

War of 1812 Materialism

Environmental impact did not change significantly during the War of 1812. The war was fairly brief, and Anglo-Americans holed up in forts had less opportunity to clear fields. After the war though, Illinois grew, as Reynolds puts it, “almost like Jonah's gourd,”¹ with a population growth from about 12,000 in 1814 to 55,211 in 1820, an increase of about 450 percent.² Capitalism and therefore environmental impact therefore expanded significantly after the war. The war was a critical turning point, for a number of reasons. Most critically, defeating Indians in the war forced many tribes to sign treaties removing them west of the Mississippi, clearing the land for settlement. Economic upheaval in the postwar United States forced many westward.³

Most directly for capitalism, the War of 1812 necessitated the expansion of trade networks to distant battle fronts. The capitalist William Morrison was contracted to deliver rations to troops in the Northwest Territory, sending two men to deliver cattle to troops in William Henry Harrison’s army at the Battle of Tippicanoe.⁴ Through the war, the Illinois territory was increasingly tied to the national economy.

For how the ideology of Anglo-Americans changed in the War of 1812, see [War of 1812 Ideology](#).

For the environmental impact of the new market economy after the War of 1812, see [Statehood Materialism](#).

1. John Reynolds, *My own times: embracing also the history of my life* (Belleville: B. H. Perryman and H. L. Davison, 1855), 175.

2. James E. Davis, *Frontier Illinois*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 155.

3. [Ibid., 158](#).

4. John Reynolds, *The pioneer history of Illinois* (Chicago: Fergus Printing Company, 1887), 163.