

Wiles, Gary and Delores Brown. Trails of the White Savages.  
Laguna Niguel, CA: PHOTSENSITIVE, 1998, 346 pp.

In 1772, Benjamin Franklin termed them "White Savages" and declared that "compared to these People every Indian is a Gentleman."

King James I had transplanted them from England's northern border to Ulster in about 1610 in an attempt to subdue the Irish Rebellion, but by 1692 these uncontrollable Scots were being driven from Ireland to the American Colonies. Because the English had levied unreasonable taxes on them and outlawed their Presbyterian religion, 50,000 Ulster Scots had emigrated to the Colonies by 1720.

Most of these "Scotch-Irish" settled in Pennsylvania and later moved down the Shenandoah and other remote valleys. There they became a buffer between the colonists and the Indians during the "Forest Wars," in which nearly 10,000 whites and Indians were murdered in ever worsening atrocities before 1770. By 1775, some 250,000 "White Savages" had come to America and accounted for one-third of the Revolutionary Army including 1,492 officers and twenty-six generals by the war's end.

Trails of the White Savages follows some of the more colorful and adventuresome of the Ulster Scots over a twenty-three year period as they met the challenges of nature and of opposing cultures and governments in their westward push. In 1813, brothers Joseph and Joel Walker (cousins of Sam Houston) joined Andrew Jackson's campaign against the "Red Sticks" (Creeks) in Alabama to avenge the Fort Mims Massacre. Thus began their stories along with those of Houston, David Crockett, Kit Carson, Ewing Young and others. By 1836, their

trails had led to Santa Fe, the Rocky Mountains, San Francisco, the Alamo and San Jacinto.

With its maps, its 169-reference bibliography and its index of 387 "real people," tribes and states, Trails of the White Savages could be just another very good, concise historical sourcebook. It is that to be sure, but thanks to the authors' creativity and to the format which they selected, it is also quite readable and entertaining. The book is done much like the script of a good video documentary with its frequent scene changes, lively dialogue and plenty of action. All of this, I believe, will get and hold the interest of readers who may be attuned to shorter attention spans influenced by watching television.

I recommend this book to adults and teenagers who are interested in this part of our history but who may not have time to do extensive research. It effectively tells the story, whets the appetite for more background and details and shows us where to find them.

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