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REV. REZIN MONROE BARNS' GIFT TO ILIFF:
A TAINTED TROPHY AND THE FRAMING OF WHITE
SUPREMACY IN AMERICA

"...a great many of the inhabitants of the frontiers (sic) consider the murdering of the Indians in the highest degree meritorious."¹ – indian governor william henry harrison (1801)

The ghastly trophy of a book of christian history bound in the flayed and tanned skin of a Lenape man murdered in 1779 became a prized gift, a colonialist icon of triumph, which the rev. rezin monroe barns (r.m. barns), a colorado methodist minister, gave to the new methodist episcopal school of theology in 1893. Iliff school of theology was the brand-new methodist religion department of the university of denver in 1892. The next year, iliff received this notorious gift, a gift for the iliff library. It was a ghastly trophy of a book of christian history bound in the flayed and tanned skin of a Lenape man murdered in 1779, which rev. barns (rm) intended as a special gift of a family heirloom, given to help support the new methodist episcopal school of theology.

A previous article traces some of the history of this book under iliff's custodianship and their eventual, if very reluctant, surrender of the book's human-remains cover. But we have yet to explore the events, the motivations, the social imaginary of barns' possession of the book and his ultimate gifting to iliff, or the earlier transmission of the book. Who is this prominent frontier preacher? How did he come into possession of the book and its cover? How much did he really know about the book's wicked history? And why would he have thought such a gruesome artifact of murder and human desecration to be an appropriate gift for a christian school whose mission was training christian ministers?

In this latter regard, there is, of course, the collateral question regarding the motives of former governor and foremost methodist layman john evans, chair of the board of trustees in 1893, in receiving the gift, not to mention other trustees such as bishop warren and his wife elizabeth iliff warren, both university trustees and co-founders of iliff school of theology. What were these christian people thinking that they completely failed to see

¹ Logan esarey (ed.), *messages and letters of william henry harrison*, 2 vols. (indiana historical commission, 1922), I: 25.

the repugnant nature of the gift? What was the dominant social imaginary that allowed them to so easily see this shameful and macabre book with its attached human remains as such a treasured trophy of christian triumph?

As I reported in an earlier article, a eurochristian squatter farmer named david morgan had murdered two Lenape men over a century before RM made his gift to iliff. It was other squatters at prickett's fort (a civilian eurochristian fort) who then relieved the victims of their skin, flaying and then tanning their skin to make mementos of the event: shot pouches and the like, along with the cover of the egregious book.² It would be good to remember that morgan's murder of these two Lenape men did more than alleviate whatever perceived threat morgan and his squatter group felt in the immediate moment – whatever the reality might have actually been. His homicidal act – consistent with so many similar acts by other Indian murderers – helped to open a new portal of conquest. But morgan's act went a step further. The skinning of the Lenape men and the enduring legacy of the book covered in that man's skin ensured the continued domination and fetishizing of Native Peoples through centuries. I taught at iliff for more than thirty years, and I can attest that many American Indians who knew about the book would refuse to step inside the school because of its presence in the building--- even without its cover.³ They well knew what it signaled to the broader world around us about American Indians, about us. A simple *artifact* sitting exposed in a glass case, it singlehandedly vindicated (and rationalized) the whole of the christian conquest of Native Peoples and Native Land. While one might use the more inclusive word eurochristian in regard to conquest and domination,⁴ the context of this sentence demands the use of the

² Haze morgan, a g-g-grandson of david morgan, became the proud owner of "quite a large piece" of the infamous Lenape murder victim's skin in 1910, taken from an "old fashioned" shot pouch. Haze morgan came by his possession via a man who said in a ca1910 legal affidavit that he was given the piece by a son of david morgan in 1826. James morton callihan, *genealogical and personal history of the upper monongahela valley west virginia*, vol. 3 (lewis historical publishing company, 1912), 953-54.

³ The book's cover had been liberated by the denver American Indian Movement in 1974. See t. tinker "Redskin, tanned hide: a book of christian history bound in the flayed skin of an American Indian: the colonial romance, christian denial and the cleansing of a christian school of theology," *journal of race and ethnicity in religion*, volume 5, issue 9, 2014: [http://www.raceandreligion.com/JRER/Volume_5_\(2014\)_files/Tinker%205%209.pdf](http://www.raceandreligion.com/JRER/Volume_5_(2014)_files/Tinker%205%209.pdf).

⁴ See t. tinker, "What are we going to do with White people? *the new polis* (december 17, 2019): <https://thenewpolis.com/2019/12/17/what-are-we-going-to-do-with-white-people-tink-tinker-wazhazhe-osage-nation/>, where I argue for replacing the usual color code designation "White" with the much more descriptive word

narrower adjective, *christian* conquest. This display was in a christian (methodist) graduate school dedicated to training christian ministers to serve christian churches built on (and now dominating) Indian Land.

Although david morgan was not a "professional" Indian-killer (unlike his nephew levi fifteen miles downstream, who counted in excess of one hundred "kills"), david's act of coldblooded murder certainly mimics the serial murders perpetrated by those professionals. And we know that these professionals were highly regarded by the eurochristian squatter farmers and by those fast filling the brand-new towns and cities of the ohio valley after the eurochristians vanquished the Natives and destroyed the Indian towns. Indeed, as harrison's report cited in the epigraph above implies, they considered morgan's murder of these two Lenape men as highly meritorious, a judgement that continues to this day. As part of this process of fractal Genocide⁵, the professional Indian-killers did a huge service for the other frontier squatters; their serial murders of Natives helped make the squatter's life more secure and opened the Land, Indian Land, to eurochristian westward expansion, occupation, and domination. The conquest by eurochristian civilization would have undoubtedly taken much longer without their homicidal dedication.

So, these Indian-killers also functioned as enablers, enabling eurochristian squatter ambitions. Together, the Indian-killers and the eurochristian squatters teamed up to shape a romantic narrative of eurochristian bravery against Indian savagery – even though the reverse, that of eurochristian savagery, can be regularly demonstrated throughout the historical period of conquest and domination.⁶ So, the resulting

eurochristian. Whether the current generation continues to self-identify as *christian* or not, the whole is shaped by two millennia of christian and european thinking, experience, action and history.

⁵ Barbara alice mann, "Fractal massacres in the 'old northwest': the example of the Miamis," *journal of genocide research*, published online: may 22, 2013: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2013.789203>.

⁶ One example of this romantic conquest narrative informing american life yet today is the infamous fourth grade reader, used in countless schools across the continent yet today: gary paulson, *mr. tucket* (yearling, 1995). Even the fact that it was published as late as 1995 is revealing. And it was published to rave reviews across the country and plenty of five-star amazon marks. We are told that Paulsen "one of the most honored writers of contemporary literature for young readers." And *publishers weekly* called it: "A real knock 'em, sock 'em ripsnorter...Superb characterizations, splendidly evoked setting, and thrill-a-minute plot make this book a joy to gallop through." I would add, "Unless you are American Indian." Mr. paulsen's characterization of American Indians (Pawnees) is abhorrent and hateful, not to say thoroughly racist. And the book is profoundly White-

historical narrative became just as enabling, facilitating the widespread quasi-official lie about American Indian Peoples generally and about eurochristian conquest and domination.

All this is to demonstrate that RM would have grown up immersed in the american narrative of triumph along with its persistent framing of American Indians as evil and deserving of genocidal killing and dispossession. These two Lenape murder victims, whose People had been pushed out of their new york and new jersey homeLands by the eurochristian invasion, were framed as having no *right* to be walking across their new, western homeLands because eurochristians were now beginning to claim that Land as well. That would be the narrative RM inherited.

While david morgan may not have been a persistent "professional" Indian-killer,⁷ his ruthless murder of these two Lenape men continues to be celebrated both in civil monuments and by morgan family gatherings in west virginia to this day.⁸ In 1889 a large obelisk was erected in honor of david, commemorating his murders and purportedly built on precisely the spot of his murders.⁹ In 1910 an obelisk was erected in rivesville in honor of david's daughter sarah morgan.¹⁰ Just north in monongahela county there is a highway historical marker that also commemorates the mythic narrative of sarah morgan's invented participation in her father's actions, used to justify his murders of the two Lenape men.¹¹ In 1979 the west virginia division of highways built the "david morgan memorial bridge"

supremacist. When it showed up in my daughter's classroom, we had to fight with the principal and the school district to have the book removed.

⁷ In 1808 david morgan's son stephen says of his father, "I certainly would not class him an Indian-fighter.... He was a christian, a patriot, a soldier, a surveyor, and a very good farmer, the profession of which he is most proud, and a loving, and most times, a too indulgent parent." *monongahela gazette* (october 8, 1808). His father would have still been alive, and stephen was by then sheriff of monongahela county.

⁸ To trace some of the continuing celebration of david morgan's murders in west virginia today, see my article: "'damn it, he's an injun!' christian murder, colonial wealth, and tanned human skin," *the new polis*, january 21, 2019: <http://thenewpolis.com/2019/01/21/damn-it-hes-an-injun-christian-murder-colonial-wealth-and-tanned-human-skin-tink-tinker-wazhazhe-udsethe/>.

⁹ "Morgan monument: rivesville, w. va.," *west virginia history: on view*: <https://wvhistoryonview.org/catalog/044645> and again at <https://wvhistoryonview.org/catalog/028279>.

¹⁰ "Man stands next to sarah morgan monument, rivesville, w. va.," *west virginia history: on view*: <https://wvhistoryonview.org/catalog/044646>.

¹¹ See "Indian park-burrows cemetery" where sarah (morgan) burris/burroughs is highlighted as a pioneer hero in relationship to her father's murders: <http://wvmarkers.com/monongalia>.

crossing the monongahela river at third street in fairmont and included a historical marker on the fairmont side of the river.¹²

Family reunions in fairmont and morgantown, w.v., of the larger morgan family, continue to revel in the mythic patriotic history of their family's progenitors and particularly of david morgan.¹³ Over 500 morgans, for instance, descended on fairmont and prickett's fort for the 100th morgan family reunion in 2007, complete with side trips out to visit the local david morgan monuments and memorials. Moreover, I was told that RM's descendants continued to make periodic pilgrimages to the iliff library to view this ghoulish artifact with awe and reverence into the early 1970s. It is this long celebration of murder that provides the context for understanding how a methodist minister might have so highly treasured his ownership of such a ghastly trophy.

In this light, iliff's indiscretion in receiving such a sadistic gift and in displaying it publicly for eighty-one years is not iliff's sin alone. To the contrary, the visual imagery of this display along with the romance narrative of christian conquest is deeply woven into the fabric of american society. The glorification of the Indian-killer becomes a part of the Master Narrative of american exceptionalism. If the church, as the "body of christ," is divine, quasi-divine, or divine and human (to play on the motifs of historical eurochristian theology), and thus knows no sin, it is a small leap for the "christian nation," the eurochristian state, to achieve similar high status in the minds of its populace. Of course, iliff displayed the human remains of its christian trophy. What could have been more natural in the social and political context of the White supremacy that ensued from the eurochristian conquest of Native Peoples? The iliff display normalized the objectified dehumanization of Native Peoples by elevating the result of murder to the status of the fetish. Indians of the past were fetishized as merely part of the wilderness that eurochristians had to overcome in subduing the continent to their own economic interests, like the slaughter of the buffalo and the clearing of trees. And their religion was always part of the rationalization. So, the book and its cover became paradoxically the stuff of every day "so-what?" reality. "Oh, look! Isn't this interesting?" "How neat!" Even as it was

¹² <https://www.theclio.com/entry/32054>;

¹³ Lindsey fleming, "morgan family plans 100th reunion," *tribune business news*, june 4, 2007, p.1; mallory panuska, "morgan reunion 'celebration of our state'," *times west virginian* (august 2, 2007), https://www.timeswv.com/news/local_news/morgan-reunion-celebration-of-our-state/article_67ef8bfe-9b4b-520b-8b58-62b739792e2a.html.

perversely and paradoxically elevated in the denver press as "a priceless vestment for the teachings of brotherly love!"¹⁴

RM was a nineteenth century all-american man. By that I mean to say he was fully a man of his own time and place even as he was a man with particular gifts and abilities. As we unpack this story, it is important to remember that this all-american man was born in and grew up in the immediate post-war ohio valley – born in wooster in 1830, but moving shortly thereafter to georgetown, his mother's hometown, close to the ohio river, only some twenty miles upstream from cincinnati. The story of this book of christian history bound in the tanned skin of a murdered Lenape man is nestled in the larger history of two decades of brutal warfare in the ohio valley and upper ohio valleys of the allegheny and monongahela rivers. It is part of the story of the christian/eurochristian invasion and displacement of Native Peoples of that Land. For more than two decades, as eurochristian squatters pressed their movement further and further west across the alleghenies, george washington had fueled an all-out war of destruction against Indian towns of western new york, western pennsylvania, and the ohio valley. It was a second front in washington's war against the british, what barbara mann (Onondawaga / Seneca) calls "washington's war against Native america."¹⁵ While the early assault involved local militias, fighting under protocols established by the revolutionary government in philadelphia (think here of "well-regulated militia"), washington also sent one military leader after another to engage in this war of destruction. I suppose, too, that we need to remember that washington and his family had huge (illegal) speculative investments in Indian Land in the ohio valley even before the war began.¹⁶ One of those military leaders was washington's Land agent in pittsburgh, col. william crawford.¹⁷

RM's birth came only 35 years after the treaty of greenville and sixteen years after Tecumseh's death marked a conclusion of the overwhelming military assault on the Native Nations of the

¹⁴ This is the bizarre claim of elizabeth kuskulis, a local denver reporter, writing about the iliff book in 1934: "iliff has old book bound in slain Indian's skin," *the rocky mountain news* (1934): iliff library archives: "Iliff Library Has Old Book Bound in Slain Indian's Skin," The Rocky Mountain News Article | Iliff Digital Collections. Never mind that a man was killed to make for this christian vestment.

¹⁵ Barbara mann, *george washington's war against Native America* (greenwood, 2005).

¹⁶ kate mason rowland, "the ohio company," *the william and mary quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 4 (1893): 197-203. Virginians thomas lee, lawrence and augustine washington formed the ohio company of virginia in 1748. The large array of investors included, of course, lawrence and augustine's younger brother george. Ron chernow, *washington: a life* (penguin, 2010).

¹⁷ See my "Damn it, he's an Injun!" for a fuller exploration of the lucrative washington-crawford relationship. Crawford, like washington, was fighting for pecuniary interests.

ohio valley and the violent loss of Indian homes to eurochristian occupancy. The smell of blood must have long lingered across the Land of the ohio valley from that long and savage eurochristian invasion and genocidal destruction. At the same time the self-justifying romance of a rightful christian conquest of Indian Land was also fully developed. Indeed, the framing of history becomes critical here because the eurochristian victor never frames this conquest as Genocide. Rather it is framed as a hard won and well-deserved, even god-given, triumph to be forever remembered in hollywoodesque terms. An educated man, RM would certainly be thoroughly familiar with the resulting historical narrative that would have been framed by his neighbors and colleagues in the ohio valley.

The penultimate victory and domination over the aboriginal Peoples of the ohio valley and their Lands was marked with the signing of the Treaty of greenville in 1795, marking the final conclusion of the so-called revolutionary war.¹⁸ And only eight years later, ohio was fully platted into counties and had already been admitted as a new state. Towns were popping up by the dozens. Part of the american romance is encapsulated in the quote from william henry harrison at the beginning of this article: namely, eurochristians who invaded the ohio valley to claim personal property for farming considered "the murdering of the Indians in the highest degree meritorious." Moreover, legendary stories of professional murderers who added a large share to the Indian blood drenched Land were being told and retold by the new occupiers of Native Land. Murderers like louis wetzel, jesse hughes and his brother elias hughes, levi morgan and countless others, were hugely appreciated by the vast majority of farmer-invaders who counted on the violence of these men to secure their own squatter share of Indian Land. These professional killers did the dirty work – along with washington's slash and burn armies – that made eurochristian peace possible. Even so-called pacifist quakers capitalized on this eurochristian violence and built towns on this bloody Land, sometimes even in places named after george washington's dashing, ruthless killer commander.

¹⁸ The Treaty of greenville comes a dozen years after the treaty of paris ended military conflict between britain and the u.s. But george washington and the continental congress had always conducted a western front of that war against American Indian Peoples of western new york and the ohio valley. The Treaty of greenville marked an american conclusion of that engagement even as it left Indian Peoples of the ohio valley completely dissatisfied. See, for instance, eric hemenway (Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians), "Summer 1795: The Treaty of Greenville creates an uneasy peace", national park service, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/a-long-legacy.htm>. Accessed November 20, 2022.

Appropriately nicknamed “mad anthony wayne,” he was the general who led the brutal 1790s scorched earth campaign against Native Peoples’ homes. Virtually all american histories written about the Genocide of the ohio valley frame events as romance, as the rightful and glorious triumph of justified eurochristian (american) violence – until the arrival of more modern critical historians, including especially Native historians. And anthony wayne is persistently framed as the hero who opened the west to eurochristian occupation.¹⁹

RM was a younger contemporary of Sand Creek genocidaires john evans (1814-97) and john chivington (1821-94), who continued ohio-valley-like violence in colorado and whom RM must have known in colorado through their common methodist connection. Like them, RM grew up in this same caldron of anti-Indian sentiment with its serial murders and fractal genocide of American Indians that produced this infamous book itself. Evans and chivington were born only ten miles apart in southern ohio, about fifty miles north from georgetown where RM grew up; the quaker-born evans is particularly notable as he was born in the quaker community named waynesville.²⁰ Like fellow quaker and Indian-murderer david morgan, evans eventually repented his quaker upbringing and converted to methodism as a young man.²¹ Morgan murdered the Lenape men who provided the tanned skin covering the book of christian history in 1779 and then converted to methodism in 1786. David then gave the book to methodist

¹⁹ Scores of towns, cities, counties, dozens of public schools and the like across the u.s. are named after wayne. The “miami monthly meeting” of friends is still located in the quaint old quaker town of waynesville.

²⁰ Evans parents lived long lives and served as key leaders in their quaker community, the miami monthly meeting.

²¹ Glenn lough, *now and long ago*, p. 682. In an interview with california historian h.h. bancroft, evans actually said his conversion to methodism from Quakerism had been a convenient excuse for killing Indians in Colorado. As one reads the interview, one must remember that evans is carefully framing his opinions within the american romance of the spread of what he calls civilization:

.... teaching them what was the proper doctrine as the British government did, that they had a right to hunt on the land, but that right must be subject to the higher occupation of the land, for a larger population and for civilization.

Their wildness should have been impressed upon them from the beginning. I think these Indians that I went out to hold that conference with wandered over five hundred miles of country in diameter, and there were only a few hundred of them. I have always been strongly impressed with the injustice that the Indians suffered and with a desire to help civilize them. At the same time when we came to be butchered by them, it is right to defend ourselves and there my Quaker sentiments desert me. Hubert howe bancroft papers - university of colorado at boulder, library - archives 200 Interviews. copies of 32 originals pertaining to SAND [originals in bancroft library, u. of CA, berkeley, CA.] [SAND-COLL - (Sand Creek Massacre NHS - collections, rec'd - february 20, 2015)].

minister and close neighbor William Barns sometime before David's death. Following in his father William's footsteps as a Methodist minister, RM then gave this family heirloom to Iliff in 1893, which Evans (evidently) gladly received as chair of the board of trustees along with fellow trustees Bishop Warren and his wife Elizabeth Iliff Warren who together funded the Iliff start-up.²² The anti-Indian violence associated with the book's cover never seemed to cross anyone's mind at the time.

In fact, this book – with its cover – had become part of the romance narrative of Christian conquest, helping to frame destruction, murder and conquest as somehow justifiable before their God. This larger romanticized history of Euro-Christian conquest of the Land where he grew up could not have left RM unaffected, although it is a far cry from justifying his elite colonialist ignorance. At the same time, the historical narrative framed Anthony Wayne as the hero who opened the continent to westward expansion, defeated the Natives in their homeland, and negotiated the Treaty of Greenville in 1795. Hence, the narrative of justifiable Christian conquest must have been so deeply lodged in RM's subconscious mind that he never gave a second thought to his possession of such a tainted treasure. Indeed, he valued it so deeply that it seemed to him (and to Iliff and the University of Denver) a memorable gift to this new school of theology. Just five years before, for instance, in 1888 RM began a two-year appointment to the prestigious Wayne Street Church in a city called Ft. Wayne, Indiana; yet he never seems to have indicated any misgivings about the history of this Mad Anthony and his genocidal ravaging of the Ohio Valley.²³

A quick perusal of some popular literature from RM's youth can only reinforce this sense that derives from the blood-saturated Land itself. Popular "frontier" journalist and Presbyterian minister Hugh Brackenridge stands out as the most blood-obsessed incendiary writer of the day, even though he never himself pulled the trigger to kill any Native as far as we

²² While we do not know the actualities of the historical involvement of Evans or other trustees in the gift transaction, we do know that the university was a small institution at that time. In 1890 the total enrollment was 848 students. Julia Mertes, "Exploring Du: the history of University Hall," *du clarion* (April 19, 2022): [https://duclarion.com/2022/04/exploring-du-the-history-of-university-hall/#~:text=During%20the%20school%20year%20of,total%20enrollment%20of%20848%20students](https://duclarion.com/2022/04/exploring-du-the-history-of-university-hall/#~:text=During%20the%20school%20year%20of,total%20enrollment%20of%20848%20students.). Accessed November 20, 2022. So, we can presume that Evans, Warren and his wife knew about this book, and as Methodists, they would have known Rev. Barns. Particularly, Bishop Warren would have known Barns well since Barns was one of his conference ministers and he would have assigned him to ministerial posts each annual conference.

²³ *Annual conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church: spring conferences 1888* (Phillips and Hunt, 1888), p. 45.

know. It was brackenridge who first published about morgan's murder of two Lenape men, not as murder but as a glorious moment in frontier history, in *the u.s. magazine*. And brackenridge even used the legal state execution of bill crawford (washington's land investment colleague) by the Lenape (1782) to rouse frontier sentiment against what he framed as a savage killing of crawford, just as he had written to glorify david morgan's homicidal behavior a couple of years prior.²⁴ On the other hand, brackenridge ignores the infamous murder and genocide of a hundred non-combatant and pacifist Lenape christian converts at Goschocking by an earlier pittsburgh militia only a couple of months before the crawford debacle of an invasion.²⁵ Certainly, crawford's sentence and execution by the Lenape was in part retribution for those blatant and savage murders (executions) by a eurochristian army. It was those scandalous murders of a Lenape village that caused the Wyandot to turn crawford over to their Lenape allies for trial and sentencing. It was brackenridge's writings, however, that framed the whole as a romance narrative of the eurochristian conquest of Native Land and never any true retelling of historical fact.

Novelist james fenimore cooper made the "liberal-colonizer" attempt to give a more balanced portrait of Native Peoples in the northwest territory of the u.s. At the same time, we remember his writings more clearly characterized as *the leatherstocking tales*, whereby leatherstockings refer to the grotesque skinning and tanning of Indian victims in order to make lightweight chaps for marching through wooded underbrush.²⁶ Nevertheless, eurochristian colonialists were not going to allow cooper's more sanguine portrait of Native Peoples to captivate the consciousness of colonialist squatters. So, robert montgomery bird responded with his own wicked anti-Indian novel that bestialized Native Peoples as depraved savages just as had brackenridge a generation before. In 1837 he published his best-selling novel *nick of the woods*, which until very recently continued to be taught as american literature in american

²⁴ See t. tinker, "'damn it, he's an injun!' christian murder, colonial wealth, and tanned human skin." Barbara mann, *george washington's war against Native America*; mann talks about the media frenzy that followed crawford's death.

²⁵ While accounts of the atrocities at Goschocking are plentiful, perhaps the best account historically is that of barbara mann, "Goschocking (ohio) Massacre of 1782," *encyclopedia of American Indian history*, bruce e. johansen and barry m. pritzker, editors (ABC-CLIO, 2007), 1: 240-43. Goschocking is the location usually identified by eurochristians in terms of their colonialist renaming of Indian places: gnadenhutten.

²⁶ See barbara mann, *george washington's war against Native America*, p. 86, for archival evidence of this practice. Of course, leatherstocking is also cooper's protagonist's name in the series. At least the invasive eurochristians call him leatherstocking.

colleges – sometimes excused as some sort of frontier humor. The model for bird's protagonist was provided by the legends of Indian-killing of figures like Levi Morgan, Lewis Wetzel, and Jesse Hughes of merely a generation or so before. It should be noted that bird's protagonist is a Quaker and peaceful citizen by daytime and Indian-killer at night, living as it were a double standard. One remembers then that the Morgan family also had deep Quaker roots, even though David Morgan did convert to Methodism later in his life. *Nick of the Woods* became bird's best-selling novel, wildly successful at the time. It seems highly unlikely that an educated RM would have not read this book in his youth. By the time of RM's early adulthood, Herman Melville would publish *The Confidence-Man*, with its chapter titled "the metaphysics of Indian killing," depicting a story not terribly different from bird's narrative in *Nick of the Woods*, although Melville's story is based on another novel in that genre. Not nearly as popular as bird's novel, Melville's title nonetheless indicates the popularity of the literary theme – however one judges Melville's effort. One historian counted eleven American novels from the first half of the nineteenth century built on the mythic hero of the Indian-killer,²⁷ including the story that Melville retells in "the metaphysics of Indian killing." So, Melville's narrative underscores a recurring theme of all these frontier narratives, even as he based his story of the "Indian-hater" on John Hall's writing about the legend of John Morelock, a historical figure of early Euro-Christian occupation of the state of Illinois.²⁸

At the same time, RM becomes the living embodiment of another heroic narrative frontier theme. He was the ultimate heroic Methodist itinerant minister in the classic Methodist system of itinerancy and developed a significant reputation across Indiana and Illinois before transferring to the Colorado annual conference. In the earliest American Methodist tradition, a circuit rider might travel a circuit of a hundred or more miles to serve small congregations over the course of some weeks. For instance, Francis Asbury is said to have visited David Morgan's rather remote western Virginia community a couple of times as people there converted to Methodism.²⁹ As that system of itinerancy evolved in Methodism, the bishop of a conference would announce clergy church appointments each year at their

²⁷ Roy Harvey Pearce, *Historicism Once More: Problems and Occasions for the American Scholar* (Princeton, 1969), 111.

²⁸ John Hall, *Sketches of History, Life, and Manners, in the West*, volume II (Philadelphia: Harrison Hall, 1835), chapter 6. Compare with Melville, *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade* (Edward Dix and Co., 1857), chapters 25-28.

²⁹ Asbury was one of the first two bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America.

“annual conference,” assigning clergy to congregations, moving them from one community to another. That meant that both ordained clergy and licensed lay preachers with their families would be moved from town to town each year (or at most two years). The idea, evidently, was to keep both clergy and congregations fresh to different preachings of the gospel—united by a book of discipline and a common theological sense.

Over an illustrious fifty-year career, then, RM moved from one church to another every year or at most two years as the bishop announced the new appointments, moving his family and all their belongings. Barns was well-known as an outstanding preacher, a favorite pastor and a sought-after speaker for church conferences. In 1890, at the age of nearly sixty, barns relocated his ministry efforts to the new methodist frontier of colorado, where his new bishop would be one of iliff's founders and denver university trustee, henry white warren.

In every step of his itinerant career, as he packed up to move from one community to the next, he also packed up this family treasure, this sacred relic, a trophy of colonialist frontier life, a book of christian history written in latin and bound in the tanned skin of an American Indian murder victim. One presumes that in such a context of itinerancy that methodist ministers would keep personal possessions to something of a minimum to limit the hassles of moving so frequently. So, we can measure the importance of the book to RM in his persistence in taking this book with him in every move until he graced the new iliff library with the gift. Especially American Indians, but indeed all of us, must wonder what was it that drove RM to such wicked devotion. What was RM thinking that he prized this horrific relic so highly? How did he balance the violent history of the book with his christian/methodist faith?

Before we answer these important questions, we need to unpack the history of the book's journey from the rivesville, western virginia, location of david morgan's squatter farm and the site of his murders, to the library of iliff school of theology. RM gives us our first hint about the pre-1830s history of the book, since he claims the book was his father's, a gift to william barns, m.d., from the originator of this newly-covered-book, from the murderer himself. That transaction would undoubtedly have taken place in western virginia. Since david morgan died in 1813, william barns would have procured the volume somewhat prior to that date. william was born in conococheague, maryland, in 1778, the year before morgan murdered two Lenape men for violating his squatter's right to what he claimed as his farm property (i.e., walking across it). But by 1790 the genealogical record puts the family in (west) virginia when william would have been twelve, and by 1807, william is married there in

monongahela county. A decade later by 1817 william had moved to medina county, ohio, a couple hundred miles northwest of the western virginia home, where he had already become a well-known preacher and a physician, another “noble” profession.

I suspect that david morgan gave william barns the book because barns had been developing his skill as a minister, and morgan, by then converted to methodism, thought the book with its attached human remains from an Indian morgan had himself murdered to be a useful gift for furthering the gospel. In that regard there is no indication that morgan ever thought his cold-blooded murder of a Lenape man to be inconsistent with his christian commitment, whether as a quaker or later as a methodist. Indeed, I would argue that there is an implicit sense that the murders actually added christian value to the book. william barns was a physician, but he was also a licensed local pastor in the methodist tradition – while probably never ordained an elder. Thus, RM notes him as a physician, signaling m.d. after his name and foregoing the title “rev.” before the name. william barns is remembered in the memoriam written for the passing of rebecca barns’ husband in 1892 as a prominent ohio methodist minister.³⁰

Records show, then, that william barns was married in monongahela county, which was then inclusive of what later became rivesville and fairmont. That means, he would have been a neighbor of david morgan, and he was a close relative of william h. barns, a friend of david morgan who squatted a large farm a few miles upstream from david and had participated with morgan in building prickett’s fort in 1774. By 1810, william’s second son was born in middleton (which later became fairmont), a son whom he named john wesley barns after the progenitor of the methodist church movement. This would indicate that william was already firmly methodist by that time, and it is only somewhat presumptuous to speculate indeed that the barns family (going back to william h. barns) was part of the cadre that met at calder haymond’s home near prickett’s creek on that day in 1786 to become methodist converts, a group that did include Indian-killer david morgan. Moreover, william was respected as a methodist minister – as well as a physician and a millwright by the time he moves to ohio.³¹ He is said to have

³⁰ Sylvester f. jones, “ezra marsh boring, d.d.,” *minutes of the 53rd session of the rock river annual conference of the methodist episcopal church* (1892, rockford, illinois), pp. 65-66.

³¹ William henry perrin, j.h. battle, weston arthur goodspeed, *history of medina county and ohio: containing a history of the state of ohio, from its earliest settlement to the present time* (baskin & battey, 1881), p. 256; gertrude van renselaer wickham, *Memorial to the pioneer women of the western reserve* (woman's department of the

preached the first funeral in lodi ohio in 1817. By 1833, however, william had moved his family to his wife's hometown of georgetown ohio, just a few miles east of cincinnati, which would have put RM in the neighborhood of vevay indiana, where he underwent his own conversion experience in 1847 that seems to have directed the young man into methodist ministry. RM's dad, however, must have been in ill health. He died that summer less than a month before RM's third birthday.

It is highly improbable that the book was given directly to RM by his father, since RM still a toddler when his father died. It seems much more probable that the book's transmission was from william to daughter rebecca ann before it came to RM. Sixteen years senior to RM, rebecca ann was born in 1814, and she evidently took over possession of the book after her father's death. She actually wrote in the book and signed her name on the second page of text as rebecca a. barns, a signaling of possession. In 1842, the year RM and rebecca's mother died, rebecca became the wife of another prominent methodist minister, ezra marsh boring, who served churches from the marietta district to chicago.³² What is unclear in extant evidence is whether the relationship between rebecca and RM included a period of guardianship after their mother died, since RM would have been not quite twelve at the time. RM may have spent a goodly period of his adolescence directly under the tutelage of rebecca and her methodist minister husband. And it may well have been that ezra boring was responsible for getting RM admitted into indiana asbury university. Matthew simpson left the presidency of indiana asbury in 1848, so there is some slim chance that the two might have intersected there briefly. There was a strong bond between simpson and john evans, with bishop simpson living for a number of years in evans' home in evanston before the latter was appointed governor of colorado territory in 1862.

In any case, it seems most plausible that rebecca would have gifted this family treasure to her younger brother at some point to help encourage his own study and eventual career in methodist ministry just as david morgan had gifted it to her father early in his turn to ministry. It is, after all, a relatively standard (albeit protestant) "history of christianity" textbook of its day. But this standard history of christianity came with a

cleveland centennial commission, 1896), p. 368, also cites dr. william barns as performing the first funeral in lodi. *Combination atlas map of medina county, ohio* (l.h. everts, 1874), p. 22: "dr. william barns, who built the first mill in the township, combining in himself the three professions of miller, doctor, and preacher...." lodi ohio is less than twenty miles from wooster, the town of RM's birth.

³² Sylvester f. jones, "ezra marsh boring, d.d.," *minutes of the 53rd session of the rock river annual conference of the methodist episcopal church*, pp. 65-66.

special signifier, of course, that special book cover that valorized the entire conquest of American Indians by christian invaders – a ghoulish but highly treasured cover of human skin. It was a great family tradition, evidently, in the minds of this eurochristian colonialist family of ohio methodist ministers. At least, the barns father and son ministers kept it as a treasure throughout their itinerant ministries.

Through the various methodist episcopal annual conference journals, it is possible to trace RM's movement from church to church through indiana and then illinois to kansas city and back to indiana before moving to the colorado annual conference in 1890. Given the nature of life in the frontier communities of the colonial conquest, the only preservation of the book would have been for RM to pack it up each year with his earthly belongings to trek to a new town and a new ecclesial assignment. Hence, it is quite apparent that the book carried a triumphal treasured status for RM. Ever the faithful itinerant servant of the methodist church, his gift of the egregious book to iliff seems almost natural in retrospect – as awful as the gift might seem to us today – or might especially seem to American Indian Peoples. And RM wrote his own inscription on the inside cover of the book at the time of his gift. An explanatory note accompanied the display of the book, possibly taken from a later (perhaps 1930s) newspaper item. It reiterates the inscription itself: "Denver, January 2. A book titled 'History of Christianity' in the library of the Iliff School of Theology is bound in the skin of an Indian killed more than 200 years ago in combat with a Virginia general.

An inscription on the inside cover, and dated Sept. 16, 1893, reads: "The book was published 150 years ago and is covered with the skin of an Indian who was killed after a desperate struggle by General Morgan, proprietor of Morgantown, West Virginia and presented to my father, William Barns M.D. by the hand of General Morgan himself."

Both the newspaper introduction to the inscription and RM's inscription itself are clearly rooted in the fictive frontier romance narrative of conquest. The Indian was "killed after a desperate struggle by general morgan, proprietor of morgantown..." Of course, that is the eurochristian framing of the incident which elevates the murderer david morgan to the status of hero. The reality, as I have explained in a prior publication, is that morgan only saw one Indian and willfully shot him in cold blood, a clear act of murder. Only then did morgan discover that he was in trouble as a second Indian man emerged to revenge the death of his colleague, and morgan was left with an empty muzzle-loader and no time to reload. It was

mere luck that morgan was able to survive that combat alive and to have murdered a second Indian.³³

Moreover, while david morgan was known as a “good shot,” he was no military officer, let alone a general. This morgan was a civilian squatter in Indian territory, an invasive eurochristian making his claim to ownership of Indian Land. The misidentification, however, allowed for the mythic expansion of the story to heroic proportions implying the involvement of a different morgan, general daniel morgan, the virginia colonialist of a military unit called the virginia riflemen who served with the continental army. The fanciful mythic legend then expands to a narrative of the general, enraged at the murder of his wife and daughter, taking time off from the revolutionary war for three years to hunt down the imagined perpetrator in order to revenge their deaths. This narrative is impossible on two counts. First, daniel was a commanding officer in the continental army and fully engaged in the war strategy of the so-called revolutionary war. He would certainly not have had three years of leisure time to engage a vengeance hunt to track down a particular Indian—the specific point in the legend. Nor were eurochristian colonialists very interested in particular Indian personalities. Their main concern was to rid the Land of all Indian resistance to eurochristians taking of the Land, which meant simply killing whatever Natives stood in the way.³⁴ Besides genocidal wars of conquest and domination, these eurochristians in the blink of an eye engaged in what Barbara Mann calls serial murder and fractal genocide of Native people. That became a way of life, demonstrated in the likes of eli morgan, lewis wetzell, or jesse hughes.³⁵ Secondly, daniel was married only once, and his wife

³³ “damn it, he’s an injun.”

³⁴ It should be noted that daniel morgan was not involved in extensive campaigning against American Indians during this war during his six and a half years of military service. Moreover, he served on active duty until june 30, 1779, two full months after the murders in western virginia. His command was key to the american forces victory in the battle of saratoga in northeastern new york, 18 months prior to the western virginia incident.

³⁵ mcwhorter nuances the passing of elias hughes: “Like his brother, jesse, captain hughes died in indigency. His life had been devoted to the trail and the chase; and his wants measured only by his present needs, were supplied from the forest and streams. For two-score years his supreme joy had been a saturnalia of blood, and not until the loss of his sight and when there were no more “Injuns to kill,” did his thoughts turn to the “future life.” Captain hughes is buried near the center of the cemetery at utica, ohio. At the interment crossed cannons were discharged over his grave, which is yearly decorated with flowers. A gray, flat stone marks the last silent camp of the “Last of the border warriors.” Lucullus virgil mcwhorter, *the border settlers of northwestern virginia, from 1768 to 1795: embracing the life of jesse hughes and other noted scouts of the great woods of the trans-allegheeny*. (republican pub. co., 1915), 245. But elias died at the advanced age of 97, comfortably ensconced in the very center of the new state of ohio in 1847. One can say that the modern

outlived himself, facts marking this story as pure fabrication. Still, the narrative is rousing entertainment for advancing the dominant strain of White-supremacy and the romantic frame it imposes on history. Indians are evil pro-forma; White men are both morally good and superior in every way – even though the story is patently false. That is, none of it happened the way it is told or the way that RM's articulation of it might suggest. Certainly, Daniel Morgan was not from western Virginia and may or may not have been (distantly?) related to the actual perpetrator. Daniel and David evidently came from entirely different Welsh immigrant Morgan families.³⁶ Subsequent mythic history does at times elevate this civilian, David, to some "commissioned" military rank,³⁷ but the truth is that he was a civilian squatter on Indian Land.

Moreover, the Morgan in RM's inscription was certainly not the "proprietor of Morgantown." That would have been David's brother Zackquill, a fellow colonialist squatter who fenced in a large property some fifteen miles downstream from his brother. Having chosen the more genteel colonialist path, Zackquill platted his squatters claim and converted it to profitable township lots. Hence, Morgantown, north of David Morgan's small enclave across from Prickett's Fort. Yet it was Zackquill's own son who chose the more romantic frontier life of "Indian killer" and far outdid his uncle David in tallying "kills." He is reputed to have killed more than one hundred Indians during his lifetime, matching the infamy of his contemporaries Jesse Hughes and Lewis Wetzel, whose legends give rise to Melville's chapter, "the metaphysics of Indian hating."

This origination narrative that accompanied the book when Iliff received the "gift" is patently false, then, on at least two levels, recording a muddled family memory that has lost its anchorage in any historical reality. Misinformation abounds in RM's short gifting note in the book, but maybe he is to be somewhat excused for muddling family history since he was so young when his father died. It is not clear that RM ever visited

colonialist states of Ohio and West Virginia are in part his own legacy and that of his brother.

³⁶ Morgan is a very common surname for families in Glamorgan, one of the historic counties in Wales.

³⁷ In a letter written about Morgan and gifting the infamous book to the Iliff School of Theology, E. E. Meredith, vice-president of the Marion County Historical Society and a writer for the *Fairmont Times* (aka *Times West Virginian*), refers to the perpetrator as David Morgan, but suggests that "Gen. Daniel Morgan" may have been involved in some similar encounter. While the letter is undated, it can be internally referenced as having been written sometime after 1933 but before the death of I. V. McWhorter in 1944. Meredith's letter, deposited in the Iliff archives, is dated Feb. 24 but without a year. And we should add that there is no other record of Daniel Morgan being involved in such an incident.

western virginia where his dad grew up. Yet it seems irrefutable that the gift to William Barns indeed came from the hand of David Morgan himself.

One can only wonder how the narrative became jumbled in the transmission. Did that happen already in the mind of RM's father William – after receiving the book from David Morgan? Or had Morgan as an old man already himself muddled the story that he told and retold about the incident that had happened decades earlier? And certainly, Rebecca could have introduced her own variants as a very young woman. She would have been only nineteen herself when her father died and when she presumably became the holder of the treasured artifact.

At the death of his mother, RM became an orphan at almost twelve years old.³⁸ Yet, he seems to have been reasonably well-educated and widely read for his era. In the memoir he wrote for RM, his colleague Cyrus Brooks wrote that despite being orphaned RM made his way "through public school and into a university."³⁹ He had at least a year of study at Indiana Asbury University (now DePauw University). And he appears to have both known some Latin and some Greek, since there are marginal notes written on pages in this Latin book, including handwritten notations in Greek. On the other hand, his Methodist minister and educator brother-in-law Ezra Marsh Boring also read Greek and Latin and would have had access to the book while Rebecca held possession of it, so these notations might possibly be his rather than RM's.⁴⁰

RM became a Methodist minister (a probationer) in 1854 and had served Methodist churches throughout the Midwest, appointed to churches in Indiana, where he began public ministry, in Illinois, and in Kansas City for three and a half decades before shifting his focus further west to Colorado. RM was well known and widely respected as a preacher and for his

³⁸ Jane Dixon Graham Barns - LifeStory (ancestry.com). Jane Dixon Graham Barns died 8-22-1842 in Georgetown, Ohio, a week before RM's twelfth birthday. His father, William Barns, died nine years prior, 8-11-1833: see ancestry.com: William Barns - LifeStory (ancestry.com). Note also Rev. Cyrus A. Brooks' "memoir" (obituary notice for RM) published in the *yearbook and official minutes of the Colorado conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, fifty-second session held at La Junta, Sept 9-14, 1914, p. 349.

³⁹ Cyrus Brooks, 349.

⁴⁰ After serving churches in Kentucky, Boring was converted to abolitionism and was finally able to name the evil of slavery, forcing him to move north of the Mason-Dixon line back into Ohio. He, like his younger brother-in-law, was relatively well educated and became himself an educator, serving short stints in a couple of Methodist educational institutions before returning to the itinerant profession of "preaching." We are told that he read Greek, Hebrew, and Latin and used these language abilities through his career.

deep commitment to the work of mission. Two methodist colleges gave him honorary degrees. depauw, his alma mater, gave him an honorary master's degree listing him among "honorary alumnae" in 1874.⁴¹ Then in 1883 RM was honored at illinois wesleyan university with a doctor of divinity degree, a dozen years before his older brother-in-law was likewise honored at depauw.⁴² Since these honorary degrees were never given out willy-nilly, we can presume that RM came from a family that valued educational achievement. As I have already suggested, an unanswered question is whether RM spent time living with rebecca and boring? At age twelve, he must have had some adult caregiver after his mother died. From the archival research I have engaged, it is not yet clear who took the young man in, but someone managed to raise him in a context of a reasonably good education. Even at RM's death, cyrus brooks of the colorado annual conference wrote that "...he ever kept in touch with the progress of events and changes of lines of thought.... Broad-minded, clear-visioned, sunny-hearted, he was an inspiration and help to all."⁴³

Essentially, framing has nothing to do with critical analysis or inherently with historical actuality, i.e., truth. When done successfully, framing nevertheless creates a truth value, even if that truth is highly subjective. That is to say, it becomes widely held as true, whether the facts bear up to that truth or not. Politically, both conservatives and liberals in a social whole engage in framing techniques in order to bolster their own political agendas. And usually, the best framing wins the day, whether in an election or in a legislative decision. While the court system in any modern democratic society might be the highest adjudication, even that decision making process is shaped by successful framing. Whether one is guilty or innocent might depend on who tells the best story about the pertinent events. We American Indians have seen this play out around issues called "federal Indian law" persistently. There is nothing Indian about federal Indian law; rather, federal Indian law is a colonialist narrative intended to both control Indian Peoples and still give the eurochristian invader population a (completely undeserved)

Martha j. ridpath, editor, *alumna record, depauw university* (published by the university, 1920), 532. Rev. r. m. barnes is listed under "VIII. honorary alumnae. 1. masters of art" with the date of 1874.⁴¹

⁴² *Twenty-fifth Annual Catalogue of the Illinois Wesleyan University*: https://archive.org/stream/twentyfifthannua00illi/twentyfifthannua00illi_djvu.txt. dr. boring received a DD from depauw university in 1885. *53rd session of the rock river annual conference of the methodist episcopal church, october 1892* (monitor publishing, 1892), 65f.

⁴³ *year-book and official minutes of the colorado conference of the methodist episcopal church, 1914*, 349.

sense of fairness about their own usurping of some legal right to ownership of Native homelands. As such, federal Indian law is a useful colonialist framing device and has nothing at all to do with ascertaining fairness or justice, per se. For instance, when Indians do go to court, we understand that the discourse of justice will be entirely conducted in the cognitive categories of the colonizer and that the outcome will, in one way or another, serve the purposes of that colonizer and not American Indians.

Barns did not erect statues to David Morgan or other Indian killers important to the conquest of American Indian Land.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, he played his part just as decisively in this process of framing the narrative about American Indians and about the Euro-Christian conquest. Intentionally? No, RM was not an intentional white supremacist in the way that modern "proud boys," the "oath keepers," or the neo-nazis are deeply embedded in self-conscious idolizing of Whiteness. Today that radical supremacy is more commonly associated with "White nationalism." Rather, RM's White supremacy was that deeply embedded communal sense of natural right, an instinctive framing: the perceived absolute right to dispossess Natives, by killing them and squatting on Native Land. That sort of White supremacy was almost automatically embraced, consciously or subconsciously, by all Euro-Christian Americans. It was this perceived right that allowed David Williamson's brigade to vote overwhelmingly to coldly execute their non-combatant prisoners at Goschocking in 1782, crushing their skulls one by one (men, women, and children) after these Christian Lenape victims spent the night praying inside their little church. RM's gift of this book, then, underscores this instinctive (perceived natural) right of Euro-Christian conquest and domination of Native Land across Turtle Island.⁴⁵

Ultimately the genocide of American Indians can never be reduced to single event episodes of genocide like the scandalous Goschocking event or the equally shameful 1864 Massacre at Sand Creek. Rather, genocide was a process that includes all these events and the serial murders across the continent, what Barbara Mann calls fractal genocide. The American Genocide, then, is processual rather than evental; yet, it is a process of events that in an act of framing get glorified by the invader one by one as a savory victory – even if individual events along the way might be conceded as genocidal. Mann uses the metaphoric

⁴⁴ There are indeed statues to David Morgan (in Fairmont, WV) and to Eli Morgan (in Morgantown) celebrating their hero status as Indian-killers in that part of the world.

⁴⁵ This is what Jennifer McCurdy identifies as a "process of relieving one's cognitive dissonance through the changing of narratives to fit" a communal sense of an ideal/good self-image. Personal communication.

analogy of a tsunami and its "wave train" to describe fractal genocide. Just as "endlessly repeating yet smaller wavelets" combine to build the huge and massively destructive tsunami wave, the endlessly repeating small massacres and serial murders committed by eurochristian squatters across Turtle Island combine to destroy the Native Peoples of the Land so that the Land could be turned into property and venerated as christian victory.⁴⁶ From the top of *Tava*, renamed col. zebulon pike's peak by the colonialist victors, katharine lee bates opined, "america, the beautiful..., god shed his grace on thee," a song in virtually every american hymnal and now sung at every major league baseball game. Like bates' famous hymn, the morgan/barns book, covered in the skin of a murdered Lenape man, served as a framing device to sweep eurochristian evil under the carpet. It became just another wavelet in the american Genocide of Native Peoples. And like bates' song composed as a victory dance atop a conquered mountain, the iliff book became a colonialist trophy of christian conquest.

As roger green indicates, "mann's work significantly attends to the overlapping ideological affordances glossed over by seeing violence against indigenous peoples as isolated events. When we combine these emphases on process with tinker and newcombs' stress on ...idealized cognitive models, we get something more nuanced than the charge of genocide as a crime. We get a glimpse that the attempted erasure of indigenous peoples across both continents is endemic to a eurochristian religious poetics of sacrifice."⁴⁷ Thus, the iliff book is NOT a

⁴⁶ Mann argues that massacre (and perforce serial murder) is the micro level of Genocide, which is the macro phenomenon. She writes, "Unlike genocide, which from the perspective of history, is big and obvious, each massacre looks small, encapsulated, tidy, and ultimately harmless. One must stand back to take in the panorama before the sweep of the repeating pattern emerges. As fractals, massacres replicate the appearance of genocide, except repeatedly and in miniature. The fractal wavelets of massacre in the tsunami of genocide can be graphically conceptualized [in the painting] 'Great wave off kanagawa', by hokusai. The great wave is composed of endlessly repeating yet smaller wavelets obvious in the white caps, each taking the form of the main, large wave, rushing to its landed conclusion. By the same token, massacres fractally join with their fellow wavelets of massacre, each mimicking full genocide, but in miniature. Taken singly, each massacre can appear negligible, even innocuous. Some are so small that they might be easily missed in the rush of the larger events, yet were each fractal massacre not present, the wave of genocide as a whole would collapse." Barbara mann, "Fractal massacres in the 'old northwest,'" 167.

⁴⁷ Green, "Rhetorical Erasure and the Doctrine of Discovery", Part 1, *The New Polis*, November 30, 2020, <https://thenewpolis.com/2020/11/30/rhetorical-erasure-indian-slavery-and-the-doctrine-of-discovery-part-1-roger-green/>. Accessed Nov. 25, 2020. Poetics of sacrifice is a metaphor rooted in the technical discourse of rhetoric. Poetics references a structured form of discourse that brings together in this case all the "ceremonial" markers of the eurochristian conquest and domination of Turtle Island. That is, a poetics that celebrates the Genocide of the Native inhabitants

singular event of indiscretion but is part of the wholistic genocide project of the eurochristian invasion and ultimately the erasure of Native Peoples, wherein the book, with its egregious cover, serves to frame a narrative of rightful Native erasure.

RM's contribution to White supremacy, then, is his gift of this egregious book to Iliff. His is not the nazi-fied White nationalism of today's republican party right wing. Rather his is the everyday variety of white supremacy that evolves into american exceptionalism. Spectacle gazers who came to view this book saw violence normalized; this was a gift from a good minister, and thus it must be not just all right but an unmitigated good. One look into that old iliff library case with its display of a trophy that combines the conquest of the ohio valley with the history of christianity would automatically confirm for the viewer the supremacy of White people in america. Of course, it endured "as a priceless vestment for the teachings of brotherly love!"⁴⁸ At least it is a siglum of the love that eurochristian people have for each other now that they have dispatched with the Native Peoples of the Land! This is love rooted in conquest and domination. Conquest and domination that makes the Land theirs. And now that the Land is theirs (by legal definition according to laws that they themselves have written) they are free to love without losing their "property."⁴⁹

White supremacy and eurochristian dominance are reinforced by the ceremonial placarding of "non-controversial" monuments, like statues of george washington across the continent – to say nothing of confederate generals and their statues. But these are always acts of framing. For most americans, eurochristian americans at least, washington's statue merely reinforces the american romance narrative of the origination of a new eurochristian republic, a new form of government that

of Turtle Island in order to allow for eurochristian occupation of Native Land. It is "religious" in that it is a litany of statures, plaques, geographical names, songs (e.g., america the beautiful), recitations (e.g., the pledge of allegiance), and the like, all of which are widely affirmed by eurochristian americans. And american participation continues, from singing the songs to tourist pilgrimages to (patriotic) historic sites and monuments.

⁴⁸ This is the bizarre claim of elizabeth kuskulis, a local denver reporter, writing about the iliff book in 1934: "iliff has old book bound in slain Indian's skin," *the rocky mountain news* (1934): iliff library archives: "Iliff Library Has Old Book Bound in Slain Indian's Skin," The Rocky Mountain News Article | Iliff Digital Collections. This, too, is a marker in the poetics of sacrifice.

⁴⁹ Two of my recent publications detail the creation of the artificial concept of property in terms of our Grandmother, the Land. "How the eurochristian invasion of Turtle Island created the environmental crises: focus on an early 'immigration'," in *Displacement climes: shifting climates, shifting people*, edited by miguel de la torre (pilgrim press, 2022), 19-30; and "Relationship – not ownership: indigenous Lands and colonial occupation," *Tribal studies* (2021). Also, "The Land, creation, sovereignty, and property," *T&T clark companion to the doctrine of creation*, edited by jason garoncy (t&t clark) is forthcoming.

results in the united states today. For Native Peoples, however, we are constantly reminded of domination, our domination at the hands of the wealthiest of all u.s. presidents. George washington, we remember, was the bloody colonialist who hounded Native communities in western new york and the ohio valley. The clear fact is that washington's wealth was in no small part built on illegal Land speculation in Indian homeLands long before the so-called revolutionary war, suggesting that his creation of scorched earth warfare in the west, a second front in that war, was intended to protect his and other's speculative Land investments. We know, for instance, that washington died still holding "legal" property titles to some 49,000 acres of Indian Land in the ohio valley.

The iliff book is far less "non-controversial" since it participates in the desecration of the dead. News reports of the desecration of the dead by u.s. troops in afghanistan and iraq continues to disturb us today. Why would the desecration of the dead by u.s. army troops at Sand Creek following their Massacre of a Cheyenne and Arapaho community in 1864, or the treasuring of a book of christian history bound in the skin of a slain Indian murder victim in 1779, be any less repelling?⁵⁰ Citing mann, green points to the eurochristian poetics of sacrifice as vested in ongoing ceremonial violence that shows up in "seemingly secular acts such as monikers and monuments." These he connects to the wavelike patterns of eurochristian violence against American Indians that mann calls fractal Genocide: "... mann (Onondawaga / Seneca) has termed the wavelike patterns of eurochristian violence against American Indians as "fractal genocide." So many eurochristians' civic identities are framed within the windy energy of a desert storm god. As she details... YHWH fused with the invader Odin perpetuates 'desert medicine' across "running-water Hahnunah (Turtle Island)."⁵¹

White supremacy is the pervasive expression of that wavelike tsunami that surfaces in cultural value across the u.s. (and across all europe), coming from the dominance of Whiteness through the long period of eurochristian colonialism and conquest that perdures to the now. The value of domination is so deeply embedded in public consciousness that even the dominated seem too often to readily accede to it. It is the everyday foundational normativizing of Whiteness and

⁵⁰ Denver newspapers proudly reported the parading and display of Cheyenne and Arapaho body parts by soldiers returning from Sand Creek in 1864.

⁵¹ Green, op. cit. Green is referring to mann's chapter "imposter god: de-christianization," in *the colonial compromise: the threat of the gospel to the Indigenous worldview*, edited by miguel de la torre (lexington books, 2021), 103-116.

eurochristian categories of discourse, including the normativizing of eurochristian colonial conquest. One has merely to notice the pervasiveness of the colonizer's flag of conquest at virtually every Indian powwow, usually danced in by a Native military veteran in uniform; or the numbers of Indian participants who step forward to dance in what the powwow mc announces as a veterans song. As Taiaiaikai Alfred (Kahnawake Mohawk) insisted some years back, young Native folk need to rethink enlisting in military service of the same institution that participated in the Genocidal devastation and domination of our Nations.

While gov. harrison's dictum in 1901 dare not excuse RM or the university of denver or iliff school of theology for its indiscretion for heroizing this murder, it does explain how good christian american citizens could fall so easily into such a pattern of living. The truth of the eurochristian invasion and the resulting Genocide of American Indians is difficult to live with both at the time of the murder and even today. So, eurochristians had to devise some narrative to excuse their extreme violence towards the Natives who inhabited the Land they so coveted for themselves. Of course, "some narrative" became a national narrative intended to diminish the inherent cognitive dissonance generated by the fractal Genocide of American Indian communities.

In talking about White supremacy, we are not yet talking about the rise of contemporary White nationalism. That is merely one radical extension of the everyday variety of White supremacy but one most White supremacists would totally disavow as scandalously inappropriate – even as it plays out before our eyes in our contemporary world. Interestingly enough, in this environment of growing christian nationalism, I saw a twenty-ish young eurochristian man with his middle-aged mother in a denver suburban grocery store wearing a dark t-shirt emblazoned with the logo: "faith, family, and firearms" – no doubt a good christian with his ar15 close at hand. I suspect he might have been first in line for a viewing of this book back in its prime, with its cover intact in that iliff display cabinet. The january 6 insurrection mob (with its bible verses) seemed perfectly intent on lynching members of congress and killing whatever capitol police got in their way. For some murder is still a useful way of implementing the will of their god, just as it proved useful for establishing eurochristian occupation of most of this continent, including the monongahela / ohio river valley. Indeed, it is this 19th century impetus that gave rise to american exceptionalism in the 20th century and inspires White rage / christian nationalism in the 21st.

As Iliff deals productively with its own history of involvement in its placarding of this book and looks to the future involved in a very different relationship with American Indians, murder, violence, White rage, and christian nationalism will all be called into accountability. And even though he never acted alone in this matter, poor RM barns, who meant so well by his gift to iliff, must live now with the embarrassment as a lone exemplar of this nasty eurochristian poetics of sacrifice that brought this egregious book to iliff. Nor is iliff a lone participant in its displaying of the book. But both RM and iliff are prominent examples that help explain how pervasive the Genocide and erasure of Native Peoples from Turtle Island has been. Murders, massacres, armies and frontiersmen, the development of a legal discourse to disenfranchise Natives and establish so-called settlers⁵² on the Land, and icons of celebration are all participants in this Genocide. Museums across Turtle Island are filled with their lucre. But RM barns and iliff school of theology, along with the book of christian history that once sported the tanned hide of a Lenape murder victim, are the immediate focus here.

Governor harrison reminded us in 1801 that settler-farmers, so-called, considered "the murdering of the Indians in the highest degree meritorious." How is it that christian would-be-farmers came to consider murder to be a christian value, a virtue? It is only when we address this question that we can begin to understand how a prominent christian minister could value such a murder-trophy as the iliff book with its shocking cover. Only then can we begin to understand how murder became an intrinsic part of the historical christian/national romance narrative in the united states. How that history of violence continues to fuel national political imagination in the u.s. awaits another discussion.

⁵² The word "settler" in this context is entirely too sanguine, a euphemism that conceals every crime of colonial invasion and conquest. Settler-colonialism sounds far too innocuous; it is a liberal soft-sell job.