THOMAS WORTHINGTON
FATHER OF
OHIO STATEHOOD
A Virginian Transplanted

It is probably just as well that the facts concerning the early antecedents of most of America's illustrious sons are shrouded, at least to some degree, in romance, anecdote, and tradition. Preeminence in colonial days was a matter of achievement rather than of family, and if the first immigrants had put their trust in noble lineage rather than in energy, sobriety, and economy, they and their progeny would have had little occasion to assume heraldic trappings. Until financial success had crowned the labors of the migrant and made him visibly and acceptably superior to his fellows, noble ancestry was no social asset. The wilderness was no place to boast of gentle blood; God, not the king, was here the arbiter of the destinies of men; let them who could, follow in His train.

Yet among many of the colonists there was a constant appreciation of the importance of heredity, the desirability of family pride, and the challenge which the achievements of their ancestors presented to each succeeding generation. The Quaker records of England, Ireland, and America show the forebears of Thomas Worthington to have been upright, civic-minded citizens of the communities in which they lived. In conformity with the practice of members of the Society of Friends, they let their daily actions reflect that moral rectitude and excellence of breeding to which they laid modest claim. From these Quaker records are derived the authentic data relating to the immediate progenitors of Thomas Worthington.

The motto of the Worthington family of Cheshire, England, was *Virtute dignus acorum* ("in virtue worthy of one's ancestors"). Each branch of the thirteenth-century Lancashire family of William de Worthington inherited not only this motto but a coat of arms: "Argent—three shakeforks, sable, two and one; crest a goat passant, argent, holding in his mouth an oak branch proper (or vert), fructed, or"; which, translated, means a silver shield with three black, triple-tined stable forks, one below and two above; the crest, a side view of a
THOMAS WORTHINGTON

silver goat, holding in its mouth a green-leafed oak branch with golden acorns. This motto and coat of arms may be seen in Chorley Church, Wilmslow Parish, Cheshire, where lived the particular branch of the family in which we are interested.

From Norman times on, the family had been a fertile one; in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Worthingtons were numerous in Cheshire and adjoining Lancashire. Many were devout Anglicans and eminent scholars; for instance, John Worthington (1618-71) was master of Jesus College and Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge. Others were nonconformist ministers: John of Dean Row, and Robert of Mottram-in-Longdendale, who in the 1640's fought the power of the established church. Others remained true to the Catholic faith, notably Thomas (1549-1622), president of Douay College, and his son Thomas (1671-1754), Dominican Prior of Barnhem, Flanders, and Prior Provincial of England. Many joined the Pietist Society of Friends and fostered in their communities the industry, sobriety, and integrity associated with the will of the righteous God they tried to serve. Their faith in the spiritual value of each individual and the equality of all men fostered social democracy; liberty of conscience and the inner light established tolerance and sympathy; emphasis on education and service furthered social reform and the advancement of the social gospel; devotion to the cause of the enslaved, the oppressed, and the underprivileged promoted a policy of world-wide reconciliation. Relatively few in number, they were extremely influential in their own day, and continued to be so in the new world in the person of leaders like William Penn and, in our own time, scholars like Rufus Jones.

Thomas Worthington's great-great-grandfather was John Worthington (1606-91) of Morley, Wilmslow Parish, northeastern Cheshire, England; he called his farm Quarrel Bank (stone quarry). He and Mrs. Worthington (Mabel Owen) were Friends, two of the earliest followers of George Fox, the founder of the society. Worthington's son Jonathan (or John) of "the Quarrel Bank in Pownall fee" died December 18, 1717, aged eighty-eight, leaving his widow Mary (1639-1723) with a large family. One of their children was Robert, sometimes called Robert the Quaker, born in 1667. Aided in part by a collection made up for him by the Morley Monthly Meeting, in 1695 Robert left Quarrel Bank and moved with his wife (Alice Taylor) and his three boys (Samuel, Robert, and John) to Ballignihoe, King's
County, Leinster Province, some seventy miles west of Dublin, Ireland. The next year they moved a short distance to Ballinakill, a small village in County Westmeath, where they were members of the Moate Monthly Meeting. There, seven more children were born to them (Jacob, Ephraim, Esther, Martha, Eliza, Philip, who died thirty-one days later, and Rachel). In 1712, Robert's eldest son, Samuel, migrated to Salem, New Jersey, and the parents and the other children followed him there in 1714. They joined the Salem Monthly Meeting of Friends and became active participants in its work. In 1722, Robert Worthington was dismissed by the Salem Meeting to the Philadelphia Meeting, and moved his family to the vicinity of Philadelphia, where he established himself as a merchant, farmer, stock raiser, and dealer in lands. Unhappily, a few years later Mrs. Worthington was taken sick and died. After the proper interval, her husband, old in years only, married Mary Burtis of the Friends Meeting at Burlington, New Jersey, on July 30, 1729.1

Deciding to leave Philadelphia and move westward, Worthington divided his estate into nine equal portions, retaining one for himself and distributing the others among his eight children, who, with the exception of Samuel and Jacob, were not interested in moving into the wilderness.2 In 1730, having completed the purchase of three thousand acres of northern Shenandoah Valley land from Joist Hite for fifteen pounds, he moved his wife and infant son Robert to the area west of the Blue Ridge Mountains just south of the Potomac.

As early as 1726, Morgan Morgan had established a home in this wilderness near Bunker Hill on Mill Creek, and shortly afterward a few families founded a hamlet called Mecklenburg (Shepherdstown) on the south bank of the Potomac near Pack Horse Ford. When Robert Worthington settled there in 1730, a group of families followed him, including, before the year was out, the Shepherds, Harpers, Foresters, Lemons, Mercers, Van Meters, and Van Swearingens. Worthington was probably the first Friend to settle there, but the next year he was joined by a considerable number of Quaker families from Philadelphia.3

His purchase lay on Evitts Run and the north fork of Bullskin Creek,

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1 The marriage certificate and deposition of Mary Burtis Worthington are in the Orange County Courthouse, Orange, Virginia. Quaker records in England, Ireland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia were investigated by James T. Worthington of Washington, D.C., and by the author for much of this early data. Most vital statistics for the United Kingdom are in Somerset House, London.
2 Thomas Worthington's "Account of His Ancestors and of His Own Early Life," a twelve-page manuscript written for his children in 1821 (in WM), has been used in this chapter.
tributaries of the Shenandoah, in the southwest angle formed by that river and the Potomac. The Quakers seem to have thought they were still within the William Penn Grant—just why it is not easy to understand. In 1732 Joist Hite and fifteen families moved in from Pennsylvania and settled farther up the valley about five miles south of what is now Winchester, where several Pennsylvania-German families had lived since 1728. In fact, every year brought large groups of Germans, Hollanders, Scotch Irish, and English from the North to this beautiful and fertile valley. Knowing the value of land in England and having seen it appreciate near Salem and Philadelphia, Worthington was ambitious to rebuild his fortune by land speculation in the Great Valley.

When he found that he was within newly organized (1734) Orange County, Virginia, he applied for and received a patent for his three thousand acres from the king’s lieutenant governor, William Gooch. He agreed to pay a quitrent of five pounds in Virginia currency for his land, thereafter locally referred to as Worthington's Patent. There, near the present site of Charles Town, West Virginia (laid out on a mill site by George Washington’s brother Charles in 1786), he labored diligently as farmer, stock raiser, and dealer in lands. There he built the first stone home west of the Blue Ridge and called it Quarry Bank (later Piedmont), “new stile for Quarrel Bank.” The house is still in use today as a part of the lovely home of John Briscoe.

In mid-October, 1735, while at Snowden’s ironworks near Patuxent (now Warderville), Maryland, Robert Worthington was taken ill and died at an inn close by. On October 2, he had had an attorney draw a will which divided his estate of three thousand acres among his widow, his children—Robert, Jacob, Mary, and Martha—and a grandson, Bobby Dunblaen, first son of Samuel, who was Worthington’s eldest son by his first wife. However, since the lawyer failed to specify that the land was to be held in fee simple by each devisee and his heirs and assignees forever, the Virginia law operated to give the heirs only a lifetime estate, with reversion to Bobby Dunblaen on their deaths.

Soon after her husband’s death, Mrs. Worthington married a farmer of the locality, Samuel Brittain, and the children were made his wards. He treated Robert harshly and in 1740 bound him out to a severe master. As a result, the boy ran away to Philadelphia, where he worked until

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5 For a description of the grant, see Virginia Patent Records, XV, 339.
6 Frederick County Court House, Winchester, Virginia, Deed Book, I, 286.
he was eighteen. Returning to the Valley in 1748 to receive his patri­mony, he took up farming, surveying, and land-dealing in his own right. A tireless worker, he was soon able to buy the reversionary claims to most of his six hundred acres from his nephew Bobby, who, after a period of prosperity as a speculator in Valley lands, seems to have dissipated his holdings rapidly. In 1752, Bobby sold 700 acres to Lawrence Washington, and in 1754, he sold Piedmont (Quarry Bank) and 1,279 acres of land, which was perhaps all he owned by that time, to Charles Dick. Years later, Mrs. Brittain told her grandson Thomas that Bobby had drifted West penniless, but since he had received £2,200 from Dick for the Piedmont estate, she was either in error or he owed many debts.

Having had little schooling, Robert secured a tutor for himself and soon became proficient in his studies, especially in mathematics, which he needed for surveying. He sometimes worked with George Washington as a chain carrier in the lower Valley, where the latter was employed as surveyor by Lord Thomas Fairfax. They often stayed at Fairfax' splendid mansion, Greenway Courts, thirteen miles southeast of Winchester. The bachelor lord's five and a half million acres between the Rappahannock and the Potomac and an approximately equal area in and beyond the Shenandoah Valley itself gave them plenty to do.

Washington was Robert's junior by two years; both served Virginia in Braddock's campaign, and were lucky to get back home alive. George Washington himself had a farm on Bullskin Creek. Harewood, Samuel Washington's home, lay next to Worthington's, between Bullskin Creek and Evitts Run.

In 1759, Robert married Margaret Matthews, an Irish lass from Fredericktown, Maryland. For marrying outside the Quaker communion he was "disowned" by the Hopewell Friends Meeting. By diligent effort he and his wife built up an impressive estate near the present Charles Town. They called their home, a stone house halfway between Quarry Bank and the Washington estate at Altona, the Manor House, and finished out their lives there; they also owned a town house in the village of Martinsburg, which they called the Mansion House. Robert invested in several tracts of Ohio country land and at his death owned at least a score of slaves.

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During the latter part of his life, Robert was a justice of the peace, the first coroner of Berkeley County (established in 1772 from Frederick, which had been separated from Orange in 1743), a collector of tithables, captain of the first of nineteen companies of Frederick County militia (1773), and in general an influential citizen of the community. Deeply religious, he was instrumental in erecting St. George's Chapel, the first church in Norborne Parish (separated from Frederick in 1769), on land which he and Thomas Shepherd of Shepherdstown had donated. The land was set aside in 1769, the church was erected the next year, and a good endowment was secured from Thomas Shepherd's son Abraham, from other members of the Shepherd family, and from James Nourse.9

For his services in the French and Indian War as lieutenant of Virginia militia, Robert was awarded a grant of two thousand Virginia acres by "the Right Honorable John, Earl of Dunmore, Governor of Virginia, dated the 9th day of April 1774 and directed to the surveyor of Augusta County . . . which land he is entitled to by his Majesty's proclamation issued in the month, October, 1763."10

The year 1774 was a critical one in the history of the British Empire in North America. By such belated awards as that made to Worthington, Dunmore doubtless hoped to placate the rising fires of discontent in the back country. His efforts were vain, however, for the resentment over British policy toward the colonies had grown in the two decades since Braddock's defeat on the Monongahela. Colonial casualties, interruptions to trade and commerce, large debts, and high taxes created bitter resentment, even though the Frenchmen had been driven from the continent. Moreover, the Proclamation of 1763 and the gradual emergence of a plan to exploit the West from London with British capital was a shock to colonial financiers, who hoped to carve fortunes from land speculation in the Ohio country. The Grenville and Townshend tax schemes had aggravated the ills of the colonial businessmen, and, with the First Continental Congress but five months away, Dunmore perhaps hoped to enlist Robert Worthington's aid against the Indians and hold him loyal to the crown; at least he could hope not to find him in the opposition.

After 1749, many Virginians, including George Washington, Patrick Henry, Hugh Mercer, William Preston, William Christian, and John

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10 Deed in WM.
Connolly, had secured or were seeking lands on the Ohio River. Most Virginians, including Dunmore himself, if we can judge by his actions, echoed Washington's sentiment that "notwithstanding the Proclamation [of 1763] that restrains it [settlement] at present... I can never look upon that Proclamation in any other light (but this I say between ourselves), than as a temporary expedient to quiet the minds of the Indians." By 1774, both in England and the colonies, it had been decided that the Indians were to be sacrificed for the speculators, as Charles Lee put it, in a war "carried on by the governor of Virginia, at the instigation of two murderers on the frontier [Michael Cresap and John Connolly], and in spite of the declamations of the whole continent against the injustice of it... an impious, black piece of work." That Dunmore was playing a double game is fairly obvious, for he had to operate as an agent of the king while he himself wished to speculate in land in the Ohio country. It was doubtless with reluctance, therefore, that he announced to the Virginia Assembly in May that, for the time being, no further grants would be made. His announcement was relayed to Robert Worthington in a letter from George Washington:

Williamsburg, June 1774

SIR:  
Your purchase of the within claim has been attended with several unlucky Circumstances, and must, I apprehend, turn out a losing bargain—I did not get down to the very first of the session, & as it turned out, was not here whilst the Council were sitting. Whilst I was waiting therefore for this Event, the Governor received orders to Grant no more Lands upon the Western Waters til further orders, so that no more warrants can now issue & a total stop is put to all future proceedings in Landed Claims till his Majesty’s further pleasure is known— Under the circumstances I return your assignment from James Smith and am

Sir Yr most H’ble Sev’t

G. Washington

To Mr. Robert Worthington
In
Berkeley Cty.

This action was in conformity with the royal circular of February 3, 1774, which forbade further allocation of western lands, except

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13 Original, RCHS.
as compensation to veterans, until after they had been surveyed into lots of one hundred and one thousand acres, after which they might be sold at not less than sixpence per acre (the price to be set by the governor) with a quitrent of a halfpenny sterling. Worthington's application was for issuance to him of the warrants due Smith for his war service, but the governor's action indefinitely postponed their issue and did not permit Worthington to qualify for them under the veterans' compensation provision in the proclamation or the February circular.

Worthington took no part in Lord Dunmore's War, and that in spite of the fact that he owned at least 2,170 acres of frontier land (the "Potato Garden") on Raccoon Creek in western Pennsylvania. He had purchased this tract from William Crawford in 1772 for one hundred sixty pounds in Virginia currency, and it was very advantageously located on the Mingo Path in the area west of Pittsburgh, only seven miles from the Ohio River. He also owned a tract of perhaps sixteen hundred acres west of the Ohio on Yellow Creek (Columbiana County, Ohio). It is likely that his Quaker training made him fundamentally a man of peace, especially when it came to despoiling the Indians, with whose plight, it is reasonable to believe, he was sympathetic. On the other hand, with the coming of the Revolution, Captain Worthington was not slow to espouse the patriot cause. He and Captain William Darke hurried east to offer their services to Washington upon his appointment as commander of the Continental Army. Of his services we have no record. However, we do know that four years later Worthington was back home endeavoring to raise a troop of cavalry, chiefly at his own expense, when death overtook him in 1779 at the age of forty-nine. His wife died the next year, leaving six children: Ephraim, Martha, Mary, William, Robert, and Thomas—the last a boy of six (born July 16, 1773).

According to the father's will, drawn up July 30, 1779, by the local Episcopal minister, the Reverend Daniel Sturges, each child inherited an equal share of the $200,000 estate (about 1,466 acres each or the equivalent), and Ephraim was made sole executor. All the children had had the best of private tutors, since the father had been eager to give them a good education—a privilege of which he had been deprived. Thomas Worthington recalled years later that "tho [he was]..."
not five years old," his father had expressed anxiety to hear him read and had promised his tutor additional rewards for teaching him. Ephraim had been sent to William and Mary College at Williamsburg, but withdrew to serve with the Virginia troops under General McIntosh in the Ohio country. Toward the end of the war he came home, was married, and after the death of his parents moved Effie, "his pretty and very illiterate wife who made his life miserable," into the Manor House. Mary, William, Robert, and Thomas lived for a time in the stone Mansion House in Martinsburg, but the pinch of war conditions, among other things, shortly led Ephraim to insist that Mary seek another home. He bound out William to a Winchester merchant and took Robert and Tom to live with him at the Manor House. The Mansion House was then rented.

The boys were indifferently schooled by Ephraim. Robert soon established a hack-and-hauling service to Alexandria and Baltimore, married, and moved out of the Manor House. Young Tom for some time was used by Effie as nursemaid for her children, a role he naturally resented. He was a sensitive boy, who particularly missed Mary and his two brothers and never felt any great affection for Ephraim or Ephraim's wife, whom he remembered as abusive. "Night after night," he wrote years later, "did I wet my pillow with tears. It was then for the first time, tho my parents had been dead but 2 years that I was sensible of being an orphan, and mourned the loss of my more than kind sister Mary, than whom a better woman never lived."

When Tom was about fourteen (1787), his brother William came of legal age, married Elizabeth Machie, and took the boy for a year as his ward to the Mansion House in Martinsburg. Tom went joyfully, expecting to better his surroundings, but William was an indifferent guardian. When he decided to remove to Kentucky, Thomas replaced him with an old friend and associate of his father, Colonel William Darke of Shepherdstown. He proved to be the type of friend and counselor the young Worthington needed. Tom was sent to school and given a real home by Colonel and Mrs. Darke: "This gentleman was to me a father, and his good lady a mother. On my part I repaid all in my power their kindness—I lived happily and progressed in my studies."

During his schooling under the guardianship of Colonel Darke, young Worthington studied navigation, for he "had long indulged the

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22 William died in 1801 at or near Maysville, Kentucky. Thomas Worthington was his executor. Worthington's diary, August 26, 1811. All references to the diary refer to the Worthington notebooks in the Library of Congress and the Ohio Historical Society. See also letters of Eliza Worthington to Thomas Worthington, February 1 and March 7, 1801, in WM.
inclination to go to sea." So, despite the fact that he was almost of age and about to enter on his inheritance, he asked consent to try his luck on the ocean.  

"My guardian . . . reluctantly assented and on the 7th day of May 1791 I bid this kind family farewell except the youngest son who would accompany me to Georgetown, District of Columbia, where I shipped as a common sailor on board the Britannia of port Glasgow, Scotland, requiring no other pay than my food." This voyage took him to Cuba, Jamaica, Glasgow, and the Baltic. In Jamaica, endeavoring to double his small capital by venture, he invested it in molasses. When the ship arrived at Glasgow the young merchant opened his casks and to his disgust found that he had purchased and transported a consignment of salt water. For the rest of the voyage he was a common seaman by necessity as well as by choice. In June, 1792, he shipped from Glasgow with Alexander Blair, master of the brigantine "Home," for Barbados. In November of the same year he served aboard the "Mary of Glasgow," the master of which was James Taylor, who had long been engaged in the Greenland, Nova Scotia, and New England trade. Off the coast of Scotland they were boarded by an English press gang, who paraded all hands on deck. The ruddy, tall American, who looked every inch a healthy Britisher, was among those seized, and it was only after violent expostulation by him and his captain, accompanied by a complete examination of the ship's papers, that Tom escaped participation in the Napoleonic wars. He showed his gratitude years later when he named his first son James Taylor Worthington. After a voyage to America, he was paid off, honorably discharged, and landed by Taylor at Alexandria, Virginia, on January 18, 1793.

In Captain Taylor young Worthington had found a most admirable and amiable friend and enjoyed, as he put it, "a degree of happiness in being with him that I had never before experienced from any other gentleman of his profession. . . . Expression fails when I would wish to paint his Character in a Proper light." A correspondence was attempted between them, but it was thirty-one years before the captain learned that he had a namesake in Ohio. He regarded it as the highest compliment he had ever received.

After almost two years at sea Worthington was happy to return to the

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16 For a more elaborate account, see Sarah Worthington Peter, *Private Memoir of Thomas Worthington* (Cincinnati, 1882), 10.
17 This is the end of the account by Worthington. Mrs. Peter's *Private Memoir* will be followed in the remainder of this chapter except as otherwise noted.
18 "Seamans Journal" (manuscript log kept by Worthington), June 4, 1792, to January 18, 1793. Photostatic copy, RCHS.
19 Taylor to Worthington, July 20, 1824, RCHS.
hills of his childhood, to his friends and his work. Colonel Darke took
an even more fatherly interest in him now, for his youngest and
favorite son Joseph had been killed, and he himself wounded, while
serving with the incompetent and gout-ridden St. Clair against the
Indians of the Northwest in 1791.

Worthington, now twenty, established bachelor's hall in the modest
home which he had inherited and which he called Prospect Hill. He
had a few colored servants to wait on him, among them his devoted
housekeeper, Aunt Hannah. He kept busy working his estate, surveying,
acting as deputy for Sheriff Cato Moore, and speculating in western
lands. He had at least 1,873 acres on Raccoon Creek, Pennsylvania, a
third of which he had inherited; presumably he had bought the shares
of William and Robert. He was also engaged in courting at least
one of the belles of the countryside and listening to tales of the rich
lands in the territory northwest of the Ohio River and of emigration
in that direction. He prepared himself to serve against the Indians, for
the defeats of St. Clair and Harmar had shown the necessity of a
well-regulated militia; he secured a lieutenancy in the 55th Regiment,
Militia of the Commonwealth, in September, 1794, and in March,
1795, was commissioned first lieutenant in a company of artillery
attached to the 16th Militia Brigade. A fortunate turn of events in
Indian relations perhaps kept him from suffering the fate which had
befallen half of St. Clair's command, for on August 11, 1794, Anthony
Wayne at Fallen Timbers dispersed the conquerors of St. Clair and
Harmar. By the spring of 1795 the Indian opposition had faded since
it was evident that England and the United States were not going to
war. When the British came to terms with John Jay, the Indians were
forced to sue for peace at Greeneville.

After the papers opening two-thirds of Ohio to settlement had been
signed, migration increased to a flood, and Worthington, now captain
of an artillery company ('Third Regiment of the Third Division'), caught
the "Ohio fever." Having purchased a considerable number of Virginia
military warrants, including some from General Darke, he proposed
to go and locate them himself. On this trip he decided to keep a diary,
and to it we are indebted for most of the detail related here.

20 Alex White, 3rd, to Worthington at Travelers Rest, Berkeley, June 2, 1796, in
WM; Tiffin to Worthington, March 10, 1798, in WMOSL. Numerous documents
(in WM) show Worthington to have been a deputy sheriff and collector of tithes
in 1795-96. See Joseph Swearingen to Worthington, February 6, 1794, regarding
his west Pennsylvania land, in WM.
He set out on horseback for the Ohio River on June 20, 1796. Several
days later, he arrived at Wheeling village on the Ohio, where he left
his horses and took the mail canoe to the mouth of the Muskingum,
noting along the way the splendid farming possibilities at Buckhill
Bottom, thirty miles below Wheeling—an area well watered and full of
sugar maple, beech, elm, and walnut trees. At Marietta he secured
a place in a sailing packet boat, and was much intrigued with a girl
and her brother who were passengers as far as Belpre, the home of their
father, Colonel Israel Putnam. Sailing day and night, they passed
George Washington's Kanawha bottoms on the twenty-eighth of June,
and the French settlement at Gallipolis on the twenty-ninth. On the
thirtieth the packet dropped him at the mouth of the Scioto, where,
by agreeing to handle a paddle, he got a place in the mail canoe going
up that river. For the first twenty miles he was disappointed with the
country; not more than one-eighth of the land they passed was the rich
bottom land he had been led to expect, and the river was "the most
meandrous" he had ever seen. On July 1, after pushing the canoe all
day, he went ashore in the evening and got lost in a swamp, where he
saw many deer and turkeys. Not finding the canoe, he walked five
miles north. Overtaken by darkness, he napped for a few hours, and was
half-devoured by the myriad mosquitoes. At daybreak he walked north
another five miles and caught the canoe when it came along. They
pushed on eighteen miles that day, "passing several fine prairies."

The next day, July 3, he went ashore at Indian Creek and picked up
a guide in the person of one Charles Fournash, who had been a prisoner
of the Indians for four years and knew their language. They walked
north to Nathaniel Massie’s farm (Station Prairie) at the mouth of
Paint Creek, where Massie’s men with thirty plows had put three
hundred acres of virgin soil in cultivation the first week in April which
now showed a splendid stand of corn. Three miles farther north they
came to Massie’s Town (Chillicothe), established in 1795 by Nathaniel
Massie and his father, Henry Massie, who had migrated from Virginia
to Kentucky in 1783 to survey and purchase lands there and across the
Ohio River. In 1791 they had established a post on the Ohio near the
mouth of Ohio Brush Creek and named it Massie’s Station (now Man-
chester).  

Worthington and Fournash found Massie’s Town in the first stages of
settlement. It was made up of the scattered cabins of the settlers who
had purchased hundred-acre outlots from Massie at £25, each of

21 See John McDonald, Biographical Sketches of General Nathaniel Massie,
General Duncan McArthur, Captain William Wells, and General Simon Kenton
(Cincinnati, 1838).
which carried a bonus of one inlot and one four-acre outlot to the first hundred settlers. Some twenty clapboard-roof cabins were already built or in the process of being built. They found very little to eat there—no reflection on the hospitality of the settlers but an indication of the situation in the new settlement: few garden plots yet, no mill, no store or tavern deserving the name, everyone living off the game and wild fruit in the woods and sharing or selling imported flour and bacon with the greatest reluctance.

The next day they made a canoe and continued to prospect the river country. By evening, Worthington had decided that the finest piece of land he had seen was the high-bank prairie in the Congress Lands opposite the mouth of Paint Creek, an area "9 miles long & 2 miles wide." They stayed at Fournash's house, "fifty [sic] miles down the river," that night. Starting for the Ohio on the sixth of July, they met with difficulty when their canoe was upset by logs in the high water and Worthington almost lost his saddlebags, papers, and clothes. From the seventh to the thirteenth they inspected the land on both sides of the Ohio near Graham's Station, Massie's Station, and Limestone. With fresh horses and a new companion, Daniel Bollinghouse (perhaps he furnished the horses), they prospected the shady bottoms on the west side of the Scioto on their way back to Chillicothe, which they reached on the fifteenth. They had had little to eat on the trip, and very little was available in the hamlet. The same day, Worthington got Duncan McArthur, Massie's brawny, twenty-four-year-old surveyor, to take two men and start surveys for him on a fine piece of land to the northwest of the settlement. He watched the beginning of this process with great satisfaction; that night they "supped on flour and water." The next day McArthur decided to go in search of food. He and Michael Thomas started after a deer while Worthington celebrated his twenty-third birthday alone in camp "on baked flour & almost starved." The following morning, leaving McArthur to continue his survey of this wonderful area, which included both fertile valley and pleasant wooded upland, Worthington scouted his way through his land, exhilarated by the clear air and alternate sun and shade of the hills and the damp, aromatically scented valleys. He lay in the woods all night, and the next day followed an Indian trail back to the village. That day he purchased several lots.

He spent the next day thrashing his way through the Scioto bottoms, and after another night in the open, he started for Limestone on July 20. For two days it had rained, and the streams were swollen.

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22 Williams Brothers, History of Ross and Highland Counties, Ohio (Cleveland, 1880), 46-47.
In fording Ohio Brush Creek near its fork, Worthington's horses were swept down the flooded stream for sixty yards before he could get them ashore. On the twenty-first, he crossed the Ohio into Mason County, Kentucky, at Limestone, and going by way of Washington, the county seat, reached his brother William's in the evening.

After visiting a few days with his brother, during which time they attended Monthly Court at Washington, where he met several acquaintances from Berkeley County, Worthington left for home. At Graham's Station he caught a sailing packet up to Wheeling. There he picked up his horses on the eighth, and that evening was in Washington, Pennsylvania, where, tired as he was—but not too tired to drive a bargain—he bought six hundred acres of Scioto Brush Creek land from Henry Smith at four shillings an acre. He reached home after two more days of hard riding via Bardstown, Beesontown (Uniontown), Laurel Hill, Faucets, Potters, Lumpkins, Tumbleton, Steckers, Cumberland, and Oldtown.

This first trip to the Scioto country completely won his farmer's heart and alienated no little part of his affection for that equally fertile but definitely limited Shenandoah Valley land on which he had been reared. He returned home firmly determined to remove to the promising Ohio region at no distant time. His friends, however, strongly urged him not to go to that far-off wilderness; John Blackford wrote on September 5, 1796, "I hope you . . . have concluded to take to your arms that sweet little woman that propitious heaven has ordained for you . . . and set down at your ease and become a good member of society." Worthington took only part of this advice; on December 13 he married the beautiful Eleanor Swearingen of Shepherdstown, who was to prove a devoted and tireless companion throughout his life. She was a niece of Mrs. Abraham Shepherd (nee Strode) of Shepherdstown, in whose home the wedding took place. Eleanor, familiarly known as Nellie, had been left an orphan, her mother having died in 1786 and her father in 1795; but since she had inherited a good deal of property, some stock, and several colored servants, the young couple was extremely well-to-do for the times. In fact, Sam Washington, George's nephew and the proprietor of Harewood estate near Charles Town, wrote in a letter to Worthington in October, 1796, "Knowing that you are the only man in our neighbor-

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23 Letter in WM.
24 The Private Memoir contains some personal history and a picture of Mrs. Worthington. The Swearingen family Bible gives the place and date of the wedding. See also Virginia Lucas, "Thomas Worthington of Virginia, 1773-1827," West Virginia Review, VI (1929), 140-42.
hood that has money [by which, of course, he meant the only man
who saved his money], am induced once more to impose on your
good nature in lending me a Hundred Dollars for Three Weeks. . . .”

It seems probable that Worthington and his wife spent their honey-
moon in Philadelphia, where Worthington visited Congress, informed
his friends of his decision to move west, and solicited a position as
surveyor in the Northwest Territory.

In May of 1797, Worthington’s brother Ephraim died, and his widow,
Effie, prevailed on him to settle the estate. That summer, Worthington,
accompanied by Edward Tiffin—a thirty-one-year-old doctor from
Charles Town, a close friend who had married his favorite sister
Mary in 1789—made his second trip to the new country, bearing more
warrants which he wished to locate. He was amazed to find that the
cluster of cabins at Chillicothe had grown to almost a hundred, that an­
other hundred families lived within a radius of ten miles, and that new
settlers were arriving daily. As to their nature, “So far as I have seen,”
he wrote his wife, “they are exceedingly well disposed and remarkably
industrious. As yet there is no magistrate, nor, though I have inquired,
do I hear of any quarrels. There are four or five little stores from which
you can buy anything necessary. . . . The Indians are quite peaceable,
and from what I learn among those of them who speak English, there
is not the most distant prospect of war.”

On August 2, he entered into an agreement at Chillicothe with
Duncan McArthur for the location of 7,600 acres in the Virginia
Military District, the great area located between the Scioto and the
Little Miami rivers which had been reserved by Virginia for her soldiers
when the cession of western lands was made to Congress. The warr­
ants that Virginians were locating there were, therefore, those that
had been issued to them as Virginia soldiers or that had been pur­
chased by them from the original holders. For his services for Worth­
ington, McArthur received one-fifth of the quantity of land specified in
the warrants he located, which was the ordinary percentage; in addi­
tion, Worthington had to pay all expenses connected with surveying
and entering the lands. This would seem to have been a rather large
price for the mere locating of lands, but actually the locater was a
most important person, for in the Virginia Military District the camel­
back (sometimes called the “zigzag cut and carve”) survey was used,
which permitted the surveyor to parallel the water courses and elimi-

25 Letter in WM.
26 Richard Z. Blackburn to Worthington, January 1, 1797, in WM.
27 Peter, Private Memoir, 22-24.
28 Signed memorandum in the McArthur Papers, LC.
nate all shallow, rocky, or otherwise undesirable land. McArthur, having supervised the first survey, congratulated Worthington on the fine quality of the land (apparently 2,866 acres) which he had located for him. These two continued to work together in land deals for many years; although such deals were a minor issue with Worthington, they were McArthur's chief business.

On this trip Worthington again met his old friend and fellow Virginian, Nathaniel Massie, with whom he carried on much business afterward. They discussed with avidity the opportunities in the West, the necessity for post roads, and the desirability of petitioning Congress for a grant of land for the support of a university to be established in the not too distant future. Already, these young men of Jefferson's generation and persuasion were anticipating educational advantages for the many.

This second trip to the West confirmed Worthington's faith in the new country and strengthened his determination to move there. The rapid increase in population stimulated his visions of profitable investment. The Greene Ville Treaty seemed to have ensured safety for the inhabitants, and the beauty of the rolling verdure-clad hills and of the fertile Scioto and Paint Creek valleys delighted him. The location appeared to be healthful, and since the three lots he owned in Chillicothe were so inviting, Worthington thought it wise to build a house before some squatter usurped the best site in his absence. Consequently, he and Dr. Tiffin agreed to build log-cabin homes immediately. About one hundred fifty yards south of the easterly bend of the river, near the present corner of Paint and Second streets, Worthington erected a modest log cabin on a lot which included an Indian mound some thirty-five feet in height on which he planned to have a summer house. He lost no time, for the prospect of an heir made him anxious to return to Virginia. On July 9, 1797, Abraham Shepherd of Shepherdstown wrote him as follows: "Mrs. Worthington . . . Mrs. Shepherds nease [sic] has thirty young ducks I see her paying great attention to every day and she begins to show she is a married woman. I suppose you will feel strange when Papa is called."
in Virginia by September, the Worthingtons and Tiffins began to prepare for their exodus in the spring. Worthington’s slaves were all manumitted and either placed with friends or included in the plans for the West. The Worthingtons’ first child was born November 19, 1797, and named Mary Tiffin.

Worthington endeavored to dispose of most of his Virginia property, making a particular effort to secure Ohio lands in trade. Prospect Hill and most of his Berkeley County lands were traded to his neighbor, General Stevens Thomson Mason of Raspberry Plain, for land warrants in the Virginia Military District. Nathaniel Massie, originally from Berkeley County, was invited to make a visit to his old home county and give advice on land locations and general prospects in the Ohio country. Since Massie was unmarried, Worthington tried to ensure his visit by telling him of the fair and well-endowed maidens that could be had for the asking. He proposed, moreover, that they go to Philadelphia and petition Congress for a post road from Wheeling to Limestone and for a land grant to establish a college at Chillicothe. He mentioned in passing that he was watching the French Revolution carefully; he hoped the Directory might have “pure principles and bring harmony to the country.” Already this twenty-four-year-old Virginian was evidencing the political philosophy and the practical statesmanship which were to make him one of the Ohio country’s leaders.

The Wheeling-Limestone road became an actuality that same year (1797), when Ebenezer Zane established it over the horseback trail known as Zane’s Trace which he had opened in 1795. Travel and commerce over it from southern Ohio east were heavy despite its deplorable condition, especially in the winter months. In 1798, United States mail service was established over the road, and stagecoach service was begun in 1805.

Wednesday, March 14, 1798, was the day set for the Worthingtons’ departure, but preparations for moving had been going on, it seemed, all winter. It took the Tiffin family three days to prepare food and finish packing for the journey. The Worthingtons had collected their furniture, including two lovely pier glasses inherited by Eleanor from her mother, and, in addition, had gathered together the family silver

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84 Worthington to Massie, November 29, 1797, in Massie, Massie, 137. A Mr. Lynn also purchased a portion of Worthington’s property. See Lucas, “Thomas Worthington of Virginia,” 141. Abraham Shepherd seems to have bought from him a farm of about 250 acres called Rocky Fountain. A. Shepherd to Worthington, November 24, 1800, and June 28 and November 27, 1801, in WM.
85 Worthington to Massie, September 9, 1797, and November 24, 1797, in Massie, Massie, 132, 134-35.
and linen, farming implements, pots and pans, chickens, fruit trees, shrubbery, and seeds of every kind. The traveling party consisted of Worthington and his wife and daughter; his brother Robert and his wife (Ann E. Whiting) and their three children; Mrs. Worthington's two brothers, James and Samuel Swearingen; Dr. Tiffin and his family, which included his wife, his parents, two brothers, and two sisters; a Mr. Woods and his family, including several big boys who were millwrights; and a group of free Negro servants. Paradise, the Tiffin home in Charles Town which had recently been sold to James Wood, was the first stopping place for the pilgrims. Thence they moved across the valley of the Opequon to Martinsburg, where they rested a day while the wagons went ahead a day's journey on the trail around North Mountain and across the Cacapon through Bath (Berkeley Springs) to Paw Paw Ferry. There the company crossed the Potomac and followed the crude road to Cumberland by way of Cresaps (Old Town). At Cumberland they took Braddock's Road across the mountains to Pittsburgh.

The next stage of the journey was three hundred forty-five miles by Ohio River flatboats to the mouth of the Scioto. The immigrants were delighted with the scenery along the Ohio, which the French had called la belle rivière, and which Elbridge Gerry, Jr., one of Worthington's contemporaries, thought "the most beautiful river in the world." Its "elegant banks" were tree-covered, and its many islands were most picturesque. Grapevines "8 inches or more in diametre" hung from the giant trees. Down past the villages of Beaver, Steubenville, and Wheeling, which they reached April 3, they drifted, sailed, and poled. The valley appeared to be very rich, and at the confluence of the Ohio's many tributaries other fertile valleys stretched invitingly. Four days of alternate shade and sunshine brought them to the village of Marietta, at the mouth of the Muskingum. There they viewed the forty acres of ancient fortifications—prehistoric Indian earthworks—looked over the projected right-angled streets, which gave future promise of "a Town of great magnitude," and admired the beauty of the placid Muskingum. Again embarking, they spent five more days sailing the one hundred ninety-three miles to the site of the old Shawnee village at the mouth of the Scioto River, another placid, but much smaller, stream flowing from the north into the Ohio. This part of the trip had been easy and pleasant compared with the arduous horseback journey now facing them. Perhaps the women recalled how, forty-

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86 Tiffin to Worthington, March 10, 1798, in WMSL. Some details are added to the account in the Private Memoir.
87 Annette Townsend and Claude G. Bowers, eds., The Diary of Elbridge Gerry, Jr. (New York, 1927), 110.
three years earlier at this very place, their athletic fellow Virginian, Mary Draper Ingles—she could leap on her horse from a standing position—had been held captive by the Shawnee, her life spared chiefly because they learned she could make shirts; here her third child was born, in some measure replacing those the Indians had sold into captivity. Perhaps they remembered, too, how all the captives but Mary had been forced to run the gantlet. Such memories no doubt strengthened them for the long walk and ride up the almost indistinguishable river path to Chillicothe. Not until April 17 did the tired though patient company reach that wilderness settlement and welcome the sight of their new homes.

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The reasons which persuaded Worthington and his party to go to the Ohio country merit a word of explanation. They despised the institution of slavery and agreed with their Virginia neighbor, Colonel Richard K. Meade, that its abolition in Virginia and throughout the South was “the wish of every liberal mind, . . . the mode of affecting it” being “the only real obstacle.” They were happy that the government established for the Northwest Territory by the Ordinance of 1787 had excluded the evil institution. Too, they had often heard that eminent Methodist circuit rider, Francis Asbury, denounce its wickedness when he regularly stopped in their neighborhood. They would have approved the entry he made in his diary on January 9, 1798, and they acted in conformity with its sentiments when they left Virginia just three months after it was penned:

Oh! to be dependant on slave-holders is in part to be a slave, and I was free born. I am brought to conclude that slavery will exist in Virginia perhaps for ages; there is not a sufficient sense of religion nor of liberty to destroy it; Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, in the highest flights of rapturous piety, still maintain and defend it. I judge in after ages it will be so that poor men and free men will not live among slave-holders, but will go to new lands: they only who are concerned in, and dependant on them will stay in old Virginia.

Yet strong as this feeling against slavery undoubtedly was, it was not the chief factor in the decision to make the move to the Ohio country; Worthington was not a slaveholder in the true sense of

the word, for his Negroes were servants and members of the household. The pioneer instinct, the economic motive of bettering his condition by moving into a country where land was rich and cheap, and the opportunity to be an influence in building a new country were the true reasons which led to his departure from friends and familiar surroundings. To a young man of ambition, the West, with its promises of adventure, wealth, and opportunity, exerted an almost irresistible attraction. The story of the movement westward has been told over and over again, but an attempt to rationalize it completely is foolish. The wilderness called, and men of spirit, of daring, of imagination, answered. Moreover, third-generation life in the lower Shenandoah Valley had lost much of its excitement and opportunity; the area’s shallow soil, its great distance—both geographically and socially—from the center of political affairs in Virginia, and the inability of its inhabitants to get ahead as fast and as far as they desired were important considerations. No such economic, political, or social handicaps existed north of the Ohio; an ambitious man’s success was circumscribed only by his personal limitations.

Thus were installed in this new country two men who were to wield an influence matched by no other two, in industry, politics, and service to the community. Edward Tiffin was the first of two licensed medical practitioners in the settlement (Samuel McAdow was the other); Bishop Asbury had made him a lay preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church; he came to Chillicothe commended to the attention of Governor St. Clair by former President Washington; and from the time of his arrival he was accorded the highest social, professional, and political recognition it was in the power of the people of his community, territory, and state to bestow.\textsuperscript{41} Worthington, without Tiffin’s schooling, professional recognition, or high endorsement, relied on his enormous energy, sound judgment, dauntless courage, and driving ambition. From the time of his arrival, he set an example of business acumen, political sagacity, and achievement in public service that seldom has been excelled.

\textsuperscript{41}William E. Gilmore, \textit{Life of Edward Tiffin, First Governor of Ohio} (Chillicothe, 1897), 1-18.