

Fort Recovery, Ohio Changing History 1790 - 1795

St. Clair's Massacre

On a small triangle of land on the banks of the Wabash River in the late 1700's, the course of United States history was changed forever! It was on this plot of land that two significant battles took place. The first battle (1791), "The Battle on the Banks of The Wabash" or "The St. Clair Massacre," was the largest confrontation ever to take place between Native Americans and the U.S. Army. Even to this day that battle stands as the greatest loss ever suffered by the United States Army! Nine hundred of the 1200 soldiers were killed or mortally wounded. Nearly 100 camp followers suffered the same fate at the hands of nearly 1500 warriors under the command of Little Turtle of the Miami's and Blue Jacket of the Shawnee's.

First Congressional Investigation

The first congressional investigation in U.S. history took place after that battle. When, in the course of the investigation, the "evidence" began to implicate members of President Washington's own cabinet, the investigation was called off.

Anthony Wayne's Legion

Fortunately the 1791 massacre and incredible embarrassment of the United States Army was not the end of the story. President Washington called Revolutionary War leader, Anthony Wayne back into service. He was given broad authority to raise and equip a "real" army. Wayne modeled it after the old Roman Legions. This army, The Legion of the United States, became well equipped, trained and disciplined.

The fort of "Recovery"

In 1793, Wayne ordered soldiers to construct a fort on the site of the disastrous '91 massacre. Choosing this land, Wayne was sending a psychological message to the natives that the army and the United States were back! Unlike the previous forts which were named for war heroes, he ordered that this fort be called "Recovery!"

The Battle of Fort Recovery

The second conflagration (1794), "The Battle of Fort Recovery," took place on the same triangle of land as St. Clair's Massacre. However, with the protection of the fort, nearly 250 soldiers were able to resist a two day relentless attack by 2500 warriors again under the command of Little Turtle and Blue Jacket. After the defeat of the natives, Little Turtle said he would never again fight the American Army. He said, "To do so would be suicide to my people." It was this battle that ultimately broke the back of Indian resistance, led to the

signing of the Treaty of Greenville (August, 1795) and opened up the lands of the Northwest Territory for settlement by the colonists. The success of the US Legion at Fort Recovery proved that the United States had a viable army, that it was in control of its territories, and that the survival of the United States was at last assured!

Visitors to present day Fort Recovery will be impressed with how much of that watershed military history comes alive today through:

1. The clearly evident "Wabash hillside and triangle of land" where over a thousand lives were lost and the river flowed bloody. Where a surviving St. Clair soldier described the scene as "A pumpkin field, a steaming pumpkin field!" (scalped heads on that cold snowy November morning)
2. The reconstructed Anthony Wayne fort with the two-story blockhouses and connecting stockade, the well, the flagpole!
3. The museum that houses such detailed and accurate figures of Wayne's Legion that students sometimes step back thinking they are real. Even a dragoon and his horse! Plus of course the stories of Josiah Harmar, Arthur St. Clair, Anthony Wayne, William Wells!
4. The prehistoric and historic Native American history, models and artifacts, all of which tell the stories of those proud people! Blue Jacket of the Shawnees, Little Turtle of the Miami's!
5. The obelisk monument that stands over 100 feet high in honor of the soldiers who died in both battles, and whose remains are buried under that monument!
6. The Greenville Treaty Line Marker on the fort ground that designated this point as the northwest corner of the land that could be settled by "white men."
6. The pioneer cemetery where the remains of soldiers and their families who stayed to make their homes near the fort are buried.
7. Two log cabins depicting early colonial homes and tools.

Open Weekends in May and September (12:00-5:00), 7 days a week in June July and August, 12:00-5:00. \$3.00 adults, \$1.00 ages 7-14. Personal/group tours - \$3 adult +\$1.00 per child with \$25 minimum. 419-375-4649.

www.fortrecoverymuseum.com