

Exploration of the Mississinewa River Area/Indiana

Northwest Territory Exploration

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OVERVIEW: Written nearly six years before Indiana would be admitted into the United States, Col. James Simrall gives thorough details of the exploration that was made in the area of what would become Indiana around the Mississinewa River area. He detailed greatly what he saw, and took note of significant Indian tribes that were in the area. This would be significant in that the new government would have to take into account the thousands of Native Americans that populated the area, and how the people would be handled, treated, and dealt with when becoming a state.

SUGGESTED COLLECTION PIECES: *Northwest Territory Collection*

Colonel James Simrall letter to Major in Kentucky

<http://images.indianahistory.org/u/?ONWT,2190>

OBJECTIVES: *Learners will...*

- Analyze the importance of such a letter, and the purpose for the exploration.
- Decide how the Native Americans hostile to explorers should be handled.
- Plot geographically on an Indiana Map where the exploration took place.
- Debate whether military action or diplomacy should be used against Native Americans in the area.

DESCRIPTION:

- 1.) **Prewrite.** The students will answer the following question: “What type of information would you need a migrant to the new territories of the U.S.?” The intention of this question is to find out what type of information they feel that people of the time would need to know in order to move from the east coast to the “western” territories of the U.S.
- 2.) **Listen/Read/Analyze.** The students will listen/look at the letter written as I read it aloud to them, making sure to note the parts of the letter in which it shows where he made significant explorations, and also key times in which Native Americans were found.
- 3.) **Identify Places on Indiana Map.** Along with the document, the students and I will plot out on an Indiana map where the exploration of the areas took place so they can begin to see what areas were settled greatest first, and why these points are geographically significant.
- 4.) **Continue Debate.** The debate will continue as with many other debates in class: How should the Native Americans be treated and handled by the explorers? Many Native Americans lived peacefully while others were

violent. Most explorers and migrants assumed the latter, and thus believed all Natives should be treated the same. The students will decide whether that is fair or unfair, and make their own course of action.

STANDARDS:

8.1.30 Formulate historical questions by analyzing primary and secondary sources* about an issue confronting the United States during the period from 1754–1877.*

8.2.4 Examine functions of the national government in the lives of people.