



The Ohio Frontier: An Anthology of Early Writings (Ohio River Valley Series)

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Few mementoes remain of what Ohio was like before white people transformed it. The readings in this anthology—the diaries of a trader and a missionary, the letter of a frontier housewife, the travel account of a wide-eyed young English tourist, the memoir of an escaped slave, and many others—are eyewitness accounts of the Ohio frontier. They tell what people felt and thought about coming to the very fringes of white civilization—and what the people thought and did who saw them coming.

Each succeeding group of newcomers—hunters, squatters, traders, land speculators, farmers, missionaries, fresh European immigrants—established a sense of place and community in the wilderness. Their writings tell of war, death, loneliness, and deprivation, as well as courage, ambition, success, and fun. We can see the lust for the land, the struggle for control of it, the terrors and challenges of the forest, and the determination of white settlers to change the land, tame it, "improve" it.

The new Ohio these settlers created had no room for its native inhabitants. Their dispossession is a defining theme of the book. As the forests receded and the farms expanded, the Indians were pressured to move out. By the time the last tribe, the Wyandots, left in 1843, they were regarded as relics of the romantic past, and the frontier experience came to a close.

Anyone fascinated by the panorama of America's westward migration will respond to the dramatic stories told in these pages.

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