Walking Through History

Fallen Timbers and Fort Miamis
A Walk Through History

This self-guide provides an overview of the historic events that took place at the Battle of Fallen Timbers and Fort Miamis. It illustrates various points of interest along the trail. Walk in the footsteps of some of early America's most remarkable figures as they shaped the history of Ohio, the United States, and North America.

With the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783, the Revolutionary War officially ended and the United States received the Northwest Territory—the lands which eventually became Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and part of Minnesota. Native Americans living in this territory were not invited to participate in the Treaty of Paris negotiations and continued to occupy the lands promised to them through previous treaties with Great Britain.

The British maintained relationships with tribes in the region and did not withdraw from the area. Meanwhile, the U.S. set its sights on westward expansion and the prospect of profitable land sales in the Northwest Territory. The interests of these three groups collided in the contested region of Northwest Ohio, and the resulting conflict came to a head at the Battle of Fallen Timbers on August 20, 1794.

Conflict erupted as westward-moving settlers pushed into territory occupied by Native Americans north and west of the Ohio River. The Native Americans aimed to push back the Americans with the formation of an inter-tribal alliance—the Western Confederacy—that included members from across the Great Lakes Region. Members of the Wyandot, Delaware, Ottawa, Mingo, Shawnee, Miami, Kickapoo and other tribes joined this alliance. Leaders included Chiefs Little Turtle (Miami), Blue Jacket (Shawnee) and Buckongahelas (Delaware). The British supported the Western Confederacy with supplies. The organized opposition posed by these Native Americans presented an alarming challenge to the United States.

The series of confrontations and battles that ensued between the U.S. military and the Western Confederacy is known as Washington's Indian Wars or the Northwest Indian War. Following the Battle of Fallen Timbers, the Western Confederacy lost strength. In the summer of 1795, representatives from each tribe in the alliance met with representatives of the United States to negotiate and sign the Treaty of Greeneville. The sale of Native American land in Southeast Ohio ultimately led to the American settlement of the Northwest Territories.
The Battle of Fallen Timbers

The battle that took place on August 20, 1794 was the last in a series of confrontations that led to the signing of the Treaty of Greeneville. Against the unified Western Confederacy, the United States suffered humiliating losses under Josiah Harmar (1790) and Arthur St. Clair (1791). President Washington and the U.S. Congress, in response to these losses and the threat to their new territory, commissioned General "Mad Anthony" Wayne to command and train a professional American Legion that could finally defeat the Western Confederacy. Training of the Legion began in 1792 and continued throughout Wayne's campaign.

In the summer of 1793, Wayne began marching approximately 1,500 men north from Fort Washington (Cincinnati) to where the Western Confederacy and British Fort Miamis were positioned. After spending the winter at Fort Greeneville (Fort Greene Ville), the U.S. Legion reached the banks of the Maumee River in August 1794. On the night before the battle, the American Legion camped at Roche de Bout (now Waterville) depositing their extra gear.

They left their camp on the morning of August 20 and upon reaching the field of battle, the soldiers moved into formation, spreading their forces along a line nearly one-mile long. The right flank, consisting of the First and Third sub-legions, received the brunt of the attack from the Western Confederacy and their Canadian allies. The Second and Fourth sub-legions successfully defended the army's left flank. Kentucky volunteers also played a pivotal role by surrounding the Native American warrior, forcing their retreat. The entire battle took less than two hours—with direct engagement lasting about 45 minutes.

Wayne ordered the men to prepare for a second attack, but once he realized the Native American forces would not return, he ordered the men to march five miles north to the British garrison at Fort Miamis. The United States army camped near the fort, but neither side engaged in violence as both the British and American commanders had been ordered to avoid engagement at all costs. The Americans did not enter the Fort. When the Native Americans retreated, they knew not to look for shelter under the British at Fort Miamis and so were compelled to travel 12 miles to safety at the mouth of Swan Creek.

Casualties in the battle were nearly even, with an estimated 30-50 dead on each side; however, the aftermath of the battle favored the United States. General Wayne not only took control of the countryside, but he burned all Native American storehouses and fields between Fort Miamis and Fort Defiance. Without provisions, the Western Confederacy faced a brutal winter. This left its members weakened and most were ready to negotiate with Wayne at Fort Greeneville by the summer of 1795. The Treaty of Greeneville ended the Northwest Indian War and opened southeast Ohio to American settlers. Native American tribes never regained the upper hand against the United States. By the 1840s, all Native Americans had been resettled west of the Mississippi River or were forced to assimilate into white culture.
The site was originally chosen in April of 1794 as a barrier against General Wayne's march north. British officials feared Wayne would attempt an attack on Fort Detroit, and they determined that Fort Miamis under the command of Major William Campbell, would be too dangerous a garrison for Wayne to ignore. The process to clear the land, dig the trenches, and build the fortifications was long and arduous, and many British soldiers fell victim to illness and injury. The fort's position on the Maumee River allowed the British to control river traffic and receive large shipments of supplies, cannons, and reinforcements from Fort Detroit.

At the time of the Battle of Fallen Timbers, Major Campbell commanded approximately 120 soldiers and 14 cannons. Campbell's superiors warned him not to be the first to exchange fire with the Americans. The British supported the Western Confederacy with food, weapons and supplies, but had no intention of actually joining the battle. After General Wayne's army drove the Native Americans back, the U.S. Army camped within a mile of the garrison. Though parties of soldiers approached within pistol range, no shots were fired. Campbell and Wayne exchanged a series of letters detailing their disapproval of each other's presence.

War of 1812

The fort was turned over to the Americans in 1796, but fell into disrepair after being abandoned in 1798. It was not used again until the War of 1812. The British arrived on the Maumee by large ship and docked at Fort Miamis to set up camp in April 1813, at which point the fort was used primarily to house supplies while the soldiers and militia camped outside the walls. Fort Miamis was strategically located just down river from the U.S. forces under the command of William Henry Harrison at Fort Meigs. Harrison's men received relief from 1,200 Kentucky Militia who arrived in the middle of the First Siege of Fort Meigs. A detachment of 800 men under Colonel William Dudley was sent to disarm the British cannons, but they were ambushed in the surrounding forests. On May 5, the Native American warriors marched the captured Kentucky militiamen under Dudley's command to Fort Miamis. The Americans were forced to run a gauntlet in front of the fort in what is now known as Dudley's Defeat. The brutality came to an end only upon the arrival of Tecumseh, who chastised the warriors and the British commander General Proctor for their mistreatment of prisoners.

Pivotal Role

The Battle of Fallen Timbers played a pivotal role in early American history. General Wayne's victory boosted Americans' confidence in their developing nation, and the resulting treaties halted hostilities between Native Americans and United States settlers until the War of 1812. Following the signing of the Jay Treaty in 1794, the British withdrew from Fort Miamis and other forts along the boundary line. Throughout this time, the British maintained relationships with the Native American tribes until conflict erupted once more in 1812. The events that took place at Fort Miamis and Fallen Timbers solidified American claims to the Northwest, and signaled the end of Native American culture and life in the Eastern half of the United States.
Points of Interest

Fallen Timbers Battlefield Memorial Park,
6599 Fallen Timbers Lane, Maumee, OH 43537

Fallen Timbers Monument: Built in 1929, this monument is a memorial to the Native American warriors and American regulars and militia who fought in the Battle of Fallen Timbers. General Anthony Wayne led his approximately 1,500 regulars and militia against the warriors of the Western Confederacy. An estimated 30-50 men died on each side.

As you look down across the floodplain, you can see the Maumee River, which was a natural highway for travel and trade. This floodplain was originally thought to be the location of the battle until archaeological evidence revealed its true location on the present site across the highway (The Anthony Wayne Trail).

Turkey Foot Rock: Legend states that Ottawa Chief Turkey Foot stood on this rock as the Native Americans were retreating from the Battle of Fallen Timbers. In the attempt to rally his warriors, he was shot and killed by American fire. The death of Chief Turkey Foot and other key leaders led the Native American warriors to believe that their losses were greater than that of the U.S. Legion. In actuality, the casualties on both sides were about equal. Though the legend has been perpetuated in oral tradition, no evidence of this story or of the existence of Chief Turkey Foot has ever been verified.

Over the last century, the rock has been moved numerous times from its original location in the Maumee River floodplain. It remains an important site for Native Americans, who come to pay tribute to their fallen warriors with offerings of tobacco. Carvings of turkey feet are still visible on the rock.

Pedestrian Bridge: This bridge offers a good view of the path that General Wayne's Legion took as he marched northwards. General Wayne followed the Maumee River, known then as the Miamis of the Lake, from Fort Defiance. The presence of the large, steep ravine running into the Maumee at this location forced Wayne to turn his forces inland. With their knowledge of the terrain, Native Americans knew Wayne would have to change course here. They settled among the fallen trees past the ravine to wait for the Legion. General Wayne, however, had been informed of the Western Confederacy's location by his scouts and expected a battle.

The forest provided natural cover and was an obstacle to the cavalry and artillery. Fighting in the woods also interfered with the army's formations and communications. Despite the disorder, Wayne's troops drove back the Western Confederacy.

Fallen Timbers Battlefield,
N. Jerome Road, Maumee, OH 43537:
(Not yet open to the public; site under development) After extensive research and archaeological surveys, it was determined that the Battle of Fallen Timbers occurred in the woods north of the bluff rather than down in the floodplain as previously thought. The Native Americans had been stationed at the battlefield for nearly three days before General Wayne's troops arrived and engaged them in battle. Their information led them to believe the battle would occur on the 18th of August, so they began observing a fasting ritual the night of the 17th. By the time of the actual engagement on the 20th, the Native American warriors were famished from their three-day fast.

Look for the ravine that forced Wayne's men away from the river and floodplain. The battle lines extended nearly a mile wide, from present-day U.S. Route 24 all the way to Monclova Road.
River overlook: The British, under the command of the Lt. Gov. of Upper Canada, Lord John Graves Simcoe, arrived at this site in early April 1794. Simcoe, his chief engineer Lt. Pilkington and Indian agent Alexander McKee chose this site for its convenient river access and the vantage point it provided for monitoring the nearby area. Situated at the foot of the rapids—the furthest point supply ships could travel inland—the British controlled travel and trade along the river. The British also outfitted the site with a water battery to maximize their defenses along the riverbank.

Standing at this site, you can look left (North) down river toward Lake Erie or right, up river toward present-day Perrysburg and Fort Meigs.

Earthworks: When the British arrived in the area, the land was heavily wooded and swampy. After clearing the existing woods from the land, construction began with digging a series of trenches which surrounded the fort. These ditches were approximately 25 feet deep and were lined by 12-inch-thick sharpened logs positioned to deter attacking forces. The system was known as an abatis.

Standing in the base of the trench while looking up at the remaining corner bastion's foundation, imagine the difficulty advancing enemies would have experienced attempting to charge the fort. Also, consider the Kentucky Militia captives from Dudley's Defeat who were marched through the abatis to a waiting gauntlet of Native Americans.

Corner Bastion: Fort Miamis was built with four corner bastions and a water battery. The design of the fort enabled British troops to install cannons facing all directions. Reports vary, but during British occupation in 1794, the fort may have boasted as many as 120 Regulars of the 24th Infantry, 10 Royal Artillery members, and 14 cannons supervised by an officer. The fort's design offered defenses strong enough to deter General Anthony Wayne's forces from attacking the British after their victory at the Battle of Fallen Timbers.

Fallen Timbers and Fort Miamis Timeline

- September 3, 1783: Treaty of Paris Signed
- October 22, 1790: Harmar's Defeat
- November 4, 1791: St. Clair's Defeat
- March 5, 1792: General Anthony Wayne Commissioned to lead U.S. Legion
- Summer 1793: General Wayne Moves Troops
- Winter 1793–Spring 1794: U.S. Army Camps at Fort Greeneville
- April 1794: British Begin to Build Fort Miamis
- June 1794: U.S. Army Attacked at Fort Recovery
- August 20, 1794: Battle of Fallen Timbers
- November 19, 1794: Jay Treaty
- August 3, 1795: Treaty of Greenville
- June 1796: Fort Miamis Transferred to American Control
- Spring 1813: British forces Reoccupy Fort Miamis
- May 5, 1813: Dudley's Defeat
Wabash-Cannonball Trail (north)

Wabash-Cannonball Trail (south)

Anthony Wayne Trail

Maumee-Western Rd.

Monclova Rd.

Toledo

Maumee

Fort Miamis

Ewing Island

Fallen Timbers Battlefield

Side Cut Metropark

Fallen Timbers Monument

Lucas County

Wood County

metroparks

TOLEDO AREA