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History

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Homework 16 Summary

In the chapter “The Birth of a Nation” of *Indigenous People’s History of the United States*, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz examines the colonists’ conflict with and the resistance of indigenous peoples as well as the growth of the United States as a country in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Specifically, she argues that the expansion of the U.S. was rooted in the violence and genocide committed against the indigenous peoples, as well as the indigenous peoples’ resistance against this. Dunbar-Ortiz herself states, “US genocidal wars against indigenous nations continued unabated in the 1790s and were woven into the very fabric of the nation-state.”¹ Some examples of these genocidal wars that were the foundation of U.S. expansion in this period included unrestrained violence against the Miami, the battle of Fallen Timbers, the battle of Tippecanoe, assault against the Cherokee Nation, as well as attempting to push the Muskogee Nation into war. However, Dunbar-Ortiz argues that these acts were met with resistance from the indigenous peoples. As the colonists committed these acts to steal land and drive out the indigenous people, the indigenous people used methods of resistance, such as not listening to ultimatums and Tecumseh’s and Tenskwatawa’s concerted resistance. In sum, Dunbar-Ortiz’s view is that indigenous peoples’ resistance as well as the brutality committed against them was critical to the growth of the United States in the late 1700s through early 1800s.

¹ Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, “The Birth of a Nation,” in *An Indigenous People’s History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014), 80.