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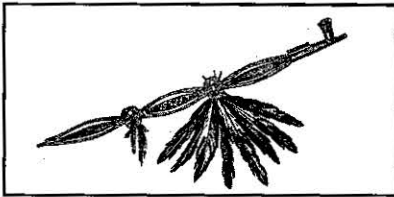
... then and now

From The Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge
1861

The Treaty of Greenville



At the end of the Revolutionary War, the British controlled the St. Lawrence River Valley and most of the Great Lakes. They supplied weapons to natives and encouraged them to attack American settlers in the Northwest Territory. After several Native American victories and continuing raids on settlements, George Washington gave command of his western troops to General Anthony Wayne who recruited 2500 men

and trained them in frontier warfare. They set forth from Cincinnati, proceeding inland and north, and built a huge fort enclosing 50 acres. Known as Fort Greenville, it was the main link in a chain of forts between the Ohio River and Lake Erie.

In July 1794 Wayne's army moved into Indian country. They positioned themselves near Fallen Timbers, a swath of land where trees had been blown down by a tornado. After peace overtures were ignored, Wayne's troops decisively defeated the Indians. Many natives fled to nearby British forts, only to be denied access and protection. Disheartened by their defeat and resentful of the British, Indians reluctantly decided to discuss a treaty with General Wayne in Greenville the following June. Representatives of the Wyandots, Delawares, Shawanoes, Miamis, Ottawas, Chippewas, Pottawatamies, Kickapoos, Weas, Eel River Indians, Piankeshaws, and Kaskaskias met in a specially constructed Council House. With particular attention to traditional ceremonies and symbols of the tribes, discussions were held over the next month. Over 1000 Indians camped outside the stockade and were supplied provisions that summer, and council fires burned when tribes met in general session.

To win over the leaders, Wayne had private conferences with them. He had an artist make a colored drawing of each leader, so he could distinguish them individually. He addressed the chiefs as "brothers" and diplomatically listened to grievances and promoted reconciliation with the American government. Proud warriors made speeches, passing wampum, beads, and decorated belts to Wayne to show their determination to "speak with one voice".

Over the summer some chiefs voiced their desire to "bury the hatchet," and the Treaty of Greenville was signed in August 1795. The lengthy treaty was read three times to those assembled. Besides the signatures of Wayne and American officials, 80 Indian chiefs placed their totem marks on the parchment. Silver oval medals were given to each Indian tribe to commemorate the peace; and the Indians gave Wayne an ornately carved peace pipe, which was passed amongst all signers.

Hostilities were to cease, prisoners exchanged, and boundaries defined. The Indians ceded some land in Michigan, and the boundary between Indians and the US was established in Ohio. Relinquishing title to the southern 2/3 of Ohio, the natives were given cash and promised funds and trade goods in future years. They were permitted to hunt on the ceded lands and to punish intruders on their property. Guidelines for trade and methods of dealing with complaints were established.

Because of Wayne's frank and fair treatment of them, the Native American signatories to the treaty remained true to their agreement. However, not all tribes participated, and some who did not sign (e.g. Tecumseh) continued fighting with the settlers. The number of raids was sharply curtailed, and there was no major warfare with Indians until the War of 1812. The Treaty of Greenville spurred settlement of Ohio, and it was the first time that a title to land within US boundaries was officially recognized.