

Wayne Madness

Cindy Felong

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Women's News Co-op — Wayne County, Wayne State University, Anthony Wayne Drive (Third Avenue), Fort Wayne, The City of Wayne. Just who is this character whose name we use all the time? Does he deserve to be commemorated all over the place? Does a bronze memorial to him deserve to be standing in the middle of the campus named after him?

After a little research, it turns out that old Anthony is a classic historical figure: he slaughtered, cheated or forced thousands of American Indians to move in order to make way for all those freedom-loving white settlers.

“Mad” Anthony Wayne earned his nickname during the American Revolution. He insisted upon being carried at the forefront of the attack on the British fort at Stony Point even though he had just received a bullet in his head. He possessed all those qualities that white American heroes are famous for: courage, perseverance, great military skill, undying loyalty to the U.S. government and a strong belief in white supremacy.

He was born in 1745 and early in his life showed his fondness for military matters by spending more time building miniature fortifications than studying his lessons. At the outbreak of the American colonies' war against the British he raised his own regiment and was appointed colonel. He engaged in battles from Canada to Georgia, the most-famous of which occurred at Stony Point, New York.

After the war the new U.S. government turned its attention to expansion toward the west. It was especially concerned about the area labeled the Northwest Territory which included Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana and parts of Illinois and Minnesota. The Indians of that region, particularly the Shawnee and Miami, had for years been waging a relentless war against the encroachments of the white settlers.

Efforts had been made by General Harmar in 1791 to crush the power of the Indian confederacy, which had its center in northwest Ohio. Both Harmar and St. Clair were decisively defeated. St. Clair's defeat, where 632 men were killed, was especially humiliating to President Washington who wanted a strong army at the western boundary.

Washington decided to ask General Wayne, who had gone into retirement at the end of the war, to be commander-in-chief of the army and to conduct a campaign that would end the “Indian problem” and open the northwest for white settlers.

Wayne started in June, 1792, to build a well-disciplined army and by the summer of 1794 he had advanced to a position 80 miles north of Cincinnati with a strong army.

He expressed his philosophy in the following statement to a Seneca chieftain: “The United States requires only that these people should demean themselves peaceably. But they may be assured that the United States are able, and will most certainly punish them for all their robberies and murders.”

On August 20, 1794, Wayne led an attack on the Indian encampment at a place later called Fallen Timbers. Using his usual style of surprise attack, he gave the order to “charge the damn rascals with the bayonets.” The Indians were forced to retreat. The British, who were supporting the Indians against the

U.S. army, now decided to stop giving them aid since they were afraid of another war with their former colonies.

The following January, emissaries from various tribes came to sign a “peace” treaty at Fort Greenville. The terms of the treaty were as follows: for the area which is now designated as Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana and Ohio as far east as Cleveland, the Indians would receive gifts amounting to about \$20,000 plus \$9,500 yearly to be distributed proportionately among the tribes forever.

Wayne also stipulated that the Indians must vacate most of the territory and be allowed to occupy a strip of land 20 to 40 miles wide, extending from Cleveland to Toledo along Lake Erie.

Thus Anthony Wayne is credited with crushing the Indian resistance to the white settlement of the northwest territory. The area was at first called Wayne County, but as pieces were carved out to make states, the name finally only applied to the area around the settlement at Detroit.

After his victory Wayne came to visit Fort Lernoult at Detroit, which was under the command of Colonel Hamtramck. (The present Federal Building is located on the site of the old fort.) He spent a couple of months in Detroit and then retired to the South where he died of gout shortly afterward.

The name Wayne thus recalls a classic piece of U.S. history: the murder or forced emigration of thousands of native Americans and the robbery of their resources by those committed to the proposition that all men (read: white males) are created equal. The latest reminder comes in the form of a relief bust of old Anthony done in bronze and set on Wayne’s campus between the Student Center and the Education Building.

We at the Fifth Estate feel that when people are commemorated, it should be for their struggles against oppression, not, as with General Wayne, for their efforts to perpetuate things like racism and imperialism. In other places the people recently have changed names which commemorate oppressors to names of people like Malcolm X, slain Black Panther Bobby Hutton, and Diana Oughton. We would like to suggest as an alternative to “Wayne” that people use the name Tecumseh.

Tecumseh was a Shawnee Indian chief who lived from 1768 to 1813. He denounced all the treaties which his people had been forced to sign (including the one with Wayne). Around the years 1808–1809 he visited many of the tribes from New York to Wisconsin and down into the South, encouraging them to form an Indian confederacy to stop the white man’s murders and robberies.

He won many recruits and promises of aid. (The Creeks were most receptive and formed a party known as the Red Sticks. A pile of red sticks was collected and one was to be thrown away each day and when they were all gone the tribes were to rise up and reclaim their land.)

When the war of 1812 between the U.S. and Britain broke out, Tecumseh held loose authority over most of the Indians in the old Northwest Territory. He aligned with the British and engineered a plan by which Detroit was seized back from the U.S. for a time. Tecumseh finally marched South and engaged in a battle with General Andrew Jackson and was defeated. (Jackson is credited with crushing the Red Stick Confederation.)

Tecumseh was a humane warrior who never allowed his men to massacre prisoners and who believed in war only as a last resort. It certainly seems fitting that he be commemorated as a hero, especially instead of General Anthony Wayne.

Tecumseh County!

Tecumseh State University!

The City of Tecumseh!

Join us in ending the commemoration of Anthony Wayne and in replacing him with the people’s hero, Tecumseh.

fifth Estate

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