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## THE MILITARY CAREER OF ANTHONY WAYNE

An address delivered at the Toledo Club September 17, 1919 before the Anthony Wayne Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution

By HON. HERBERT P. WHITNEY.

### THE SCHUYLKILL VALLEY

"The shot heard around the world" fired by the minute men of Lexington roused a clear echo in the "Great Valley of the Schuylkill" in Eastern Pennsylvania.

It was a peaceful prospect there in the year of 1775. A far look across sloping country side to the river; where cultivated farms and comfortable homesteads alternated with picturesque woodlands; a scene upon which rested an atmosphere of peaceful thrift and well-ordered prosperity.

### ANTHONY WAYNE BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

#### The Challenge of Lexington

That echo came to a prosperous young land owner named Anthony Wayne, living quietly on his ancestral estate with his young wife and his two small children, and changed him in a moment from a peaceful farmer and land owner into a soldier whose life was thenceforth to be spent in the camp and in the field.

Anthony Wayne was at this time a man thirty years of age, handsome and manly in appearance, with a free bold manner of speech and sincerity of character, which made him much of a leader among his neighbors. His estate of Waynesborough, inherited from English ancestry, settled already for three generations in Chester County, Pennsylvania, was considerable, and it is said that next to Washington and Lafayette, Wayne, of all the Revolutionary Generals, staked the largest personal fortune upon the successful outcome of the Revolutionary struggle.

#### A Born Soldier

Wayne had not, like Washington and other of the Revolutionary Generals, previous military experience, but he was a born soldier. No better illustration of the old truth "The child is father of the man" can be found than the soldierly achievements of Anthony Wayne. Both his father and his grandfather had distinguished themselves as soldiers and Wayne himself as a boy displayed a marked fondness for martial things.

An Uncle Gilbert who was his teacher when he was about fourteen years of age wrote his father a letter which contained an interesting and amusing glimpse of the young Anthony. "What he may be best qualified for, I know not. He may perhaps make a soldier. He has already distracted the brains of two-thirds of the boys under my charge by rehearsals of battles, sieges and so on. During noon, instead of the usual games and amusements, he has the boys employed in throwing out redoubts, skirmishes, etc." Wayne, however, never as a young man, took up a soldier's life, but did spend two years exploring and surveying in Nova Scotia, which may have contributed something to his later success as a soldier; but at the beginning of the Revolution, he had for some eight years been settled quietly upon the Waynesborough estate at Chester, which about that time, by the death of his father, came into his own control and ownership.

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### A Leader in Chester County

The sturdy Welsh-Irish folk of Chester County had in common with the other American Colonists, deeply resented the growing tyranny of the English Government, and Wayne, who was a leader among them, became an outspoken champion of the colonists and a leader in every movement to protect their rights.

He was, during the months preceding and following Lexington, Chairman of the County Committee which proposed the resolutions condemning the course of the Ministry, adopted by the freemen of that county on the 13th of July, 1774. He was also chairman of the committee appointed to carry out the recommendations of the Assembly in reference to a military organization and non-importation agreement; he was also the author of the proposition in May, 1775 that the freemen of the county should be organized for military purposes. In June of the same year he became one of the members of the Provincial Committee of Safety.

In the meantime, he had been recruiting a regiment of the continental line and upon the 31st of January, 1776 was, upon the recommendation of the Committee of Safety, appointed its Colonel.

### SECOND SOLDIER OF THE REVOLUTION

#### General Statement

Wayne's first active service was in the spring and summer of 1776 in connection with the expedition sent to relieve the unfortunate army of Arnold, which was falling back from Quebec. From that time on he was almost continuously engaged throughout the seven years of the Revolutionary War in strenuous service, usually in the front of every attack. At Three Rivers, collecting the broken fragments of the fleeing army and stemming the tide of defeat; in command of Ticonderoga perfecting its defenses and keeping up the spirit of a neglected and mutinous garrison; stubbornly holding the left flank at the disastrous battle of Brandywine; surprised and overwhelmed by a superior force at Paoli, but drawing his division off without great loss; driving the British three miles at Germantown, and only missing decisive victory through the failure of other Generals to do their part; with his brave Pennsylvanians repulsing again and again the much vaunted grenadier guards at Monmouth and defeating them so completely that they were unable to rescue the body of their fallen commander; thrilling his countrymen with pride and new confidence by his brilliant storming and capture of Stony Point; taking his forces by a night march of sixteen miles to save West Point after Arnold's treason, at the eminent risk of his life; at one time facing the bayonets of his own men in a fruitless effort to prevent revolt; doing his part in the marvellously worked out campaign which resulted in the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown; and finally by a brilliant exhibition of generalship and military skill, driving the British and Tories out of the State of Georgia. The Revolutionary record of Anthony Wayne richly entitles him to the title of "Second Soldier of the Revolution."

#### Wayne at Three Rivers

Wayne quickly became recognized by Washington as one of his most fearless and dependable Generals, and as such, was called upon by him to lead the most hazardous enterprises and to defend the most dangerous points. From the memoirs of a Captain Wilkinson, we have the following interesting glimpse of Wayne under fire for the first time at Three Rivers. Bear in mind that it was the first time that either he or his troops had been under fire, and that the American forces were in disgraceful flight. He says: "I found every house and hut on my route crowded with straggling men without officers, and officers without men. The first officer of my acquaintance whom I met was Lieut. Colonel Wm. Allen, of the Second, Pa. I informed him of my orders for a detachment. He replied: "Wilkinson, this army is conquered by its own fears, and I doubt whether you can draw any assistance from it, but Colonel Wayne is in the rear, and if anyone can do it, he is the man", on which I quickened my pace and one-half-hour after, I met that gallant soldier as much at his ease as if he was marching to a parade for exercise. He halted at a bridge and posted a man with orders to stop any man without regard to corps, who appeared active, alert and

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equipped. In a short time a detachment was completed and in movement for Longueil on the route to Montreal. The very men, who only the day before were retreating in confusion before a division of the enemy, now marched with alacrity against his main body. "Then", continues Wilkinson, "our detachment was discovered advancing on the banks of the Sorel, two miles from the front. We were taken by Sullivan to be the enemy and great alarm and confusion ensued; the drums beat to arms, and General Sullivan and his forces were observed making great exertion to prepare for battle. Colonel Wayne halted his column, pulled out his glass, and seemed to enjoy the panic his appearance produced."

### **Wayne at Brandywine**

At the disastrous defeat of Brandywine, Wayne with his division was posted on the left of the American line on the east bank of the Brandywine. The following account of his action is given by Stille:

"This creek was fordable in front of the position at a place called Chad's Ford, and at that place Wayne's division was stationed. Wayne had in front of him, separated by a narrow creek, the forces of Knyphausen (the Hessian general), consisting of about seven thousand men, and during the whole day stood his ground firmly, repelling successfully every attempt by Knyphausen to pass the creek, and sending Maxwell with his light infantry occasionally to the other side with orders to annoy him. Wayne remained in this position until sunset and until the division of Sullivan (reinforced by that of Greene), which had not been able to withstand the attack of Cornwallis, was forced back from Birmingham Meeting House. The right flank of the army being turned by the enemy, exposed Wayne's division to the danger of being attacked by Knyphausen in his front and by Cornwallis in his rear. He therefore retreated, as his supports had been driven from the field, to avoid being surrounded. His men were in good order and discipline and quite ready to attack the tired battalions of the British army, had they undertaken to interrupt the retreat of the army. There can be no doubt that his division in this retreat saved the remnant of Sullivan's force.

### **Wayne's Love of Attack**

Wayne's principle of action in the field was that of aggressive attack. This trait is interestingly shown in a letter written by him to Washington, offering some suggestions upon the conduct of the campaign in defense of Philadelphia. In advising an attack upon the right or left flank of Howe's army, with three thousand select troops, he says: "This, Sir, I am well convinced would surprise them much—from a persuasion that you dare not leave your works—it would totally stop the other party from advancing—and should the attack be fortunate—which I have not the least doubt of—the enemy would have no other alternative than to retreat—for they dare not hazard any new manoeuvre in the face of your army, which would be cool and ready to take every advantage of either their confusion, disorder or retreat, and from which the best and greatest consequences might be derived."

### **Reversal at Paoli**

While this aggressive policy of Wayne's usually was blest with the "fortune which favors the brave" it did on one occasion result in a defeat which brought some criticism. This was at Paoli, where he was surprised and defeated with considerable loss by largely superior forces of British. A court of inquiry censured him for reckless disregard of information that the enemy was approaching. He was, however, later exonerated by a court martial which he himself demanded. The verdict of the court martial was, "That Wayne was not guilty of the charge exhibited against him, but that he, on the night of the 20th of September last, did every duty that could be expected from an active, brave and vigilant officer under the orders he then had. The Court do acquit him with the highest honor."

The truth of the matter was, that Wayne was under insistent orders from Washington to attack the rear of the British Army under General Howe, who was then marching upon Philadelphia. Wayne's orders were, to harass the enemy from the rear in order to delay their march upon the city. In his efforts to do this, he was obliged, of course, to take an advanced position close to the enemy,

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who, unfortunately, getting word of his approach, made a night attack upon him, with greatly superior forces and drove him from the ground with severe loss.

As a matter of fact, it was one of those mishaps which will come sooner or later to the man who dares much, and Wayne, instead of censure, deserved the praise given him by his Commander-in-Chief for extricating his forces from a situation which promised utter annihilation.

### Wayne at Monmouth

A battle in which Wayne won great honor was the famous battle of Monmouth.

Upon news of the coming of the French fleet which he feared would blockade the Delaware, Howe evacuated Philadelphia and began to retreat across Jersey, encumbered with a great baggage train twelve miles long.

Washington was unwilling to permit him to escape unmolested, but was advised against attack by the Council of his Generals, whose decision was described by Colonel Alexander Hamilton as, "Worthy of that honorable Society of midwives and no other".

Chief amongst those who advised a cowardly course was General Charles Lee, who by reason of previous training in the British Army, was inclined to ascribe great superiority to the British troop and to look with contempt upon the ragged colonists.

Wayne with two or three other Generals, however, advocated prompt, vigorous and decided action. General Washington decided to follow the advice of this gallant minority.

An attack upon the rear guard of Howe's army was accordingly planned and Wayne's division, as usual, was picked to lead the attack. Unfortunately, however, General Lee who had opposed an attack, at the last moment claimed and was given command of the expedition. The result is one of the well-known incidents of the Revolutionary War. Having come in contact with the enemy Wayne attacked with his accustomed vigor and with brilliant success drove the British forces in front of him. As he advanced, however, the British forces were rapidly re-inforced to such an extent that Wayne was unable to proceed further with his inferior forces.

He thereupon held his ground waiting for the expected support from Lee. To his consternation he was informed that Lee was in full retreat with all of his command, leaving him to shift for himself as best he could. With the greatest difficulty Wayne extricated his forces by a retreat over difficult ground of swamp and woods.

At this point Washington came up with his full command, amazed at the retreat of the advance guard and angry beyond restraint with Lee, who had ordered it. It was a most critical situation. Washington had, it is said, but fifteen minutes to dispose his forces to meet the full shock of the British forces. Acting with the vigor and decision which marks the great commander, he met the situation, and there followed the important battle of Monmouth.

In aligning his forces in this important action, when the fate of the American Army hung in the balance, Washington assigned Wayne to an advanced position in the well-known orchard of Monmouth. Here the British Grenadier guards, flushed with victory and proud of their name as the finest soldiers in the world, advanced to the attack.

Crossing a fence which lay in their front, they came on with dauntless courage, first on the right and then on the left, but were repulsed in both cases with great loss. Finally the guards, officered by sons of the noblest English families, re-formed for a last charge.

These were the same British officers who had for months given the tone to fashionable dissipation in Philadelphia society and had, with their admirers, adopted an attitude of contempt toward the ragged and miserable soldiers of Valley Forge. Their commanding officer, Colonel Monckton addressed them, appealing to every motive which would spur them to victory. Then on they came in a furious charge with the bayonet. Waiting until they came close, Wayne's regiment met them with a withering fire which killed not only the

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The indomitable spirit of their leader reflected in his men was not to be denied, and heedless of the deadly fire of grape and musketry, they pressed up and on, bearing down all opposition, and soon were in complete possession of the fort. So carefully worked out and so perfectly executed was the plan that all three of the attacking columns met in the center of the fort where Colonel Flemy leading the right column handed down the English standard, shouting: "The fort is ours."

At two o'clock Wayne announced the surrender of the fort to Washington in the following note—

"Dear General: The fort and garrison with Colonel Johnston are ours. Our officers and men behaved like men who are determined to be free.

Yours most sincerely,

Anthony Wayne."

### General Estimate of Wayne's Services

It is hard to over-estimate Wayne's value to the Revolutionary cause. He furnished in a large measure the confidence in council and the vigor in action so much needed on the staff of the Commander.

The voice of Wayne was always for the attack. It is related of him, that on one occasion when Washington was holding one of his frequent councils of war, that he sat for a long time quietly at one side, reading a book. After all present had spoken, most of them pointing out difficulties and advising against attack, Washington finally turned to Wayne and asked him for his position.

"Fight", said Wayne, looking up from his book, "fight, fight."

In many of his letters to the Commander-in-Chief, one of which has been referred to, we note the never wavering note of advance attack. What the presence of this man among his generals meant to Washington and to the Revolutionary cause we can only estimate. Always the Commander maintained toward Wayne the most cordial feeling, and that he trusted him greatly was shown on many occasions.

### CAMPAIGN AGAINST NORTHWESTERN INDIANS

#### Defeat and Discouragement

Washington's confidence in Wayne was most strikingly shown some years later, when he entrusted him with the organization and command of the expedition against the Indians of the Northwest. It was in the year 1792, a dark and anxious period for the American settlers along the western frontier, and a time of great discouragement for the President. The Indians, trained to fight with rifles and furnished with ammunition by the British of Canada, had disastrously defeated the American armies, and elated by their success had burst with renewed fury upon the frontier settlements. During the five years preceding that year 1,800 men, women, and children had been killed in these Indian raids, under circumstances of great barbarity. Every day brought new tales of horror and bloodshed to the anxious President in Washington. Following the Revolution the veterans of that war had been encouraged to take up lands along the frontier and to move there with their families—hence there was a strong obligation upon the government to protect them.

Terribly moved by the news of St. Clair's defeat and the massacre of 600 of his officers and men, Washington had begun organizing the new expedition with the greatest care. His choice of Wayne as the Commander-in-chief of the expedition was significant. As has been shown, Wayne had served directly under Washington much of the time during the Revolutionary War. Many generals were available, and that the President now chose Wayne indicates a confidence not only in the latter's courage, but also in his discretion and judgment.

#### Preparation

The new army called, "The Legion of the United States" had to be recruited and trained and Wayne was given charge of this work. During the summer and autumn of 1792 and the winter and spring following, the recruiting, organizing and training of this army proceeded. The men were carefully drilled in all the

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methods and devices of frontier warfare. The work was systematically done and the result indicated in Wayne high quality as an organizer and leader. It would appear that he succeeded in inspiring his force with his own enthusiasm and sense of responsibility. When certain flags and standards for which he wrote were sent him, he wrote the Secretary of War these words, which today have a familiar ring: "They shall not be lost". And this spirit of determination was the spirit of his entire force.

### **Fallen Timbers**

While Wayne's armies were being trained and a line of forts was being established, overtures were made to the Indians for peace. When, however, it became apparent that nothing would come of these peace measures, Wayne decided to advance.

There was a great gathering of Indians at the British Fort at the foot of the Rapids of the Miami—our own "Fort Miami"—and to them Wayne sent a last proposal of peace. Their reply was—"Wait ten days and we will treat with you".

Wayne did not wait; hardly was the word received before he was on the march and by the second day had reached Roche de Boeuf. Shortly thereafter he threw forward his skirmishers and the battle was on.

The savage warriors skulking in the woods from tree to tree, and shooting from covert received a stern surprise when hundreds of trained frontiersmen drove them from their hiding places at the point of the bayonet and then shot them down mercilessly as they tried to run. To complete their confusion, mounted horsemen appeared upon their flanks and rear, riding and cutting them down. Such was the completeness of the victory that in one hour they had been driven through two miles of the woods, many of their bravest warriors lay dead and dying on the battle field, and the remainder were dispersed and fleeing through the woods to their distant villages.

It is related of Wayne that he was suffering from an attack of gout as the battle began, and that as he was lifted into the saddle his pain was so severe that the tears coursed down his cheeks. In the joy of battle, however, he soon forgot his pains and was soon moving about with the speed of his youngest officers.

Lieut. William H. Harrison, then an aide-de-camp under Wayne, said to him early in the action: "I am afraid you will get into the fight yourself and forget to give me the necessary fighting orders."

"Perhaps I may" said Wayne "and if I do recollect that the standing order of the day is, charge the damned rascals with the bayonets".

Unlike the generals who had commanded previous expeditions, Wayne, kept his spies and scouting parties threading the woods for miles ahead of him, lurking by the streams and watching the trails, so that he was at all times informed of the movements of the Indians.

It is reported that Chief Little Turtle, speaking in council at Miami, in favor of accepting Wayne's peace overtures said:

"The Americans are now led by a Chief who never sleeps. Night and day are alike to him. During all the time which he has been marching upon our villages, we have never been able to surprise him."

Wayne's title of "Mad Anthony" finds no justification anywhere in the record of his military career, though it is easy to understand how some of the timid, over-cautious generals with whom he was associated may have liked to call him Mad Anthony Wayne.

### **Results. Peace of Greenville**

The Battle of Fallen Timbers was most decisive in its results. The Indians, backed by the British, who disliked the expansion of the American Nation westward across the continent, and who, besides, placed a high value upon the fur-trade, had been fighting to keep the whites south and east of the Ohio; and after defeating Harmar and St. Clair the savages seemed about to succeed. After the Battle of

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Fallen Timbers, however, the Indians never again made an organized stand in defense of their line and in August, 1795 a treaty of peace was concluded with them at Greenville, whereby they conceded the claims of the United States to the Northwest Territory. In this connection the boundary line established is of interest. "The general boundary line between the lands of the United States and the said Indian Tribes" says the treaty, "shall begin at the mouth of the Cuyahoga river, and run thence up the same to the portage between that and the Tuscarau branch of the Muskingum; thence down that branch to the crossing place about Fort Lawrence, then westerly to a fork of that branch of the Great Miami River running into the Ohio, at or near which Fork stood Lorimies store and where commences that portage between the Miami of the Ohio and St. Mary's river, which is a branch of the Miami which runs into Lake Erie; thence a westerly course to Fort Recovery, which stands as a branch of the Wabash; thence southwesterly in a direct line of the Ohio, so as to intersect that river opposite the mouth of the Kentucky or Cuttawa river."

In order to facilitate intercourse between the whites and the Indians, certain reserves were created in the Indian territory, among which were twelve miles square at the British fort of the rapids, also a reserve of six miles square at the north of said river where it empties into the lake.

By this treaty the Northwest territory was thrown open to white settlement and following it for seventeen years a constant stream of emigration and settlement from the eastern states flowed in, until its possession by the United States was assured. Among these settlers, gentlemen, were your ancestors and mine, and we tonight stand directly indebted to General Anthony Wayne for the masterly stroke which broke the hold of the British and Indians upon the Maumee Valley.

### Need of Memorial

General Wayne and his legion as they marched so dauntlessly into the remote wilderness, staking their very lives upon victory at Presque Isle were the fighting vanguard of the great peaceful host which has since moved in and occupied the country which they won.

And this great city, Toledo, with its sea of roofs sheltering the quiet homes of its people, with its hundreds of great plants, where busy thousands toil, with its miles of water front crowded with shipping, its parks and play grounds where the children play, and the broad miles of beautiful country about it, dotted with country homes and villages, we hold as a direct heritage of their gallantry.

Yet, it is a matter of surprise and regret to me to think that there is not in this rich and populous Maumee Valley any fitting memorial of their deeds. A painted sign, such as a real estate man puts up on a cheap addition, should not be the measure of our appreciation. Our handsomest Boulevards, our most magnificent hotel, our finest park should keep fresh in our minds the name of Anthony Wayne. And on Presque Isle Hill there should stand, moulded in bronze the heroic figure, the great soldier and patriot. And carried upon the base these words of his:

"The safety of the western frontier, the reputation of the legion, the dignity and interest of the nation, all forbid a retrograde manœuvre, or giving up one inch of ground we now possess, until the enemy are compelled to sue for peace."

### CONCLUSION

After the passing of a century and a half, quickly shifting scenes in the great drama of our national life, the tumult of wars alternating with seasons of peace, new crises followed by new settlements, with many a great figure passing across the stage, the figure of Anthony Wayne still lingers in the imagination of loyal Americans, to thrill with its suggestion of daring leadership and its lesson of patriotic devotion.

**Ed. Note**—In our next number we shall present an account of the Memorial soon to be dedicated in commemoration of General Wayne's famous victory, on the field of Fallen Timbers.