

THE END  
AND  
THE BEGINNING

JIM OLESON



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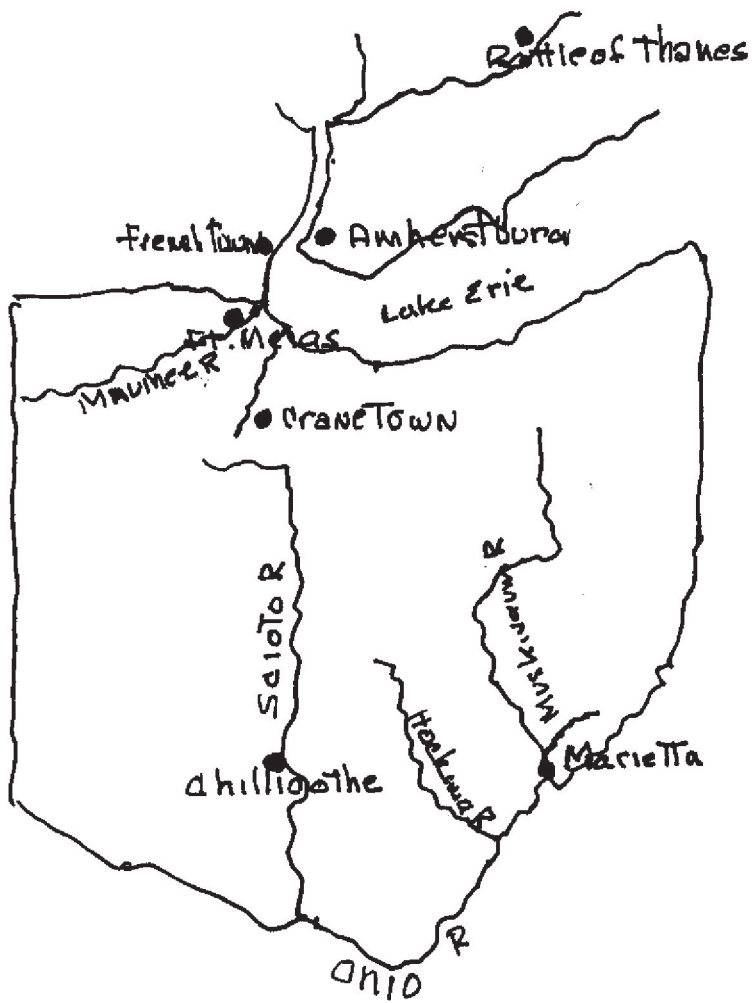
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## PROLOGUE

The Territories of the Northwest were like no other land: great endless rivers, flowing south, north and west; fresh streams of great abundance with sweet waters, providing for a world of wildlife of all forms and dimensions; endless dark forests covering hills and plains, bold and formidable, to be entered with caution; flat grass lands where great herds of buffalo and antelope benefited from their harvest; enormous lakes of profound beauty and danger.

A proud land; forever in time, going through its own seasons repetitively, predictably. The living creatures of this wild land know its motions and moods, and are content. For the eons the land has prospered in its present form, managing whatever nature gives. For eons, trees only fell as nature prescribed; only recently have they felt the violence of the steel ax.

The boundaries of this vast land included the Ohio River to the south and west; the Ohio River flowed into the Mississippi River basin, which in turn went north to its headwaters and the vast Canadian forests. The great lakes—Superior, Michigan, Huron and Erie—separated the northern boundary from the British-owned Canadian colony. The Appalachian Mountains presented a natural, formidable barrier to the east, discouraging the western migration of non-indigenous peoples. This enormous tract, representing the heartland of the continent, was created as a political

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entity for the government of a new nation for the control and settlement of its people and the harvesting of its resources. It was the destiny of a new nation. Change had come and the lands of the great northwest were no longer whole.

The northern Europeans have appeared. Before them and because of them, displaced originals have come unwelcome to this serene land. Removed from their tribal territories on the seacoast, plateaus, and mountains of the eastern seaboard, pushed relentlessly west, the clans of the Delaware and Wyandotte, Shawnee and Mohawk, the entire Algonquin culture forced from their lands and villages in just a few decades. The displaced tribes came through the river valleys of the Alleghany and Monongahela, over the Appalachians and Berkshires, following Nemocolin's path and other trails of Indian commerce. They came reluctantly, with great resentment, and in continual conflict as they sought to stop the relentless movement of the man of the white skin who took, changed, and destroyed all things precious. The Northern Europeans did not rest; they closely followed the eastern tribes as they continued westward, overcoming the physical barriers and the violent resistance of the natives. The originals saw this migration as an unstoppable malignancy that destroyed all in its path. Some knew they could move no further; they needed to take a stand to ensure their existence...

This unspoiled land was a new battleground of cultures with the outcome already determined; survival, however, is a powerful driving force, and the originals would take a stand, however hopeless, to preserve their way of life and protect its friend the earth from destruction.

South of the great river that formed the southern boundary of the Northwest Territories, another migration was underway. The northern Europeans who inhabited the southern states were also moving west, looking for new opportunities in the wild and unsettled lands of the Tennessee and Kentucky River valleys.

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They too forced the originals out of their way as they claimed all lands that appeared prosperous. To exploit the land and maximize personal gain, they brought with them the African slave who for three hundred years in this land of freedom and democracy was the engine that drove the southern economy. Black people did not come to this new land willingly. Many were sold to masters who more often than not were brutal and cruel men. These slaves knew that the burdens and hardships, already intolerable in the civilized plantation culture from which they came, would be unendurable in the raw and savage world they were about to enter. Settling the land, building the masters' domiciles and industry would fall on their backs. They were the beasts of burden that would make the Europeans wealthy. To labor in the tobacco fields was, next to the developing rice and sugar farms of the Mississippi Delta, the most torturous and lethal industry of their world.

For those who marched westward, word was beginning to spread from one slave camp to another that there might be hope, a cautious hope, a desperate hope. Across the wide river was the new state of Ohio, a free state; if you could somehow cross that body of water. White folks would help you go north to the country called Canada where any black man could live free. Around the evening fires, in the fields of their labor and in the hovels of their homes, they asked the river to show them the way. In the second decade of the nineteenth century was the beginning of another transition. The Europeans' cruelest institution was to be challenged, amid great conflict, and ultimately overthrown.

So it would be in the Northwest Territories in the year of 1812 that great events were about to unfold that would define the American identity. In conflict and turmoil, one great civilization would be forever destroyed and another would begin to breathe the life of freedom.





PART 1  
THE END





# CHAPTER 1

*Marietta, Ohio*

*June 1812*

*“Our great patriot lies herein, resting now for all time, his worldly duties done. General Jonathon McGuire in every way a founding Father, creating this great country three score years ago. He fought the king on the streets of our fair cities, on the trails and byways of our country side, the greens and commons of our villages, in the halls of our government, on the battle fields of our great war. His deeds forever remembered when and wherever patriots gather. The General has earned his rest and all yee here on this day the 22nd of June in the Year 1812 is witness to his legacy.”*

Rufus Putnam, an old war friend, leader of the Ohio Company of Associates, and founder of Marietta, closed his Bible and put his notes into his coat pocket. He had helped bring McGuire and his family to this territory in 1792. They shared a lifetime of tragedy and triumph, and had known each other in the War of Independence and years thereafter as politicians and entrepreneurs. They were in many ways brothers. He found his brief words fitting. *The older one gets the less needs to be said, the general would*

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*want it this way*, he thought as he threw a handful of dirt onto the coffin. Rufus would miss his dear old friend; he worried for a moment of the great debt the general left behind and how it would be resolved. The hundred or so friends and citizens of Marietta attending the funeral service walked slowly past the gravesite, located on the McGuire property, overlooking the river. They dispersed to their carriages and horses for the short trip back to the farmhouse where refreshments were waiting. It was a fairly sunny day with light breezes. The general's daughter would serve outdoors on the front lawn.

The last decade of the general's life revolved around his 1,240-acre farm, located in the hills over the mighty Ohio River. Several miles southeast was the rural hamlet of Marietta, a prosperous community of one hundred and twenty dwellings, a bank, two churches, and several hundred people, and supporting an active boat building enterprise that provided transport for travelers going west to Cincinnati, the Mississippi, and beyond. General McGuire came to the Ohio valley in 1792, his years as a local Pennsylvania business man, politician, and war hero over. With Maggie, his wife of thirty years, he secured a military land warrant with the assistance of Rufus Putnam of the Ohio Company of Associates. The McGuire's thrived on this new opportunity, building and creating a most prosperous farm to be envied by everyone in the county.

This all changed one April evening when Maggie, in her happiest days, suffered a stroke while sitting on the front porch enjoying the sunset over the Ohio. The general referred to the seven years since her parting as his resting and weeping time. His interests in the day-to-day operations of the farm diminished; he spent more time in solitude, healing as best he could from the loss of his beloved, and gradually reviving his interest in literature and language.

Eventually, he would turn over the commerce of the farm to

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his only child Virginia and her husband Joshua Sprout, oldest son of Ebenezer Sprout, a hard working and proud frontiersman who, through his industry, was able to cast off his squatter heritage and purchase a small plot of land that kept his large family in modest but honest means. Unlike his father, Joshua was not of pleasant disposition. He was a selfish, angry, blaming man, who seems to have resented his father's reputation as a self-made citizen, respected by the New Englanders who founded Marietta in 1788 and the more recent frontier settlers who shared the community. The general was disappointed in Virginia's choice of a husband and felt that her rebellious nature was at the root of her decision. Joshua's lack of curiosity and scholarship was a barrier between him and the general that had been difficult to overcome.

No one understood Joshua's disposition and attitudes, so different from the rest of his family. He did work hard on occasion and, under the direction of the general and the quiet management and manipulation of Virginia, he contributed to the bounty of the farm. The family's industry however was productive and the farm continued to flourish.

Upon Maggie's death, the general retired to his cottage, a small three-room cabin with a small loft; this was the original home built by the couple in their first years on the land. This was the home of his best memories. It served him well these last years, as he focused his energies on writing his memoirs, corresponding with old friends, and entertaining the occasional reporter who sought out his remembrances of the war and his experiences in building a new country. There had been increasing interest in his past on the part of others in the community in the last year, with the talk about a second war with the British Empire.

His greatest enjoyment however was tutoring and mentoring young Jim, who had come to the farm as a homeless waif seven years ago. An abusive, violent stepfather forced his mother to give over her son to save his life.

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The general loved his rolling land of soft hills and gentle valleys. The hills that surrounded and occasionally intermingled with a large tract of tillable soil, laid out like a serpent through the center of the property, were heavily wooded with hickory, maples, oak, and ash. The four hundred and twenty acres under cultivation raised a multitude of crops: wheat, corn, potatoes, and beans were the staples. The farm had another two hundred and twenty acres of lightly wooded rolling pasture. In good rain years, this was enough to maintain an ample number of cattle, horses, and pigs, both feral and domestic. A small creek flowed out of the forested woodlands and led quietly to the Little Muskingum River. This creek, several wells, and in most years, adequate rainfall provided ample moisture to meet the many demands of all the farm's enterprises. The living area was centered on twenty acres, on a small hill at the southwest end of the property. A short walk through a small stand of maples led to the bluff overlooking the Ohio River, while the Muskingum ended its journey several miles to the west. The bluff was several hundred feet above and a mile from the river bank. After the spring runoffs, the flood plain was rich in vegetation and provided a common summer pasture for the hamlet's livestock.

The rugged northern and eastern acreage of the property included a small stream that flowed through a narrow gap in the dense hills and spread out into small drainages that meandered across the property, creating deep bottoms. The opening also included a small path that followed the stream as it fought its way into the "Thickets," a large tract of heavily forested, rugged, and impenetrable land that defied civilization. The stream and accompanying trail meandered for many miles in a northerly direction. The thicket began on the general's property as rolling forested hills that continued in an easterly and northern direction, turning quickly into steep ridges and deep bottoms that rolled relentlessly to the hazy blue and grey mountains of

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the Appalachian plateau. The ridges were smothered in dense vegetation, thick forests, occasional meadows of wild flowers, small creeks, and impenetrable swamps and marshes. The dark thicket, as it was referred to by the settlers, was for the most part left alone.

The trail to the north was both narrow and difficult, working its way over steep ravines and deep valleys, through the large stands of hardwoods and dense underbrush that was still untouched. On the remainder of the property, sufficient timber was still available from the forested hills for those in need of prime lumber, a major winter industry of the general's enterprise.

The farm was located on the edge of the western foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. It was a rich and prosperous land, shared over the last two decades with many bands of displaced Indians, primarily from the eastern states, representing numerous clans and tribes in conflict with the original inhabitants and the never-ending flow of white settlers taking and destroying everything in their path.

The general felt that he was probably walking down the lane for the last time; his breath was short, there was pain in his chest, mostly he was very tired, and he paused several times between the main house and his cottage only several hundred yards away. The path was next to an apple orchard that he and his beloved Maggie had planted sixteen years before. He was too disconcerted to enjoy the green buds of his prize Belvidere Apples filling out the branches. The sun, low in the western sky, was casting ominous shadows that guided him home. *I need to take care of my unfinished business*, he thought. He reached his cottage, his home for the last eight years, fell into the chair, breathed heavily for several minutes, and waited for some energy to return. "Digger, get young Jim, bring him here." The hound dog, still eager after all these years to be a part of the general's life, ran to the shed as he had done many times before