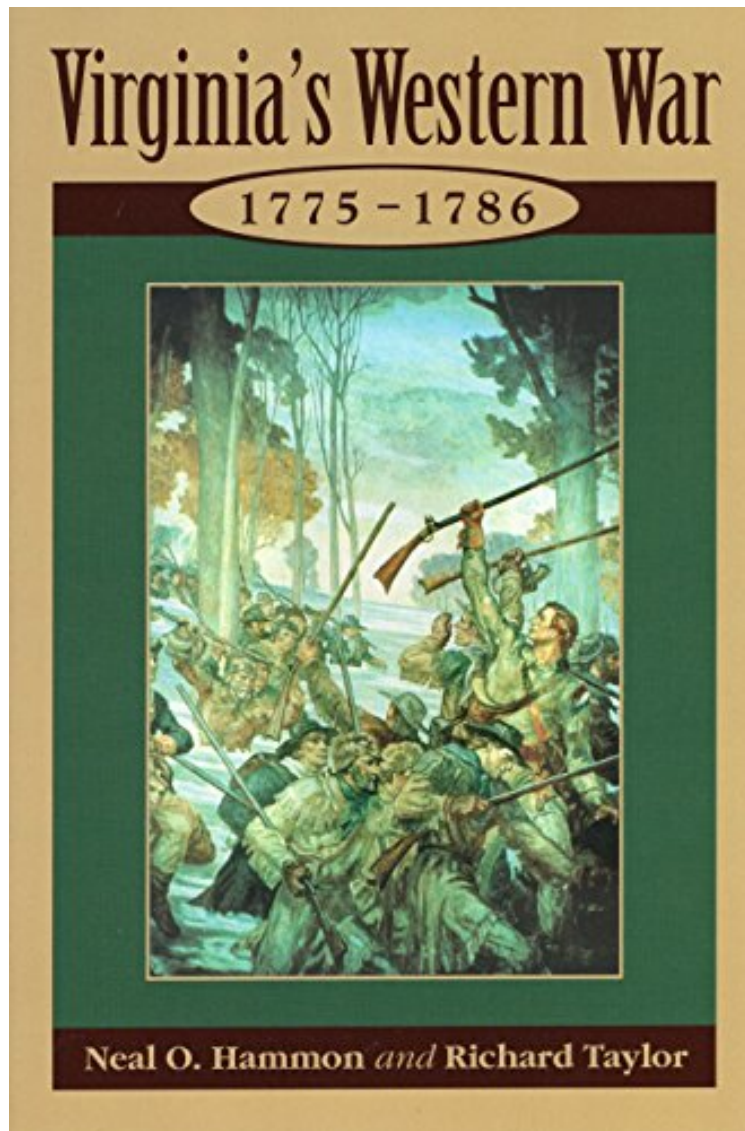


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## Virginia's Western War: 1775-1786

*Neal O. Hammon, Richard Taylor*  
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**Neal O. Hammon, Richard Taylor : Virginia's Western War: 1775-1786** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Virginia's Western War: 1775-1786:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Early Kentucky LandBy UK1958Neal Hammon's years of research on the early surveys and settlements in Kentucky is of particular interest to me. A good summary of the surveys and surveyors is presented in the Introduction and first chapter. The stories of the early ventures into the Colonial West are an important part of U.S. history. This book should be added to the library of all serious students of Kentucky history.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Hammon's GemBy MJCIIt is little wonder that Mr. Hammon is so well-

respected regarding Kentucky history. Well-written and strongly researched work. 10 of 15 people found the following review helpful. LOOK ELSEWHERE By Stephen Beck This could have been an important book about greater Virginia's westward expansion during the Revolutionary Era, a place and time with lots of information inaccessible to most general readers and historians. Instead, the authors present a hodgepodge of bad history, narrow research, and distracting bias. The "history" in the book is dismal, replete with errors, exaggerations, and bias. The errors started early with a wildly inaccurate map labeled "The thirteen colonies, 1776" (xiii); only coastal Delaware, New Jersey, and Rhode Island could be considered accurately drawn for that time. And the errors continued to the closing pages, where the authors mistakenly date the last native American/Indian uprising east of the Mississippi as 1814 (228), thus omitting the three Seminole Indian Wars (1817-18, 1835-42, 1855-58), among other conflicts. Possibly, the book's problems stem from inadequate research. The authors make some unusual claims and attribute lots of quotes without citation. The bibliography is both dated and slim. It has very few unpublished primary sources, which means readers probably will find very little they haven't already known about. There is only one article from an academic journal and there are no dissertations, despite that one author is a university professor. Further, there are some obvious missing sources, like Fischer Kelly's *Bound Away: Virginia and The Westward Movement*. This widely reviewed book covers much of the same ground and was published two years before Virginia's Western War. As a consequence of scanty research, readers lose one of the traditional benefits of "local" histories: new sources for their own research. One widespread problem with the book warrants special notice. The bias is incredible. The triumphalist version of Virginia's role in our country's founding is breathtaking. Except for Virginia, the new United States probably would have been limited to only east of the Appalachian Mountains. And, although many new states ceded territory to the new federal government, the authors considered Virginia's claim legitimate, but New York's claim "illegal" and land claims by Connecticut and Massachusetts are not even mentioned. Another illustration of bias is the authors' labeling. African Americans/Blacks are identified only as "Negro" (e.g., 63, 69, 72, 106, 184), which I don't think I've read before in a book published after 1975. The authors usually use "Indian," though occasionally they use "squaw" (69, 202) and "savage" (184). Similarly, Loyalists are named "Tories" or "turncoats" (xxxv), and Scots are called "Scotch" (xxxv, 66). All of these labels are antiquated. Even more, they imply an incredible bias. But the authors explicate their bias with statements like "the majority [of slaves] remained loyal to their masters" (xxxviii) which supposes slaves had a choice and freedom of movement. And throughout the book, battle atrocities by Indians are detailed while atrocities by whites are hardly mentioned. By the way, bias is not about political correctness, it's about the lack of objectivity and balanced story telling. Even more, here, the use of antiquated labels suggests that the authors are, at best, unfamiliar with books written after the 1970s—and that shortchanges all readers. All in all, readers interested in the Revolution, westward migration, pioneering, and/or Virginia and Kentucky history should look elsewhere.

More than any other colony, Virginia looked to the west for its future. After the French and Indian War, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 declared that officers and soldiers would be paid with parcels of western land, vaguely extending about eighty miles in all directions from Lexington. By 1768 most of the area had been explored by the Long Hunters, including Daniel and Squire Boone, James Knox, Hasker Mansker, and the Skagg Brothers. These brave, enterprising men battled both with nature and with the Indians, bringing their families to settle this rough frontier. Virginia's Western War traces the little-known period of colonial history.

About the Author Neal O. Hammon, an architect, is the author of several books and numerous articles on pioneer history, including *My Father, Daniel Boone* published in 1999. He served in World War II aboard the USS Montpelier and was recalled to serve on the USS Helena for two years during the Korean War. He graduated from the University of Illinois. Richard Taylor is a professor of English at Kentucky State University in Frankfort. He has written a novel (*Girty*), four collections of poems, and *Three Kentucky Tragedies*. In 1992, he received the Distinguished Professor Award at KSU. He served as Kentucky's Poet Laureate from 1999 to 2001. He and his wife live near Frankfort with their three children.