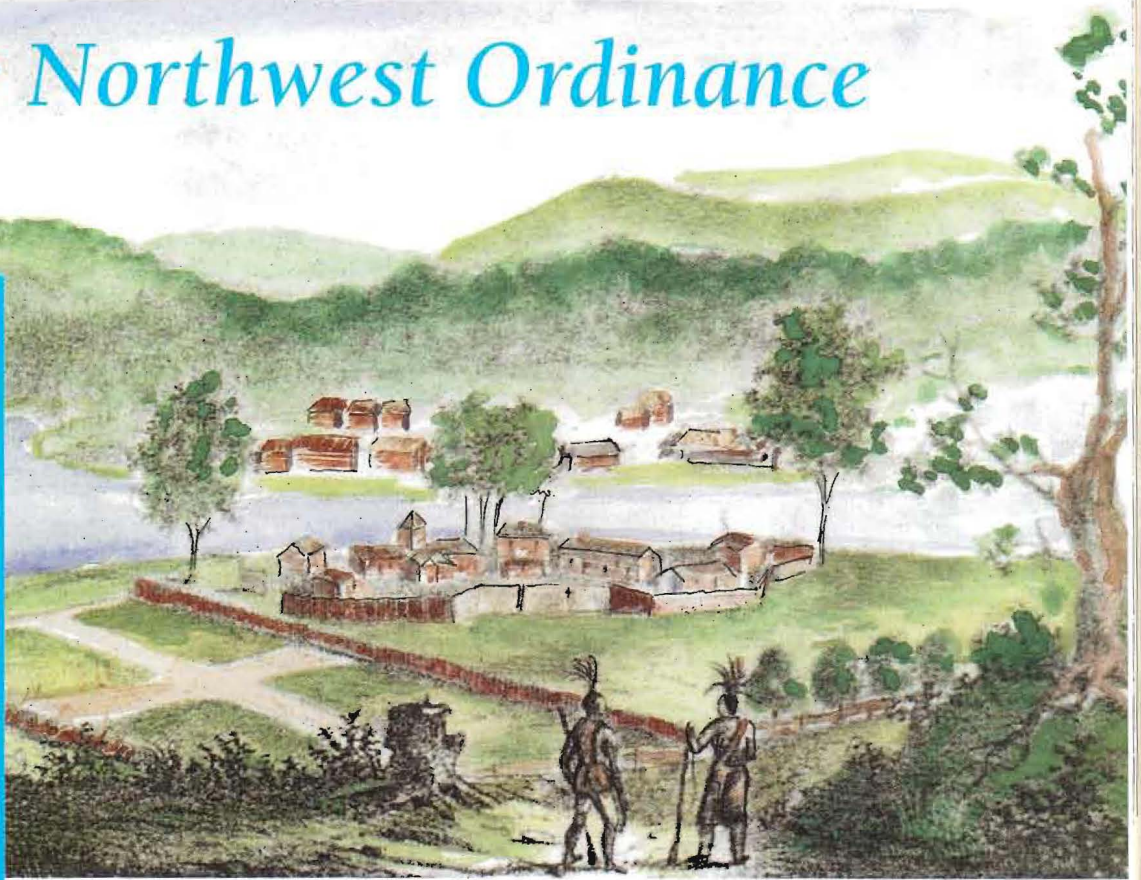


# The Northwest Ordinance

*The lands covered by the Northwest Ordinance soon became dotted with log cabins and some forts. This is Fort Harmar in 1790, five years after it was built near what is now Marietta, Ohio, where the Muskingum River flows into the Ohio River.*



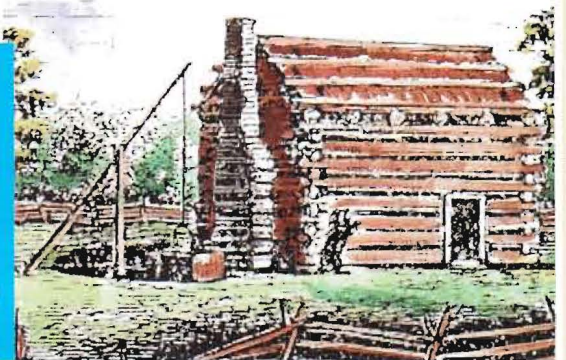
The most substantial successes of the Confederation as a national government came on the frontier. In the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, the states of the Confederation managed to agree on ceding their huge western land claims to the nation. With the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 both in place, a mass of emigrants poured into the Northwest.

The Northwest Ordinance set the rules for admitting new states into the Union. Those rules have been followed throughout the United States, with some changes, for more than 200 years. For the original Northwest Territory, it provided that a total

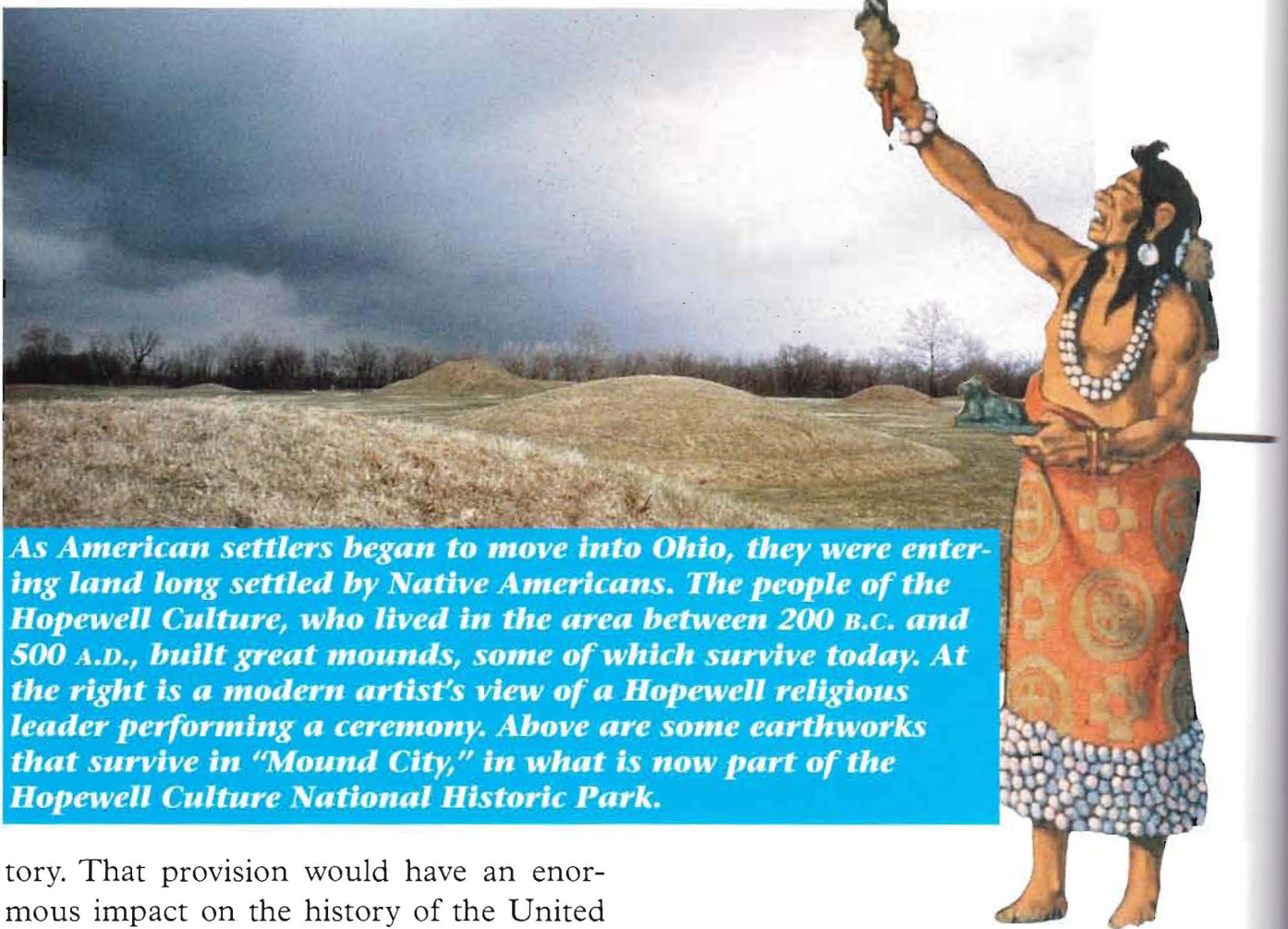
of three to five states could be carved out of the Territory. In the end, five new states would be formed from the Northwest Territory: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

The Ordinance also banned slavery in all states created out of the Northwest Terri-

*This small log cabin was the first house in Greene County, Ohio, built in 1798.*







*As American settlers began to move into Ohio, they were entering land long settled by Native Americans. The people of the Hopewell Culture, who lived in the area between 200 B.C. and 500 A.D., built great mounds, some of which survive today. At the right is a modern artist's view of a Hopewell religious leader performing a ceremony. Above are some earthworks that survive in "Mound City," in what is now part of the Hopewell Culture National Historic Park.*

tory. That provision would have an enormous impact on the history of the United States.

The Ordinance provided two basic steps to statehood, each based on reaching a stated population level. At the start, an area was governed by Congress, which appointed a governor and three judges, who together would administer the area. After reaching a population of 5,000, that area could become a U.S. Territory. Then it would elect a state legislature, which would send a non-voting delegate to the national Congress. When a Territory reached a population of 60,000, it was eligible for full statehood, with the same rights as all the other states of the Union.

The Ordinance provided that Congress was to pass a separate "Enabling Act" granting admission to each state applying for statehood. The Enabling Act would include any special requirements for the state—as when Congress after the Civil War required the Confederate states to prohibit slavery before they could be readmitted to the Union.

The U.S. Congress passed a similar act covering the Southwest Territory in 1790. That Act allowed slavery in states created in the Southwest Territory, which consisted only of Tennessee.