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## Trees and Texts: Indigenous History, Material Media, and the Logan Elm

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### Cover Page Footnote

The author is very grateful to the Barton family, the Bibliographical Society of America, the Ohio Country Early Americanist Network, the Pickaway County Historical Society, and the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing for sharing their knowledge and supporting this research.

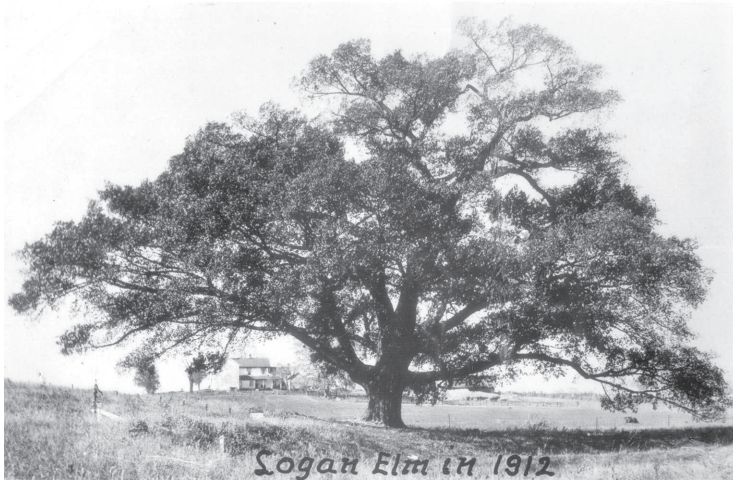
# TREES AND TEXTS: INDIGENOUS HISTORY, MATERIAL MEDIA, AND THE LOGAN ELM

Mark Alan Mattes

Soyeghtowa (ca. 1725–80), a Cayuga Native American also known as Logan,<sup>1</sup> played a central role in a conflict among Virginian colonists, Shawnee people, and Haudenosaunee migrants to the Ohio Valley commonly termed Dunmore's War (1774). Accounts of Logan are most often organized around a mourning speech delivered in absentia during the peace treaty ceremony that concluded the war. Popularly known as "Logan's Lament," the speech recalls the murder of his kin at the hands of white soldiers.<sup>2</sup> Scholarship on Logan's speech has in large part moved beyond questions of authorial attribution and linguistic authenticity<sup>3</sup> to focus on how Euro-American stories about Logan contribute to the ideological and cultural work of settler colonialism—a process described by Jonathan Elmer as "archiving Logan."<sup>4</sup> Keeping in mind that the aesthetic and material practices by which settlers archived Logan gave rise to records riven with racist myopias and epistemological uncertainties about Native peoples and cultures, this essay asks a different set of questions: What would a decolonial history of Logan's words and deeds look like, how can material texts approaches contribute to it, and, relatedly, what are the limits of such approaches?

Thinking on these questions, in 2021 I traveled to central Ohio to learn about a tree: the Logan Elm (fig. 1). The tree once anchored a park in Pickaway County, Ohio, the Logan Elm State Memorial, which was dedicated in 1912. The park sits on Piqua Shawnee land between the towns of Circleville and Chillicothe, east of the Scioto River. Among a range of monuments and print publications, nineteenth- and twentieth-century settlers and historical societies apocryphally claimed that this elm tree was the site of Logan's eighteenth-century oration. Some of these accounts assert that a stream flowed nearby during the eighteenth century, while others suggest that a spring once flowed from the base of the tree itself. Today, a small creek, Congo Creek, flows behind a windbreak of trees that borders the northeastern side of the park, though due to significant

changes to the landscape by farmers, it is unclear what relation this creek has, if any, to the waterways described in settler accounts. The Logan Elm, weakened by Dutch elm disease, died of storm damage in 1964.



*Figure 1. The Logan Elm in 1912. Photograph held in the Ohio Department of Industrial and Economic Development Collection. Image courtesy of the Ohio History Connection.*

While conducting research on the Logan Elm, I met with settler custodians of the memorial's history, including the Pickaway County Historical Society's library director, Darlene Weaver. Weaver directed me to a range of written materials about the Logan Elm, the vast majority of which are marked by settler colonialism's racialization and historical privileging of alphabetic writing, simultaneously eliding Native investments in writing and subordinating Indigenous archives to colonial letters. Nonetheless, many of these materials, some of which I discuss in this essay, also help us start to think about the relationship between written records and the evocative role of trees in communicating Native histories.

Material media such as trees<sup>5</sup> and monuments,<sup>6</sup> as well as textual archives and the institutions that house them, together compose what Chad L. Anderson calls a "storied landscape," and our ability to recognize and understand those stories requires harkening to theories, methods, and forms of evidence that both include and extend beyond the book.<sup>7</sup> One crucial matter is the category of writing itself. In this essay, I draw on the work of scholars in Native American and Indigenous studies such as Chadwick Allen and Lisa Brooks (Abenaki), who have argued for expansive conceptions of writing and reading that are rooted in the

experience of Native space. Allen, for example, understands Indigenous earthworks “as forms of Indigenous *writing*.” He explains: “Following the lead of Indigenous artists and intellectuals, I employ a definition of writing expansive enough to include any form of encoding knowledge in any medium, rather than a narrow definition that would apply exclusively to alphabetic, syllabic, logographic, and other sound- or speech-based scripts.”<sup>8</sup> Like the embodied act of writing itself, reading such writing, Allen argues, also “requires methodologies that are embodied and performative.”<sup>9</sup> Indigenous approaches to the materialities of writing and reading that center the embodied experience of Native space—of literally standing with, listening to, and speaking before trees and, in some cases, planting trees—allows us to better understand how Native Americans’ understandings of Logan’s story contribute to “their histories, their ongoing significance, [and] their possible futures.”<sup>10</sup>

Centering Indigenous concepts of written media and embodiment is vital to a decolonial approach that, as Heidi Bohaker recommends, considers “the diverse ways in which people of the Americas thought of and expressed themselves as people with histories.”<sup>11</sup> These diverse historicisms must also be understood in relation to both Indigenous and settler perspectives on the media practices of specific tribal nations that are not reducible to the category of writing, no matter how expansively one defines the concept. For example, as Matt Cohen points out, it is vital to “talk with cultural heritage keepers in whatever community it is you are studying. . . . The means of interpreting non-written media of the past, and in particular, relations with the land, are often maintained in oral tradition and are generated and sustained socially. Interpretation is itself part of the ‘common pot’; meanings, like other forms of sustenance, call for careful curation and exchange.”<sup>12</sup> Relatedly, we must try to recognize existing interpretive frameworks in which Indigenous historical media and meaning-making are bound neither by writing nor by human-to-human communication alone. As Margaret Bruchauc (Abenaki) observes with regard to Haudenosaunee wampum belts, “[A] wampum belt is more than just an inanimate assemblage. If an object is both imbued with meaning and embodied with memory, it can potentially recall and communicate its own history.” Bruchauc goes on to observe similarities between cultural heritage keepers and media such as “sacred and ritual objects” like wampum stand in ecological correspondence with one another. She notes that these media “are seen by Indigenous claimants to be ‘ancestors,’ ‘relatives,’ ‘informants,’ and otherwise living persons who, even if they are ‘sleeping’ in the collections, are capable of being awakened in the presence of the appropriate thoughts, words, and relations.”<sup>13</sup>

Building on these insights, I read settler and Indigenous memories of Logan in ways that reckon with the symbolic elements, material media, and embodied performances that constitute Haudenosaunee historiographic and political practices,<sup>14</sup> as well as the memories of past and current-day knowledge keepers, including members of both settler communities in Ohio and the Seneca Cayuga Nation in Oklahoma. These stories, alongside Logan's words, reveal an Indigenous-centered history of ongoing negotiation and resistance to settler colonialism, rooted in traditional knowledge and communicated within Native space. Therefore, while the first section of this essay begins with a brief historical sketch of Logan's words and deeds in 1774 and their entrance into eighteenth-century Anglo-American textual archives, my analysis focuses how these early settler texts, and the language of Logan's speech itself, archive the embodied performance of Haudenosaunee treaty protocols. Similarly, the second section of this essay draws on early twentieth-century historical society publications. These publications contain Native commemoration speeches related to the Logan Elm by figures such as Charles Edwin Dagenett (Peoria) and Frederick Ely Parker (Seneca). I demonstrate how these orators, through their framing of Logan's story and speech in terms of Native futurity, herald the sacred and political significance of pines, elms, and allied material media as related in the founding epic of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the oral tradition of the Haudenosaunee constitution.

The essay concludes by connecting these earlier Indigenous interpretations of Logan—and the Logan Elm itself—to twenty-first century evocations by a replanted elm tree. I focus on the interpretations offered by an enrolled member in the Seneca Cayuga Nation, Paul Barton, who serves as a "Pothanger" (or Faith Keeper) in their longhouse (Cayuga-Deer Clan), and whose family traces their descent from Logan's brother, Tachnechdorus. Barton's memories figure Logan's actions as parts of an ongoing Indigenous history of "survivance," a term that Gerald Vizenor (Ojibwe) describes as "an active sense of presence [in] the continuance of native stories. . . . Native survivance stories are renunciations of domination, tragedy, and victimry."<sup>15</sup> Ultimately, this essay argues that a material texts approach should not only demonstrate how producing, collecting, and curating stories about Native Americans were concomitant with colonial violence and dispossession but should also recognize how nation specific Indigenous knowledge helps us develop antiracist reading practices that center Native contributions to and interpretations of those stories.

## Logan's Speech and Haudenosaunee Treaty Protocol

Logan's mourning war was, most immediately, a response to violent acts committed by white frontiersmen and militia personnel led by Captain Michael Cresap and Daniel Greathouse between April 27 and April 30, 1774. A party headed by Cresap killed two Native people traveling in a canoe near the town of Wheeling. In a separate incident shortly thereafter, they attacked a Shawnee party camped below Wheeling on Grave Creek. Another party of Virginians, led by Greathouse, killed eight to ten Native people and wounded at least two over the course of two attacks.<sup>16</sup> These killings occurred above Wheeling, in and around a tavern owned by a member of Greathouse's party, Joshua Baker. His tavern sat opposite the mouth of Yellow Creek, which flows into the Ohio River.<sup>17</sup> Among Greathouse and Baker's victims were members of Logan's kin, including his pregnant sister.<sup>18</sup> Logan responded to the murder of his kin with a mourning war that lasted through the spring, summer, and mid-fall of 1774.

On October 10, 1774, a battle took place at Point Pleasant at the mouth of the Kanawha River. "[E]ight hundred Virginia militiamen" commanded by Colonel Andrew Lewis "defeated an equivalent force of Shawnee."<sup>19</sup> The Shawnee forces were led by Hokoleskwa (Cornstalk) and his war chiefs, Peteusha (Snake), Waweyapiersenwaw (Blue Jacket), and Pukeshinwau (the father of Tecumseh). They were protecting Shawnee villages on the Scioto River and its tributaries, including Cornstalk Town, Grenadier Squaw Village (named after the settler appellation for Hokoleskwa's sister, Nonhelema), Kispolo Town, and Chillicothe.<sup>20</sup> This battle marked the culmination of what was commonly known as Dunmore's War and, alternatively, as Logan's War or Cresap's War.<sup>21</sup>

Logan absented himself from the peace treaty ceremony at Camp Charlotte that followed the battle at Point Pleasant. Instead, he delivered his speech through an interpreter named John Gibson, who had participated in Dunmore's War on the side of Virginia. Gibson was a "brother-in-law" to Logan via the latter's pregnant sister, who was among the eight to ten people killed at Yellow Creek by Greathouse's party. Gibson, having transcribed, transmitted, and possibly translated his kinsman's words, versions of which then, as Thomas Jefferson put it, circulated in "the camp where it was delivered; it was given out by Lord Dunmore and his officers; it ran through the public papers of these states; was rehearsed as an exercise at schools; published in the papers and periodical works of Europe; and all this, a dozen years before" Jefferson placed a translation of the speech and a prefatory narrative of the events to which it referred

in *Notes on the State of Virginia*.<sup>22</sup> The text of Logan's speech published in the 1787 Stockdale edition of *Notes* reads:

I appeal to any white man to say, if ever he entered Logan's cabin hungry, and he gave him not meat; if ever he came cold and naked, and he clothed him not. During the course of the last long and bloody war, Logan remained idle in his cabin, an advocate for peace. Such was my love for the whites, that my countrymen pointed as they passed, and said, "Logan is the friend of white men." I had even thought to have lived with you, but for the injuries of one man. Col. Cresap, the last spring, in cold blood, and unprovoked, murdered all the relations of Logan, not sparing even my women and children. There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature. This called on me for revenge. I have sought it: I have killed many: I have fully glutted my vengeance. For my country, I rejoice at the beams of peace. But do not harbour a thought that mine is the joy of fear. Logan never felt fear. He will not turn on his heel to save his life. Who is there to mourn for Logan?—Not one.<sup>23</sup>

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Thomas Jefferson makes a rather odd claim about Logan's speech in his later publication, *An Appendix to the Notes on Virginia Relative to the Murder of Logan's Family* (1800): "Of the genuineness of that speech, nothing need be said . . . gen. Gibson concludes the question for ever, by declaring that he received it from Logan's hand."<sup>24</sup> However, according to John Gibson's April 4, 1800, deposition, which Jefferson included in his Logan *Appendix*, the claim that Logan handed Gibson a written speech is a misreading or invention on Jefferson's part. According to Gibson,

on his arrival at the towns [on the Scioto river], Logan, the Indian, came to where this deponent was sitting with the Corn-Stalk, and the other chiefs of the Shawnese, and asked him to walk out with him; that they went into a copse of wood, where they sat down, when Logan, after shedding abundance of tears, delivered to him the speech . . . [and Gibson subsequently] delivered the speech to Lord Dunmore.<sup>25</sup>



Jefferson's claim and Gibson's deposition hint at the vexed provenance and textual history of Logan's speech, as well as settler vexations about that textual history, which range from racist disbelief in Native eloquence to archive fever dreams of recovering an authentic Native voice.

Rather than shackle ourselves with chains of provenance that privilege colonial records, this essay instead invites us to more deeply consider Gibson's reference to "a copse of wood." Such moments in Gibson's deposition allude to the nine stages of the Haudenosaunee treaty protocol in which Logan's speech would have been meaningful to its orator and his audiences. These protocols assured parties a peaceful space of negotiation produced through adherence to a series of embodied actions intended to impress upon the parties the essentialness of ties rooted in ongoing mutual obligation—in deeds rather than words alone.

For example, Gibson's deposition notes an invitation and travel by foot: Gibson "asked him to walk out with him."<sup>26</sup> As Daniel K. Richter notes with respect to the treaty protocol, "First came a formal invitation to attend a meeting at a recognized or 'prefixed' place or 'council fire.' . . . Second was a ceremonial procession, by foot or canoe, by which the visitors arrived at the site of the council."<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Gibson's claim "that they went into a copse of wood, where they sat down, when Logan, after shedding abundance of tears,"<sup>28</sup> is evocative of the third protocol, "the 'At the Wood's Edge' rite, in which" as Richter writes, "the hosts offered rest and comfort to visitors presumed to be tired from a long journey. Each side offered the other the 'Three Bare Words' of condolence, to clear their eyes, ears, and throats of the grief-inspired rage that prevented clear communication—the rage that, if unchecked, provoked mourning wars and spiraled into endless retaliatory feuds."<sup>29</sup>

Reading Gibson's words alongside Haudenosaunee treaty protocols situates Logan's speech in terms of Indigenous diplomatic and historical practices rather than among questions of settler authorship and historical knowledge. The evocations of treaty protocols in Gibson's deposition also provide insight into both Logan's own invocation of Haudenosaunee principles of mutual obligation in his speech, as well as his choice not to attend the treaty ceremony at Camp Charlotte. Consider Logan's opening words: "I appeal to any white man to say, if ever he entered Logan's cabin hungry, and he gave him not meat; if ever he came cold and naked, and he clothed him not. During the course of the last long and bloody war, Logan remained idle in his cabin, an advocate for peace. Such was my love for the whites, that my countrymen pointed as they passed, and said, 'Logan is the friend of white men.'"<sup>30</sup> Logan's invocations of a common pot ethos and a history of advocating for peace in the face of previous experiences

of colonial violence, harken to the sixth protocol, “a ‘recitation of the law ways,’ a rehearsal of the history of two peoples’ relationships with each other, the basis of their peaceful interactions, and the way in which their forebears had taught them to behave. . . . The recitation of the law ways articulated ideals rather than grubby realities.”<sup>31</sup> Understood as an adherence to the essential, deliberative nature of the protocol, then, the decision to deliver these words in absentia through a cultural go-between, Gibson, can be understood as in keeping with the seventh stage of the treaty protocol: “Only in the seventh stage, after the ritual requirements for establishing a peaceful environment had been fulfilled,” writes Richter, “could what Europeans considered the business of a treaty council—the offering of specific ‘propositions’—take place.”<sup>32</sup> In the case of Logan’s speech, only after its delivery to the colonial delegation at Camp Charlotte could the matter of treating even begin; rather than some kind of aberration, Logan’s absence can be understood as in keeping with established social practices.

More generally, Gibson’s deposition and Logan’s speech make central the importance of understanding Logan’s words in terms of Indigenous perspectives on their histories. Indeed, the phrase “During the course of the last long and bloody war” demonstrates that Logan’s understanding of his own actions in war (and peace) was not bound to 1774 alone, nor was his memory of murder and murdered kin limited to Yellow Creek. Moreover, Logan’s speech is oriented toward the future. When Logan says, “I have fully glutted my vengeance. For my country, I rejoice at the beams of peace,” his words speak of burying animosities and hope for the restoration of ties of mutual obligations through, perhaps, the process of treaty-making at Camp Charlotte. Read as an invocation of mutual obligations toward peace, the speech’s penultimate words read not as the articulation of a ventriloquized figure of vanishing but rather as a warning to those who might renege on those obligations in the future: “But do not harbour a thought that mine is the joy of fear. Logan never felt fear. He will not turn on his heel to save his life.” Logan’s speech, then, is an address to later audiences who are already part of an ongoing correspondence in deed as well as in word. Unlike settler interpretations of “Dunmore’s War,” which so often privilege, ponder over, and indeed produce the epistemic indeterminacies of written records past, reading Logan’s speech as an embodied act of Haudenosaunee history-making allows us to see Logan’s own interpretation of his actions as but one part of an ongoing conflict with white settlers and a long *durée* of resistance to settler colonialism.

## Trees and Haudenosaunee History

While Gibson's deposition is the only eighteenth-century record I have found that describes Logan as having delivered his speech in the vicinity of trees, in the nineteenth century and on to the present day, representations of trees, and real trees, take on increasingly central roles in mediating interpretations of Logan by both settlers and Indigenous people. Many of the settlers whose works I discuss in my larger book project would have been familiar with the importance of trees to Haudenosaunee people—both elm trees in the material construction of the Longhouse and the importance of pine trees and elm trees in Haudenosaunee political culture. It is unsurprising, then, that trees (and especially elm trees) figure prominently in later-day settler memorials involving Logan. Perhaps most compelling for the purposes of this essay, however, are the ways in which Indigenous people have articulated the importance of trees when interpreting Logan's story, despite settlers' failures to fully recognize their significance for Native contributors to these memorials.

To better understand the sacred, symbolic, and political significance of trees when connecting Logan's story to the concerns of present-day and future generations of Native Americans, it helps to have some grounding in the founding of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the ongoing oral tradition of the Haudenosaunee constitution. The Confederacy's founding narrative centers on a Peacemaker, Deganawida, who brought a sacred message that "awakened the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca nations to their potential as a people of righteousness, power, and peace."<sup>33</sup> Peacemaker articulated this message, the Great Law, through the material metaphor of the Longhouse, under which the nations would and will "unite under one roof and meet at the central council fire in the Onondaga nation, but they also maintain separate council fires."<sup>34</sup> The Haudenosaunee constitution, created by the Peacemaker, with the help of Jikonsawseh and Hiawatha, is filled with symbols and metaphors. Many of these symbols and metaphors are depicted on the Hiawatha Belt, whose wampum beads are strung on the woven fibers of Elm bark, echoing the Longhouse, traditionally built with Elm, and inside, its five fires representing the Five Nations, with the Onondaga's central fire accompanied by the Great Tree of Peace, represented on the belt as a great white pine.<sup>35</sup>

In the Haudenosaunee epic, "the Peacemaker uproots the tree and 'under it disclosed a Cavern through which ran a stream of water, passing out of sight into unknown regions under the earth. Into this current he cast the weapons of war, the hatchets and war-clubs.'"<sup>36</sup> A 1916 transcription

of the constitution by the archaeologist and historian, Andrew C. Parker (Seneca), explains further: "Into the depths of the earth, down into the deep underearth currents of water flowing to unknown regions we cast all the weapons of strife. We bury them from sight and we plant again the tree. Thus shall the Great Peace be established and hostilities shall no longer be known between the Five Nations but peace to the United People."<sup>37</sup>

The founding narrative and the constitution are oriented toward matters of the present and the needs of the future in the people's burying of animosities and replanting of the Great Tree of Peace. Such is the tenor of Indigenous contributions made by those present at the dedication ceremony for the Logan Elm memorial in 1912 by the then named institutions, the Pickaway Historical Association and the Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society. Native American attendees included graduates of the Carlisle School and members of the recently formed pan-Indian activist association, the Society of American Indians,<sup>38</sup> such as Angel De Cora (Ho-Chunk/Winnebago), Rosa LaFlesche (Ojibwe/Chippewa), and Charles Edwin Dagenett (Peoria).<sup>39</sup>

Three Indigenous speakers contributed to the ceremony, including Dagenett and Frederick Ely Parker (Seneca), the father of Arthur C. Parker. Dagenett and Parker sprinkled their speeches with settler tropes such as "happy hunting grounds," stoic Indians, speechless witnessing, and melancholic Anglo-American mourners.<sup>40</sup> The use of such tropes may reflect the betwixt-and-between situation of an activist organization working alongside, and in many ways reliant upon, early twentieth-century white allies. Nonetheless, Dagenett and Parker also used this opportunity to make pan-Indian sovereignty claims and remind their settler audience of their coeval humanity and their legal rights. Orated beneath the Logan Elm, their speeches memorialize the tree on Indigenous terms, articulating the sacred and political significance of the Great Tree of Peace by looking toward the future rather than get bogged down in the recriminations of the past.

For example, Dagenett begins by reminding his audience that, "In the early days of Pennsylvania, the country around the falls of the Susquehannah was assigned by the Six Nations as a hunting grounds for the Shawnees, Conoys, Nanticokes and Monseys and Mohicans."<sup>41</sup> He later claims, contra settler speeches about the guilt or innocence of particular settler ancestors in murdering Logan's kin,<sup>42</sup> "It matters but little now who murdered or instigated the murder of Logan's family, the fact remains that they were killed and the resultant bitterness implanted in the breast of Logan thereby was simply human and not because he

was an Indian.”<sup>43</sup> Dagenett deemphasizes a strict accounting of the past (who killed whom) and appeals instead to a universal, “simply human” feeling with which all members of his audience can empathize. In doing so, Dagenett centers the importance of how those present will remember the past going forward. In a similar appeal to present-day needs and future relations among Indigenous and settler peoples, Frederick Ely Parker gently pushes his audience toward a more progressive vision of intercultural relations and encourages the replanting of the Great Tree of Peace. According to “Harry E. Weill, local editor of the Circleville Union-Herald,” Parker told his audience that “I am glad to say it was a relative of mine, General Eli Parker, who inaugurated the policy that forced General Grant to treat the Indian and place him on the same footing as any other American citizen enjoys. But it is time for us to bury the past. We must forget and forgive.”<sup>44</sup>

The dedication ceremony closed with a recitation of Logan’s speech by a woman identified only as “Miss Calvert, Sioux, South Dakota.”<sup>45</sup> How different must Logan’s speech have seemed to those whose sense of the words were oriented toward the futures articulated by Dagenett, Parker, and even Logan himself!

### The Logan Elm and the Evocation of Indigenous Memory

When I visited central Ohio in 2021, the local park district’s Logan Elm State Memorial park liaison, Rod Smith, led me on a tour of the landscape’s built environment, including Indigenous earthworks, state historical markers, and the memorial itself. The park contains a range of structures, including a marker placed on the former site of the Logan Elm, as well as monuments dedicated to Hokoleskwa, Nonhelema, and Michael Cresap, among others. Particularly conspicuous is a stone monument erected in 1913. It is engraved with “Logan’s Lament” on one side and a brief narrative of settler mourning on the other side. The monument is fitted with two metal plaques: an artist’s rendering of Logan’s head sits above the brief narrative, and an image of the Logan Elm as it stood at the turn of the twentieth century sits above the speech. Most of these monuments stage Native people as either unable to articulate their own histories, or when they do so, as speaking to their inevitable dispossession, disappearance, and death, conforming to what Ojibwe historian Jean M. O’Brien describes as a settler ideology of “lasting.”<sup>46</sup>

My guide, Smith, played a significant role in ironizing the stories of lasting told by many of these monuments. Smith was the main person

responsible for organizing a ceremony celebrating the hundredth anniversary of the Logan Elm memorial's dedication. Particularly compelling was the organizing committee's plan to plant a new elm tree in the park (fig. 2). So, too, were the efforts of the Ohio History Connection (then known as the Ohio Historical Society) to invite enrolled members of the Seneca Cayuga Nation, Paul and Shelba Barton, to the ceremony. The centennial organizers connected with the Bartons through Paul's work in Ohio via his role as the East Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma's NAGPRA coordinator (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act).<sup>47</sup>

On September 30, 2012, the Ohio Historical Society celebrated the "Logan Elm Centennial," with a "Tree Planting Ceremony." The program explains: "We are planting this tree to commemorate welcoming the tribal descendants of Chief Logan, the Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma, back to Ohio, on the 100th anniversary of Logan Elm State Memorial. We've asked you to bring a handful of soil from your home to help plant this tree, so together we might have an elm as mighty as the one that once lived on this land."<sup>48</sup> Paul was presented with a wooden plaque hewn from the wood of the Logan Elm and engraved with its image and a dedicatory message; Shelba was presented with a watercolor painting of the Logan Elm. During the ceremony, Paul gave an extemporaneous speech. According to one eyewitness, Andrew Lee Feight, Barton



*Figure 2. The elm tree planted in 2012 during the centennial dedication of the Logan Elm State Memorial. Photograph by Mark Alan Mattes (2021).*

“explained that it has long been the tradition of his people to think about how their actions will impact the lives of their descendants seven generations into the future.”<sup>49</sup> Barton himself said, “When my uncle Logan acted, he acted with me and my generation in mind.”<sup>50</sup>

The first thing that interests me about Barton’s words is his invocation of kinship ties to Logan: “my uncle Logan.” This invocation is not a fictive trope; the simple reality that Paul can claim ancestral ties to Logan through his brother, Tachnechdorus, is a powerful rejoinder to those who privilege colonialist figures of lasting in Logan’s speech. Barton’s historical interpretation further orients Logan’s story and speechmaking toward an Indigenous future, “me and my generation.” Barton thus stands in recursive relation to Logan, strengthening ties of mutual obligation to his ancestor, while simultaneously keeping future generations “in mind.” Paul Barton’s presence at the planting of an elm sampling, and his interpretation of Logan’s actions, together reorient our focus, making the case that Logan’s words—as embodied actions—need to be recognized and read in terms of ongoing Haudenosaunee historiographic tradition—a tradition that Barton elaborates in turn. Speaking in front of a US honor guard to the assembled participants and attendees, Barton meets the moment of a settler-oriented memorialization of Logan with a sense of hope, invoking traditional knowledge about replanting the Tree of Peace, as well as about the centrality of the Elm to Cayuga people—the people of the swamp—in securing the future. As the Haudenosaunee constitution asserts,

Should a great calamity threaten the generations rising and living of the Five United Nations, . . . [w]hen all the truths relating to the trouble shall be fully known and found to be truths, then shall the people seek out a Tree of Ka-hon-ka-ah-go-nah [a great swamp Elm], and when they shall find it they shall assemble their heads together and lodge for a time between its roots. Then, their labors being finished, they may hope for happiness for many days after.<sup>51</sup>

In 2022, I corresponded with Paul Barton about his experiences of the 2012 ceremony and learned more about his thoughts on Logan’s life and words, as well as the still-living elm tree that he helped to plant. I asked, “How do you feel about efforts to ‘authenticate’ Logan’s speech, and how do memories of Logan live on and circulate in your communities?” Barton reflected on Logan’s knowledge of multiple languages, mentioning Cayuga,

Delaware, Shawnee, English, and French, as well as matters of oral delivery, translation, and written transcription discussed elsewhere in this article. Ultimately, the particulars of wording are not a big concern for him: “the exactness isn’t the point.” “This focus on who did what exactly misses the whole point of Logan wanting to move on,” Barton told me. Instead, he focuses on different, present-day needs, asking, “What is the thought process sparked by those words?” For Barton, the speech and the tree evoke family memories of Logan, as well as the idea that there is “value in a loss of life.” Conveying his own understanding of mourning war, Barton explained, “All of that [Logan’s] vengeance was also a responsibility,” to reestablish one’s kin, which Barton himself embodies as Logan’s nephew.<sup>52</sup>

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Cultural knowledge keepers like the Bartons and Indigenous histories such as the Haudenosaunee constitution help us better interrogate constructions of anti-Indigenous authority like those surrounding the Logan Elm. Indigenous memories of Logan provide insight into the many ways that Native Americans shape the archives of Indian Country. As such, they are crucial to developing decolonizing methodologies that attend to the interactions both among and beyond textual media such as the compelling signifying work of trees, war clubs, and wampum, as well as oratory, manuscript, and print. When Barton describes words and trees as sparking memories, we are reminded that Indigenous historical media are often animate and evocative. As such, they require interpretive approaches that recognize “their functions and use [as] not only referential but also experiential, not only conceptual *but also* physical.”<sup>53</sup> These Indigenous-centered approaches better contribute to the ongoing work of an American studies that, unlike the colonial archives with which much of the discipline works, neither treats Native Americans as ciphers nor their cultural productions as irrevocably lost. Put another way, the fragmentary records of Logan’s life are not only a colonial story of violence. Tracing the reverberation of Logan’s actions and literacies demands that we listen to Native people strategically wielding history.

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## NOTES

I am very grateful to the Barton family, the Bibliographical Society of America, the Ohio Country Early Americanist Network, the Pickaway County Historical Society, and the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing for sharing their knowledge and supporting this research.

1. In most instances I reference Logan's English name, acknowledging his choice to refer to himself as such in the communications examined here. On the use of "Soyeghtowa," see Paul Barton (Faith Keeper, Seneca Cayuga Nation), in discussion with the author, May 9, 2022; and Alan D. Gutches, "Up Front: Fort Pitt—Logan's War," *Western Pennsylvania History* (2015): 4–7. Barton and Gutches revise an error in recent scholarship, traceable to the work of Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), which misidentifies Logan as his brother, "Tachnechorus." All quotations and paraphrases of Paul Barton's words have been confirmed as accurate by Barton himself through a follow-up email exchange during the drafting of this article.
2. The most influential early settler accounts of Logan are Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (London: Stockdale, 1787); and Thomas Jefferson, *An Appendix to the Notes on Virginia Relative to the Murder of Logan's Family* (Philadelphia: Smith, 1800). The current academic standard is Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. William Peden (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).
3. See Arnold Krupat, "*That the People Might Live*": *Loss and Renewal in Native American Elegy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012); James H. O'Donnell III, "Logan's Oration: A Case Study in Ethnographic Authentication," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 65 (1979): 150–56; Ray H. Sandefur, "Logan's Oration—How Authentic?" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 46 (1960): 289–96; Edward D. Seeber, "Critical Views on Logan's Speech," *Journal of American Folklore* 60 (1947): 130–46.
4. Jonathan Elmer, *On Lingering and Being Last: Race and Sovereignty in the New World* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 114–46. See also Betsy Erkkila, *Mixed Bloods and Other Crosses: Rethinking American Literature from the Revolution to the Culture Wars* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); Amanda Louise Johnson, "Thomas Jefferson's Ossianic Romance," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 45 (2016): 19–35; Laura Rigal, "Framing the Fabric: A Luddite Reading of Penn's Treaty with the Indians," *American Literary History* 12, no. 3 (2000): 557–84; Laura Rigal, "In the Shadow of His Office: Architectures of Affect in Jefferson's Notes on the State of Virginia," in *A History of the Literature of the U.S. South*, ed. Harilaos Stecopoulos (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 93–111; Gordon M. Sayre, *The Indian Chief as Tragic Hero: Native Resistance and the Literature of America, from Moctezuma to Tecumseh* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*.
5. See Chadwick Allen, *Earthworks Rising: Mound Building in Native Literature and the Arts* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2022); and Andrew Newman, *On Records: Delaware Indians, Colonists, and the Media of History and Memory* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012).
6. See Lisa Blee and Jean M. O'Brien, *Monumental Mobility: The Memory Work of Massasoit* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019).
7. Chad L. Anderson, *The Storied Landscape of Iroquoia: History, Conquest, and Memory in the Native Northeast* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020).

8. Allen, *Earthworks Rising*, 23; emphasis in original. See also Lisa Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).
9. Allen, *Earthworks Rising*, 25.
10. Allen, 23.
11. Heidi Bohaker, "Indigenous Histories and Archival Media in the Early Modern Great Lakes," in *Colonial Mediascapes: Sensory Worlds of the Early Americas*, ed. Matt Cohen and Jeffrey Glover (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 103.
12. Matt Cohen, "How to Read Things That Weren't Written Down in Early America," in *The Cambridge Companion to Early American Literature*, ed. Bryce Traister (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 25, quoting Brooks, *Common Pot*.
13. Margaret M. Bruchac, "Broken Chains of Custody: Possessing, Dispossessing, and Repossessing Lost Wampum Belts," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 162, no. 1 (March 2018): 56–105, quotation on 69.
14. Exemplary scholarship in this vein includes Maureen Konkle, *Writing Indian Nations: Native Intellectuals and the Politics of Historiography, 1827–1863* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); and Scott Manning Stevens, "Tomahawk: Materiality and Depictions of the Haudenosaunee," *Early American Literature* 53, no. 2 (2018): 475–511.
15. Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), vii.
16. Jefferson, *Notes* (1996), 235.
17. See Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 358–62; and Jefferson, *Notes* (1996), 239–41.
18. Jefferson, *Notes* (1996), 243.
19. Robert Parkinson, "From Indian Killer to Worthy Citizen: The Revolutionary Transformation of Michael Cresap," *William and Mary Quarterly* 63 (2006): 97–122, quotation on 101. Scholars differ on the numbers of participants. For example, John Sugden counts the number of Shawnee at 500 and Lewis's Virginia force at 1,100. See John Sugden, "Cornstalk," *American National Biography*, 2000, <https://doi.org/10.1093/anb/9780198606997.article.2000217>.
20. See John Sugden, *Blue Jacket: Warrior of the Shawnees* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000).
21. Logan himself did not see the events of 1774 as a discrete event outside of a larger Indigenous-colonial conflict, a point on which this essay later elaborates. On variant names for Dunmore's War, see Jefferson, *Notes* (1996) 234–36; Sayre, *Indian Chief*, 166.
22. Jefferson, *Notes* (1996), 252.
23. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes* (1787), 105–6. In early editions of *Notes*, Captain Michael Cresap is mistakenly identified as his father, Colonel Thomas Cresap.
24. Jefferson, *Notes* (1996), 252.
25. Jefferson (1996), 234.
26. Jefferson (1996), 234.
27. Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 135. Richter quotes the word "Bare" from William N. Fenton, "Structure, Continuity, and Change in the Process of Iroquois

- Treaty Making,” in *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy: An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and Their League*, ed. Francis Jennings (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1985), 28. However, as Paul Barton pointed out to me in a May 17, 2022, email correspondence discussing an earlier draft of this article, in his experience the phrase is “Three Rare Words.” For additional work on the use of “bare” versus “rare” in scholarship on Haudenosaunee condolence ritual, see Krupat 21–22.
28. Jefferson, *Notes* (1996), 234.
  29. Richter, *Facing East*, 135.
  30. Jefferson, *Notes* (1996), 63.
  31. Richter, *Facing East*, 135.
  32. Richter, 135.
  33. Angela Calcaterra, *Literary Indians: Aesthetics and Encounter in American Literature to 1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 53.
  34. Calcaterra, 54.
  35. Onondaga Nation, “Hiawatha Belt,” Onondaga Nation: People of the Hills, accessed November 28, 2022, <https://www.onodaganation.org/culture/wampum/hiawatha-belt/>.
  36. Calcaterra, *Literary Indians*, 55, quoting Paul Wallace, *The Iroquois Book of Life: White Roots of Peace* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1947).
  37. Andrew C. Parker, *The Constitution of the Five Nations* (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1916). Andrew C. Parker was the son of Frederick Ely Parker, a member of the Seneca Nation and a descendant of Handsome Lake. Andrew was not born as an official member due to a lack of matrilineal Senecan descent, but he was made an honorary member later in life.
  38. On the Society of American Indians, see Chadwick Allen, “Introduction: Locating the Society of American Indians,” *American Indian Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (2013): 3–22.
  39. See May Lowe, “Dedication of the Logan Elm,” *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly* 22 (1912): 285. Lowe misidentifies Rosa LaFlesche as “Rose LaFleshe.” Also, Lowe misidentifies the Society of American Indians as “the National Association of American Indians,” 282.
  40. See Lowe, “Dedication of the Logan Elm,” 288–94, quotation on 293.
  41. Lowe, 288–89.
  42. See, for example, the speech of Frank Tallmadge, in Lowe, 295–302.
  43. Lowe, 293.
  44. Lowe, 294.
  45. Lowe, 285, 305–6. I have not been able to learn more about Miss Calvert during my research.
  46. Jean M. O’Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).
  47. Paul Barton, in discussion with the author, May 9, 2022. Paul also informed me that his family claims Piqua Shawnee and Wyandot ancestry in addition to being an enrolled member of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma and the Seneca Cayuga Nation.
  48. “Logan Elm Centennial Celebration” (2012). Event program held by Ohio History Connection.

49. Andrew Lee Feight, "Logan's Elm & Commemorating Dunmore's War," Scioto Historical, accessed May 16, 2022, <https://sciotohistorical.org/items/show/47>.
50. Qtd. in Feight.
51. Parker, *Constitution of the Five Nations*.
52. Paul Barton, in discussion with the author, May 9, 2022.
53. Allen, *Earthworks Rising*, 27; emphasis in original.