

**EARLY HISTORY OF
THE MAUMEE
VALLEY, PP. 9 - 70**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649298631

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TOLEDO:
PUBLISHED BY HOSMER & HARRIS,
1858.

HISTORY.

Previous to the decisive battle of Gen. Wayne in 1794, the Maumee Valley was the favorite home of the Indian. Here, for ages he had lived unmolested—roaming through forests and beside streams that invited and rewarded his pursuits—in possession of a soil which yielded abundantly to his careless tillage and cultivation. Here, were the graves of his ancestors for many generations, and the spots consecrated in his affections by recollections and events, which rendered them as dear to him as life itself. Here, he had often lighted the council fire, and listened to the indignant denunciations of his brethren against the pale faces. Here, forces had been organized for predatory and offensive warfare, and the fearful war whoop and hideous scalp dance had often proclaimed how successful had been their bloody enterprise. This beautiful valley was to the Indian enchanted ground. He never left it for the briefest period without regret, or returned to it without delight. The gurgling of the river as it broke into rapids over the rifted rocks—the sighing of the wind through the mighty forests—the drumming of the partridge at mid-day, and the prolonged midnight howl of the wolf were sweeter music to his ears, than any he ever listened to elsewhere. Here, the Indian maidens were more beautiful, and the gallants of the sterner sex more manly and daring. Mighty nations, not unlike in number and prowess the mighty nations of old, rose, flourished and fell here, amid the scenes which had witnessed their combats, and

the remnants which had struggled for their supremacy. The world contained no other spot around which the Ottawas and Miamis had gathered so many endearments—no other, indeed, which even, for purposes of enterprise or ambition, they were willing to exchange for it. Not only were they contented—they were delighted to dwell amid the varied scenery of River, Rock and Island, and like the Arcadian shepherds, they refused, until refusal was unavailing, to abandon it to their enemies. Mournful and melancholy is the story of their decay—full of sadness and gloom the reflections it suggests to the mind which sorrows for their fate—sorrows, while it cannot aid, nor find aught in the exchange to regret.

For a long period before the battle of 1794, traders from Canada, and refugees, had taken up an abode with the Indians of this valley—and at their instigation much of the border massacre occurred, which led to the various ill-fated expeditions of Danmore, Crawford, Harmer and St. Clair, and to the final and terribly retributive onslaught of Gen. Wayne. Simon Girty, the noted renegade, abandoned the house he had long occupied, above Napoleon, and fled to Canada before the invading army. An Indian agent, no less celebrated, one Colonel McKee, to whom, at that time and afterwards, in 1812, we were indebted for many of the bloodiest depredations of the savages, dwelt near the present site of Maumee city, where his barns, stores, and other property were destroyed by our indignant soldiery. A strong fortress—Fort Miami—had been erected by the Canadian Governor, Simcoe, a short time before the battle, fifty miles within the recognized boundary between the possessions of Great Britain and the United States, and was at the time under the command of a testy Scotch Major, by the name of Campbell.

The March of Gen. Wayne into the Indian country had been so stealthy, that it won for him the name of the Black Snake. He had not only advanced by an obscure and difficult route, but had attempted to divert the attention of the Indians by

clearing out two roads in the direction of their country and taking neither. His generalship, however, did not escape the vigilance of the famous Miami Chief, Little Turtle, who, when Wayne entered the valley of the Maumee, was prepared with Miamis, Wyandots, Pottawatamies, Delawares, Shawnese, Chippewas, Ottawas and Senecas, to the number of two thousand, to give him battle. The Continental Legion under Gen. Wayne was of about equal strength, exclusive of eleven hundred mounted Kentuckians under Gen. Scott. As soon as he came so near the savages as to render a battle unavoidable, except by friendly negotiation, Wayne sent to them an envoy of peace, whom they received with every demonstration of hostility, and would have slain, but that some of their warriors were prisoners in the American camp. The battle was not delayed—and it resulted in the loss of one hundred and seven Americans, and in the total rout of the Indians. Their loss, never accurately known, was supposed to exceed a thousand.

A council was held by the several Chiefs the night preceding the engagement, at which, Little Turtle recommended the acceptance of the terms of peace offered by Gen. Wayne. "We have beaten the enemy," said he, "twice under separate commanders. We cannot expect the same good fortune always to attend us. The Americans are now led by a chief who never sleeps. The night and the day are alike to him, and during all the time that he has been marching upon our villages, notwithstanding the watchfulness of our young men, we have never been able to surprise him. Think well of it. There is something whispers me it would be prudent to listen to the offers of peace." He was reproached with cowardice. Stung to the quick, he said no more, but took part in the battle, performing his duty with wonted bravery.

Major Campbell addressed a note to Gen. Wayne the day after the battle, expressing surprise at the appearance of an American force within gun-shot of his batteries, and desiring to be informed in what light he should regard such audacity.

Wayne, in his reply, says "that the most full and satisfactory answer was announced the day before from the muzzle of his small arms, in an action with a horde of savages in the vicinity of the Fort, and which terminated gloriously to the American arms. But," he adds, "had it continued until the Indians were driven under the influence of the Fort and guns mentioned, they would not much have impeded the progress of the victorious army under my command, as no such post was established at the commencement of the present war between the Indians and the United States." Campbell rejoined, complaining that armed Americans should come within pistol-shot of his works, and threatened hostilities should such insults to his Majesty's flag be continued. Wayne reconnoitered the Fort closely in every direction, and found it to be a strong, regular work, with two bastions mounting eight pieces of artillery on the rear face, and four upon the front, facing the river. He then wrote to the British commander, disclaiming any desire to resort to hostile measures, but denouncing the erection of the Fort, as an act of decided aggression towards the United States, and requiring his instant departure from our territory. Campbell answered that he should only leave when commanded to by those under whom he served, and again warned the American General not to approach within reach of his guns. The only notice Wayne took of this last letter, was to cause everything of a combustible nature, for miles around the Fort, to be set on fire, and all the corn fields and vegetable patches to be destroyed. This failed to provoke the wary Scot into any more decided acts of hostility, than the utterance of a few threats and oaths. Restricted by his instructions from attacking any British posts he might find within the American lines, unless they first assumed a belligerent attitude, Wayne chafed for a pretext to pay his respects to the Briton. It is reported that on one occasion, he ordered one of his grenadiers to descend the bank in front of the Fort, and bring a pail of water from the river.

"Why, General," replied the soldier, "were I to do so, they would shoot me from the Fort."

"That's the very thing I want them to do, John," replied Mad Anthony, "let them kill you, and we'll massacre every soul of 'em."

The American army returned to the camp Grand Glaize, where Wayne, on his downward march, had constructed Fort Defiance, after a stay of three days at the foot of the rapids. The whole Indian country along the Maumec and Auglaize rivers, which Wayne wrote "appeared like one continued village for many miles," was laid waste, and forts erected to protect it against the Indians. On being informed of the defeat of the Indians, Governor Simcoe hastened from Niagara to Fort Miami, accompanied by Capt. Brant, the great chief of the Six Nations, and held a council with the Indians on the 30th September, 1794. They had already intimated a desire to Wayne, to negotiate a peace, but the arch counsels of Simcoe and Brant caused them to hesitate, and for a while the prospect was fair for another campaign of active hostilities. In the meantime, however, the difficulties between the United States and Great Britain were adjusted by Jay's Treaty, so that the Indians were forsaken by their British allies. Wayne's victory had quieted the restlessness of the Six Nations, who refused any further calls for assistance to their western brethren, and at this critical juncture the Treaty of Greenville was concluded, and the long and destructive war, which, for so many years had desolated the frontier, was brought to a satisfactory termination. Capt. Brant, in a speech made not long afterwards, said: "The Indians, convinced by those in the Miami Fort, and other circumstances, that they were mistaken in their expectations of any assistance from Great Britain, did not longer oppose the Americans with their wonted unanimity. The consequence was that Gen. Wayne, by the peaceable language he held to them, induced them to hold a treaty at his own head-quarters, in which he concluded a peace entirely on his own terms."

A small stockade, known by the name of Fort Industry, was built near the junction of Swan Creek and the Maumee, immediately after the treaty of Greenville. It was garrisoned until 1808 by about 150 men, merely to guard the territory ceded to the United States, against Indian depredations.

Such was the valley of the lower Maumee until after the battle of 1794. What it was for some years after that event may be gathered from the following extracts, from one of Judge Burnet's letters to the Ohio Historical Society :

"My yearly trips to Detroit from 1796 to 1802 made it necessary to pass through some of the Indian towns, and convenient to visit many of them. Of course I had frequent opportunities of seeing thousands of them in their villages and at their hunting camps, and of forming an acquaintance with some of their distinguished Chiefs. I have eat and slept in their towns and partaken of their hospitality, which had no limit but that of their contracted means.

"In journeying more recently through the State, in discharging my judicial duties, I sometimes passed over the ground on which I had seen towns filled with happy families of that devoted race, without perceiving the smallest trace of what had once been there. All their ancient settlements on the route to Fort Defiance, and from thence to the foot of the rapids, had been broken up and deserted. The battle ground of Gen. Wayne, which I had often seen in the rude state in which it was when the decisive action of 1794 was fought, was so altered and changed that I could not recognize it, and not an indication remained of the very extensive Indian settlements which I had formerly seen there. It seemed almost impossible that in so short a period, such an astonishing change could have taken place."

Peter Navarre, a grandson of Robert de Navarre, a French officer, who came to America in 1745, and was appointed Notaire Royal and Sub-Deligue, on the early establishment of Detroit, was born in Detroit, and came with his father's family