

Public Abstract

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Throughout the colonial era and the earliest years of the nineteenth century, the Ohio Valley was a vital member of the Atlantic World. It participated in transatlantic trade as both a provider of natural resources such as agricultural produce, timber, mineral deposits and animal skins and furs to act as raw materials for industrialization in Europe and a consumer of European manufactured goods such as glass, home furnishings, clothes, guns, hardware and farming equipment. Despite being geographically isolated from the Eastern United States by the Allegheny Mountains and from Europe by the Atlantic Ocean, it was connected to the larger world through commerce. While this type of commerce connected the Ohio Valley to the Eastern United States and Europe, it also created varying degrees of economic dependence upon outside forces by ensuring that its system of manufactures remained underdeveloped. This study argues that the Embargo of 1807 constituted a major transforming event in the development of a system of manufactures in the Ohio Valley and its economy as a whole. The embargo shut down American ports for both imports and exports and cut off trade between the United States and Europe and forced resourceful Ohio Valley entrepreneurs to adjust their business strategies to meet both current and future economic challenges caused by disruptions to foreign commerce. These businessmen embraced domestic manufacturing and trade within the Ohio Valley while lessening their dependence on outside markets and created a new economic environment and regional economy.