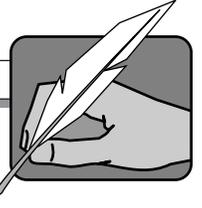


## PRIMARY SOURCE ACTIVITY



## Native American Politics

As American settlers moved westward, the new nation confronted Native American resistance. The excerpts below reflect contrasting views on westward expansion into Native American lands.

**EXCERPT A**

[The United States has] no desire to destroy the red people, although they have the power; but, should you decline this invitation, and pursue your unprovoked hostilities, their strength will be exerted against you; your warriors will be slaughtered, your towns and villages ransacked and destroyed your wives and children carried into captivity. . . .

General Charles Scott, to the Miami tribe of the Ohio country, urging them to relinquish their land claims, May 1791

**EXCERPT B**

For some time past the western frontiers have been alarmed by depredations committed by some hostile tribes of Indians; but such measures are now in train as will, I presume, either bring them to sue for peace . . . or make them feel the effects of an enmity. . . . Tho' I must confess I cannot see much prospect of living in tranquillity with them so long as a spirit of land jobbing prevails, and our frontier Settlers entertain the opinion that there is not the same crime (or indeed no crime at all) in killing an Indian as in killing a white man.

President George Washington, letter to Secretary of Foreign Affairs David Humphreys, July 20, 1791

**EXCERPT C**

*Brothers:* We know that these settlers are poor, or they would never have ventured to live in a country which has been in continual trouble ever since they crossed the Ohio. Divide, therefore, this large sum of money, which you have offered to us, among these people: give to each, also, a proportion of what you say you would give to us, annually, over and above this very large sum of

money: and, we are persuaded, they would most readily accept of it, in lieu of the lands you sold them. If you add, also, the great sums you must expend in raising and paying armies, with a view to force us to yield you our country, you will certainly have more than sufficient for the purposes of repaying these settlers for all their labor and their improvements.

Wyandot tribe, to United States commissioners, August 16, 1793

**EXCERPT D**

The great cause of so many quarrels with the Indians has been, that the latter have always looked upon the attack of individuals as expressive of the disposition of the whole nation; and not unfrequently have private quarrels been the cause of shedding much blood. And it is worthy of remark, that the most violent prejudices exist on both sides, between the Indians and those white people who live on the frontiers of the United States: so much so, that I have heard them talk with the same unconcern of killing an Indian, as of killing a deer or a turkey. . . .

Francis Baily, English traveler, journal entry of March 31, 1797

**EXCERPT E**

When I walk through the streets I see every person in his shop employed about something. One makes shoes, another hats, a third sells cloth, and everyone lives by his labor. I say to myself, which of all these things can you do? Not one. I can make a bow or an arrow, catch fish, kill game, and go to war, but none of these is of any use here. . . . I should be a piece of furniture, useless to my nation, useless to the whites, and useless to myself.

Little Turtle, Miami chief, on a visit to Philadelphia, 1797

**ACTIVITY**

It is the early 1800s and you are a leader of a large Native American group. You have just read the documents above. What advice would you give your people for dealing with the problem of western expansion into your lands, and why?