typified in a section titled "War on the Woods" in W. H. Venable's *Footprints of the Pioneers in the Ohio Valley* (1888):

> The trees are the backwoodman's [*sic*] enemy, for they occupy his ground. They will not run away, like the buffalo and the Indian, so they must be hewn down and cremated.
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> The labor of clearing, like that of building, was lightened for each by the union of all in the war upon the woods. "Choppings," and "log-rollings," were among the toilsome pleasures of the settlers.
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> A small army of stalwart men, with strong muscles and sharp axes, soon cut away a regiment of trees, and let daylight upon a plot of ground large enough for a "patch" for planting corn, beans, and pumpkins. The trees felled, their branches were lopped off, their trunks were cut into lengths of from twelve to twenty feet. Then came the log-rolling. Ox teams and handspikes dragged and rolled the slain giants of the forest into high piles, which, when dry, were burnt to ashes. When the task of the day was ended, such games as racing, wrestling, and boxing were in order.[18]

The needs of the native wildlife and the native peoples also conflicted with the pioneers' row crops and livestock. They too had to be removed and other major environmental modifications made before one could prosper. It was not a time or place for the conservation of resources or preservation of nature: the landscape was to be altered and exploited as quickly as possible.

People of Kilbourne's day believed there was an inexhaustible supply of fertile land and saw little necessity to husband natural resources. If sloppy land management depleted one area, one need only move to another where the land was untouched. The old axiom "The grass is always greener on the other side of the hill" had elements of truth early in our landscape's history. By the mid-1800s, however, it became mostly myth, one we still struggle to overturn.

Similarly, most settlers failed to fully realize the relationship between their environmental actions and the resulting outcome, despite experience that people often deplete the land. They thought the land had unbounded fertility and resiliency. Whatever wounds they caused would quickly heal. Common beliefs that people were fundamentally separate from nature and that nature was merely a collection of commodities further blinded them to the true consequences of their land use practices.

Those beliefs led them to underestimate the full effect of Native American land use practices, so they saw the New World as a virgin wilderness rather than a settled landscape shaped by its human occupants.

Euro-Americans like Kilbourne considered the landscape mostly in rational terms: reason applied by the enlightened mind, not the folklore and mysticism practiced by the natives, was the primary means used to understand the New World. Their rationalism reinforced another key difference between native and invader. While the Indians lived in a landscape full of spirits and rich in the myth and folklore of their ancestors, to the Euro-Americans the New World was a place devoid of mystical or ancestral significance, an alien land lacking cultural heritage and meaning separate from certain moral or religious connotations. The ghosts and gnomes, fairies and folktales of their European heritage were left behind in the Old World. The Euro-Americans had no emotional, psychological, or historical linkage to the new land. Their ancestors had not lived here. The resulting disconnection from the new land made it easier for them to alter the landscape with little guilt or self-restraint.

Euro-Americans also believed that people existed separate from and were superior to nature in a moral sense; they did not see themselves as integral components of nature as commonly believed in Eastern and Native American philosophies. That sense of separation, together with the perception of land as property, sits at the very core of American landscape values. Drawing on their Judeo-Christian heritage, pioneers like Kilbourne believed God created people in his image, and that this separated humans from all other forms of life. They believed humans were given dominion over the earth and all its creatures and so were ethically free, even empowered, to use the land to fulfill God's will—in part, to go forth and multiply, to prosper in the paradise they sought to create.[19]

They also considered the wilderness a moral threat in the context of that heritage. Roderick Nash detailed those attitudes in his classic study of American environmental values, *Wilderness and the American Mind.* He wrote, "Wilderness as fact and symbol permeated Judeo-Christian tradition. Anyone with a Bible had available an extended lesson in the meaning of wild land. Subsequent Christian history added new dimensions. As a result, the first immigrants approached North America with a cluster of preconceived ideas about wilderness. This intellectual legacy of the Old World to the New not only helped determine initial responses but left a lasting imprint on American thought." He continued:

> Wilderness not only frustrated the pioneers physically but also acquired significance as a dark and sinister symbol. They shared the long Western tra-

> dition of imagining wild country as a moral vacuum, a cursed and chaotic wasteland. As a consequence, frontiersmen acutely sensed that they battled wild country not only for personal survival but in the name of the nation, race, and God. Civilizing the New World meant enlightening darkness, ordering chaos, and changing evil into good. In the morality play of westward expansion, wilderness was the villain, and the pioneer, as hero, relished its destruction. The transformation of a wilderness into civilization was the reward for his sacrifices, the definition of his achievement, and the source of his pride.[20]

The wilderness was lawless. It was the darkness beyond God's light. Whether forbidding, primeval forest or desolate desert, wilderness was the devil's domain. And even though wilderness as a harsh, alien landscape had traditionally been sought in Judaism and Christianity as a place of spiritual atonement or cleansing, it remained one's moral duty, the pioneers believed, to subdue wilderness, to civilize it, to bring the light of his word and his law to it, and in its place to create a true paradise more reflective of his will.

That paradise, they believed, was a peaceful, pastoral landscape, a gardenlike place common to many ancient cultures and echoed in the Bible's description of the Garden of Eden—a fertile landscape of rolling fields, a well-watered land of milk and honey. Virgil's pastoral poetry and the Arcadian landscapes painted by Claude Lorrain further popularized this imagery, the antipode of wilderness, and profoundly affected the European and American landscapes. Today it still directs our landscape thoughts and actions.

The dark, desolate New World wilderness also triggered a contradictory set of perceptions in the Euro-American mind. Its virgin purity and fertile promise offered the European immigrant the opportunity to escape the moral, social, and environmental degradation of the Old World and begin anew. Here they could achieve a utopian life in an idyllic land free from the bonds of history.[21] Hence the American wilderness beckoned and beguiled the immigrant with opportunity while it simultaneously physically and morally threatened.

Like most Euro-Americans, James Kilbourne set out to transform his piece of the New World wilderness into a Garden of Eden where his diligent labors would yield a life of plenty and foster harmony with the land and his Lord. Central Ohio was a paradise in the rough, like an uncut diamond. His righteous labor would polish it into a true earthly garden and make him a handsome profit in the process.

Armed with those values, he and his young assistant surveyed central Ohio in search of the perfect land to buy for their new community.

As the survey concluded, Kilbourne reserved with Thomas Worthington a twelve thousand–acre tract about ten miles south of Franklinton, along the eastern bank of the Scioto River. The survey complete, Kilbourne and Little then began the difficult trip back to Connecticut as the wondrous Ohio forests blazed with the colors of autumn. On return to Granby, Kilbourne reported the abundance of the newfound paradise; the description reads like an inventory of resources awaiting exploitation.

But Kilbourne worried from the beginning about the quality of the land he had reserved, sensing it might be too wet and conducive to malaria, a prevalent malady thought to emanate from stagnant water. He was also concerned about the political stability of the region and its stance on slavery. Ohio was just becoming a state, and serious questions remained regarding its boundaries and governance. Kilbourne's boundary concern centered on the location of the state's western edge. One proposal by the Federalists sought to make the Scioto River the boundary. This would place Kilbourne's property at the edge of the frontier and make it more susceptible to Indian attack. The Federalists feared another popular proposal to locate the boundary more than one hundred miles to the west. That they thought would create too large a state, one that might become so politically and economically powerful it would overwhelm their eastern power base. Therefore Kilbourne made the purchase contingent on three conditions: the adoption of a state constitution that prohibited slavery; the establishment of the state's boundary well to the west of the Scioto River; and the approval of his investors.

By the time of his return to Connecticut late that autumn, word had spread of their plan. To satisfy a growing interest in the plan, the Scioto Company soon expanded to forty members. The enlarged company needed more land and it wanted better land. Fortunately it learned of another promising tract for sale in the same area. Dr. Jonas Stanbury, a New York City land speculator, and his partner, Jonathan Dayton of Elizabethtown, New Jersey, were offering sixteen thousand acres on higher ground about twenty miles north of the twelve thousand–acre tract Kilbourne had optioned. When word reached the Scioto Company that the Ohio constitution was passed and the boundary issue resolved, meeting its approval on both accounts, the company dispatched Kilbourne to New York to negotiate the purchase of the Stanbury-Dayton property.

In 1803, James Kilbourne and thirty-nine other investors, including Ezra and Roger Griswold, Alexander's brothers, purchased the Stanbury-