The Battle of Fallen Timbers and the Treaty of Fort Greeneville: why did Anthony Wayne win both and could he have lost?

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Entitled

The Battle of Fallen Timbers and the Treaty of Fort Greeneville:
Why Did Anthony Wayne Win Both and Could He Have Lost?

By

Bryce Dixon Blair Jr.

Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for

The Master of Liberal Studies

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Committee Member: Dr. Michael Jakobson

Graduate School

The University of Toledo
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Introduction

It is important that I immediately state to the reader that I have attempted to pursue the philosophy of a liberal studies approach to this thesis by combining the perspectives of my two undergraduate degrees of History and Sociology. Rather than just chronicle the events of the Battle of Fallen Timbers and the Treaty of Fort Greeneville, I wanted to analyze the more complicated truth of the matter contained in the details and to “what if” the political and military scenario of the 1790s as far as it effected the Ohio Country.

It has been a bone of contention of mine that the local events of the American conquest of the Ohio Country and their significant consequences to our Country’s development are so poorly known. This historical era has been neglected in the history textbooks and curriculum. The United States faced very real and dire threats in the Ohio Country to its westward plans and maybe to its survival as a unified country. The European nations were still players in the political game of North America, the United States was still an agrarian pre-industrial economy, the Indians had access to most of the weapons of contemporary technology, a strong sense of manifest destiny and national unity had not yet developed, and the population ratios were not totally insurmountable yet. The historical stage of Ohio in 1794 was much different than that of the “Wild West” in the 1870s-80s, which is far more popularly known. The popular image of the proud Plains warriors on horseback fighting the U.S. Cavalry was intriguing but its
outcome had already been predetermined prior to it commencing. The fighting in the Ohio Country could have been decided much differently.

I believe that a few fundamental questions remained unanswered by all the material I read for this thesis. I found these questions intriguing and basic to a complete understanding of the significance of Fallen Timbers. Did the Indian Confederation facing the Legion of the United States actually have a chance of achieving a battlefield victory against Anthony Wayne? If they had, was there a chance that this could have translated into a long-term, stable political victory. This entailed debunking what I consider the myth of historical inevitability. Human history develops through a single course of action contingent upon countless variables but there are always alternatives. These alternatives have a greater or lesser degree of potential based upon the dynamics of individual, societal and cultural factors. Since the United States was successful in its ‘Manifest Destiny” from coast-to-coast it can appear that the historical factors that led to this were predetermined and inevitable. I will argue that these issues relate to my thesis because the Indian Confederation of the Old Northwest could have won both the Battle of Fallen Timbers and won at least a temporary and stable settlement of their boundaries.⁴

The Battle of Fallen Timbers has been relegated to an American historical footnote.⁵ The Indian Wars for the Old Northwest from the end of the Revolutionary War until 1795 are usually only covered sparingly in American History textbooks.⁶ As with most human events that are only covered as a “sound bite” many of the truths found in the details are lost. But unfortunately, this subject is covered inaccurately when it is minimized to a single paragraph. One of my undergraduate military history textbooks describes the significance of Fallen Timbers like so many others do. Weigley states that:
...even the young Republic of the 1790s was able to administer a severe
defeat to the Indians of the Old Northwest, in Anthony Wayne’s battle of Fallen
Timbers in 1794.  

The current history textbook for the Toledo Public School system that is used for eighth
grade history simply states:

The Native Americans were defeated in what became known as the Battle
of Fallen Timbers… The Battle of Fallen Timbers crushed Native American
hopes of keeping their land in the Northwest Territory.  

The Metropolitan Park District of the Toledo Area’s Draft General Management Plan for
the Fallen Timbers Battlefield site submitted to National Park Service contains the same
type wording:

The 1783 Treaty of Paris ended the Revolutionary War, but it contained a
 provision that allowed the British to remain in the Northwest Territory until the
United States resolved a land issue with the Native Americans, who had been
British allies. The Chippewa, Ottawa, Pottawatomi, Shawnee, Delaware, Miami,
and Wyandot tribes formed a federation to halt further U.S. incursions into their
territory (Library of Congress 2003a). After a stunning defeat of General
Anthony St. Clair’s American troops in 1791 by the Native American federation
under Chief Little Turtle, George Washington put General Anthony Wayne, a
Revolutionary War hero, in charge of the Legion of the United States. Two years
later the Battle of Fallen Timbers became the decisive point for resolving U.S.
jurisdiction of the Old Northwest Territory.  

I will argue during the course of this thesis that these descriptions are flawed in their
simplicity. It is correct to state that the Battle of Fallen Timbers was a significant event
in bringing the Indian Confederation of the Old Northwest to the peace table at Fort
Greeneville in 1795. But it is inaccurate by omission and generalization because it fails
to mention the equally if not more significant events that happened at Fort Recovery and
Fort Miamis. It is ironic that the most impactive American historical event that occurred
on August 20, 1794, was before the gates of the British Fort Miamis not at the Fallen
Timbers battlefield. The Battle of Fallen Timbers wasn’t “the decisive point”. It was a
battle that amounted to a minor victory, more a skirmish in terms of casualties. Brigadier General Wilkinson, Wayne’s second-in-command, wrote, “…this affair does not deserve the name of a Battle”. The Indian Confederation still had the same military power after the battle as they did prior. I will argue in this thesis that the establishment of forts throughout the hostile Indians’ lands, destroying their crops, and humiliating the British regulars at Fort Miamis were equally, if not more important than Fallen Timbers.

The lands north and west of the Ohio River were virtually an unbroken wilderness at the end of the American Revolutionary War. Its only inhabitants were the Native Americans that had lived there for uncounted generations. The Indian tribes that lived between Lake Erie and the Ohio River were the ones to feel the brunt of the coming white expansionist pressure and they were the ones that became most intractably hostile. The Shawnee, Miami, Delaware became the leaders and the main instigators of the Indian Confederation’s battle plans but the Mingo, Wyandot, Ottawa, Wea, Eel River, Piankeshaw, Kickapoo, Ojibwa, Iroquois, and Potawatomi played significant roles in the warfare. At times, the Indian Confederation
would garner support from tribes on the periphery but never in significant numbers. This was to be a fight by the Ohio Country and Lakes\textsuperscript{14} Indian tribes against the Americans.

This conflict was basically a continuation of the fighting of the Revolutionary War. The British had asked the Indians to “pick up the tomahawk” and fight for their side against the Americans and most of the Ohio Country tribes had then done so. The fighting was very bitter and at times each side seemed to gain the upper hand. The American General, George Rogers Clark had success in his attacks against Kaskaskia and Vincennes in the Illinois country in 1778-9 but he was unable to strategically sustain his success or to move against Detroit.\textsuperscript{15} The Indians were able to defeat the Americans twice in 1782, at Blue Licks in Kentucky and against Colonel Crawford in Ohio. In 1783, the Indians were undefeated and bewildered at the terms of the Peace Treaty of Paris signed by the Americans and their former allies the British without consulting any Indian councils. After the Treaty of Paris, the Americans immediately took a belligerent stance to negotiations, predicated upon what they considered their rights of conquest.

The first of these treaties was signed the following year in 1784 at Fort Stanwix. The Americans insisted that the Indians had

forfeited their claims by violating their neutrality and engaging in warfare against the United States. The United States stated that their ally and sovereign, Great Britain had transferred her rights in the Paris Treaty and it was in their best interest to negotiate and receive what they could from the generous Americans. The Americans were able to secure but never enforce four treaties prior to having to launch federal military campaigns to solve their Indian problems instead. These treaties amounted to very little since the Indian signatories never represented a majority of their respective tribes. The United States attempted military campaigns using their regular forces and militia led by Brigadier General Harmar in 1790 and General St. Clair in 1791. Both of these campaigns failed to achieve their military objectives and St. Clair’s was spectacular in its degree of utter devastation. This set the stage for the Washington Administration in Philadelphia in early 1792 to have to come to grips with a serious threat that had the potential of ruining the newly created United States of America. It was the most serious threat the new nation had yet faced.

Military history has always been an interest and hobby for me as far back as I can remember during my adult life. Some of my motivation for exploring this subject arises from the textbooks I read throughout my secondary school years and the movies I have diligently watched during my life. I have enjoyed most and they have helped to fuel my continually interest in American and military history. They were consistent in that they were usually very spartan when it came to narratives, descriptions, and explanations of events in Ohio or the Northwest Territory. I read an article about fifteen years ago detailing St. Clair’s Defeat at Fort Recovery, Ohio and was surprised how little I knew. I have lived my entire adult life in Ohio and I had a history degree from Miami University.
I thought of all people I should have known a little more about the conflicts, which had taken place in my own “historical backyard”. This prodded me to further readings and led to a healthy sense of fascination with the subject matter of the struggle for the Ohio Country.

As a creature of modern American society, many of my notions originated with the images played out upon the silver screen. Popular entertainment and public interest (it can be argued which fuels which) have always placed a much greater emphasis upon the Indian wars of the Great Plains during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Most Americans would likely be able to recognize a reference to “Custer’s Last Stand” but how many Ohioans know anything about Harmar’s, St. Clair’s, or Wayne’s campaigns against the Indian Confederation right here in Ohio? Movies like “Dances with Wolves” are embedded in our collective social psyche as a dramatic illustration that allows the watcher to understand some of the history of the Indian conflict in our nation’s past. Hollywood made countless versions of movies depicting the “Wild West” for the Saturday theaters. It was impossible for me to grow up in America and not see dozens of movies about the cavalry and/or cowboys fighting the Apaches, Sioux, Arapaho, Comanche, Nez Perce, etc. But if I hadn’t viewed the “Last of the Mohicans” and the few other movies of its ilk, I never would have known as a young boy that hostile Indians even lived east of the Mississippi River.18

I find the study of the conflict between the westward advancing white civilizations and the Native Americans far more intriguing during the time periods where the eventual outcome was in doubt, at the time of the events. The conflict which occurred in the Old Northwest during and the twelve years after the American
Revolutionary War, was such a situation where circumstances could have led to quite
different maps being drawn up, then and possibly now.
I have used the old spelling of Greeneville, instead of the current Greenville, throughout the thesis because it was the correct contemporary usage and the fort was named after Nathaniel Greene who was Wayne’s commander during the Revolutionary War during his fighting in the southern states.

I use this term throughout the thesis to signify the lands west and north of the Ohio River that were mainly occupied by Native Americans during the 1790s.


The dynamics of population trends and economic industrialization would eventually have brought much greater pressures to bear upon the Indian territories whether they were a loose confederation of tribes or organized into an Indian State.

A slight controversy occurred concerning the location of the actual battle. The battle had for many years been supposed from primary manuscripts to be on the floodplain of the Maumee River and on the adjacent ridgeline. The Fallen Timbers Memorial was established on the top of this ridge. A bronze sculpture entitled The Battle of Fallen Timbers Monument was installed in 1929 and the site was designated a national historic landmark in 1960. But an archaeological survey in 1995 led by Dr. G. Michael Pratt of Heidelberg College, discovered that a significant portion of the battle took place about a quarter mile away on land owned by the City of Toledo that was at risk of being commercially developed. In 1999, the United States Congress designated three separate areas as a national historic site. These three sites are the Fallen Timbers Battlefield, the Fallen Timbers Monument, and Fort Miamis. These three sites are an affiliated unit of the National Parks Service and are managed by the Metroparks of Toledo. The nature of this controversy is intriguing but it is immaterial to my thesis because the events and their sequence are not disputed, just the location. My analysis is based upon what happened not whether it occurred a mere half mile away from the traditional monument and park.


Dr. Jesus Garcia, et al, *Creating America: A History of the United States*, (Evanston: McDougal Littell, 2003), 283-284. Hereafter cited as Garcia. Currently, in Ohio, Ohio history is covered in junior high school. Therefore unless the student takes a history course in college this maybe their only educational interface with the subject of the Ohio Indian Wars.


I would note a few inaccuracies with this statement other than the understandably misplaced emphasis upon the Battle of Fallen Timbers, which is covered repeatedly throughout the thesis. First, the Treaty of Paris contained 10 articles and none had any provision mentioning the Indians at all. That was a basic flaw in the treaty. The British stated that they retained the four forts on American soil to ensure that the issues of bona fide pre-war debts and loyalists’ confiscated property would be settled as stated in the treaty. Second, St. Clair’s first name is Arthur not Anthony. Third, the Battle of Fallen Timbers and the Peace Treaty of Fort Greeneville resolved jurisdiction over two thirds of what is presently the State of Ohio and a slight sliver of present day Indiana but left the vast majority of the Northwest Territory to be decided later by further treaties and the War of 1812. Fourth, it fails to even mention Harmar’s campaign.


This will be covered extensively throughout the thesis.
There was a brief period during the Iroquois Wars of the latter seventeenth century that the lands were depopulated because of the fighting.

This term is used to delineate the tribes living north of the southern shore of Lake Erie yet still in the Great Lakes theater from the tribes living in present day Ohio. The Ojibwa (Chippewa) and Ottawa were the two most numerous and participatory of the Lakes tribes.

Sword, 11.

John Sugden, Blue Jacket: Warrior of the Shawnees, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 68. Hereafter cited as Sugden. Sword, 25. The “conquest treaties” were Fort Stanwix-1784, Fort McIntosh-1785, Fort Finney-1786 and a final attempt at Fort Harmar-1789. The Americans pushed the negotiations hard stating that they had won all the lands ceded by the British by right of conquest.

I take literary license here – it is to emphasize that popular culture seemed uninterested in the very real conflicts between the expanding American society and the indigenous peoples in the lands east of the Mississippi River. The cliché – ‘You are what you eat’ is applicable to society also. Unless the average American picks up a collegiate level history text they will never be exposed to the events that took place in the Ohio Country from 1783-1795.
Chapter One

How Anthony Wayne and the Legion of the United States Defeated the Indian Confederation of the Ohio Country at the Battle of Fallen Timbers

In late 1791 and early 1792, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, President George Washington and the recently seated Second Congress of the United States faced a grave dilemma in their territories north and west of the Ohio River. The United States had newly acquired these lands from the British by the Paris Treaty of 1783, which ended the War for American Independence. Though the title was ceded, many indigenous tribes still occupied these lands. The American attempts to negotiate agreements that would allow the United States to utilize these new territories for sale and settlement had failed. The initial agreements were based upon the American assumption that the Indians were now a conquered people because most of the tribes in the Ohio Country had fought for the British during the previous war. These American efforts had only worsened the troubles that already existed between the Indians and themselves since the start of the War for American Independence. The Indians were far more successfully hostile than the federal government first assumed they could be. The federal government thought that the Indian raids were conducted by a relatively smaller number of Indian “banditti”. This miscalculation meant that the United States’ military efforts to subjugate the hostile tribes came at an unexpectedly high human and financial cost. The fiscal status of the new republic was already strained from debt incurred during the Revolutionary War and was
becoming more precarious through its efforts to quell the Indian aggressiveness.

The federal government had launched two military expeditions into the "Ohio Country" in order to terminate this source of frustration. Brevet Brigadier General Josiah Harmar led the first campaign in the fall of 1790 from Fort Washington. His force consisted of 320 regulars from the one federal regiment that Congress had authorized following the end of the Revolutionary War and about 1100 militia. Many of these militiamen were "hardly able to bear arms—such as old, infirm men and young boys". Harmar mission was to move to the Miami Towns at the confluence of the St. Mary and St. Joseph Rivers and destroy the hostile villages found there. General Arthur St. Clair led the second expedition in the fall of 1791, also embarking from Fort Washington. St. Clair's force included the two U. S. regiments that were then currently authorized and assorted militia and six-month levies for a total of approximately 2,300 men. St. Clair was to march on the Indian towns (Grand Glaize) now established at the confluence of the Auglaize and Maumee Rivers. He was to build a series of frontier posts as his army marched into the wilderness. Both of these expeditions were defeated and

limped back to Fort Washington\textsuperscript{8} with very little to show for their casualties and efforts. Instead of “awing and curbing the Indians”\textsuperscript{9} the confederation was encouraged to continue and further their efforts to defeat the white incursions. St Clair's defeat on November 4, 1791 was monumental in its calamity.\textsuperscript{10}

The Federal Government had to decide in early 1792 whether another military effort should be undertaken or whether peace should be brokered at almost any cost. Many Americans, Wayne among them, believed it would have been devastating for the fledgling nation to allow its military honor and its perceived ability to govern to tolerate such an international black eye.\textsuperscript{11} European nations still had tremendous vested interests on the American continent and would have been encouraged to more strongly pursue their interests if the United States could not handle its own affairs. The United States was surrounded by Great Britain in Canada and Spain in Florida and in the Trans-Mississippi region.\textsuperscript{12} The United States' southern border with Spain in East and West Florida was in dispute from inexact language in Spain's treaty with Great Britain in 1783. If the European nations believed that they could interfere successfully with minimal expenditures into American affairs then the United States might have had to defend its interests far more frequently.

The United States determined to increase its military strength to deal with the resistance from the Indian Confederation in the Northwest Territories. On March 5, 1792, Congress authorized the formation of the Legion of the United States by passing the United States Militia Act. This Legion was to consist of four sub-legions with an authorized strength of approximately 5000 men and was an early experiment in the concept of combined arms. This meant a significant expense to the federal government
but Congress realized that it had become necessary.\textsuperscript{13} There was still a strong public opinion that peace should be attempted prior to any full-scale invasion. Some also believed that the Indians were not the root cause of the problem and the independent nature of the backwoodsmen led to transgressions against the Indians, which led to depredations on their part.\textsuperscript{14} These arguments aside, it became imperative that the United States better prepare itself to face the challenges of its Trans-Appalachian provinces. Immediately, the first order of business was to select a commander for the newly authorized Legion. Harmar had resigned just prior to St. Clair's debacle and St. Clair, though he remained the Governor of the Northwest Territory, was removed from military duty following his disastrous campaign. Thus all but one of the candidates to be considered were no longer on active military duty.\textsuperscript{15} The selection process focused upon persons that had held the rank of Major General (promoted or brevet), Brigadier General, or Colonel during the Revolutionary War. The list was shortened to three names\textsuperscript{16} and from that Anthony Wayne was offered the position of Commander-in Chief of the Legion in April 1792.

This chapter is organized into two broad categories for consistency. I will first discuss the preparations and strategies that Wayne undertook in anticipation of the Legion's military encounters with the Indians. Secondly, I will discuss the actual battle tactics that Wayne and the Legion employed. This section will also include events immediately prior and post Battle of Fallen Timbers.

When President Washington and Secretary of War Knox finally chose Anthony Wayne, he already had the sobriquet of "Mad" Anthony Wayne. Though there are different versions of how this name came about it was usually applied to indicate his rash
and aggressive battlefield endeavors.

Wayne was also known as the "Hero of Stony Point" for his successful nighttime bayonet charge and seizure of the British garrison on the Hudson River at Stony Point in July, 1779, during which he was wounded. This perceived rashness was a source of contention that almost removed him from consideration\(^\text{17}\) but turned out to be an inappropriate criticism of Wayne.

Fundamentally, Wayne understood the problems that faced him better than his two predecessors did. Wayne understood the enemy he was to face and the efforts that would be required of him and of the Legion, because of his previous experience fighting the Indians. Anthony Wayne had been transferred to Major General Nathaniel Greene's command in South Carolina\(^\text{18}\) late in the Revolutionary War. Wayne was involved directly in the siege and capture of Savannah, Ga. and during this campaign he had to fight Creek Indians who were supporting the British efforts. On June 24, 1782, an evening attack by about 300 Creeks under their chief, Guristersigo, led to near total surprise of the Americans. Wayne was able to turn the tables on the Indians and rout the Creeks by rallying his troops and performing a bayonet charge into their midst.\(^\text{19}\)

Wayne’s experience in Georgia and at Paoli led him to greatly appreciate that the bayonet was a most useful tool especially in close quarters with the Indians. Wayne wrote after the Battle of Fallen Timbers:

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“the bayonet is the most proper instrument, for removing the Film from the Eyes - & for opening the Ears of the Savages, that has ever been discover’d – it has also an other powerful quality! Its glitter instantly dispel'd the darkness, & let in the light.”

Wayne from the beginning knew that the Indians were extremely skilled in the military art of ambush and when allowed to choose the moment and field of battle were usually successful. He knew that Indian tactics wisely to relied upon superior numbers whenever the situation allowed but unlike his predecessors he fully understood that the Indian forces were quite capable of coordinated large-scale attacks when that was required to triumph. U. S. military doctrine prior to St. Clair's Defeat in November 1792 was that the Indians would avoid engaging large armies in the field and would ambush smaller detachments such as what happened to Harmar in 1791. Wayne would not commit this fatal error.

Wayne, Washington, Knox, and the military in general had the advantage of having the benefit of history. The two federal campaigns of 1790 and 1791 and the various militia campaigns undertaken by Virginians, Kentuckians, and Pennsylvanians had clearly demonstrated the true capabilities of the Indian tribes in the Northwest either singly or in confederation. There could be no mistaking the gravity of the situation in 1792 no matter who had been offered the command of the Legion. The saying that one learns more from their failures than their successes is no truer than when applied to this scenario. Military campaigns had been fought in the Old Northwest since the French and Indian War. A competent military commander is also a historian so there were many examples of success and failure but now the United States had two personal lessons from which to learn. It was Wayne’s responsibility to ensure that these lessons would not be forgotten and that they would become the basis of his successful military doctrine.
Wayne, like the rest of the country bore witness to the humiliating defeats meted out by the Indians and from this he undoubtedly grasped the nature of the threat. Both Harmar and St. Clair had been respected and proven military leaders that were expected to achieve battlefield victories for the United States. In 1792, there could no longer be any assumption of inherent superiority by the armies of the U. S. over the Indian Confederation. In addition to the public discourse on the nature of the defeats, there were also specific inquiries into the defeats. Harmar had demanded an inquiry into his command to exonerate his honor. This officer’s commission was completed just prior to St. Clair's advance into the Indian country, which it seems little was gleaned from it due to the disaster to follow on November 4th. Harmar commented from his observations of St. Clair’s troops that the same fate awaited their campaign:

> He conversed frequently and freely with a few of his friends on the probable result of the campaign – predicted a defeat. He suspected a disposition in me to resign; discouraged the idea. “You must,” said he, “go on the campaign; some will escape, and you may be among the number.”22

St. Clair's campaign was scrutinized by a congressional commission, which exonerated him and detailed the causes for his demise. One can assume that these hearings would have been almost required reading for officers involved in Wayne's campaign and at the very least the information would have been readily available to Wayne. A military leader of Wayne's stature would have availed himself to all information that would have helped his cause. Wayne also had the early luxury of not having tremendous command responsibilities because the Legion wasn’t recruited yet; therefore Wayne had time available to study the strategies and tactics of his predecessors. A corollary to this advantage of learning the lessons shown to Wayne by recent history was the benefit of having a President and Secretary of War that were both accomplished
and well-versed generals themselves. The cumulative judgments that could be brought to bear in the preparations for Wayne's campaign were enhanced by the unique experience of these three gentlemen. Any misconceived notions about Indian warfare in the Old Northwest held by Washington and Knox in 1790 were more clearly evaluated by 1792. This was evident as the United States believed it should and could inform the British and friendly Indians prior to the launch of Harmar’s campaign without greatly hurting the chances for success. The two intervening years proved many such thoughts false.

One of the key lessons learned was implemented as soon as Wayne took command of the Legion. He knew that Harmar and St. Clair had felt compelled to act rather quickly to start their campaign. Both of these competent officers were able to see the inherent faults of their armies but had still pushed forward regardless. Wayne insisted that he be able to choose the timing of the campaign and the strategy and tactics to be used. This was a very important point allowed from the beginning that assured Wayne that the campaign would have the best possible chance. Consequently, the Legion could be trained and deployed when Wayne knew that they were ready to undertake the rigors of the Indian campaign. It is ironic that when the situation appeared grave in 1790 and 1791 that it was important to act quickly against the Indian Confederation but when the situation was even graver in 1792 it became imperative that the next campaign is conducted correctly and time became secondary. If only that luxury had been afforded Harmar or St. Clair.

Anthony Wayne knew that it was essential for discipline in the Legion to be strictly enforced, harshly when necessary. Wayne understood that success on the battlefield, but especially in the wilderness, required the troops to believe in their ability
to be successful and realize the consequences of their failures. This was accomplished by maintaining rigorous standards of military behavior and relying on constant military drilling that emphasized the mode of combat that was to be faced. The military was not the career in the late 18th century that it is today. Recruits were found in any place possible with little concern for the soldiers that they would eventually become. St. Clair railed that his regiments were being filled up with the dregs of society, many from the eastern cities who had never seen the wilderness before, some straight out of jail, the infirm, the elderly, and all other sorts that would never develop into a strong fighting force.\textsuperscript{25} The wages of the military were not competitive with the rates that a private laborer could receive for a hard day’s work.\textsuperscript{26} Wayne knew that this was a recipe for disaster again if he didn’t require strict adherence to the established military protocols. Desertion and encouraging such acts were treated harshly from the start. It was important for the Legion to understand immediately that this was their lot in life for their three-year enlistment. That they were a part of the Legion and their personal success was ultimately tied to the military success of the Legion. As with any punishment, it never fully eliminated the problem but curtailed it to a moderate degree so that it became manageable. Also when Wayne moved the Legion further afield to Ft. Washington and then to Ft. Greeneville,\textsuperscript{27} the geographic realities reduced the numbers of deserters. Desertion is contagious and fatal to military morale and operations. Wayne knew that it was a potentially devastating phenomenon that was best settled early and convincingly. Wayne also dealt harshly with other forms of unmilitary behavior such as insubordination, dereliction of duty, cowardice in the face of the enemy, theft of
government property, and drunkenness both on and off duty. Wayne wrote to Brigadier General Wilkinson on July 31, 1792:

..."I send you some of the latest Philadelphia papers, by which you will see the fatal effects of want of discipline, & due subordination in the armies of France, we must prevent the most distant appearance of the worst of all evils, in the American Legion." 28

There was a common predilection to drunkenness in the federal regiments during this time frame, which was somewhat common in the western populace as well. Wayne understood that unmitigated consumption of whiskey would ruin the Legion’s ability to function administratively and militarily. This had been appreciated throughout the annals of history but Wayne vigorously acted to control its effects on his army. His Legion was in a situation where the tendency was there for these self-destructive factors to blossom. Garrison duty has always been and will most likely always border on boredom. When this is coupled with the strangeness of a vast wilderness with a lurking deadly enemy and little avenue for entertainment or recreation, there was a great propensity for libation to assist with life’s drudgery. Wayne refused to have his preparations for the campaign be adversely effected by these circumstances.

Wayne purposely required constant military drilling because he fully understood that this was integral to his success. Once again this is not a novel idea from Wayne but it was applied with a vigor that was lacking in the federal government’s previous attempts. The concept of today’s professional army was somewhat foreign in the 1790s in the United States. It was understood during the Revolutionary War that eventually the Continental Army would have to face the British in open battle for the war effort to succeed, but it wasn’t grasped that the same effort was necessary to defeat the Indians in the Ohio Country. The Harmar and St. Clair campaigns had not worried so much about
proper military training and had paid a dear price for it. Wayne understood that the nature of the enemy and the terrain that they would have to fight was different than the standard military doctrine used during the Revolutionary War. Wayne and his officers utilized General Baron von Steuben's field manual ‘the Blue book’ but it couldn’t deal entirely with the contingencies that would be encountered in the Ohio Country. The standard battle tactics of the day that utilized chess-piece style maneuvers on open fields against European type opponents would not work successfully in the wilderness. Wayne knew this well and adapted his formations and weapons. Wayne had the troops drill in open order drill rather than the typical close order drill so common during the eastern campaigns of the previous war. The rigid close order drill of company and larger unit maneuvers in thick woods would quickly come apart. The flexibility that open-order drill allowed under these circumstances was ideal. Also Wayne took a keen interest in the military technologies of his day. This was evident as Wayne suggested how to better improve his tactics by modifying the basic musket and powder. This modification and its change in tactics worked as well as Wayne could have hoped, for the captured Frenchman, Lasselle, reported that the Indians fought so poorly at Fallen Timbers because the Legion “would give them no time to load their pieces, but kept them constantly on the run”.

Wayne knew that his troops would perform well if they became competent in standard military tactics. Both Harmar and St. Clair had underestimated the fighting capabilities of the Indians and so relied upon barely trained troops. Their troops fled at crucial times in their campaigns and this cowardice brought defeat to Harmar and disaster to St. Clair. Wayne established a routine for drilling and firing of their weapons. He
realized that many recruits had never fired a rifle or musket before and that they needed to become familiar and eventually proficient. Wayne knew that the Indians were superior in general in their handling of their firearms compared to his army in 1792. He was determined to train the Legion, so they would meet the Indians on equal terms. A letter from an unknown officer states:

“A system of drill adapted to the woods, and to the enemy we expected to meet, was introduced, and practiced daily – and every Sunday when the weather would permit the army was marched to the woods and have a sham fight…”

Ammunition and powder were requested and usually received in sufficient quantities to allow the troops to practice their marksmanship. Whenever a guard was relieved of duty during garrison duty he was to fire that loaded round at a target in a tree. This way the shot wasn’t wasted and the soldiers became more familiar with their weapons, more accurate in its use and the lead would be dug out of the tree to use again. Wayne also utilized his troops in mock battles on a regular basis. This accomplished two tasks. First, it allowed his troops to practice their larger unit drills in situations that approximated real battle. These mock battles allowed Wayne and his officers to evaluate their troops’ progress and it created greater confidence in the soldiers amongst themselves. The day of battle is never the moment that a good commander attempts a maneuver his officers and soldiers aren’t familiar, competent or confident with. The second thing the sham battles achieved was to better familiarize his troops with the tactics of their adversary. As the soldiers role-played the battle scenarios, they became more confident in their skills and understood their enemy better. This included both the troops that played the Indians and the troops that fought as the U. S. regiments. In 1792, Wayne’s recruits and to some extent his officers also were vulnerable to exaggerations of
the Indians’ abilities at stealth, ambush and massacre. I’m not suggesting that these abilities weren’t factually based but that when an army applies too much credit to their opponent they have half defeated themselves prior to engaging in battle. Fear, from a lack of knowledge and understanding can create the wellspring of doubt and defeat. Therefore, Wayne was able to have his troops better prepared to fight an opponent that they too then understood.

The two previous federal campaigns had been severely hampered by a lack of morale and fighting élan, which manifested itself as desertions, insubordination and at the worst, fleeing in the face of the enemy. There was a clear distinction between the garrison and battlefield performances of regular federal troops and volunteer militia. The campaigns of 1790 and 1791 had had to rely on volunteer militia soldiers for a significant portion of their numbers. Both Generals Harmar and St. Clair were well aware of these differences from their own experiences. But without the militia companies neither campaign would have had sufficient combat strength or have been considered combat worthy. It was an inherent problem that these volunteers were never truly combat ready when compared to the foe and the style of fighting required. The hindsight critique of Harmar and St. Clair was that they knew of and expected nothing different but proceeded to undertake their campaigns anyway.36

The militia units were a cost-effective manner of increasing the invasion force at the moment of need. The timing of the militia call up was considered fiscally critical since it was seen as an unnecessary federal expense to have these troops too long on the payroll. It would have been an alien idea to call up these units so that they might receive extensive and proper military training before the campaign was to start. Wayne and
Knox both knew that better discipline and combat effectiveness was more likely to be achieved through the use of mounted Kentucky volunteers rather than militia infantry. The disadvantage was an increased cost associated with the recruitment of these troops. They were able to demand better wages and they required forage for their horses they brought with them. Understanding the crux of the situation, Knox gave Wayne the permission to call up 2,000 of these troops as he felt was necessary and then more if Wayne felt it necessary but to do so with consideration to the cost involved. It is ironic that the decision to utilize these troops showed its wisdom not in their battle prowess and capabilities but by their use as convey escorts after the Battle of Fallen Timbers, which proved more crucial to the ultimate American success.

Wayne stated that St. Clair’s biggest fault was his lack of cavalry. Wayne had a strong conviction in his belief that his Dragoons (cavalry) were essential to success against the Indians. Wayne knew that the Indians feared the horse soldiers and their swords. There has always been a shock effect to the proper use of cavalry that can’t be duplicated by infantry. The Indians had little to counter the Dragoons when the terrain was accommodating to their technique of battle. Also, the Dragoons were able to accomplish a basic military requirement of screening the main host so not to allow it to be surprised or caught off guard without sufficient time to maneuver against the threat. This was especially important when considering the outcome when Harmar and St. Clair’s forces were ambushed and trapped. These tasks were and are still vitally important to the strategic and tactical maneuvering of larger forces. Wayne also planned on the ability of his Dragoon forces to ferret the Indians out of their ambuscades when they choose to fight. Wayne realized that the Indians would select an advantageous
position that would allow them to ambush his infantry but he would plan to utilize the
cavalry to countermand this initial advantage and force the Indians out and into an
engagement not of their choosing. It is another irony that it wasn’t their fighting
capabilities that served Wayne best. The cavalry screen along the march northward from
Fort Greeneville kept the Indians at a distance long enough for Wayne to gain their
villages and crops. Little Turtle said that Wayne was the American leader that never
slept and couldn’t be surprised. After the Battle of Fallen Timbers, the Dragoons and
Mounted Volunteers pursued the Indians north past the British post of Fort Miamis
almost to the villages on Swan Creek in present Toledo, Ohio. This action helped to
remove the Indians as a threat immediately following the battle. General Wayne was
then allowed to conduct the more decisive actions at Fort Miamis with little concern from
counterattack.

It is important to realize that Anthony Wayne benefited from the composition of
his forces even if their battlefield endeavors weren’t needed as originally planned. Both
the regular Dragoons and the Kentucky Mounted Volunteers under the command of
Major General Charles Scott were not utilized in their optimal military role at the Battle
of Fallen Timbers. This is inconsequential because their presence meant that Wayne was
given options that he could use if necessary. If the tactical situation at the Battle of
Fallen Timbers had deteriorated or if the strategic situation had become graver, then
Wayne could have used them as a guard force or mobile flanking force to allow his
troops to disengage in good order and retreat to the safety of Fort Defiance. The fact that
they weren’t called on to perform these functions or didn’t reach a position to be used as
such doesn’t diminish their potential and therefore the wisdom of their inclusion.
It is an old and accurate adage that an army travels on its stomach. It is an overgeneralization that correctly implies that supplies play a tremendous factor in military success. A large group of humans and their collective efforts can’t be sustained long without the proper logistics. St. Clair’s expeditions’ congressional inquiry stated that the terrible condition of the supply chain by the private contractors to his forces compromised his ability to wage the proper campaign.\textsuperscript{44} There was no question from the outset that supplying a large army at the edge of the frontier would prove difficult at best. Wayne understood this and personally would deal with the logistics when necessary. Wayne’s correspondences to Secretary of War Knox continually mention the circumstances of his supplies and the essential need to maintain their regular delivery to all of his posts. Wayne even warns after his victory at Fallen Timbers and the establishment of Fort Wayne, at the confluence of the St. Marys and St. Joseph Rivers, that all may come to naught if supplies are allowed to falter.\textsuperscript{45} Wayne’s dealing with the small particulars of logistics seem non-relevant to the current role we expect of a Major General but it indicates his understanding of its significance and his ceaseless effort to ensure his campaign’s success.\textsuperscript{46}

When the Legion of the United States was created in 1792, it was organized into sub-legions that could operate autonomously if necessary. Each sub-legion had riflemen, musketeers, Dragoons, with artillery to assist. This is an example of what is currently referred to as combined arms. It allows flexibility to a commander to rely upon the strengths of the different type units at a needed tactical moment. This provided Wayne with another strategic and tactical advantage when used properly over the Indian forces who were exceptional fighters but very one-dimensional.
President Washington’s last advice to General St. Clair prior to his embarking upon the 1791 campaign was to beware of surprise because that was the tactic that the Indians favored most and were most adept at.⁴⁷ Ebenezer Denny, the officer that brought St. Clair’s report of his defeat to President Washington wrote of that episode:

Washington says “St. Clair defeated - routed; the officers nearly all killed, the men by wholesale, the rout complete! Too shocking to think of - a surprise in the bargain!” “Yes! Here on this very spot I took leave of him; I wished him success and honor. ‘You have my instruction,’ I said, ‘from the Secretary of War. I had a strict eye on them, and will add but one word – beware of surprise! You know how the Indians fight us! He went off with that as my last solemn warning thrown into his ears. And yet, to suffer that army to be cut to pieces – hacked by a surprise – the very thing I guarded against! O God, O God, he’s worse that a murderer!”⁴⁸

General Wayne fully understood that he must safeguard against this same threat if he and the Legion were to succeed. Wayne’s own command during the Revolutionary War at Paoli had suffered a surprise pre-dawn bayonet attack by the British in September 1777.⁴⁹ Wayne’s forces incurred over 200 casualties and he swore that he would never suffer this again.

Indian depredations by small raiding parties to larger confederations were always based upon the premise of striking against an enemy that was unaware and making the most of that important tactical advantage. Wayne devised a plan to minimize his army’s exposure to surprise. Wayne made it standard practice that his troops would bivouac early and fortify their position every night. The Legion would rise around 0500 hours and would attempt to be on the march by 07-0800. Wayne was insistent that the order of march be adhered to as exacting as possible. It is an axiom of military maneuvers that large unit movements in the field will only at best resemble the same march on the parade ground. Once individual companies are out of sight with each other, once broken ground,
streams, lakes, rivers or impassable terrain is encountered the order of the march will be modified whether intended or not. Wayne, like most good commanders knew this and understood that his best defense on the march was to rigorously stress the need for maintaining his designated formation. This usually relied upon the light infantry to provide the outer screen for the Legion and the Dragoons to provide the next ring of defense, usually referred to as the guard force. The Kentucky mounted volunteers were then utilized as a rear guard and as a reconnaissance in force when needed. The absolute nature of Wayne’s requirement of performance forced the Army to adhere to the principles that Wayne believed would bring their ultimate success. The Legion’s stalwart continuation of these fundamentals was tantamount. It can’t be emphasized enough that the Legion’s true tactical “Achilles’ heal” was their susceptibility to a surprise attack by the Indian Confederation in force. Wayne maintained a disciplined march deep into the Ohio Country to the Maumee River \(^50\) villages at the Grand Glaize, \(^51\) and an acceptable opportunity never arose for the Indian leadership to seize.

Equally as important as march security was a defensible bivouac camp at night. Under Wayne’s orders the Legion would cover approximately 12 miles per day if the terrain allowed. Normally this was accomplished by early to mid afternoon. \(^52\) This left ample time for the Legion to prepare a fortified camp prior to nightfall. Trees were felled and placed so to create breastworks that would give the advantage to the defender. This was referred to as fatigue detail and as its name implies was very labor intensive and time-consuming but was integral to Wayne’s plans of success. Wayne understood that his efforts should be to eliminate all opportunities for the Indians to take advantage of stealth and surprise. Artillery was usually placed at the corners unless specific
circumstances provided a better field of fire from another location. The mounted volunteers were not included inside the Legion’s defensive works but were expected to provide the same in a nearby location that would assist with mutual defense.

Wayne’s success was facilitated because he not only had better soldiers than his two predecessors but because he also had more of them. Harmar and St. Clair’s campaigns didn’t have the number of troops necessary to win ill-conceived campaigns. Harmar had approximately 1,450 troops composed of mostly militia and St. Clair had 2,300 troops composed of a mix between regulars, levies and the majority were militia. Wayne’s forces numbered about 3,500 men composed of a little over 2,000 regular troops and about 1,500 Mounted Volunteers. Wayne was assured a better chance of success just by having more combat troops since it is a primary goal of any battlefield leader to achieve tactical and numerical superiority over one’s opponent. An interesting dilemma for the Legion was that Wayne could never be sure of the numbers of warriors that the Indian Confederation might field at any given time. American intelligence through traders and friendly Indians allowed them to have a set of approximately accurate numbers of warriors that given villages and tribes might be able to bring to bear but the fluid nature of the confederation and the time of year were both factors that could greatly increase or decrease the size of the army he must fight. Congress had initially approved the raising of a 5,000 man Legion, which slow recruiting never brought about. Wayne insisted to Knox that efforts should be continued to fill the other two sub-legions by further recruitment and retention of current soldiers. This never came about in time to assist Wayne. Wayne realized that if this happened he would no longer have to rely upon the militia forces from Kentucky and that he would have a better army and an easier
campaign. Regardless of this complaint, Wayne praised Scott’s Kentuckians for their performance at Fallen Timbers. Without the Kentuckians, Wayne would not have had the luxury of a greater numbers of troops.

Many a military endeavor has been lost not because of men or material but for want of information on how to use these resources to their greatest advantage. Harmar and St. Clair typified this by more or less blundering their way through the wilderness unaware of the Indians disposition until it was too late. Harmar divided his forces and met unexpected organized resistance that he believed had melted away at his coming. St. Clair never appreciated the Indian Confederation’s ability to engage him en masse. So low a priority or concern was military intelligence that a report from a reconnaissance patrol the night before the November 4th attack of large numbers of Indians in the area went unchecked and was never delivered to General St. Clair. The Indian supreme tactic of ambush relies upon their opponent’s lack of military intelligence. Wayne would not repeat this mistake either. His Legion was larger, better trained and supplied, with better confidence and morale but all this was tenuous if Wayne led his men into a trap. Spies, scouts, backwoodsmen, and Indian guides were used to provide Wayne with as much if not more information about the Indians than they had about him. Wayne had Chickasaw Indians from the south volunteer to assist the Legion and he used men that had already spent most of their adult life living in Trans-Appalachia, and maybe most valuable, Wayne had white “spies” that had been Indian captives earlier in their lives. William Wells and Christopher Miller were two of the more famous repatriates who knew the Indian manners, methods of warfare, and the territory as well as any Indian. These assets allowed Wayne to proceed towards the Maumee villages knowing what to
expect. The condition of the villages at Au-Glaize when the Legion arrived indicated that the Indians had been surprised at the timing of the arrival since fires were still warm and the crops were still standing or barely hidden.\textsuperscript{56}

A concern of Wayne’s in regards to his army’s size and composition was whether the British forces in Canada would play an active role against him in his campaign. It was widely believed/known in the United States that Great Britain had played the instigator through its Department of Indian Affairs agents such as Alexander McKee\textsuperscript{57} and Simon Girty. Washington, Knox and Wayne like most other Americans believed that their Indian troubles had revolved around Britain’s determination to actively supply the Indians with weapons, food and regular staples. Though diplomatic efforts were being conducted to minimize the conflict between the United States and Great Britain this was no guarantee. The British had already taken two belligerent stances that could be construed as preludes to war. One was through a speech made by Lord Dorchester\textsuperscript{58} to a group of assembled Six Nations chiefs in February 10, 1794 stating that he believed that there would be war between Great Britain and the United States by the end of the year and that the Indians would soon be able to take back what was rightfully theirs.\textsuperscript{59} The second act was the reoccupying of the area of an older fort on the Maumee River. The British built Fort Miamis\textsuperscript{60} on land clearly granted to the United States by the Paris Treaty of 1783\textsuperscript{61} by Britain. According to the British, Fort Miamis was built in 1794 ostensibly to protect the approaches to Detroit and thus to Upper Canada because the British were not sure of Wayne’s eventual target but it could easily be interpreted as a strategic first move prior to war. However the merits of the British statements, Wayne had to prepare for the contingency that the British regulars and militia might actually join
the Indians in battle. This predicated that he have sufficient arms to engage both the British and the Indians.

    Wayne’s military success during the Fallen Timbers campaign was unhindered by the British armed forces except for a few militia that did actually fight at the battle.\textsuperscript{62} London decided that their forces in Canada should only engage the Americans if they were attacked and to hold the four treaty forts\textsuperscript{63} as status quo until a final arrangement would be worked out with the United States. This diminished the chance that the greater vested interests and sympathies within the Canadian government might play into an active war between the two countries. Great Britain was again at war with France in 1794 and Britain’s coalition wasn’t enjoying many military successes during this year. London felt that national interest out-trumped any colonial interest in Canada that might lead to war with the United States. It was decided that the interests of the fur trade and Great Britain were better served by a peaceful condition in the Old Northwest rather than a continuation of the wilderness warfare. Therefore, the Canadians were instructed to not instigate the Indians to such an extent that the United States would push hard for war. Britain still saw the advantage of ensuring the fur trade through Canada instead of through American traders but they weren’t willing or capable at this time to pursue military options to maintain an exclusive monopoly.

    Some of the issues that helped to create Wayne’s victory at Fallen Timbers were out of his control. Most of the above listed factors were directly linked to Wayne’s instigation and efforts but societal phenomena as large as territorial and cultural conquest hinge upon many variables not contingent upon one man. The Indians themselves helped to weaken their own cause in many ways that benefited Anthony Wayne.
Major General Wayne and the Legion benefited because the Indians failed to follow up their military advantage after defeating the armies led by General Harmar and General St. Clair. The Indian efforts following their victories over Harmar and St. Clair seemed to have an air of overconfidence, both in negotiations and tactics. Captain Joseph Brant of the Mohawks suggested that the Muskingum-Venango line be used as the boundary between them and the whites but the more hostile tribes of the Maumee Valley were insistent that the Ohio River and nothing less should be the dividing line. The United States wasn’t prepared to accept this proposal and realized that a greater, more convincing and this time successful military effort was needed. The recent victories of ’90 and ’91 gave favor in intertribal councils to the more aggressive tones that felt there wasn’t a need to compromise - so the Indian negotiation position was one that the United States would never agree with. It is ironic though that the Indians aggressive and rigid negotiating stance wasn’t matched with the military efforts necessary to make it a reality. The Indians returned to occasional depredation style raids rather than following up their advantage with large scale assaults that may have forced the issue immediately while the

United States would have had few options but to comply. American federal ability to defend its national interests west of the Appalachian Mountains in 1792 was minimal. The Army had far-flung forts to garrison and few men to do it. The First Regiment had been spared of the November 4th, 1791 disaster but was losing men at the end of their enlistments and the Second Regiment had been badly mauled with St. Clair. If the Indians had grasped the situation accurately they would have gone on the offensive once the weather and crops permitted in 1792.

Their ‘window of opportunity’ got smaller as time went by because of the efforts by the United States through Anthony Wayne to structure the Legion of the United States into a most formidable offensive weapon. In retrospect it was a clear choice; either pursue peace and stability or launch the decisive military offensive that would force the Americans and/or Kentuckians or Pennsylvanians\textsuperscript{67} to sue for peace on better terms. The Indian Confederation’s belief, or their lack of a decision otherwise, in their innate ability to parry the next American Army’s thrust played perfectly into Wayne’s hand. Wayne needed time for recruitment, organization, training and drilling\textsuperscript{68}, supply and deployment. If the Indians had forced him to defend the western posts prior to accomplishing the above, he would have had difficulty doing any of this. But the lack of a strategy from St. Clair’s Defeat until the 1794 campaign, meant that Wayne’s chances only improved with time.

The military doctrine adhered to by the United States on their western borders was similar to what the Roman Empire had done on their extensive borders a millennium and a half before. The United States Army built and garrisoned numerous forts at strategic locations usually at junctures of waterways. Most garrisons were smaller in
number and were only capable of protecting the immediate region. Coordinated efforts between these posts were not possible with the normal garrison compliment. Part of the reason for this was from a national concern of having a large standing army. It was commonly thought that it would lead to excesses by whatever authority commanded such as force. Also a more practical reason was that the federal government’s coffers were bare after the Revolutionary War. Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury helped devise a plan whereby the individual states would relinquish their claims to the western lands and the federal government would assume the states’ war debts. Then the United States could sell the new federal lands to bring in the much needed revenue to eliminate the war debt.

Transportation between these posts was usually best accomplished by water. It was cheaper, faster usually, and the territory directly between many posts wasn’t friendly ground. Supplies became a constant concern for each of the posts since some weren’t near civilians that could supply them in time of emergency and sending out troops to forage meant putting them at risk of ambush. Whenever the water level dropped during mid to late summer and when the waterways froze over in the winter, the task of supplying the posts became difficult and tenuous. Garrison commanders were forced to order reduced rations frequently. At time, post commanders even had to consider abandoning their posts because of a lack of supplies. This was the norm even without the Indians trying to hinder the supply process. Many times supplies such as medicines, salt and beef were almost non-existent at the wilderness posts. Wayne knew that the Harmar and St. Clair campaigns both were plagued by chronic supply deficiencies. Though Wayne was constantly addressing the government contractors and beseeching
Secretary Knox to assist with solving his supply problems, Wayne’s posts were constantly in need of staples. It was Wayne’s intention to store enough supplies at the head of the line so that his campaign into the Indian country would avoid re-supply crises. Herein was a crucial weakness in the American military doctrine. The supplies had to come overland from Fort Washington northwards through Fort Hamilton to Fort St. Clair to Fort Jefferson to Fort Greeneville and then in December 1793, Fort Recovery was added at the site of St. Clair’s Defeat. Before Wayne could campaign, sufficient stores of supplies had to reach these forts via packhorse and oxen. These provisions had to reach Fort Greeneville in quantity, which was the “head of the line”. This was a slow, tedious and non-stealthy method. These supply convoys were a relatively easy target for the Indians to ambush and destroy or seize the supplies as booty though they too ran into the problem of transporting their captured goods while avoiding mounted sorties. In addition to adding to the Indians’ coffers, it deprived the forward posts of essential staples. A large convoy commanded by Lieutenant Lowery was ambushed on October 17, 1793 and much of the stores and horses lost. After this event
Wayne was forced to defend the convoys with larger escorts to make “super convoys”, otherwise his best-laid plans would come to a bitter end due to a lack of provisions. These escorts came at a price. It meant these troops were no longer garrisoning the forward posts, that they were outside the protection of the forts, that unit cohesiveness was diminished, drilling in combat maneuvers was curtailed and it wore down the Dragoon and Mounted Volunteer horses. These prices were worth the advantage of securing needed provisions for all of the forts. But with these larger escorts some convoys still traveled with only light security and even the larger escorts were themselves vulnerable to large-scale ambushes.

The Indian Confederation, even in 1794, still had an opportunity to bottle up the Legion without having to engage them in decisive open combat. Had a concentrated effort been employed that would have pressured these supply convoys then the posts would have had to be abandoned or the troops would have had to come out and fight - most likely not at a time or location of their optimal choosing. An army that can’t feed itself or doesn’t have adequate clothing or ammunition while facing an active enemy will suffer morale and command and control problems at the least. It has long been a basic military tenet to disrupt your opponents supply lines whenever possible. From American Civil War cavalry raiders to modern day air interdictions in Iraq, the principle is the same – keep an army from being re-supplied and it will then be unable to conduct offensive operations and eventually fail to defend itself. Rather than keep up a sustained effort against these convoys; the Indians left them relatively untouched in 1794. This allowed Wayne to concentrate more effectively on establishing the large stores needed at the head of the line for the imminent invasion. Also the garrisons were almost invulnerable to
direct attack from the weapons the Indians had. The forts could only be taken by artillery and/or scaling ladders. The Indians obviously had no artillery and the British were not going to provide these weapons and the men necessary to use them. It would be too overt an act of war against the Americans and moreover it would provide the Indians the necessary weapons to defeat the Canadian forts if the political situation ever changed.\textsuperscript{73}

The use of scaling ladders requires a direct assault usually into the face of heavy enemy fire and by its nature exacts a heavy toll in casualties. The functioning of Indian society couldn’t endure severe battle casualties because each warrior served a vital role in procuring food, shelter and protection to his village. Therefore the Indians normally avoided combat that didn’t grant them a distinct advantage. If the Indian Confederation initiated a sustained siege on any fort, it would place them at risk of counterattack from the relief column that Wayne would surely send.

The Indians lack of a grand design and strategy never hurt them more than at the battle at Fort Recovery on June 29-30, 1794. It was quite evident to the Indian councils that the United States was preparing for another campaign into their territory. During the summer and early fall of 1793 they had refused to treat with the peace commissioners\textsuperscript{74} sent by President Washington. They had demanded the Ohio River as the only boundary acceptable to them. The Indians had even suggested that rather than give the tribes money which they didn’t need for signing another agreement, that the United States government should use that money to purchase the lands back from the white settlers and squatters already living in the Ohio Country. The Indians bore witness through their scouts of the large quantities of supplies that Wayne was having brought forward. The Indians and the British had no doubt about Wayne’s intention. The only questions were
when would Wayne move out and did Wayne’s orders include attacking the British at Fort Miamis and Detroit.

The Indians met in confederated council in June 1793. It was decided to launch an offensive against Wayne’s forces before he campaigned against them. This is in agreement with another basic military tenet to not allow your opponent the initiative. More warriors were then gathered for this attack than had been present at St. Clair’s defeat and not until almost 20 years later for Tecumseh would they gather in such strength again. Approximately 1800 Indian warriors, some white fighters such as Simon Girty, and some British officers assembled at the Grand Glaize villages. The original targets for their offensive were the convoys with the hope that Wayne and the Legion without the 1500 Kentuckians would be forced out of Fort Greeneville and maybe ambushed in force. But the Indian Confederation skirmished with a group of Choctaws and Chickasaws and it was then decided to attack the closest fort, which sat on the site of their greatest victory, Fort Recovery. The larger numbers of warriors from the lakes-region tribes, mainly the Chippewas (Ojibwas) and the Ottawas, allowed them to determine what target the confederation would attack. They decided that Fort Recovery could easily be taken against the advice of Little Turtle, Blue Jacket and the British officers. An ambush was set and the convoy leaving the fort to return to Fort Greeneville was hit immediately outside the fort. The Dragoon escort ushered out of the fort to the convoy’s defense but they were quickly defeated also. Some of the infantry from the fort issued out, were hotly engaged and then the survivors were able to run back to the fort and the gates were closed. Up to this point it was classic Indian tactics and it had been very successful. The Americans had lost the convoy and sustained about 40 casualties
while the Indians had only suffered only three dead. But a fateful decision was made by the Indians to attempt to take the fort by storm over the next day and a half. All efforts were unsuccessful and the Indian coalition suffered for their foolishness. The Lakes Indians even accused the Ohio Country Indians of firing into their backs during the assault as retaliation for depredations committed against a few villages on the Maumee River by northern Indians on the way to the military gathering.

This small battle was extremely significant to the events leading up to the Battle of Fallen Timbers and the Treaty of Fort Greeneville. As the Indians had changed tactics they became unsuccessful. They realized that they couldn’t defeat a much smaller force that is entrenched within a well-built fort. They lost a significant milestone by being unable to reclaim the hallowed land of their defeat over St. Clair. The Indians lost about 30 dead, which they saw as unacceptable. Their offensive against Wayne and his convoys ceased and they returned to the Grand Glaize. The Lakes Indians decided that they had performed their part for the confederation and they returned home with a few scalps and captured booty. The larger Indian Confederation came apart after this battle. The attack on Fort Recovery accomplished nothing for the Indians and instilled a great sense of accomplishment and esprit de corps to the Legion. From this point on Wayne was strategically on the offensive. The Indians lost the initiative and never attempted to regain it. The Indian Confederation was then only able to field about 1400 warriors for the Battle of Fallen Timbers after the debacle at Fort Recovery.

The Six Nations of the Iroquois had been the most dominant and feared Indian power for better than a century prior to the 1790s. The American and British governments both acknowledged the unique position the Iroquois occupied. But the
Iroquois had undermined the land claims of the tribes living in the Ohio Country by signing the two Treaties of Fort Stanwix. These treaties signed away the rights of the lands south of the Ohio River first to the British and then to the Americans. These treaties were the basis for the large influx of settlers into Kentucky during the 1770s and 1780s. This had been hunting lands for the Ohio Country Indians as well as their southern brethren, the Cherokees. This caused tremendous conflict between white and red men especially as the settler population grew quickly. Eventually white settlers crossed north over the Ohio River and the conflict worsened from depredations to open warfare by both sides. The Treaties of Fort Stanwix are not the sole cause for this conflict but it gave some legitimacy to the dispossession of the Indians by whites. The Iroquois were farther east and therefore more in constant contact with white society. Their culture and their tribal claims were exposed to a proportionately greater threat so it made sense to compromise from a position of strength while still possible.

Soon after the Revolutionary War ended Captain Joseph Brant, a Mohawk, became the most vocal leader for Indian unity and solidarity of purpose. He journeyed to London in 1785 to determine what commitments the British government and the King would make to their former allies in war, to secure a half pension for himself and to secure the title for the Canadian reservation that the British had given the Mohawks. He received vague promises of common goals and Britain did agree to trade to the Indians the weapons needed to defend their homelands from the aggressive Americans but no promise was ever made to fight openly for their cause. The same day that Lord Sydney, Secretary of State for War and Colonies, met with Brant, he sent a secret dispatch to the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec, Henry Hope, ordering him to avoid direct assistance to
the Indians “but that justice or good policy not to completely abandon them because through resentment they may become hostile towards the Canadians.” In Indian councils Brant preached that no treaty was valid if not all the tribes were included in its negotiations because the land was Indian land before it belonged to the individual tribes that occupied it at that moment. Brant was willing to compromise with the Americans but the more hostile faction of the confederation, the Shawnees, Miamis, and the Delawares pushed for the Ohio River as the definitive boundary. The compromising approach by Brant and others of the Six Nations and their greater distance from the lands effected meant that their traditional position of leadership eroded and become insignificant to the conflict. Brant found himself alternately at odds with the leaders of the more hostile tribes. The dispute concerning negotiations and boundaries, a strong vested interest by the Six Nations to not enter into open warfare with an enemy that nearly surrounded them by 1794, and a weakened vested interest in the affairs of the Ohio Country manifested themselves as minimal military effort by the Iroquois. Wayne’s chances for military success against the combined strength of an Indian Confederation were greatly improved because the Iroquois failed to support the fight when it mattered most. For all the belligerent bellicosity of Brant, very little came to show for it. The Iroquois had legitimate reasons for not becoming involved too deeply and leaders like Cornplanter had already been wooed into the American camp. Had the Six Nations decided to commit militarily in strength to the Battle of Fallen Timbers then the outcome may well have been quite different, both on the battlefield and the political arena that followed.
The United States military efforts to quell the hostile Indian Confederation, based mainly out of the Wabash and Maumee River villages, after the Revolutionary War always had the distinct advantage that the Indian Confederation was too loose an organization to concentratedly act for a sustained period. The term ‘confederation’ implies an incorrect dynamic to the combined political and military efforts by the Indian tribes. Though Brant preached Indian unity of purpose and there were intertribal villages or tribes with villages in close proximity there was little cohesiveness for lengthy and time-consuming actions. It is indicative of this that many villages left or considered leaving the area altogether for lands west of the Mississippi River. Most Indian war chiefs would have understood the advantage of collective military efforts when it came to the challenge posed by American armies but most hostile actions were composed of smaller raiding parties that were composed of members from one or two tribes. Usually the purpose of these raiding parties was retaliation and the capture of booty, not to implement a grand scheme of a united Indian council. It was true that most of the volunteer raids by Kentuckians/Virginians were also retaliatory in nature but the purpose of the federal campaigns was of implementing governmental policy.

The Indians were not a homogenous group that shared culture, languages, or life styles. Their common form of government, village sachems and chiefs didn’t lend itself to developing specific long-term collective strategies and then implementing the necessary policies to achieve those goals. Tribes and even individual villages associated with a tribe might find their best interests would diverge from any particular confederated effort. The aesthetic beauty of their lifestyle and non-dominant authority seem desirable from an urban 21st century ‘Hollywood’ perspective but were inefficient when it came to
defeating the coordinated military efforts of a larger and more industrial society that acted mainly in concert.

The category of “Woodland Indians” is a very broad grouping but not one that was practical as far as identifying and creating lasting alliances. Indians themselves had been each other’s enemies, some more so than others, for as long as tribal stories could recount. The arrival of the white man and his society clearly became a greater threat but never enough to dissolve native differences completely. The United States and the European nations as well, that had a vested interest in trade or land acquisition understood and utilized the basic concept of divide and conquer in their dealings with the Indian tribes. The Americans benefited by dividing the interests of individual tribes from any confederated effort, but these tribes also gained from the preferential treatment they received from their agreements and compliance. It is an incorrect concept and it does their historical perspective no justice to apply a single face to Indian interests and endeavors. Just as the Americans in the 1790s first identified themselves as sons and daughters of their state (Virginians before calling themselves Americans), the Indians were first members of their tribes before they were ‘Indians’. The difference was that even the weak Articles of Confederation, let alone the stronger Constitution of 1789, facilitated the necessary collective political and military effort to produce a successful outcome eventually.

Washington and Wayne understood that once the peace attempt in 1793 failed to produce anything that they needed a definitive battlefield victory to secure a favorable peace for their western territories. Wayne writes in 1792 of the possible peace negotiations:
“nor can we attempt anything until that event is known, altho from present appearances there can be little expectation of an honorable and lasting peace, with a victorious, haughty and insidious enemy – stimulated by British Emissaries to a continuance of the War – or to dictate terms of peace, perhaps disgraceful to the American character…”

The Indian tribes collectively failed to understand that they needed the same. By this I don’t mean that the Indian tribes didn’t want a victory or wouldn’t defend their homes but that they lacked the sophisticated political foresight to understand what just one significant loss on their part would mean. Obviously, the tribes would gather their warriors to attempt once again to throw back the insolent whites but Wayne’s army came prepared and its purpose was to garrison their lands and forever destroy their ability to threaten the interests of the United States. The Indian coalition failed to fully grasp that “Mad” Anthony Wayne came not to punish but as a conqueror.

General “Mad” Anthony Wayne’s Indian campaign of 1794 included only one battle and the casualty numbers for both sides at the Battle of Fallen Timbers made it look more like a skirmish than the battles fought by Harmar and St. Clair. But this battle took on significance far greater than the number of its dead. During the following discussion of the actual battle tactics used I will cover some of the points from the first section of this chapter. I will elaborate further and give the details so to show how and why they led to the battle’s outcome.

The Legion of the United States launched their campaign by leaving Fort Greeneville on July 28, 1794. Their goal was to first reach the Indian towns at the Grand Glaize. This group of Indian villages was seen as the center of the hostile tribes and the source of the American troubles in the Old Northwest since the end of the Revolutionary War. The march from Fort Recovery northward, the Legion was breaking new ground
since Harmar had proceeded to the Miami towns at the junction of the St. Marys River and the St. Joseph River and St. Clair had made it no farther than the site of Fort Recovery. Wayne now depended upon the eyes and ears of his scouts. The battle plan and campaign in general depended upon not being surprised in force. Wayne’s scouts were able to consistently provide him with enough information that he moved ahead confidently and the Legion made the villages at the Grand Glaize without issue. Wayne sent his scouts forward towards the British Fort Miamis before leaving the newly constructed Fort Defiance. They brought back valuable information concerning the strength of the British garrison and the assembled Indians in the area. Wells brought in two captured Shawnees that provided more information. As the Legion moved forward towards Fort Miamis Wayne’s mounted reconnaissance companies discovered where a large group of Indians had been waiting in ambush for the Legion to arrive. All this gave Wayne a fairly accurate picture of what to expect and thus he marched into battle prepared. This by itself was a valuable tool that neither Harmar nor St. Clair had possessed.

A significant factor in most battles throughout history, the Battle of Fallen Timbers being no exception, is the number of participants. During the campaigns of 1790 and 1791 the two sides had approximately the same number of fighters but that wasn’t the case for Fallen Timbers. Wayne marched into battle with approximately 3500 effectives but the Indian Confederation was only able to field about 1,400 total. This numerical advantage wouldn’t always guarantee victory but it allowed Wayne a greater margin for error and it allowed him to utilize flanking movements around his enemy without weakening his frontal defenses too much. As discussed before, the Battle of Fort
Recovery had led to the northern Lakes tribes returning home. Runners were sent out with black wampum and red/painted tobacco$^{92}$ at the approach of Wayne’s forces to recall warriors but relatively few numbers returned south in time to augment the Indian forces. Also the Six Nations of the Iroquois were noticeably absent for this battle. Their attention was diverted further to the east and they no longer considered it of prime importance to their tribes, and the British weren’t going to officially field her regular forces or her militia. That said, approximately 50-70 Canadian militia did fight at Fallen Timbers under Lt. Col. Caldwell but was never sanctioned by the British government in Canada. The best that the Indian Confederation could muster on August 20, 1794 was less than half the number of Wayne’s forces.

The opening battle plan and tactics hinged upon the size of the respective armies. Wayne’s order of march was sufficient in depth to not allow the initial Indian ambush to disrupt the majority of his forces. When his forward mounted troops came under fire and were forced backward against the first regular army skirmishers, the Army’s disposition was still not threatened. Wayne’s practiced tactic throughout the entirety of the Legion’s march had been to have at least two layers of outer defense around his main body. On August 20, 1794, Major Price commanded two companies of scouts that were Wayne’s forward screen force. They were given orders to maintain sufficient distance from the main body to allow enough time to form battle lines.$^{93}$ Behind them, the regular skirmishers under Captain Cooke were his more substantial front guard force. When the Indians sprung their ambush on these lead elements the Indians were unable to trap the army. Wayne had time to properly deploy the army into an effective fighting arrangement without the Indian forces interfering. Wayne’s tactics had worked as he had
planned. The Indians had played their hand first and shown themselves in strength and position and Wayne was able to counter their initial thrust.

Wayne’s larger forces allowed him to have one mounted brigade in reserve as the rear guard while he used the other mounted brigade to swing wide around the Indians’ right flank to come up on their rear. This flanking movement was to either cut off their retreat if they had already been routed or to fall upon their rear if they still held their positions. In addition, the Indians would have to be concerned about a large mounted force to their rear since their families were now unguarded in villages down river near the mouth of Swan Creek.94

The Indian battle plan had to attempt an ambush of Wayne’s forces with their limited manpower while not engaging his entire force. It was important that they be able to rout the forces they engaged quickly. The difference in available manpower meant that the Indian Confederation couldn’t hope to defeat Wayne’s force in a direct climactic assault. What they needed was to overwhelm the initial troops and their retreat or rout would become contagious and the Legion would fall into disorder. This had worked to perfection against St. Clair and the Indian leadership felt that it would serve them well again.

The Indians knew the route of Wayne’s approach with a degree of certainty because of strategic and geographic necessities95 plus by now each side had received deserters96 from their opponent who divulged information in exchange for safe keeping. The Indian leadership chose a battle sight that had its advantages. It was partly covered by an area that had a recent tornado blow down many trees. This tangle of trees was perfect cover and concealment for the Indian ambush and it limited the American
Dragoons movement to directly attack them since the horses couldn’t transverse through the fallen timbers. It also had the advantage of being close enough to Fort Miamis for protection and to Colonel McKee’s stores that their warriors could easily be supplied.

The Indian council before the battle was one of confidence in their victory. They felt that after all they had badly beat the previous attempts to subdue them and they were sure of their ability to defeat the white soldiers that now were before them again.

This was evident by the change in military leadership just prior to the battle. Wayne had sent entreaties of peace to the Indian council as he had left Fort Defiance enroute to battle. Little Turtle, the Miami war chief, who had held the informal control of the Indian forces, advised in the wisdom of listening to Wayne’s offers. He had felt that eventually the Americans would put an army in the field that the Indians couldn’t defeat. He came to believe that Wayne’s Army was that very army. But the council was sure of its victory and wanted nothing to do with talk of possible defeat and treaties. Little Turtle, the war leader that had devised and led the defeat of Harmar and St. Clair and considered by some as one of Americas greatest military leaders, stepped down as overall leader. He agreed to still fight and lead his Miami contingent in battle. This change would have been detrimental to the Indian efforts. Even if his tactical equal had replaced Little Turtle, it would have been too late to bring any benefit
when compared to the disadvantages of changing leadership in the middle of a crisis. The Indians were overconfident and didn’t modify their plans to reflect the true military situation they faced on August 20, 1794. “The Indians had been so successful against St. Clair that they were very sanguine of success… They talked as though it would be an easy victory.” So reported the repatriated white captive, Jonathan Alder.100

Wayne understood the Indian manner of fighting. He understood their strengths and weaknesses. He knew that it was a common practice for Indian warriors to fast before battle101 both for spiritual and practical reasons. As the Legion approached Fort Miamis, Wayne established Fort Deposit,102 as the cache for the equipment the Legion would drop in preparation for battle. Instead of leaving on August 18th, Wayne delayed his march until August 20th. This meant that the Indians waiting in their ambush were on their third day of fasting. So on the morning of the battle many of the Indian warriors were well to the rear finding food. Most of these men never saw any of the battle. Some estimates were that about 500 men were to the rear during the battle.103 Wayne had played that perfectly. The hesitation at Fort Deposit also gave his troops two extra days of recover their strength from the march and it also meant that the individual soldier marched into battle much lighter because most of their gear remained behind. Wayne ordered that only two days provisions were to be carried per man so to keep every man light.104

Wayne understood and appreciated their fighting prowess too but he knew their limitation also. The Legion was composed of many soldiers with different specialties such as artillery, cavalry, mounted infantry, engineers, scouts, musketeers and riflemen. The modern term is “combined arms” and it has distinct advantages over one-
dimensional units. The Indians were excellent fighters but they were all light infantry. Wayne knew that the Indians had nothing to counter his Army’s composition. They couldn’t answer his artillery or cavalry threat if he used them adequately\textsuperscript{105}. Their only possibility to level the playing field was the British forces that had comparable assets but Wayne knew from his intelligence from scouts and deserters that Fort Miamis was garrisoned with only about 250 men at this time and most of them were already sick. Wayne knew that no other large body of British troops was nearby and that the Indians were on their own.

The Indian formation was anchored on their left flank by the ridge overlooking the Maumee River floodplain. This formation stretched obliquely forward towards their right flank for about two miles. The right flank was the area that the battle gained its name from because of the numerous downed trees. The left flank was also naturally protected by a series of wooded ravines along the ridgeline. This battle position was a few miles southwest of Fort Miamis along the river. The Indians had committed a classic mistake. With only about 1,400 men to hold this position they were spread too thin to accomplish any effective offensive punch. With maybe up to 500 of these 1,300-1,400 men in the rear hunting for food, the Indian line stood no chance of holding let alone attacking if Wayne didn’t blunder or his troops lose heart and run. It was most likely out of concern for not allowing Wayne to bypass them or to hit them on a flank that led them to attempt this ridiculously long line of engagement. Their right provided them their excellent natural protection but they also had to anchor on the river otherwise the Legion might slip by on the floodplain below. This again was either overconfidence or a lack of tactical understanding by the current Indian leadership of their real capabilities.
This formation directly led to another severe tactical mistake, which played, straight into Wayne’s plan. The Mounted Kentucky Volunteers in the screen force found themselves suddenly in a terrible ambush. The two point men were immediately cut down. The rest of the screen force was turned back due to the heavy fire. The battle started close to the Indians’ left flank. Most of the Indians, about 400, left their ambush positions and attacked the retreating Americans on foot. The retreating volunteers fell back in disarray into the guard force composed of regulars. They held their ground but to fell back towards the main force. The Indians pursued these men hoping this tactic would rout the Legion immediately. When the Indians reached the American right wing commanded by Brigadier General James Wilkinson, they found the Army ready to receive their attack. Thus the one attempt to offensively defeat the Legion had run its course. The Indians that stood only for a few exchanged rounds with the regulars before slowly retiring were too few to defeat the American forces before them. Another military axiom is to concentrate forces to execute a decisive attack at the enemy’s weakest point especially in the face of superior numbers.
The deployment of the Indian Confederation on August 20th wouldn’t facilitate this move and had effectively split their force.

Wayne gave the main credit to and most chronicles place the heaviest fighting during the battle on the Indian right flank. This developed after the initial ambush on the left. On this side the Indians, mostly Ottawas and Wyandots, and Canadian militia held their ground the longest and suffered the most casualties but they never were able to launch an offensive action. Their advantage was the defensive protection of the fallen timbers. Again the Indian numbers were too few to bring about the defeat of the Legionaries. The Indians were static in the defense on their right and themselves became the victims of their own tactics. Colonel Hamtramck commanded the American left wing, which was made up of the Second and the Fourth Sub-Legions. He ordered his companies to attack with the bayonet and rouse the Indians from their cover. The long days spent training proved fruitful and prophetic as the Americans showed themselves as martially aggressive and equal to the task. The battle was over in less than an hour.

It is of note that Wayne’s Mounted Volunteers, artillery, and his Dragoons were not imperative to the outcome of this
battle. Though the Dragoons were successful in flushing the Indians from some of their
vantage points along the American right and center, the artillery fired on the enemy to
help dislodge the center, the Mounted Volunteers assisted with the assault on the
American left. General Todd’s flanking movement around the Indian right may have
helped the Indian decision to retreat, it still was fundamentally an infantry battle decided
at the point of a bayonet. It doesn’t detract from Wayne’s accomplishments that his
preparations exceeded his needs when all was decided. When Wayne left Fort
Greeneville a month before, there was no way of knowing where, when, what, and how
many he would face. It was Wayne’s battle experience and wisdom that made him
prepare the Legion for the unique contingencies of battling the Indians. Isaac Weld, an
Englishman traveling through the Ohio Country during the years just following the battle,
wrote:

“Notwithstanding the great pains that were taken formerly, both by the
French and English, they (Indians) never could be brought to fight in any other
manner. It was in this manner and no other, as I heard from several men who
were in the action with them, that they fought against General Wayne; each one,
as soon as the American troops were descried, instantly sheltered himself, and in
retreating they still kept under covert. It was by fighting them also in their own
way, and by sending parties of his light troops and cavalry to rout them from their
lurking places, that General Wayne defeated them; had he attempted to have
drawn up his army in the regular order described in the plan, he could not have
but met with the same fate as St. Clair, and General Braddock did, on a former
occasion.”

I will next evaluate three other points of conjecture concerning the Battle of
Fallen Timbers. Two of these are strategic and one is tactical in nature and all three are
pertinent to the long-range effects of the battle. The first point is an opportunity missed
by the Indians. The 1,400 warriors stood little chance of winning a toe-to-toe fight with
the Legion on August 20, 1794. This American Army was too well disciplined and
trained to fall like Harmar or St. Clair. But there were chances otherwise. A wise commander looks to find victory however it presents itself. Many of Napoleon’s victories were based upon maneuver and timing not just raw firepower. Wayne had left everything but two days provisions at Fort Deposit and left it with a small garrison of the infirm. The fort wasn’t even completed when the Legion left on the morning of August 20th. It still had one side to still be completed. This cache of provisions was extremely essential to the Legion regardless of the outcome of the battle. The Indians easily could have overthrown the incomplete earthworks, defeated the small detail and captured or destroyed the supplies. If they had been able to do this most likely all would have been lost for the Legion. The discipline necessary for any military unit to remain effective would fall apart if basic food supplies weren’t even available. Without those provisions, Wayne would not have been able to maintain the Legion in the field. The Indians could have accomplished this task either by sending a large raiding party around the Legion as it moved towards them. The East bank of the river had only a few scouts out and no units able to stop the Indians. Another option; the confederation could have concentrated their forces for a breakthrough at Fallen Timbers. This could have allowed Indians in force to make the rear of the Legion and then on to Fort Deposit. Nevertheless, nothing was attempted either through a lack of military intelligence, a concern about separating a force too small already, a lack of understanding military tactics or overconfidence in their ability to win by rushing the enemy directly. This opportunity would most likely not have changed the outcome of the Battle of Fallen Timbers; if anything it would have hurt the Indians because of the loss of the detached warriors, but it could have greatly affected the outcome of the campaign.
The second is the site of the battle. I have earlier cited the advantages of this location but it had a distinct disadvantage. After the Battle of Fort Recovery, Little Turtle went to Detroit to enlist further British aid. His concern was to receive assistance to reattempt the assault on Fort Recovery but this time with British troops and artillery. He asks Colonel Richard England, commander of Detroit, for 20 Redcoats and two cannon.\textsuperscript{109} He realized that the American forts were impregnable to his Indian assaults and if the Indians were to rid their lands forever of the American soldiers it must include the destruction of the forts. His requests were met with civility and prognostications of a common cause but in the end the answer was no British troops. Little Turtle began to realize that the British self-interest made them very suspect as allies and he counseled peace negotiations openly.

Also, the two Shawnees captured by Wells prior to the battle had said that the Indians were considering three options. One to fight the Americans, two to join the Americans against the British and three to step aside and let Wayne pass unhindered to Fort Miamis. Hindsight shows there was some wisdom in the third choice. The Indians had fled their towns at the Grand Glaize with the Legion’s approach and were now settled in villages near the mouth of the Maumee River. This meant they couldn’t step aside and not defend their families and villages but it didn’t require they defend the British. A better option would have been for the Indians to retreat past the British post and choose a site of battle northeast of Fort Miamis instead of southwest. This would have allowed the Indians to still intercede for their villages but would have shown the Indian Confederation what the British intentions truly were prior to losing a single man in combat.
This would have forced the American and British hands. General Wayne would have faced a tough decision because he would have not yet accomplished his mission since the confederation would still have been intact. If Wayne bypasses the British fort he violates another basic military tenet – one doesn’t leave an enemy to your rear that has the capacity to sever your supply lines and now engage you on two fronts. Wayne was too good a commander to have allowed this. The British in the form of Fort Miamis’ commander, Major William Campbell, would have also faced a dilemma. If he allows Wayne to pass by then an undefeated Indian Confederation bears witness to this acquiescence. Secondly, Campbell doesn’t know yet whether Wayne’s ultimate target is Detroit so he can’t let Wayne pass without making an effort to defend Detroit since this is the real reason for the post in the first place.

This scenario has two advantages for the Indian Confederation. One, it would most likely have entailed the Legion and the Fort Miamis garrison coming to blows. This accomplishes two things; first it weakens the Legion and diverts their attention and makes them very susceptible to ambush and/or having their supply lines cut and second it may have brought about an active war between the United States and Great Britain which would have meant British troops for their cause. This trap could have been the chess move needed to defeat the Legion and pressure the United States for peace with the Ohio River as the border. The second advantage was if the British failed to attempt to stop the Americans then the Indians would understand the true nature of their ally prior to shedding any blood.

The third point of conjecture is the Indian lack of effort after the battle. Wayne’s forces had won the field on August 20th but they had not won an overwhelming victory.
The killed were about the same on each side but stories greatly exaggerated each sides’ losses. Wayne stopped at Fort Miamis for three days and chose not to pursue the Indians to their villages. Then he turned back and retreated back to Fort Defiance. From there the Legion moved on to the old Miami towns at the head of the Maumee River then built and garrisoned Fort Wayne. He was able to accomplish these tasks without any effort being made to stop him. The more forts Wayne was allowed to build, the more the region was subdued. This point wasn’t foreign to the Indians but still nothing was done. Wayne was still vulnerable to his ceaseless supply problems even after the Battle of Fallen Timbers. Wayne was also plagued with other immediate problems. The Kentucky Volunteers were becoming more unruly and were demanding to be released, enlistments were ending and this would deplete his ability to garrison the forts he just built and always provisions were in short supply. If the Indians had continued a sustained effort to thwart the re-supply of these forward posts the United States would have had to compromise during any peace negotiations at Fort Greeneville in 1795 if this treaty would have even come to past. The Indians had fought so well for so long but after the Battle of Fallen Timbers all coordinated efforts ceased. The British tried to motivate the Indians in council but during the winter of ’94 and the spring of ’95 the chiefs became more susceptible to an agreement with the Americans. Even the primary war leaders, Little Turtle (Miami), Blue Jacket (Shawnee) and Buckongahelas (Delaware) acquiesced to the notion of a peace treaty and eventually presented themselves to General Wayne at Fort Greeneville. The greatest hardships the Legion had to endure weren’t at the Battle of Fallen Timbers but were the continual concerns that they be able to survive on limited and erratic necessary supplies. This didn’t abate because the battle was won. This
struggle to maintain an effective fighting force was no less dire but Wayne was afforded
the opportunity to find a solution while the Indians left him alone. The Indians didn’t
understand how close Wayne and the Legion were to defeat through logistical
circumstances. The Indian Confederation didn’t beat Wayne in open battle on August
20, 1794 but they still could have harassed him and his supply lines to a point where
victory could have been possible.
The term Ohio Country is used to describe the lands north and west of the Ohio River. This term was contemporary with the events of this paper. It signified the lands occupied by the Indians and delineated by the Treaties of Fort Stanwix in 1768 & 1784, as compared to Kentucky, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

The Miami Towns (Kekionga) were the Indian towns established at the head of the Maumee River. These consisted originally of the Miami and then the Delaware and Shawnee that joined the Miami there in the mid-1780s.

Braddock’s Defeat in July 1755, during the French and Indian War had shown that an army mostly made up of Indian warriors could effectively fight against and defeat the Europeans. Doctrine thought the difference lay in the fact that the French commanded this force and not by the Indians themselves.


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Spies claimed the vast region west of the Mississippi River during the 1790s. It was transferred to France in 1802 and then sold to the United States in 1803.

The Miami Towns (Kekionga) were the Indian towns established at the head of the Maumee River. These consisted originally of the Miami and then the Delaware and Shawnee that joined the Miami there in the mid-1780s.

Braddock’s Defeat in July 1755, during the French and Indian War had shown that an army mostly made up of Indian warriors could effectively fight against and defeat the Europeans. Doctrine thought the difference lay in the fact that the French commanded this force and not by the Indians themselves.

Both Harmar and St. Clair had to rely upon the volunteer militia for most of their troops. In Harmar’s two engagements the militia fled and left the outnumbered regulars to be defeated. In St. Clair’s one engagement the militia were initially attacked and routed back into the regular encampment. The ensuing chaos was never quelled and the Army was severely mauled.


Knopf (1960), 183.

Ibid., 67.


Sword, 147.

Knopf (1960), 337.

Gaff, 346.

Knopf (1960), 73-75.

Carter, 136.

Gaff, 308. General Barbee’s brigade was initially the rear guard and was called forward to bolster the American left wing but the fighting was over before they were deployed for battle.

Carter, 108. Sword, 202-203.

Knopf (1960), 356-357. Wayne states that having to contend with the private contractors about supply issues has been ten fold more difficult and perplexing than “all the Savages in the Wilderness.”

One is struck by the degree of Wayne’s time that must have been devoted to the logistics of supply and provisions from the emphasis his letters to the various Secretaries of War would indicate.


Ibid., 170.


The Maumee River, as it is known today, was referred to in the 1790s as the Miami(s) of the Lake to differentiate it from the Miami of the Ohio, today known as the Great Miami River. I use the current name so not to confuse the contemporary reader.

This was the name for the collection of Indian villages surrounding the confluence of the Maumee and Auglaize Rivers. This is where the Legion built Fort Defiance. This is present day Defiance, Ohio.

Knopf (1960), 74.

Ibid., 263-264.

Sword, 174. Captain Slough led a night patrol about one mile from the Army’s encampment. They discovered numerous larger bands of Indians in the area. Upon return this was reported to the second-in-command Major General Richard Butler who felt it could wait until morning and decided not to wake St. Clair or worry about follow up patrols.

Knopf (1960), 304, 313, 347.

Gaff, 280-281.

Colonel Alexander McKee was an agent of the British Indian Department. He controlled store houses across the Maumee River from Fort Miamis. Wayne saw him as the epitome of British intervention and as the source of the American problems with the Indians.

Lord Dorchester, Sir Guy Carleton, was Governor of Canada twice. The second time was from 1785-1795.

Sword, 258-260.

Fort Miamis was built near an area the British had a fort during the Revolutionary War. It is in present day Maumee, Ohio.

The Treaty delineated the international border down the middle of Lake Erie and then down the connecting waterways between Lake Erie and Lake Huron. There was no question to everyone involved that the new fort was within American jurisdiction. The British saw it as somewhat legitimate because it was necessary to defend Detroit from hostile approach.

63 Forts Niagara, Oswego, Detroit (Lernoult)and Michilimackinac.

64 Sword, 262. Joseph Brant and the Six Nations proposed a modification to the Ohio River boundary. The border would head north up the Muskingum River from the Ohio to Lake Erie following the Venango River (French Creek). This partition was a compromise based upon the reality that very few Indians and mainly only whites lived east of this line by 1793.

65 Miami, Shawnee, Delaware and Ottawa.

66 The Washington Administration never contemplated accepting the Ohio River as the boundary between the United States and the Indian tribes. Multiple treaties had already been negotiated and signed agreeing to the transfer of much of the Ohio Country. The peace commissioners were instructed to insist on the conditions of the Fort Harmar Treaty.

67 The current sense of national identity hadn’t yet developed. Many settlers considered the federal government too distant and weak to care about or solve their Indian problems. It was a distinct possibility that another federal military loss would motivate the frontiersmen to negotiate on their own behalf.

68 Wayne needed time to train the individual soldiers in the very basics of Army life and then to drill the soldiers together in larger unit tactics.


70 This term was used to indicate that Fort Greeneville was the farthest point the United States held in force. Fort Greeneville would be the point that the invasion would be launched into the hostile Indian region. This invasion would not be possible until Wayne had the required stores of the necessary provisions and supplies.

71 Knopf (1960), 279.

72 Gaff, 176, 177.

73 Cruikshank, 326. In a letter from Simcoe to Lord Dorchester on March 15, 1795, Simcoe expresses his concern about the possible disaffection and hostility of the powerful Ottawa tribe once the fort at Detroit is transferred to the Americans.

74 Sword, 243. Timothy Pickering, Beverly Randolph and Benjamin Lincoln.

75 Ibid., 275.

76 Ibid., 276.

77 Ibid., 272. Gaff, 147. Larry L. Nelson, “Never Have They Done So Little”: The Battle of Fort Recovery and the Collapse of the Miami Confederacy, *Northwest Ohio Quarterly*, 64, No.2 (Spring 1992), 46. Hereafter cited as Larry Nelson (1992). St. Clair left eight cannon at the sight of his defeat in 1791. The Indians buried them so the Americans couldn’t use them later. It becomes ironic that Wayne had Fort Recovery built on this exact spot and the only weapons it was vulnerable to were already there. It is the small twists of fate that sometimes determine the larger issues. Informants, which included repatriated whites that actually fought against St. Clair, were able to identify all but one of the cannons’ locations. British officers later admitted that the Indian army had British artillerymen, powder and the correct size ammunition with the intent of digging them up and reducing the fort. St. Clair’s cannons, instead of being used by the Indians to subdue the fort helped to defend it.

78 Larry Nelson (1992), 51.

79 This site of two battles represents a dichotomy of this war. It was the site of their greatest triumph but also the site where their might and tactics were inept and couldn’t capture a small fort with a small garrison.

80 1768 & 1784.

81 Sword, 4. The Kentucky District of Virginia grew from very few white inhabitants prior to 1775 to a white population of 73,677 in 1790. Helen H. Tanner (ed.), *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 66. Hereafter cited as Tanner. Tanner estimates the total Indian population throughout the Great Lakes region as only about 60,000 in 1768.

82 Thornbrough, 59.

Thornbrough, 212. Raids by Kentuckians eventually forced the Delaware and Shawnee living in southern Ohio to move to safer areas. In the mid-1780s they joined the Miami at the confluence of the St. Mary and St. Joseph Rivers. This and the Wabash villages were seen by the United States as the origin of their troubles and the instigation for the Kentucky raids.

Wayne Papers – Clements Library, 47.

Gaff, 306.

Present day Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Present day Fort Recovery, Ohio.

Gaff, 288-290.

Cruikshank, 8.

Sword, 288.

Gaff, 302.

Present day downtown Toledo, Ohio.

In 1794 there was a large swamp/wetland area immediately south and east of the Maumee River. It was second in size in the continental 48 States only to the Everglades in Florida. This was called the Great Black Swamp and it would have greatly hindered any attempt to cross it by an army. It has since been tiled and drained for agricultural use.

Knopf (1960), 373. Sword, 296. Robert Newman was a surveyor for the Legion. His desertion and information led to the rapid evacuation of the Grand Glaize prior to Wayne’s arrival.

Carter, 125.

Sword, 287.


Most references credit Little Turtle with commanding the Indian forces that defeated Harmar, St. Clair, and many of the supply convoys ambushed on the way to the various frontier forts. They also agree that Little Turtle counseled the confederation to discuss the offers of peace with Wayne immediately prior to the Battle of Fallen Timbers. At an Indian council on August 14, 1794, the military leadership of the confederation passed from any factions preaching mediation to those espousing the military solution. Most references also state that Blue Jacket led the Indian Confederation at the Battle of Fallen Timbers and Blue Jacket’s martial capabilities are well documented. We know that Little Turtle had attempted to enlist direct British aid after the Battle of Fort Recovery and that after this failed attempt he no longer believed in the strength of the British commitment. It follows that the reports of Little Turtle pronouncing the wisdom of peace because the Indian Confederation wasn’t capable of achieving a one-sided victory against Wayne are accurate. Lascelles, the captured Frenchman at Fallen Timbers, reported…”but that the Little Turtle the morning of the action told him they were beat, as he had but 900 men which with 47 white men he believes to be the true number…” Sugden, the biographer of Blue Jacket, agrees the this but argues that the evidence we have concerning Little Turtle is somewhat based upon information given by Captain William Wells, years later. Sugden points out that Wells had a strong vested interest in Little Turtle and his reputation. Wells was a captive of the Eel River Miamis at the age of thirteen, then the adopted son of Little Turtle for nine years and even after his repatriation was ever fond of his second father. Once again the specifics aren’t overly crucial to my thesis. What is more important is that the brilliant tactics employed previously by the confederation were absent at Fallen Timbers and Fort Recovery. The “generalship” needed by the Indians to defeat a trained and numerically superior enemy didn’t manifest itself on August 20, 1794. Therefore, I give more creditability to the references that claim that Little Turtle was an extreme asset to the Indian cause that wasn’t utilized as such at either Fort Recovery and Fallen Timbers. Wayne reports of the controversy, on October 3, 1796 when Little Turtle refuses to travel to Philadelphia in the company of Blue Jacket. A journal entry made by an unknown officer concerning August 20, 1794 gives more credit to the notion that the tactical decisions were no longer made by the same
person: …”now if we had an enemy of military sagacity to contend with, he might with facility turn either our right or left flank, neither of which I am well assured have been examined more than two or three miles, and when we reach the extent of our march fall suddenly upon our baggage and provision, and by destroying them not only defeat the expedition but actually destroy the army, as we take but two days provision with us.”

100 Sword, 291.
102 In present day Waterville, Ohio.
103 Carter, 135.
104 Gaff, 301.
105 The key word is adequately. At the Battle of Fort Recovery an ill-conceived cavalry charge led by Major McMahon to relieve the attacked convoy meant its severe defeat. During St. Clair’s Defeat his artillery fired repeatedly at the Indians skulking in the woods to their front. Their shots were over-target and useless and the artillerymen were annihilated by the Indian riflemen.
106 Gaff, 303. Privates Moore & Steele.
107 Cruikshank, 12.
109 Carter, 132.
110 Wayne had his men carry only two days provisions upon leaving Fort Deposit. An attempt to lay siege or storm the post would have created logistical and supply problems for the Legion, which could have been devastating.
111 Wayne’s supply lines were always tenuous. If the Indians had relied upon a strategy of severing these supply lines they may have forced his retreat or even have defeated the Legion because of a lack of provisions. Conducting a siege operation with a large mobile enemy in the vicinity would have been a difficult task at best.
112 Wayne was fortunate that when he captured the Grand Glaize most of the Indian crops were still intact. The Legion was able to augment their rations and extent their supplies for days. When the Legion returned back to Fort Defiance, it was running out of food. Had it not been for the Indians’ crops they would have already finished their stores.
Chapter Two

Why the United States Won
the Treaty of Fort Greeneville in 1795

Most history texts seem to relegate the American and Native American history of the post Revolutionary War conflict over the Ohio Country to a short sidebar. The most common theme usually entails a quick mention of Anthony Wayne decisively defeating the Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers. This victory is then said to have opened the Old Northwest for white settlement and future development. The facts do not bear out such a concise explanation. Most if not all large-scale human occurrences are predicated upon complex interlocking variables and the signing of the Treaty of Fort Greeneville is no different.

On August 20, 1794, the Battle of Fallen Timbers was fought to the west of the Maumee River, above its flood plain in present day Maumee, Ohio. This battle lasted no more than one hour according to most accounts. It was not a particularly bloody battle in terms of dead or by total casualties. It was a fight to the death though and both sides took only one prisoner. The Americans suffered 33 dead and about 90 wounded. The Indians suffered about 20-50 dead. This by itself was not devastating, crippling or incapacitating to either side militarily. The casualties were a small percent of the combatants involved and many of the soldiers and warriors present weren’t actually engaged by their enemy. There were stories of exaggerated losses by both sides, some placing the dead at over 200 Americans and 400 Indians.
This begs the question of why the United States ‘won’ the Treaty of Fort Greeneville one year after the battle. Why was there a Treaty of Fort Greeneville and why was it so successful for American negotiators? The fighting that continued between the Battle of Fallen Timbers and the Treaty of Fort Greeneville was erratic and haphazard and many of the hostile tribes now disavowed these raids. The war chiefs claimed that it was impossible to contact all of the raiding/hunting parties to inform them of the cessation of the hostilities, therefore some depredations were still naturally to occur. These engagements were conducted by smaller raiding parties and were of little consequence without any strategic value. By February 1795 all of the previously hostile tribes had come to Wayne to profess peaceful intentions. Why did the previously successful Indian Confederation collapse so quickly after such an indecisive battle?

The first and an important issue that should be looked at is whether the battle’s casualties were closer towards the lower estimates. If the Indians had truly suffered in the range of 200-400 dead then the battle was as advertised in the history texts and it would make sense that the Indians capitulated at Greeneville because of the degree of their defeat. There seem to be a few common sense observations that exclude this possibility. One, the duration of the battle was universally recorded as about an hour. The death of 200-400 Indian warriors that were well entrenched in the cover of the downed timber would have taken much longer to execute or it would have required a much greater sacrifice than the American Army experienced. The Legion could have only delivered that serious a defeat to the Indian Confederation within a short period of time by a direct frontal attack on all fronts. This maneuver would have cost the Legion of the United States a very bloody toll considering the Indians defensive position and their
skill with the rifle. Wayne eventually flushed the Indian Confederation from this vantage point through fire and maneuver combined with frontal assault techniques. Once the Indians fled the relative safety of their defensive line they would have been vulnerable to being caught in the open by the cavalry and Mounted Volunteers in large numbers. This could have led to large numbers of Indian casualties but it would have taken longer than an hour to complete from the initial ambush until the last shots. Also there is no supporting evidence even from the American perspectives that any significant fighting took place after the Indians left their ambush line for the rear. Smaller detachments of mounted troops harassed the Indian retreat but not with enough numbers to make the tactical situation change. If the Indians suffered these larger casualties within their fixed positions then the bodies would have been found, reported, and documented by Wayne and his officers rather than just publish estimates of the casualties. It would have been in their vested interest to publicize this congratulatory evidence – there isn’t such evidence. The Indians would not have been able to carry off a large number of dead from the Fallen Timbers battlefield all the way to Swan Creek while they were especially concerned about pursuit. There also would have been documentation of these losses from the British garrison at Fort Miamis, the traders, the deserters, the Indian agents, to the Indians themselves. John Simcoe’s or Alexander McKee’s reports would have indicated the greater degree of the Indians’ defeat and would have reflected this reality in future British considerations and plans. They did not. It is clear that the Indians did not suffer a devastating military defeat at Fallen Timbers so the answer lies not in the battle exclusively but mostly elsewhere.
In August, 1794, Wayne and the Legion of the United States moved forward deeper into the Indian Country to attempt to end the ‘Indian troubles’. The Old Northwest Territory had not known long term peace since before the Revolutionary War. Wayne advanced towards the congregation of Indian villages at the confluence of the Auglaize and Maumee Rivers. This was called the Grand Glaize. This group of villages, made up of Miamis, Shawnees, Delawares, and Ottawas, was seen as the nest of villainy by the federal government in Philadelphia, and was supplied by the British at Detroit. Here Wayne thought he would be able to decisively rectify years of frontier depredations. But this was not to happen. Wayne’s forces found that the Indians had hastily evacuated their villages just prior to his approach. This was done in such a hurry as to leave a cornucopia of food in the field. This was such a boon to Wayne that he was able to continue his advance when his supply lines were on the verge of failing. The Indians were unable to provide an adequate defense for their homes thus giving up their villages and most importantly their direly needed food supplies into the mouths of their enemies. The Indian cause had to be hurt not only from the physical aspect of their loss of their homes but also from the psychological impact of retreating from their homes, without firing a shot, from an enemy they thought that they would always beat. Couple this with the report that Wayne caught the Indians mostly unaware and the failure to defend the Grand Glaize becomes indicative of the remaining effort by the Indian Confederation.

The Indians had always relied upon storing their crops from the harvest to augment their winter diets. The Indians usually split into smaller bands in the winter because the heavier reliance upon hunting was a more difficult manner of providing for larger groups. Thus, the utter destruction of their crops in the field and most of the
stores meant that the Indians were to suffer greatly in the coming months of 1794. Shelter had to be secured since their villages were also put to the torch. This type of destruction had happened before because of raids from Kentucky but they had always left immediately allowing the Indians to move back unhindered. But Wayne’s advance had left the Indian logistics in complete disarray. The Indians were separated from the ancestral homes and newly constructed forts stood upon the ashes of their villages. The Indians had little recourse. The American Army occupying their territory now severed the fur trade that had brought them the European trade goods that they were dependent upon. The basis for the Indian Confederation in the Maumee valley was terribly disrupted by the invasion and occupation. Wayne had broken the proverbial back of Indian power by itself. Their ability to stand against the military might of the United States as an independent force had been decided against their favor. The ineptness of the previous military campaigns had been replaced by a force that would not fall in battle to the meager forces the confederation was able to field on August 20th. The thoughts that the Indians could defeat the Americans by themselves were dashed by Wayne’s campaign in toto, not just the events of Fallen Timbers. The Indians were now able to see the situation more clearly following the battle. Prior to the engagement, the Indian council believed that they would drive the Americans away in defeat as they always had but the outcome of the military engagement, though militarily strategically indecisive, illustrated that the Americans were now their equals in martial prowess and superior in numbers. The Indians had lamented for many years that the white man came in uncountable numbers but they had prided themselves upon their ability to meet and to better them in time of battle. After the Battle of Fallen Timbers that veneer was peeled
away and the Indian Confederation quickly lost its initiative. Even the best efforts of the British to rouse their allies into action came to naught. The Indians realized that their situation was unavoidable without the direct help of others.

An event happened about two months prior to the Battle of Fallen Timbers that was at least as important. The Battle of Fort Recovery showed a valuable lesson to both parties. The Indians succeeded against the Americans when able to launch a surprise attack but were not able to make any headway against the walls of the wilderness fort. The Indians understood the futility of their inherent military capabilities against this form of fortification. They knew that these installations must go or their lands were forever compromised to the Americans. The might and the will of the Indian Confederation was broken upon the walls of this little fort hidden deep in the forests that had been the unchallenged domain of the woodland Indians prior to this battle.

After the Battle of Fallen Timbers, the Legion of the United States was left alone by the Indian forces. They were unobstructed at the gates of Fort Miamis and were unharrassed in their march back to Fort Defiance and then onto the Old Miami Towns where Wayne had Fort Wayne constructed. Both Fort Defiance and Fort Wayne were built so to be able to withstand any bombardment that the British might bring forward. Wayne still realized that the British were the key to settling the Indian conflict. If they chose to come forth and fight, they would find both of these new forts quite well built and able to withstand their field artillery. This was devastating for the Indian cause. They were unable to be much more than a nuisance to the Americans inside Fort Recovery. Now two larger better-garrisoned forts stood upon their old homes. The Indians knew that this foretold the end of their struggle against the Americans. They didn’t have to
suffer a terrible and bloody defeat to realize that the war was lost and an enemy that was here to stay claimed their lands.

The Indians were regarded as excellent fighters who were feared throughout the frontier because of their savagery and skill. The ambush mode of fighting and warfare utilized by the Indian tribes of Old Northwest was perfectly adapted to the conditions of the environment and terrain of the Old Northwest, which was mostly mild topography with dense woodland intersected by Indian and animal trails and waterways. It was also well adapted to the necessities of Indian life. The Indians of the Old Northwest were reared on the concept of developing their hunting and martial skills. Both the men and the women played important roles that helped the village/tribe sustain itself. This gave the tribes benefits in warfare but these skills were a necessity to the village life required in the wilderness. Indian warfare was a continuation of the hunt only on a grander scale. The Indians were excellent light infantry whose greatest strategy was the ambush. That which worked so well to provide the fruits of the hunt for the tribe also defended it from threats. This evidently worked repeatedly against Indian and white foes alike otherwise there wouldn’t have been such dominance in its use. But it contained a flaw that would be brought clearly to light by Wayne and his Legion.

Wayne was too aware of the nature of the threat that the Indian forces in the field posed to him. He understood that the Indians would eventually try to ambush the Legion because it was the best tactic they had and they excelled at it. He knew that to avoid a devastating ambush would be to almost guarantee his victory. At Fort Recovery, the Indian surprise attack upon an unguarded convoy brought instantaneous success. Their attempts to storm the fort over the following day and a half only brought foolish defeat
and anguish. The Indian tactic of large-scale ambush had worked at Blue Licks, Braddock’s Defeat, Oriskany, and St. Clair’s Defeat.\textsuperscript{30} Their attempts to reduce fortifications were never as successful. Attempts such as Pontiac at Detroit, Tecumseh at Fort Meigs, and Little Turtle at Fort Recovery illustrated the futility of poorly supported light infantry against well-defended walls. The Indian method of warfare was ultimately vulnerable to a military leader who knew that victory could be achieved by effectively engaging the Indians in open battle without being ambushed on the way there. Herein lay the poison pill – the very nature of the Indians’ success contained its downfall. The fluidity of tactics and skill of the individual warrior were not going to defeat the American efforts in open battle forever. Once the United States launched a determined campaign regardless of cost and placed a competent commander at the head of a well-trained army the unaided Indian cause was lost.

The United States had the advantage of rudimentary strategic planning. The Indians understood in their councils, the significance of the American encroachment into the Trans-Appalachian lands. They were not ignorant of the lessons that had befallen the East Coast tribes. Many of the Ohio Country tribes had already migrated from other areas to avoid the pressures applied by the British/American white advancement and Iroquois aggression\textsuperscript{31} into their lands. But even with this knowledge it didn’t translate into effective strategic operations. The Indians were content to trade depredations with the Kentuckians as if this would forever be the nature of the solution. Their prosecution of the war was as if the intent was to win the individual battles with almost a disregard to winning the war; almost as if they didn’t see or understand the existence of the war for the conquest of the Old Northwest. Their motivation was to defend their lands from
raiding excursions, retaliate against the frontier settlements and claim prizes of war through raids of their own. The Indian Confederation was similar to many historical armies that relied upon plunder as individual payment and/or martial acts to validate social prowess. Once these objectives were achieved, the confederation lost warriors who went home afterward because they had achieved what they set out to do or they couldn’t carry their booty on the campaign trail. This was the style warfare that the Indians had fought with each other beyond memory but it wasn’t what was needed to ultimately bring victory to their cause. The Indians failed to comprehend that they too needed a decisive victory in 1794 either through defeating Wayne directly or by forcing him to retreat by harassing his communication and supply lines.

More globally was the fact that the Indians didn’t have the capacity to wage a strategic war. After defeating St. Clair, the Indian Confederation needed to zealously press their military advantage but through a lack of foresight they squandered that opportunity. The Indians needed to pursue an offensive campaign while the federal government couldn’t respond. This would have required the Indians to engage aggressively on the offensive to force the United States to negotiate a damaging treaty. This would have required the Indians to consciously undertake military operations that would bring about significant casualties. This was not possible from the viewpoint of a victorious confederation that believed that the next army would meet the same fate. Indian tribal and military leadership failed to appreciate how well the Americans had learned their lessons. The overconfidence that was bred from the victories over Harmar and St. Clair kept the Indians believing in the relative permanence of their military superiority. The Indians had had to learn to adapt when the first eastern tribes were able
to trade for firearms and thus gained a noticeable technological advantage. The Indian Confederation didn’t adapt again when it needed.

Indian tribal cultural was based upon all members of the tribe assisting in its well being and survival. Life could be harsh and the societal margin for error could be slim especially during times of crop failure and disease. Each person was relied upon to help. This meant that there was an inherent military disadvantage for the Indians to overcome against the Americans. The Indians needed their warriors to come home and perform their tribal duties after the warfare was over. It was not enough for them to be victorious in battle but they must return because they were essential to the functioning of their respective villages. If the Indians lost too many men in battle they were devastated regardless of the outcome of the battle. Indian tribal life didn’t allow the Indians the luxury of committing their troops in such a manner as to incur numerous casualties.\(^{34}\) They must win the battles and the ultimate war without too great a sacrifice. The Indian population of the entire Great Lakes area could be estimated to be less than the white population just in Kentucky at the time of Fallen Timbers.\(^ {35}\) The Indian military effort was best fitted to the light casualties expected during ambush warfare but not at all for the chess move maneuvers required in an open battlefield. The Americans were always able to lose many more men than the Indians could afford so when an American commander appeared that would not foolishly sacrifice his men, the Indians could not tolerate the losses it might have taken to force the issue with Wayne.

Another military disadvantage the Indians faced was that when their warriors left the village and went off to raid or battle they left their homes and families vulnerable. The Indians always faced a dilemma. If they sent out as many warriors as they had so to
overwhelm their enemy then they did so at the possibility of losing everything at home. If they sent out only a small war party to keep the village protected they stood the chance of accomplishing nothing or worse to have their warriors fall to a superior foe. This was a problem when gathering to defend against an expected attack by the Americans. When runners were sent out to gather the various tribes to fight an invading army or raiding party there was always a question as to what direction or target the invaders would attack.\textsuperscript{36} Any poorly defended village in their way was sure to be destroyed and the inhabitants scattered or worse. This disadvantage was somewhat mitigated against other Indian foes or Kentucky volunteers because they too had to face the same dilemma but not so when the Indian Confederation faced a standing army. Another risk of an undefended village was not just the invaders but other tribes that might take advantage of the situation. Indians answering the call to arms before the attack of Fort Recovery fell upon villages on the Maumee River.\textsuperscript{37} They ravished the very villages they were there to help.

In 1790, the white population in Kentucky and western Pennsylvania was too large for the Indians to do anything other than temporary incursions. The military strikes by the confederation were depredations that caused the effects of fear and terror but didn’t accomplish any significant military feats. The waylaying of pioneers on the Ohio River or the burning of scattered cabins caused widespread panic but this wasn’t enough to change the tide of population dynamics. The Indians were not able to extend their military might beyond the Ohio River after Lord Dunmore’s War\textsuperscript{38} in 1774 for anything other than a larger raiding party.\textsuperscript{39} The Battle of Blue Licks was fought in 1782 and was a devastating victory for the Indians but it was not a decisive victory. By the time of the
1790-95 Indian war, the Indians could only minimally affect the stability of the Kentucky countryside. Though the alarms of panic sounded throughout the towns in Kentucky, they were never seriously threatened by Indian military power again.

A corollary to this is that the Indian Confederation was never able to deal the proverbial deathblow to the United States. The United States’ eastern havens were no longer in any danger from the military might of the Old Northwest tribes. The long arm of Indian raiding parties was limited to attacking vulnerable outposts and frontier towns. As the white population shifted westward the fringes were exposed but the distant core wasn’t. This meant that the majority of the United States was mostly immune to the Indians whereas the Indian villages were in harm’s way. The United States armed forces were poised to attack the very core of the hostile tribes in each campaign. They didn’t have to fight their way through layered defenses before falling upon the villages and families of the Indians. The Indians had to win every battle or else the Americans would take possession of their homes, their crops, and maybe even their families. The Indians had to win every time or flee with only what they could carry. Again, once an American Army was victorious against the Indians they would lose all and must sue for peace or migrate to more distant lands.

A factor that helped decide the Treaty of Fort Greeneville is that the Indians always had the ability to retreat to further lands. The Spanish claimed the lands west of the Mississippi River and they encouraged the Indians to move across the Mississippi for the same reason that the British offered lands in Canada to the tribes. They understood that ample Indian forces in the way could nullify the evident aggressive American westward push. The Spanish and the British knew that the Indians could form their first
line of defense. This would greatly reduce the cost and sacrifice either of these nations would have to pay in the defense of their colonies. This offer meant that the Indians were not backed ‘into the corner’ in 1795 and they could make the best of the treaty negotiations with the option open of leaving the region at a later time if the situation dictated. In fact, some portions of the hostile tribes had already migrated into the Trans-Mississippi area before the Battle of Fallen Timbers thus reducing the number of Indian effectives.

The composition and disposition of the Indian army was different in terms of logistics and supplies than was the American Army. The Indians didn’t have an elaborate system for the supply of provisions. The United States relied upon the private contractor system for delivering supplies to Wayne’s forces. Congress put the contract out for bid and the lowest bid was awarded the contract to supply the Legion in the field. This was used during the Harmar and St.Clair campaigns also and was continually criticized by Wayne and his predecessors. But it was an organizational system that provided a stable function no matter how slow it normally operated. Concerned that this failure to meet his expectations would hamper his options, eventually Wayne ordered his Quartermaster O’Hara to assist the contractors by transporting corn and flour to make up for the deficiencies. The Indians didn’t have such a system and had to rely upon two methods of securing provisions for their warriors in the field. The first method was to secure provisions through and hunting and gathering techniques they used when not in warfare also. They were able to bring in tremendous quantities of foodstuffs by their skills as woodland hunters. Typically, hunters were assigned to hunt for the Indian Confederation while they were on the move. The problem with this method is that the
land can only sustain so many hungry people at one location for a given period of time. It was easy to over hunt a smaller area if the war parties stayed too long. The larger the Indian war party the shorter duration it had for military operations in the same area. This limited the Indian army’s ability to linger long for any reason, whether for council, training, siege, or battle. The hunters would have to range farther and farther away from the main host to secure the quantities needed. This meant that the provisions would come in later and offensive plans in particular would become more vulnerable to these flaws since timing is so essential to the aggressive operations of the military.

The other manner of securing provisions was the Indian reliance upon the British. Supplying the Indians in the Maumee Valley was a serious concern and expense of the British foreign policy, from the highest British official in Canada, Lord Dorchester, to the British Indian agent Alexander McKee. The Indian Confederation was able to sustain large numbers in the field because of the British commitment. This method has its limitations. The Indians had difficulties ranging too far from the supply depot at McKee’s storehouse near Fort Miamis. There wasn’t the supply chain into the interior that allowed large Indian forces freedom of strategic maneuver. This system of supply required the Indians to never venture too far from the dependent supplies of the British. Both of these systems worked well enough that the Indian Confederation was able to field an army but these methods were inherently inferior to the American supply lines, no matter how poorly they ran. The Indians never had the logistical or organizational capacity to launch any major long-term offensive action.

The American Indian problem in the Old Northwest was deeply intertwined with the relationship between Great Britain and the Indian tribes. During the Revolutionary
War, the British were able to nearly garner support from all of the tribes living in the Ohio Country. The Americans received very little active support in the region and this continued after the war. The Paris Peace Treaty of 1783 helped exacerbate this problem. The agreement between the British and the Americans didn’t mention the Indian tribes at all and gave the Americans unobstructed sovereignty over the Old Northwest Territory. The Americans decided to initiate peace proposals quickly at Fort Stanwix in 1784. The tone of the talks was of belligerence by the Americans who claimed the right of conquest over the “vanquished” Indians and their former lands. This continued through the next three negotiations: Fort McIntosh 1785, Fort Finney 1786, and Fort Harmar 1789. These treaties led to polarization of some of the tribes that participated. The more belligerent Indians that had avoided the talks avowed to fight the American encroachment. These members turned to their former allies, the British, for assistance to redress these issues.

The British in Canada realized that the Paris Treaty had foolishly given away the claims to vast lands that were never pacified during the Revolutionary War. Some of the American raiding parties had been successful and General Clark’s expeditions of 1778 and 1779, in Indiana and Illinois were able to hold onto territory for a while. The Indians had twice struck hard in 1782, at Blue Licks in Kentucky and against Colonel William Crawford in Ohio. They had been asked to pick up the tomahawk of war by the British and then in 1783 they were asked to put it aside. The Indian tribes did not see themselves as defeated. Thus the American arrogance played strongly into the British hands. The Indians believed that the United States was wrong to push their claims to the Indian lands and were prepared to resist. The British in Canada knew that the very lucrative fur trade could be jeopardized by American incursions. This set the stage for
the British to agree to continue to passively support the Indians against the Americans. The fur trade allowed the Indians to acquire the much needed rifles, muskets, powder, and ball to not only hunt for the fur bearing animals but to fight the Americans and it continued the profits of the British trade companies. The years following the Paris Treaty found the British still in procession of the four forts they agreed to turn over to the Americans. The British were giving every indication that they would remain staunch supporters of the Indian cause. This culminated in 1794 when Lord Dorchester predicted an inevitable war and Fort Miamis was constructed within American territory.

The British support through mid-summer 1794 seemed only to strengthen the resolve of the Indian Confederation because they could or believed they could count on a powerful and willing ally to counter the Americans. The British soon failed to help the Indians in two significant episodes, which together were equal in importance to the outcome of the Battle of Fallen Timbers. The Indians, in the form of Little Turtle requested direct British aid to reduce the garrison of Fort Recovery after the June 1794 battle. He requested that Colonel England, commander at Detroit, lend him men and cannon but the British put him off with talk but no action.

The second incident happened on August 20, 1794 immediately following the short Battle of Fallen Timbers. The Indians fled north from the battlefield and arrived at the gates of the British Fort Miamis. The Indians asked for help from the British soldiers against the Americans and to be let into the fort before the Americans arrived. The British commander, Major Campbell had very little choice in his possible courses of action. If he let the Indians into the fort it would be seen as an overt act of war by harboring the recent combatants. Wayne’s opening written reply to Campbell stated
that if the retreating Indians had been allowed into the fort then the Legion would not have stopped their attack.\textsuperscript{53} There was also the possibility that the open gates could be breached by the American forces that were nearby and might quickly intermingle with the retreating Indians. Campbell chose to bar the gates and man the walls and order the Indians and Canadians to move on.\textsuperscript{54} The fact that Campbell’s options were limited is of little consequence because it was the much greater global issue of British inaction and thus interpreted as betrayal that left its mark on history.

Some the Indians may have suspected that the British alliance was tenuous.\textsuperscript{55} The question whether they would engage the Legion when it arrived was put to rest and the Indian Confederation was able to witness the official British policy of avoiding war with the Americans at the expense of their Indian allies once again. The Indians were not able to see the extent of the British duplicity during the years following the American Independence. The British government had never intended to actively fight for the Indian cause before or after the Revolutionary War. It was always their intent to have the Indians fight for their cause instead. But part of this policy was based upon the British fear that the Indians could become recalcitrant and threaten the British Canadian settlements if they ever believed that they had been betrayed. Alexander McKee pushed the Indian councils to greater demonstrations of hostility and rigid negotiation positions when it would have been in the Indians’ best interest otherwise but it supported the British policy.\textsuperscript{56} Lieutenant Governor Simcoe had always feared that the Indian strength might turn against the fledgling Canadian settlements.\textsuperscript{57} After the events of August 20, 1794 happened, Simcoe quickly reacted by calling out the Canadian militia in force to
protect from the possibility of an American invasion. On August 31, 1794, once he thought the threat was over to the British:

“I for the present suspend the recall of the Fifth Regiment and the Queen’s Rangers, and shall be in readiness if occasion requires to proceed to the Miamis with such troops and Militia, together with a great part of the Six Nations I had collected for that purpose.”

This illustrates the core of the British position. They would prepare for war and move to the Fallen Timbers Battlefield to meet the Americans if they felt it necessary but they would go even further and call up the Iroquois for the British defense. Then ironically they dismissed these very same warriors when they believed the Americans posed no immediate threat. The British used the Iroquois as their personal military reserve at the same time that the Ohio Indian Confederation truly needed them most.

The Indians had been led to believe that the Americans would be fired upon from Fort Miamis if they came within range but Anthony Wayne himself dared the British by riding his horse within pistol shot of the fort’s walls. The British remained inactive within their fort while the Americans burned and destroyed everything of value in the vicinity of the fort. Though the British were prepared to fight if Wayne had launched an attack against the fortification this meant nothing to the confederation. They saw that at the moment of their greatest military need the British had shown their true colors. The motivational impact upon the Indians was devastating and immediate. The Indians retreated to their villages at Swan Creek and offered no more organized resistance to the Americans. When Wayne returned to Fort Defiance, he left without pushing his advantage against the Indians at Swan Creek. He was leaving a relatively unscathed confederation force in his rear. He and General Wilkinson both expected that the Indians
would attack their return march.\textsuperscript{61} But the Indians were left in a state of hesitation and despair because they had lost their hope and belief of an easy victory and in their ally.

The official British policy was based upon international politics that the Indian Confederation was not a participant in. Great Britain was not prepared or willing to actively engage the United States in open warfare in 1794 because it was not in her self-interest. Great Britain was at war with revolutionary France in 1794. Britain was bankrolling the alliance against the French and things were starting to go badly for the British interests on the continent.\textsuperscript{62} France was having military success by the spring of 1794 and Great Britain’s treasury was feeling the strain.\textsuperscript{63} The critically unstable period for France had passed and Robespierre’s faction seemed to solidify its power base.\textsuperscript{64} It became imperative that British interests in Canada not lead them into war with the United States because the manpower couldn’t be spared to fight the more numerous Americans and any fiscal effort in the New World meant diminishing the more important war effort in Europe.

The Americans and the British were both interested in resolving the remaining issues of conflict between them. The United States clearly was able to see the British predicament and the British also knew well the American desire to put her Indian troubles behind her. Thus conciliatory talks were held between the two powers and the United States’ first Supreme Court Justice John Jay was able to negotiate a treaty that solved some of these problems. Amongst them was the British possession of the five\textsuperscript{65} forts on American soil. The treaty, known to the Americans as Jay’s Treaty, was signed on November 19, 1794 and was ratified in June 24, 1795. It stipulated that the forts would be turned over to the Americans in 1796. The transfer of these forts made the situation
perfectly clear to the Indians that the British were allowing the Americans to finally reign over the Old Northwest. The British effort to stop American power from assimilating the Indians was over. Wayne was able to attain an early copy of Jay’s Treaty for the treaty negotiations at Greeneville. He purposely had it read to the gathered Indians so that none of them could still hold out hope that the British had not forsaken them again. This was the second treaty where British interests trumped any loyalty to their allies.

The transfer of the posts held by the British by June 1796 was extremely important. Wayne’s campaign had defeated Indian power as a single stand-alone entity. There is no question that the Indians needed a European sponsor to continue the war. The arms and ammunition, the food and crops provided, to the finished goods such as knives, pots, blankets, etc. were integral to the woodland Indian societies in 1794. The Indians had become very reliant upon the finished trade goods provided to them by the British and the French before them. “All Native Americans had become dependent on European culture for a variety of trade goods, such as tools, clothing, and food, which they did not believe they could live without.” The agreement to withdrawal by the British meant the start of hardships from scarcity of everyday staples. The Indians were at a quandary in 1795. They hadn’t suffered military setbacks proportionate to what they were expected to now give up in the Ohio Country. The fundamental nature of their societies and their lack of technology mandated that they were dependent upon others for their capacity to fight regardless of their intrinsic ability to fight. Without British support and supplies, the Indian War was basically over.

Another possibility of European interference into the Old Northwest was Spain. She claimed dominion over the territories west of the Mississippi River. The vague
language delineating the southern border between the United States and Spanish Florida had caused tension between the two nations. Spanish officials in New Orleans had helped to foment independence minded plots in Kentucky. The Spanish had also occupied the Chickasaw Bluffs on the eastern side of the Mississippi River and were attempting to treat with the Chickasaw as a separate and independent nation in an antagonistic move against the United States. The Spanish were skeptical and cautious of American intentions as her population pushed further and further westward. Regardless of any ill will between the two nations, the Spanish were too weak and distant from the Indian Confederation in the Old Northwest to possibly affect the political and military outcome between the United States and the Indian tribes. Spain’s strongest vested interest and her attention were focused on the southern tribes below Kentucky. Any efforts at intrigue in the Old Northwest were with the hope of diminishing American hegemony throughout the western border rather than in a planned effort to support the Ohio Country Indian Confederation. In the end, Spanish interests and power were too distant to assist the Indian Confederation directly. If Spain had succeeded with their plans with the southern tribes then maybe it would have aided them indirectly.

The Indian Confederation of the Ohio Country was a loose organization of tribes that had a common interest in thwarting the westward progress of the white settlers. It was never a formal organization and its membership depended upon the varied interests at the moment. First, the settlers came under the flag of Great Britain, then under the banner of the United States but the threat was the same to the Indians. These settlers were on the fringes of American society. They had a strong propensity for independent thinking and were quick of avenge perceived wrongs. They usually acted in their best
interest, which commonly was at odds with the government’s policies. Lord Dunmore, Governor of Virginia, wrote in December 1774:

…”they do not conceive that Government has any right to forbid their taking possession of a Vast tract of Country, either uninhabited, or which serves only as a Shelter to a few Scattered Tribes of Indians. Nor can they be easily brought to entertain any belief of the permanent obligation of Treaties made with these People, whom they consider, as little removed from the brute Creation”.73

During the post Revolutionary War period, the federal government was unable to rein in the migration of ambitious settlers who saw the vast lands in the west as virtually empty and providence provided. These settlers came in large numbers and they came to claim the lands by changing the nature of the country at the same time. The French came in fewer numbers and were mostly concerned with trading with the Indians. The French benefited from the existing Indian culture and the natural state of the land. The white American settlers came to clear the land and introduce agriculture and livestock. They had little need for the unbroken forests, wildlife, or the Indians. These were viewed as obstacles to be removed. The Indians had tolerated the trader phase of white expansion because they had benefited also. But the settlers that followed the traders were determined to fight and succeed.

A factor in the historical success of white expansion was that it interfaced with only a small percentage of the Indian population at any given time. The pressures of societal conflict were borne by some tribes more than others simply due to geography. The expansion moved in a generally westward direction so the eastern tribes were always affected first. The Indian Confederation of the Ohio Country was made up of tribes that were directly threatened, tribes that were on the periphery to the theater of warfare, and the Iroquois to the east, who had held sway over the area for many years. The Indian
Confederation that faced the Americans over the Ohio River was composed of tribes with differing degrees of commitment and this always affected its ability to politically and to militarily act. The Shawnees, Mingos, Delawares, and the Wyandots were the most affected in the area of present day Ohio and the Miamis, Weas, Piankashaws, and Kickapoos in the area of present day Indiana because of the location of their hunting grounds and their villages. It was their territory that was coveted, surveyed, squatted upon and fought for by the Americans. The Ojibwas, Potawatomies, Ottawas, Mesquakies, Sauks, Dakotas, Kaskaskias, Menominees to name some were tribes that lived to the west and north but were close enough to be involved. Sometimes these tribes had smaller war parties join the fray and at other times larger bodies of warriors engaged in the pitched battles.

The Six Nations of the Iroquois were a third group of the confederation. They were in a unique position in that the westward expansion had already skirted around their traditional lands in the Finger Lakes area of New York. They were somewhat surrounded on two sides by American settlers but they were still a powerful and respected confederation. The other tribes of the eastern states had either moved west themselves or no longer had the capability of militarily defending themselves. But even the mighty Iroquois knew that the Americans represented a power too strong for them to openly challenge after the Revolutionary War. Many had moved to Canada where the British had provided lands as compensation for their losses in the previous war. The Six Nations became more of a mitigating tribe within the confederation rather than an active military partner during the war for the Ohio Country. The Iroquois understood that if they joined the war openly in large numbers, that they would eventually receive the brunt
of the American military, which would have to remove the closest threat first. If they
joined the war in large numbers, the theater of war would have switched from the
Maumee River Valley to the Mohawk River Valley again. The Six Nations knew that
unity was the only hope the Indian Confederation had against the Americans but their
own interests and their lack of tribal concern for the Ohio Country after the Treaty of Fort
Stanwix in 1784, ultimately excluded them fulfilling their traditional role as the Indian
juggernaut.

In the 1790s, communication was not the instantaneous construct of today but the
Indian tribes were knowledgeable of the proceedings outside their immediate region.
They understood the history of the social phenomenon of white migration but they were
not all equally involved or yet threatened. The Indian tribes were not a single-minded
homogenous culture that naturally acted in concert. Many of the tribes spoke different
languages and had varied social norms and mores. Some tribes were distant from the
trading posts and others had grown overly dependent upon them. Another factor, which
helped to weaken the confederation unity, was that throughout their tribal histories there
had always been intertribal warfare. The Indians were used to the other tribes being a
threat also. The Iroquois wars of conquest in the mid-1600s throughout the Ohio Country
showed that Indian depredations were doled out regardless of race. Tribal leaders had to
wisely consider the possible threat to their own villages if they sent most of their warriors
a distance to fight. Every tribe still had its traditional rivals/enemies that might take
advantage of a neighbor’s temporary weakness. A common purpose was achieved where
the Americans threatened most but the further away the concern diminished and those
tribes realized that the Americans were just one of many potential foes. At times
members of these more distant tribes joined the war parties in search of claiming scalps and captives rather than out of any political ideology or practical necessity. The Indians first identified themselves as tribe members before being Indians. This was also true for the Americans but even their weak Articles of Confederation were far more unified and stronger than the Indian councils held at the Grand Glaize.

The structure and dynamics of the confederation as an organizational entity did not allow it to dictate the courses of action necessary for it to sustain the war after the battle. The Indian Confederation was stronger in war than in peacetime. The war seemed to become an inactive one after the Battle of Fallen Timbers. The cohesion of purpose was no longer strong enough to bring about any further military campaigning by even the Maumee tribes. The intractably hostile tribes of the Maumee started to realize that there were benefits to be gained by treating with the Americans sooner than later. Blue Jacket (Shawnee), Little Turtle (Miami), and Buckongahelas (Delaware) all came to Fort Greeneville or Fort Wayne within months after the battle to talk peace with Wayne. Once the confederation broke apart it was very foolish to remain solitarily hostile. Peace or migration was the only two options.

The Indians were a people of equal native intelligence as compared to their foe but their councils lacked a political knowledge and sophistication that was needed to understand the international dynamics of the wars for their homelands. The very term of “father” applied to either the British King or the American President illustrates a subservient role. The Indians were relegated to a subordinate purpose to the colonial powers and their councils didn’t have the ability to politically demand their inclusion in the most significant negotiations. The Paris Treaty of 1783 and then Jay’s Treaty of 1795
were conducted without input from the people most affected by its outcome. The Indian Confederation was unable to deal with the British or the Americans as political equals regardless of their military strength. Along with this, the Americans used a policy of continually intermingling offers of peace with threats of war. At the time that Wayne was developing the Legion, President Washington sent three peace commissioners in the summer of 1793 to attempt to solve the troubles without further fighting. It was evident to the Indians that the United States was clearly preparing for war by simultaneously building up its supplies in their forts. Also the United States only asked for a portion of the Indian lands while guaranteeing their perpetual hunting use of the lands to be vacated. Other Indians in the previous treaties had already signed these lands away, plus the Americans were willing to pay for these lands again. They also swore to protect the tribes and their lands from all future threats. All this helped to divide the councils enough that coordinated military efforts were no longer possible. Though Indians chiefs for many years had lamented of the inherent greed of the white man, the Indians failed to politically understand the long-term nature of the threat to their people, lands, and culture.

The United States had its reasons to push for a treaty based upon its chosen terms. The young nation was an experiment in republicanism. Many thought that the United States would not last as a political entity for long. The initial Articles of Confederation that loosely bound the states together severely limited the power of the central government and maintained states’ rights above all else. The ratification of the Constitution of the United States in June 1788 by the required ninth state, helped to produce a federal government, which finally could defend itself more appropriately. The
European powers were still actively involved on the North American continent and would have immediately benefited if the United States disintegrated. There was very little that was stable for the young nation.

The biggest growing pain for the United States was its Indian troubles in the Ohio Country. The nation was unable to control its citizens on the frontier or stop the Indian depredations in retaliation to these settler affronts. The federal government’s two military campaigns to quiet the hostile Indian tribes only worsened the situation. In addition, there was a growing segment of the western population that believed that the government in Philadelphia was too distant and inept to have jurisdiction over them. Kentuckians were lured by British and Spanish agents in attempts to have them migrate further or to declare their independence from the United States. Brigadier General Wilkinson was one such person that became involved. The settlers and settlements became too numerous for the small federal Army to control. Harmar was given the task of rounding up white squatters illegally living in the Ohio Country but this task was too large for too few. In the late 1780s, the one federal regiment was barely able to garrison its forts let alone enforce the will of the federal government on the frontier. The rugged-individualism philosophy of the frontiersmen and settlers that served them so well through hardships would not allow them to sit back repeatedly while the government in Philadelphia made the Indian troubles worse. In 1794, the time had come for the United States to prove itself to its foes, its neighbors and its own citizens.

George Washington faced the choice of another more expensive military campaign into the wilderness that might also fail or to treat with the hostile Indians in a manner belittling the young nation. Neither was a favorable choice so he attempted to
negotiate with the Indians based upon the Fort Harmar Treaty of 1789. This seemed a
good compromise since the United States would again pay the Indians for land already
received through multiple treaties while the Indians would only sign away land that was
already in the hands of white settlers anyway. When the Indians refused to meet with the
peace delegation, President Washington chose his best alternative because he believed the
previous failures were based on a lack of commitment. The nation could not lose
international face again. It meant military action against the Indians and also the British
if they were to intervene.\textsuperscript{82} So for reasons both domestic and foreign, the United States
had to win to ensure its political stature and its military power.

The federal government and the thirteen states faced large debts after the
Revolutionary War. The federal government found that one way to help balance its
budget and centralize its power was to assume the states debt and acquire their claims to
the western lands. Now the federal government would be able to sell the land, pay off its
soldiers with land titles, and control how this process was instituted. The Ordinances of
1785 & 1787 were Congress’ legislative efforts to put a land distribution system and
government in place. It was hoped that the land auctions would help to replenish the
coffers but it went unrealized at first.\textsuperscript{83} In an attempt to still produce revenue from these
lands, Congress started to sell large tracts to land speculators.\textsuperscript{84} The federal government
was obligated as seller and landlord to suppress the Indian troubles that persisted. The
United States had sold the rights to the land under the assumption they had clear and free
title but now that the Indians resisted strongly the federal government was forced to
spend money to employ troops to patrol and garrison the frontier. It is ironic that the
Ohio Country was supposed to help the fiscal crisis but instead it initially contributed to the problem.

Basic sociological factors contributed to the post Battle of Fallen Timbers American victory of peace in 1795. One of the most profound was the population dynamic. Though exact numbers were/are impossible to calculate because of the nature of the woodland Indian culture it is estimated that the Indian population had decreased since the first contact with the European whites. Part of the reason for this estimate is the introduction of Old World diseases that the Indians had no natural immunity against. Small Pox was a killer in Europe but that was nothing compared to the havoc it was able to play in many Indian villages. Sometimes whole villages were decimated. Another reason was the introduction of liquor to the Indians. Many developed a strong fondness for the drink and seemed to have a propensity to succumb to its effects. It became a useful negotiating tool among the traders who found they could sweeten their profits when the Indians were intoxicated. The rampant use of liquor helped to destabilize Indian society in general, which indirectly may have affected their population. In stark contrast to this the white population west of the Appalachian Mountains had greatly increased since the first attempt at settlement in Kentucky District of Virginia in 1775. The numbers of white settlers in Kentucky brought statehood in June 1792 as the fifteenth state to join the union. The biggest factor in Indian population was the state of almost constant conflict that existed for over forty years in the Trans-Appalachian area. The Indians were involved in the French and Indian War, the Revolutionary War, and then the Indian War for the Ohio Country. This mode of warfare was more intense than the traditional tribal warfare prior to the European arrival. The replacement of what are
now called low-intensity conflicts (LIC) that usually involved only a few casualties with
the mode of conflict of annihilation surely dealt the Indian population a severe blow. The
traditional warfare of tribal societies is similar to the predator, who seizes upon
opportunity and can’t afford to take great risks that might cause harm disproportionate to
its gains.

The drastic change in human use patterns was as important as pure numbers. For
hundreds of years since the end of the mound builder era, the human cultural use of the
land had been the same. In a very short time period, the settlers brought an immediate
change to the Kentucky landscape. The virgin forests were cleared and burned, the wild
animals were trapped, hunted, or sported almost out of existence in some areas, and
larger more resource dependent human settlements (towns) were erected. White
American population transfer with its inherent cultural metamorphosed Kentucky in a
short twenty-year period. The Kentucky of 1794 was no longer able to support the
hunting and gathering cultural of the Indians in large numbers. One of the most effective
American weapons against the Indians was the intrinsic nature of its culture.

The Indians “lost” the peace treaty at Greeneville because of socioeconomic
factors as well. I believe that the most common misunderstanding about the inevitability
of the outcome of the conflict is because of these issues. It seems to be common sense
that the mercantile pre-emerging industrial society of the Americans could not lose a war
to a collection of “backward” hunters and gatherers. I disagree with the above stated
“common sense” but I will argue below that some of these issues were very pivotal to the
war’s conclusion. The United States was more populated and more productive in terms
of Gross Domestic Production (GNP) than the Indian tribes of the Old Northwest during
the 1790s. The United States was a country that was involved in international trade, the manufacture of finished goods through various cottage industries, large and small-scale agricultural, and the development of service industries. The economic might of the United States wasn’t near what it is today compared relatively to the economic powers of the day but it was vastly ahead of the Indian societies. Part of Britain’s dilemma with how to treat the United States after the Revolutionary War was hinged upon the fact that the Americans were the biggest market for British trade goods. It is clearly obvious that the Indian Confederation could not compete with the United States from an economic perspective. But the war for the Ohio Country was not like major conflicts of our day where industrial might plays the key role most times.

The economic power difference was greatly negated by the environment of the Ohio Country. It was mainly a virgin wilderness and contemporary industrial processes had not yet been developed that could easily subdue this theater of war. The roads were as basic as any built over the previous centuries and the waterways were only passable during the wet seasons. The vast obstacles of distance and harshness countered most American economic power. Modern economic processes would come to the area over the next few decades but in 1790 American economic power was based on the East Coast. The clear advantage that this economic power did bring to the American table was that it created a society that was able to specialize tasks. Once a degree of excessive subsistence was achieved, portions of the population were freed from the necessity of having to secure their own provisions. Artisans, doctors, inventors, bankers, politicians, tradesmen, etc. were the fruits of this economic abundance. Most important was that societies were fiscally able to create standing professional armies. Herein lies the United
States biggest advantage over the Indian Confederation. The American government was able to tax its citizens enough without causing economic collapse to create an army that had no other purpose or responsibility but to provide defense and wage war when necessary.

The Indians were as a group, well-respected fighters. They were some of the best light infantry in the world at the time. They displayed courage, skill and savagery that caused consternation throughout their foes, both red and white. They were able to endure hardships in the field that would have broken the morale of most likely even Wayne’s Legion. All this said they still were a form of citizen/warrior army. They had to perform essential subsistence duties for their villages if the tribe was to succeed or even survive. They weren’t able to “fight to the last man” because it would have been tribal suicide. The Indians always had to be cautious even in victory for a Pyrrhic victory would surely mean suffering and devastation for their tribes. The Indian economy was a cross between a hunter&gatherer and a horticultural society. The woodland Indian societies had progressed beyond basic hunting and gathering which usually is limited to the extended family groups because the land can’t support large human densities based upon a daily catch. The Indians utilized extensive agriculture to augment their diets but they hadn’t developed the domestication of draft animals. They hadn’t developed the economic conditions of sufficient agricultural surpluses to foster significant trade. They hadn’t developed the class stratification common to agricultural societies. The woodland Indian economy required that its able bodied men contribute towards their collective success. It had many communal aspects still embodied in its functioning. Villages experienced times of famine or plenty as a group rather than as family units. The
primitive hunter&gatherer/horticultural culture had disappeared many years prior to the
1790s. The Indian economy was forever changed when the white man introduced their
trade goods. The Indian tribes had always conducted trade amongst themselves for items
such as mica, shells or chert but this was limited trade. The advent of the trade market
with the Europeans brought about overhunting, for the first time, because the Indians
viewed the animals of the hunt now as commodities to be harvested. They quickly
preferred the sharp steel of the white man’s axe and knife to their traditional stone
implements. Hunting and war became easier with the rifle/musket rather than the bow
and arrow. Blankets finished upon looms were superior to hides sown together. They
even became dependent on trade with the white man for wampum at times. By 1790 the
Indians were no longer a basic subsistence economy. They no longer only hunted what
they needed but tried to secure excess hides so they could trade for more items. The
difference in lifestyles between the Indians in their villages and the settlers in their log
cabins was not that great. The Indians were able to acquire many of the conveniences of
their era that were available to the frontiersman. The fur trade was an important industry
to the British traders who were quite willing to keep a steady flow of goods coming to the
Indians for the hides they brought.

The fundamental difference between the capacities of each economic structure
revolved around the fact that the United States was able to produce the goods needed for
war themselves or they were easily able to find international trading partners for anything
they might need otherwise. The Indians had become very dependent upon the trade
goods they received in exchange for their commodities but they didn’t have the basic
cottage industries to produce these goods. The Indian Confederation no longer knew how
to fight effectively with only bows and arrows. The Indian Confederation needed the European trade goods to wage their war for their homeland. They needed an industrial sponsor or trading partner if they were to be able to hold their own or defeat the Americans. No matter how great the Indians fighting elan or their individual martial prowess, they needed the British to supply them the means to fight. Once the British removed themselves from the equation the Indian cause was destined to defeat against the Americans that could continue to field armies until they got it right.

An adjunct to the Indian economic dependence was the American policy to immediately operate trading posts at their forts in the Ohio Country. Wayne understood that the Indians needed these goods and then by extension they needed the provider of these goods. Wayne knew that the outcome of Fallen Timbers meant little compared to the Indian cultural dependence on these trade goods. He wrote Sect. Knox on December 23, 1794 about the imperative nature of establishing trading posts and thus diminishing their dependence upon the British, whom he considered as still hostile:

“The British agents have greatly the advantage in this business at present by having it in their power to furnish the Indians with every necessary supply of Arms Ammunition & Clothing in excha[n]ge for their skins & furs – which will always make the savages dependent upon them until the United States establish trading houses in their Country…. & without it is adopted we can never expect a permanent peace with or fidelity from the Indians… I am confident that we shou’d draw them over to our interest Notwithstanding every effort of the British to prevent it.”

The Americans were able to make inroads with the Indians by supplying the signatory tribes with goods and specie so that the Indians found the Americans a necessary evil soon afterwards. The Americans understood that the Indian Confederation could be subdued by more than just bloodletting. This continuance of the dependent Indian economy with the Americans now in the role of provider worked very well since it
reduced the chances of warfare, decreased British influence, and increased the need for American trade goods with its inherent economic bonus.

The Whiskey Rebellion in the fall of 1794 contributed to the American victory of peace at Greeneville. An excise tax was placed upon the production of whiskey to increase revenues for the cash-strapped federal government. The western farmers found that it was far easier and less expensive to transport their agricultural commodities in the form of whiskey rather than as solid grain. It also was more profitable at market. The federal government taxed the whiskey stills based upon their size rather than the actual production. This caused widespread complaint since much of the production was for use and not for sale. This, plus other issues causing western discontent brought the irate farmers of western Pennsylvania to rebellious action. This amounted to very little of concern since the “rebels” quickly disappeared with the approach of the large army with President Washington in attendance. The militia army that was raised to put down this insurrection numbered about 13,000 soldiers.\textsuperscript{93} The Indian Confederation or the British could not have missed the presence of this army. Most especially since it immediately followed Fallen Timbers. With such a large army not too far away in Pittsburgh and Wayne garrisoning their tribal lands, the Indians’ options were limited. Washington would have had trouble leading this army northward because of the same logistical problems that Harmar, St. Clair, and Wayne had faced. Also the enlistments of the militia were short-term and would not have allowed any prolonged campaigning in the wilderness. But I believe that the mere presence of such a large army upon the frontier immediately following the Battle of Fallen Timbers helped to sway the Indians and the British towards a more peaceful path.\textsuperscript{94} If the British had contemplated any action in
conjunction with the Indian Confederation, they would have had to rethink it again once the United States activated such a large army. An army this large would be too cumbersome to engage the more nomadic tribes but the British in their static forts would have made an easy target. If the negotiations over Jay’s Treaty had proceeded poorly or not all, it could have been a distant option for Washington to take them by force.

One final factor that led to an American victory at Fort Greeneville in 1795 was the treaty and the peace process itself. The Indian Confederation hadn’t been overwhelmingly defeated but their lack of initiative and action made them appear prostrate at the feet of the victorious Americans. The Indian councils following the battle couldn’t agree upon a course of action. Some in the Indian councils still looked to the British to see if any help would be forthcoming. Others believed that the British had shown their true colors and weren’t to be counted upon. Individual tribes and chiefs started to respond to the requests being forwarded by the Americans, both at Fort Wayne and Fort Greeneville. Tarhe, the only chief of the Wyandots of Sandusky to survive August 20, 1794 and Buckonghelas of the Delawares, made gestures of peace by late 1794 against the wishes of the British95 and the tribes still hostile to peace. During the months of uncertainty following the battle, some of the Maumee tribes and some tribes near Detroit still held out in council whether they should continue the fight. The debate centered on what role, if any, the British would assist their cause. As always, Alexander McKee strove to motivate the tribes to rally against Wayne and the Legion regardless of the defeat at Fallen Timbers but British official pacificity was too apparent to the Indians. The three most significant war leaders of the confederation, Little Turtle, Buckongahelas, and Blue Jacket now felt that the British were unreliable if not cowardly allies.96
The terms that were announced were not unreasonable considering the circumstances. Timothy Pickering, the Secretary of War at the time of the negotiations, wrote to Wayne about securing the lands for the frontier posts within the Indian territory but cautioned “but all these Cessions are not to be insisted on; for peace and not increase of territory has been the object of this expensive War.” The Americans appeared to be the conquerors of the Ohio Country but they only asked for what had been agreed to in the earlier treaty. Wayne proclaimed to the assembled tribes at Fort Greeneville that the Treaty of Fort Harmar would be used as the basis for negotiations. The Miamis, Potawatomis, and the Wyandots pleaded ignorance of this treaty and requested time to familiarize themselves with it. They stated that they had never been a party to the treaty back in 1789.

The Americans demanded more concessions from the tribes than the original Treaty of Fort Harmar had required but they also provided treaty/trade goods and annual annuities for the signatory tribes. Wayne agreed that the tribes were to continue their rights to hunt, trap, and fish the ceded lands. The tribes initially balked at Fort Greeneville when

Wayne read that they would have to agree to the permanence of the established forts and cede land grants for them and others within their territories. These grants for forts were to serve some offsetting beneficial purposes for the tribes. They were to act as trading posts and they were to guarantee protection for the Indians by the federal garrisons that would be empowered to uphold the treaty stipulations for the Indians.

The Washington Administration made a valuable decision by using Anthony Wayne in the role as the treaty commissioner. Wayne had gained the respect of his adversaries and was seen as the war leader that never slept. He was the leader whose army couldn’t be ambushed and defeated. This image as their conqueror obviously worked well as an intimidating utensil and it gave leverage for the proceedings. Wayne also understood that it was important to treat the Indians with respect and to fulfill the traditions expected of the proceedings. He supplied the provisions for the more than eleven hundred Indians gathered for the negotiations. Even though the prescribed time of the peace council drug on because of the tardiness of the Shawnees and Wyandots, for a month before proceeding. He addressed the Indians firmly but with courtesy and followed their protocols such as addressing the Wyandots first, as the elder tribe at the negotiations. Wayne, who had failed at most of his civilian endeavors, was able to achieve more than had been anticipated by the Washington Administration.

Wayne had understood that the American image was badly tarnished by the two prior campaigns and that a lasting peace would only come about after “the Savages shall experience its keenest effects.” Wayne also fully understood that if Great Britain was forced or convinced to abandon the treaty forts then “we then shall have it in our power to dictate terms to those haughty savages – or to exterminate them at our pleasure.”
Wayne played his role well, knowing that the Kentucky Volunteers had gone home, the Legion was still always low on provisions, and the enlistment terms of the Legionaries were expiring. Wayne was the magnanimous conqueror. He, better than anyone understood the tenuous nature of his victory. The Indians were so thoroughly ready for peace by mid-1795 that they couldn’t see the long-term consequences to their acquiescence. Only Little Turtle of the once mighty Miamis, argued against the terms of the treaty at first and even he and his tribe signed on August 3, 1795.
1 Knopf (1960), 352. Gaff, 312.
2 Knopf (1960), 361. Gaff, 312. James Wilkinson, “General James Wilkinson’s narrative of the Fallen Timbers Campaign”, Edited by Milo M. Quaife, Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 16, (June 1929), 85-86. Hereafter cited as Wilkinson (1929). A Frenchman, Antoine Lasselle, was found hiding dressed as an Indian. The fact that Lt. Colonel Hamtramck recognized him and his gun was unfired saved his life from execution.
3 Gaff, 317.
4 Knopf (1960), 354. Cruikshank, 251. Wilkinson (1929), 86. Wayne writes that the Indian losses were about double the Legion but Simcoe writes on January 1, 1795, that the Indian losses were less than first supposed at only 19 dead. Wilkinson writes that only about 30 enemy dead could be found, which included several white men.
5 Knopf (1960), 389. Wayne estimates the potential Indian fighting force at 4,000 warriors without the aid of the Wabash, Illinois, or Michigan tribes. The Indian dead at Fallen Timbers were therefore not militarily significant.
6 Clark, 430.
8 This is a fundamental question of my thesis. If the Battle of Fallen Timbers was militarily indecisive then why did the Indians agree to terms at Fort Greeneville?
9 Knopf (1960), 387-388.
10 Gaff, 365.
11 Ibid., 364.
12 Wilkinson (1929), 86. Wilkinson writes that Wayne claimed to have faced 2000 Indians and all the Militia of Detroit and to have killed 400 of the enemy.
13 Knopf (1960), 352.
16 Knopf (1960), 56-57.
17 Gaff, 280. The news brought by Robert Newman, a surveyor for the Legion who deserted to the British, caused the majority of the Indians at the Glaize to retreat downstream past Fort Miamis at the Maumee rapids.
18 Gaff, 292. Wayne ordered the Legion to half rations because of the expected supply crisis even though they had seized the Indian stores at the Glaize.
19 Wilkinson (1929), 83. Gaff, 281. Joseph Kelly, a captive white, reported that as Wayne’s vanguard approached they “had no time to take any provisions, and only a few kettles and blankets, but hurrying into their canoes pushed off down the Maumee… with what regret they left their fine fields of corn,… the beans, and the squashes, with large patches of water-melons.”
20 Carter, 17.
21 Logan and Clark led expeditions in 1786. Wilkinson and Hardin led expeditions in 1791.
22 Gaff, 293. The Indians responded to Wayne’s final peace proposal prior to the battle by asking for him to hold his position for 10 days. It was later admitted that this was to recruit more warriors so to come up on Wayne’s position and defeat him.
23 The battle was clearly tactically decisive, for Wayne had won the field and was then uncontested but the Indian losses were not severe enough to inflict permanent damage to their cause.
24 Cruikshank, 7.
25 Tanner, 48. The Indian Confederation understood the significance of these frontier fortifications. They knew that it was the precursor to controlling the lands. After the French and Indian War, the tribes at first believed that the British might abandon the captured French forts because they would no longer be needed and only maintain a few trading post/forts. Pontiac’s War was an outgrowth of this Indian frustration in 1763.
26 Knopf (1960), 356.
These three battles showed that the Indians could launch successful large-scale ambushes upon the frontier militia and/or in combination with the regular army.
Clayton & David Roberts, *A History of England: 1668 to the Present*, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980), 546. Hereafter cited as Roberts. The first coalition against revolutionary France was created in 1793 by William Pitt, the Younger, and was made up of Russia, Prussia, Austria, Great Britain, Holland, Sardinia, Hanover, the two Hesses, Baden, and Spain. Slowly many of the countries dropped out and in 1796-97 Napoleon defeated the Austrians in Italy and ended the first coalition.


Fort Miamis was built after the Paris Peace Treaty of 1783.


Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and the Creeks were the largest most powerful tribes south of Kentucky.


The Ojibwas and the Ottawas were larger tribes in the “Lakes” region and were usually involved in the significant fighting.

Complanter of the Senecas befriended Wayne’s efforts to negotiate in tribal councils for peace.

Captain Brant and his Mohawks argued at many Indian councils for unity but by 1794-95 his voice no longer commanded the respect of the hostile Ohio tribes.

The Miami, Shawnee, Ottawa, and Delaware had villages on the Maumee in 1794. Though there was disagreement in the councils these tribes never wavered in their military actions.

A Kentucky expedition led by Patrick Brown came to Fort Knox during their punitive raid but Hamtramck was unable to chastise this unauthorized raid even though he wished to for lack of military strength.

Due to disease, liquor, emigration and warfare the Miamis were reduced from approximately 10,000 to only about 1,500 left to face Wayne.

Efforts were made by both Indian and white leadership to limit the use of liquor amongst the natives. It was a continual source of grievance and discontent. But as much as there were reasons to forbid the use of liquor there were profits that could be made. Both Carter and Sugden, the biographers of Little Turtle and Blue Jacket respectively, write that these two chiefs partook in the liquor trade themselves to their own tribes. Thus individual gain over communal benefit is a temptation not just found in the white culture.
90 Ibid., 85-86.
91 Caruso, 179.
92 Knopf (1960), 371.
93 Gaff, 284.
94 Cruikshank, 251.
95 Carter, 141.
97 Pickering was appointed to the post of Secretary of War after Henry Knox stepped down. Pickering had served under Washington as his Adjutant General and as the Quartermaster General during the Revolutionary War.
98 Knopf (1960), 395.
99 Carter, 150.
100 Knopf (1960), 378.
101 Carter, 149.
102 Ibid., 148.
103 Ibid., 148-149.
104 Knopf (1960), 57.
105 Knopf (1960), 176.
106 Knopf (1960), 357-360.
107 Sword, 330.
Chapter Three

Did The Ohio Indian Confederation Stand a Chance?

This chapter is to discuss the factors that would/could have been involved for the Indians to achieve a victory or an advantageous stalemate for the Indian Confederation. Many of these variables have been evaluated in the previous two chapters. These factors will not be thoroughly discussed again except to highlight what effect any changes might have had on the chances of an Indian victory. The outcome of the conflict was based upon many variables. Some contingent on the disposition of other factors and some were relatively independent.

The military closure to the Indian wars of the Old Northwest during the 1790s was not a forgone conclusion. Prior to the Battle of Fallen Timbers there was grave concern in the young nation that the Northwest Territory was a source of military humiliation and fiscal ruin. The degree of buildup in commitment in troops, training, supplies, and frontier posts, clearly indicate that the federal government understood the critical nature of the Indian threat. The preparations that Wayne insisted upon for his Legion illustrate that he unquestionably understood the reality of the danger posed by the Indian Confederation. The fact that it was more than two years after his appointment as Commander-in-Chief before he led the Legion into open battle with the Indian Confederation is partially explained by his reluctance to chance their fate while not completely prepared for a staunch and capable foe. As discussed in the previous chapter
the United States had many inherent advantages that contributed to her victory. Many of these factors would have been difficult for the Indian Confederation to overcome but none were etched in stone. The Indian Confederation of the Old Northwest undoubtedly had the possibility of achieving a more acceptable conclusion to the war for their homelands in the mid-1790s. They had already badly beaten the two previous federal military campaigns and a few changes in “fate” and the third could have ended the same. The analysis of the Indians chances for a long-term successful outcome to this war must first look at the specifics of the battle and war and what feasible changes could have occurred to produce this solution.

The first and most obvious of all the historical changes that would have led to peace on their terms would have been the Indian Confederation achieving a battlefield victory at Fallen Timbers. A victory would have given the military upper hand to the Indians but also another battlefield loss by American forces to the Indian Confederation would have been politically disastrous for the federal government. The ability to field another army might have become supplanted by the political question whether to continue the war at all. On August 20, 1794, it was possible for the Indian forces gathered at Fallen Timbers to have won the field if not an outright victory. This could have been accomplished by a few different methods. One, the Indian ambush could have achieved better initial surprise, attacked with more warriors or greater concentration, and then their attack into the vanguard of the Legion could have put the sub-Legions of the American right to flight because Wilkinson didn’t have enough time to form ranks into a battle position to receive the Indian assault. This would have split Wayne’s forces and led to his defeat. Two, the Indians could have achieved an initial break through attack
due to a greater concentration of forces\(^6\) and continue the attack towards Fort Deposit where they could then overwhelm the small defending forces there and then destroy Wayne’s cache of provisions. Leonard Covington, an officer in the Legion, wrote the day of the battle:

…”it is unquestionable with me that if the Enemy had struck with their whole force at any point in our Army, instead of attempting with 900 men to form a Line of two miles they would have penetrated & if they pleas’d pass’d through us making great havock at Least…”\(^7\)

Regardless of the actual battlefield outcome, this would have led Wayne to a disastrous retreat or an attack upon Fort Miamis because of a dire need of provisions. At the very least, the Kentucky Volunteers would most likely have left the campaign for home if they didn’t even have basic food supplies at hand. Three, the Indians could achieve the same result by flanking the Americans to the east\(^8\) with a sufficiently large enough force to destroy Fort Deposit and its cache. Four, the Indians could have had provisions brought forward so the approximately 500 warriors\(^9\) that went off to the rear to eat could be used in the battle thus allowing the confederation to concentrate its forces or to have a tactical reserve. Five, the Indians could have chosen a battle site farther downstream from Fort Miamis. Thus forcing Wayne to assault Fort
Miamis first, or deploy sufficient forces in his rear as he advanced forward to engage the Indians thus reducing his battlefield numbers, or avoid both and return to Fort Defiance thus partially capitulating the goal of the mission.

The second possibility for victory dealt with strategy rather than battle tactics. It is clear with hindsight that the Indian Confederation failed to take advantage of the strategic opportunity immediately following St. Clair’s Defeat in 1791. The United States had suffered a tremendous military disaster and was incapable of any offensive action at all. Their ability to provide an adequate defense along their long western frontier would have been severely tested if the Indians had maintained the initiative.

James Wilkinson wrote to Wayne and Knox from Fort Washington in November 1792:

“we are vulnerable to the Enemy at every point, the moment we step beyond the walls of our little fortresses, and the Enemy if he knew our real situation, would greatly embarrass, if not cut off, all communication from Post to Post.” and “should they act with vigor, there will be no security for any escort.”

Since the Indians had suffered very few casualties in this battle their military capacity was unscathed. The reasons for this lack of strategic action were varied, which included the fact that the Indians would have had to engage the American forts, their confederation and society were politically powerless to agree upon a strategic mode of warfare, and there was some belief that the Americans would revise their strategy after two military defeats. The exact combination of reasons is important to understand the Indian Confederation’s acquiescence but it doesn’t diminish the actuality that the opportunity existed for the Indian Confederation to prosecute the war upon their terms. The United States could have been forced to accept a British brokered peace, thus giving up claims north of the Ohio River.
The state of technology\textsuperscript{12} combined with the natural state of the terrain and environment meant that the ability to supply troops in the field was a difficult task. All three federal campaigns suffered from the inconsistency of basic provisions, which will always be a factor in any military planning. As the American Army extended their line of forts northward so to threaten the Indians along the Maumee, they too became more vulnerable because of this supply conundrum. General Wayne saw the advantage of the furthest forts because they were now so close to the Indian villages that large-scale depredations would have to be curtailed because of the immediate threat posed by the troops in Forts Recovery and Greeneville. But these troops were only able to man the forts if they had basic provisions and supplies.

The Indians had the ability to defeat the American Army without ever facing it in open battle. The ambush tactics that the Indians excelled at were perfect for engaging the supply convoys. These convoys were slow and predictable. There was only one and in some cases two roads blazed between the forts\textsuperscript{13} that were sufficient to allow the supply trains to traverse. Smaller armed groups could follow Indian or animal trails but the convoys needed the wider improved roads for travel. Thus these supply trains were a perfect target for the Indians. The Indians did attack many of these convoys and did cause some disruption. But the problem lies in to what degree. Wayne shifted some of his forces to convoy escort to reduce their vulnerability and the presence of these larger escorts reduced the ambushes upon the big convoys.\textsuperscript{14} If the Indians had decided to actively pursue the war by constantly attacking Wayne’s supplies they would have “starved him out” or forced him to commit the Legion at a time and place not of his choosing. This was the original design of the Indian army instead of attacking the
garrison at Fort Recovery on June 30, 1794. The Indians could have maintained the strategic initiative and kept the fighting out of the Maumee River Valley.

The Indian cause would have been greatly assisted by an active war between the United States and Great Britain in 1794. Neither government officially wanted such a war but some of the main participants believed that it would benefit their side. The Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, John Graves Simcoe, in a letter to the Duke of Portland, wrote on October 24, 1794:

… I have little doubt, but that in the month of January, as I had proposed, I should have destroyed most of the Forts, which they now possess & which would have given such a Spirit & ascendancy to the Indian Confederacy as to have rendered this Province secure from any invasion which might have been meditated from the Banks of the Ohio.

Though this may have eventually wreaked havoc throughout the Indian lands similar to the War of 1812, it would have given the Indians the active ally and provider necessary for them to defeat the Americans in the Ohio Country. The potential for this occurrence “hung in the balance” during the days immediately following the Battle of Fallen Timbers. Wayne purposely antagonized the British garrison at Fort Miamis by letter and action. Wayne, himself rode up to within “pistol shot” of the walls of the fort as a challenge as much as to inspect the fortifications. The anxious finger of a British soldier could have irrevocably changed the course of history. If Wayne were shot down or any of the American soldiers near the fort, the Legion would most likely have laid waste to Fort Miamis, at a bloody cost though, and thus entered another war with Great Britain. This event might have been enough to end the negotiations over Jay’s Treaty and force an undesired war upon both countries. If this sequence of events had followed then the British would have needed the Indian Confederation at full strength and
actively engaged in war. The British would have supplied and coordinated the Indians as best they could have to facilitate as much military pressure upon the western frontier without British regulars. With the British already at war with the French, they would have bolstered, through weapons and provisions, the Indian forces so to eliminate the need for a large build up of British forces in their Upper Canadian province. This is not to suggest that widespread warfare throughout the Ohio Country would have been socially beneficial for the Indians but it would have assisted their political and military aims and changed or forestalled the events of 1795 at Fort Greeneville.

The Indians, as a group, have usually been stereotyped and/or over-generalized in the explanations of their cause. The Indian Confederation was not a homogenous entity. The Indian Confederation was a loose confederation of tribes that were stimulated to common action. This didn’t mean that the tribes faced the exact same dilemma. There were Indians that wanted nothing of the war, like the Christianized Moravians in Eastern Ohio, or weren’t threatened enough, like the Dakotas in the upper western basin of the Great Lakes, to risk military involvement. The “Indians” were not such a group as to voice and act as one. Eventually the United States was to become the military, political, and social force that would uproot, destroy, and assimilate all Indian tribes in their way. But there was always the possibility that more of the Indian tribes would realize the long-term threat that the Americans would pose to them and thus decide to strike sooner, rather than later when the American position was even stronger. The Americans were a common foe and threat to all Native American cultures. Though not commonly experienced at any given time, all tribes would come to feel the pressure of the United States and succumb.
In 1794, there were still militarily powerful tribes within the southern borders of the United States. These were the Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and the Cherokees. They had the military might together in some sort of southern Indian Confederation or especially in concert with the Ohio Country confederation to combat the United States’ limited military power of the 1790s. There were attempts to unite these tribes behind the efforts of the Ohio Country Indian Confederation. Delegations were sent south but no significant support was ever given. There were even Cherokee villages in the Ohio Country but their numbers were too few to effect the outcome or draw their southern relatives into battle for their cause. The perennial problem with this scenario was that the individual tribes considered each other as threats also. The Americans were then able to divide and conquer because of traditional Indian mindsets about each other. The United States would offer incentives to individual tribes, such as the Iroquois at the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, and this would change the composition and involvement in any Indian Confederation. The Chickasaws and Choctaws even actively fought against the confederation as scouts for Wayne. The irony was that the short-term best interests of certain tribes were to fight against their long-term stability. While the southern Indians offered assistance to the Legion they too were soon to become severely threatened by American expansion. They had Spanish instigation and assistance, similar to the British role in the Northwest Territory, but this ended as Spain resolved her issues with the United States and signed the Treaty of San Lorenzo in 1795.

There was the possibility, though maybe not probable, that foresight and understanding would rule over short-term rivalries within the Indian councils. If the Indians had been able to clearly grasp the need for united and concerted military efforts
then the outcome could have been different. The threat to the United States would have changed from just the Old Northwest to one of political and military survival throughout their entire frontier. While Wayne marched off to battle along the Maumee River the southern states were mainly protected by militia that were called out as needed. If the southern tribes had risen up to join their brethren either to fight in Ohio under the banner of the Ohio Country confederation or to fight as tribes within their own regions, the United States would not have been able to prosecute the war in the Old Northwest in the same manner. A large-scale alliance would have most likely entailed the southern tribes fighting the Americans in their own territories because of the logistics of transportation and supply and moving the majority of their warriors northward opens their villages to attack. This would have worked just as well as if the southern tribes actually fought at Fallen Timbers because the United States would have had to counter the additional threat. If Wayne had been required to split his forces before Fallen Timbers, he would have reduced his offensive punch and the Indian Confederation could have taken advantage of this. The United States may have decided to keep the Legion intact so to have the numerical superiority to win the conflict in the Ohio Country. The southern threat would have to be handled by the traditionally unreliable militia forces and maybe even a federal army thrown together immediately. This would have placed the “second Legion” on the battlefield without the advantages of the extensive training Wayne had given to his troops, thus making them susceptible to the same fate as Harmar’s and St. Clair’s campaigns.

Another and more pertinent variable of the Indian unity issue was Iroquois participation. The southern tribes were more distant in both tradition and location but the
Iroquois were intimately intertwined in the Indian affairs of the Ohio Country. The Ohio Country had been significantly depopulated by sporadic warfare during the second half of the seventeenth century.²⁵ The main impetus for this was the fur/beaver trade but as a consequence of this conflict the Iroquois claimed the Ohio Country was theirs by right of conquest. As the other Indian tribes returned to the Ohio Country, the Iroquois usually assumed a dominant role in intertribal affairs. The two Treaties of Fort Stanwix illustrated the Iroquois’ belief that these lands were theirs to do with as they chose.

Another connection is the Mingo tribe living in Ohio after the Revolutionary War. The Mingo were Iroquois, typically Senecas that had left their traditional New York homeland and were now distant from the Six Nations home fires but were still acknowledged as related. The Iroquois had been strong utensils of the British during the Revolutionary War, most of the Six Nations supported the British during the Revolutionary War but the Oneidas, Tuscaroras, and some Mohawk did support the Americans.²⁶ The Iroquois were still used by the British in leadership roles in Indian councils after the Revolutionary War. Captain Joseph Brant was the initial prognosticator of Indian unity within the Indian councils debating the American entreaties following the Revolutionary War. He condemned the actions of a few in signing the Treaties of Fort Stanwix,²⁷ McIntosh, Finney, and Harmar and insisted that the Americans deal with all Indians concerning future treaties and that any treaty signed otherwise wasn’t valid. But the leadership role passed to the more belligerent tribes living in the Maumee and Wabash River Valleys as the Iroquois voiced a more conciliatory voice, especially after the victories over Harmar and St. Clair. The central point here is what if the Iroquois hadn’t abdicated their lead role as the primary and most
powerful Indian nation(s) opposed to the white civilization’s westward expansion. They were quite capable of fielding enough warriors to disrupt the American campaign plans in the Ohio Country. As with the southern tribes the Iroquois could have either marched to the Maumee and fought beside the Indian Confederation warriors or they could have gone on the warpath in their New York lands. If the Iroquois joined the confederation at the Maumee River, as they did in small numbers, they would do so as individual warriors and the tribes could plead neutrality officially. This might center the theater of war in the Ohio Country and keep their homelands free from the turmoil. If they rose up in their own lands then they would face the might of the United States armed forces first because this would have placed too powerful an enemy on Wayne’s flank causing the Americans to have to deal with the Iroquois before moving on to the Maumee. The settlements in western Pennsylvania and New York and the communication and supply lines to Pittsburgh and Cincinnati, let alone to Fort Greeneville would have been placed in jeopardy by a war with the Iroquois. The Iroquois were involved in the councils and negotiations unlike the southern tribes. Their involvement in either treaties or war was at first expected. When Cornplanter sided with the Americans, he informed them that he was scared for him, his family, and his followers because there was a strong war faction in the Iroquois councils. If the Iroquois had joined the confederation in battle its chances for success would have greatly increased. It is ironic that the Six Nations, who first professed the need for Indian unity, became just another tribe to acquiesce in favor of self-interest.

Some of the reasons that the Indian Confederation could have avoided losing the peace treaty were based upon Indian warfare in general. First and foremost was the
inescapable fact that the Indians were excellent fighters that were raised from childhood to be proficient at the skills necessary for their style of warfare. General Josiah Harmar predicted St. Clair’s defeat partially because the "enemy brought up from infancy to war and perhaps superior to an equal number of the best men that could be taken against them." 30 It was without question that the Indians were skilled light infantry and were capable of producing fear in the white soldiers who opposed them, even the trained soldiers of the Legion. 31 The male Indians were excellent hunters and this translated into skilled warriors when the same tactics were used against people rather than animals. Martial prowess was fundamentally linked, in most tribes, to the social standing and the transition from boys to young men and to joining the ranks of the villages’ warriors.

There were good reasons Wayne relied so much upon Indians and whites that had grown up as Indians as his scouts against the confederation. 32 He knew that there was none better when it came to living off and living in the wilderness. He never expected his Legion to compete toe-to-toe with the Indians’ skills but he wanted to put them in a battle situation where the Legion’s forte would prove decisive.

The Indians had the advantage of conducting military operations within their own territories. 33 There is an inherent advantage of being familiar with the geography, weather, and environment. This will always allow better military and contingency planning. 34 It allowed the confederation to be much closer to their source of supplies and this provided greater flexibility of maneuver and action. The Indians were knowledgeable of the obstacles that would determine Wayne’s route of approach, such as fording sites across the various rivers in their path, to the routes through the Great Black Swamp if he so chose to traverse it. It was also beneficial for Indians that they were
fighting for their homes and their ancestral lands. Their motivation was more basic and possibly more sincere than that of the Americans. They were forced to defend that which had been theirs for as long as any could remember.\textsuperscript{35} This would have created greater inspiration for the Indians who felt they were fighting to retain their lands, traditions and their culture. Another factor, which is typically associated with fighting within one’s own territory, is the advantage of interior lines. This advantage was somewhat negated because Wayne’s approach was linear without any secondary or diverging offensive approaches.\textsuperscript{36}

It is important to note again in this section that the basic mode of Indian warfare whether in small parties or in larger numbers was perfectly matched to the Legion’s greatest weakness in 1794. Wayne had trained his forces repeatedly and they were prepared and ready for the Indians to eventually launch an ambush attack. The Battle of Fallen Timbers played itself out as Wayne had foreseen but the ambush could easily have been the undoing of the Legion’s invasion of the Maumee River Valley if it had been pursued harder against the vital supply trains. The Achilles’ heal of the Legion of the United States was its continual vulnerability to running out of necessary supplies. This combination of strength versus weakness could have brought about a much different conclusion to the matter. Even after Fallen Timbers, the Legion was within a few days of running out of its provisions.\textsuperscript{37} If the Indians had rallied and attacked the next supply convoy, the Legion would have had no option but to retreat quickly and give up the forts built north of Fort Recovery.\textsuperscript{38}

The Indians were perceived and usually stereotyped by the white culture as backward and simple savages living in the wilderness. They were seen as uncouth and
uneducated without the advantages of modern civilization. But one of these characteristics that lent itself to their critique was able to make them a more elusive and therefore dangerous foe. The Indians normally had a seasonal migration for the tribe’s subsistence patterns. The Indians went into winter quarters as the weather changed and split into smaller groups only to reunite as the weather warmed.\textsuperscript{39} The shelters and towns that the Indians lived in were much easier to move and erect, as necessary, than the more permanent log cabins of the white frontiersmen. Though the tribes along the Maumee River maintained fairly permanent villages there, they were also involved in this slightly nomadic seasonal lifestyle. This movement made the Indians that much harder to fix and attack. Their simplicity allowed them to be a little less vulnerable to the American Legion. They were able to move their towns as the situation dictated\textsuperscript{40} or they were able to flee their villages but still not succumb to the typical rigors normally placed upon refugees.\textsuperscript{41} The simplicity of the Indian towns allowed them to quickly rebuild and to reestablish the same style of community they had just left.\textsuperscript{42} An inherent disadvantage was the loss of agricultural foodstuffs that had to be left behind when the move was immediately necessary because of the approach of an enemy.\textsuperscript{43} Many American officers believed that this advantage would continue as long as the British were allowed to remain in Detroit and supply the Indians whenever they were in need.\textsuperscript{44}

The Indian culture and lifestyle was well adapted to the environment of the Ohio Country. The mix of basic agriculture and hunting and gathering took advantage of the natural benefits that were plentiful. This worked well for sustaining a large armed force in the field. Rather than rely upon the supply train/convoy method used by the Americans, which was the current technology for European warfare, the Indian
Confederation was able to provide its necessary provisions “on the fly”. The Ohio Country in the 1790s had abundant wildlife in the woods and fish in the streams and rivers. The Indian expertise allowed them to efficiently harvest these resources to sustain their forces on the move. Gaff writes that:

The Indian advance was slow, for the army had to hunt for food along the route… When a number hunt together they sometimes extend the line for several miles, leaving a space from a hundred to two hundred paces between each man, the two flanks generally projecting a little in advance… This method of hunting is called waeneaghronye, and is practiced by War parties, and villages when the inhabitants hunt in a body, to procure meat for a feast… that the main column stopped every afternoon at 1:00 or 2:00 P.M. to allow the hunters time to kill enough game for the evening meal. Little Otter’s detachment of Ottawas, on its march from Roche de Bout to the fallen timber south of the Glaize, had by itself killed five bears and forty deer.45

Thus the Indian Confederation was able to move quickly without much baggage. It meant that campaigns took less time to prepare for when compared to the monumental efforts put forth by Wayne and the Legion in securing the needed provisions at the head of the line prior to launching their invasion. As with most things, there was a trade off. This method of supply didn’t lend itself to remaining in a location for too long a time. Not only were the animals over-hunted but they would also migrate away from such a large group of people. An Indian army of 2000+ warriors could quickly deplete the naturally occurring provisions in a given area thus requiring the hunters to range farther and farther a field. This was an excellent method of supplying a large Indian force that moved quickly on the attack and it gave a degree of flexibility not available to the Legion.

The British were one of the strongest contingent factors that could have led to an Indian victory. The Paris Peace Treaty of 1783 had transferred the claims of the British to the Northwest Territory to the United States of America. The British argued later that
this meant that their exclusive right to purchase/receive the Indian lands was transferred not the Indians’ claims to their ancestral lands. The British even suggested to the Indians that they held on to the Northwest forts for the benefit of the Indians. Also this treaty did not end the British interests in the region. Some American Loyalists to the British Crown chose to leave the United States and locate northward in British Canada. The British considered that these new settlements at Upper St. Lawrence, Niagara, and Amherstburg, among others, were initially vulnerable to American expansionist threats and needed time to grow and/or stabilize. The Indian tribes that occupied the territory in between the American and British settlements provided a buffer that granted the British time commensurate with the Indians’ ability to delay American settlement and expansion. British policy between St. Clair’s Defeat and Wayne’s campaign centered around the concept of an Indian barrier state which would insulate the British holdings in Canada from the Americans Most of these tribes had been British allies during the Revolutionary War and they still traded with the British agents in the area. The fur trade that emanated from the Great Lakes region came mainly to the British traders in the area. This fur trade was very lucrative in the European markets. The Americans were not able to compete with the British for Indian furs in 1783. The British wished to continue this arrangement if it would not create an undue hardship upon the Canadian or British administrations. Open warfare with the Americans was considered too great an issue to undertake for this arrangement. But that didn’t stop the British from supplying their former allies, the Indians of the Old Northwest, with the provisions and weapons they needed to conduct their own war against the Americans. Most of this was done under the
guise of legitimate trade and the provisions and weapons were claimed as trade goods for peaceful intents that could be used to defend their homes if necessary.\textsuperscript{50}

The British still held possession of four forts within the new American borders at the end of the Revolutionary War. The transfer of these forts was politically delayed. The British stated they would hold onto these forts until the Americans honored some of the other issues of the treaty.\textsuperscript{51} British possession of these forts had a tremendous impact upon the course of the war for the Old Northwest. It gave the strong impression to the Indian Confederation that the British had not backed down to the American challenge in the region. It allowed the Indian councils to believe that the British may actually join again with the Indians in open combat against the Americans. It allowed the British to carry on a flourishing trade with the Indians to their benefit. It meant the weapons and provisions so needed by the Indians could be supplied much easier. These forts symbolized a temporary refudiation of the British intents of quitting the Ohio Country.

The Indian Confederation had a viable and realistic chance of attaining victory through either direct or indirect military actions because of the British decision to provide the supplies necessary to conduct war against the Americans. The downside to this issue was that whenever the British decided it was no longer in their best interest to continue this arrangement, the Indians were left to their own devices and inevitable defeat.

The Indian Confederation of the Old Northwest was helped in their struggle for the Ohio Country because of intrinsic problems within the United States of America. The new nation suffered from fiscal problems, a decentralized governmental structure, a fear of a standing army, a lack of national identity, and regional disaffection.
The twelve years from the end of the Revolutionary War until the Treaty of Fort Greeneville were roughly divided as six years under the Articles of Confederation and six years under the Constitution. The form of government first created by the newly independent nation was the source of ineptitude and the inability to centrally and decisively act. The Articles of Confederation were purposely created to unify the former colonies yet eliminate any form of strong central power that could dominate and eliminate the state’s and citizens’ newly acquired rights. The impetus for this was brought about because of the concern of duplicating the form of government they had just rebelled against. During the first six years, the federal government didn’t have the ability to act with the degree of command and unity that was necessary to militarily punish the Indians or even curtail its citizens from provoking the Indians. The federal government was able to conduct a few treaties with the Ohio Country Indian tribes but these amounted to nothing gained because the stronger factions within these tribes never participated in the treaty negotiations and still sought war and depredations to settle their grievances. Kentucky, Virginia, and Pennsylvania militiamen rather than the federal army conducted the military expeditions that were sent against the hostile tribes during this time period. The two most significant were Logan’s and Clark’s raids in 1786.

The Constitution of the United States was fully instituted in 1789 to rectify the problems with the Articles of Confederation. One of the problems with the Articles of Confederation was that it did not have an executive position. It had a single house which had a legislative chair that was titled the President of Congress but this position had none of its successors’ powers. Among the solutions the Constitution provided, it gave the executive branch of the government greater powers and responsibilities. The President of
the United States had the ability to better deal with the threat posed by the Indian
Confederation. Article II, Section II, Clause I of the Constitution states that: The
President shall be commander in chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of
the militia of the several states, when called into the actual service of the United States;55

Though the governmental structure was changed to more efficiently handle the
administration of the new republic there was still a strong opposition to granting the
federal government free reign. The former colonies had a tendency to see themselves
first as a political entity unto themselves prior to viewing their state as just a political
subset of an indivisible nation. The modern mindset of Americans is of a strong belief
that we are citizens of our country first and foremost. We live in a globally oriented
society that is highly mobile. The specificity of a particular state or region and its
indigenous traits are diluted to the current national psyche illustrated by a primary
emphasis on national sports, entertainment, and politics to economics. This was not the
case in the 1790s for the neonate United States. Initially, individual states had claims to
the western lands because of their original colonial charters. Some quit these claims to
the federal government but some such as North Carolina, reneged on this deal and
continued their own western agendas. Other states such as New York, even sought to
negotiate their own treaties with Indian tribes. The growing pains of developing a new
political philosophy and identity for the new country caused some disunity of purpose.

This situation may not have had the greatest impact upon the military conclusion
on the Maumee River but it did help to create a political condition in the United States
that brought a better chance of success to the Indian Confederation. An example of this
was the reluctance to establish and support a federal standing army. It was a concern for
the contemporary believers in the primacy of states’ rights that the central government, in whatever form, not have the ability to quash the political and social designs of the individual states. They believed that if the defense of the new nation was exclusively in the hands of the central government that this power could be abused and turned inward to handle domestic problems with military might. There was a strong sector that distrusted a base of centralized power whether held by a king or president. Their belief was that each state should be able to provide its militia at a time of need and still be under the control of officers from that state.

This concern about a standing army manifested itself by Congress only authorizing one federal regiment immediately following the Revolutionary War. The thought was that this regiment would be able to protect and garrison the western frontier and its forts. When it was politically realized, after Harmar’s defeat, that this was insufficient a second regiment was authorized. Following St. Clair’s Defeat, the United States Congress created the Legion of the United States with an authorized strength of approximately 5000 men. But even this was subject to political debates and attempts were made to reduce the Legion. It was part of the eastern political landscape at the time for some to be as concerned about the ramifications of a strong standing army as they were about the Indian threat to the western provinces.

Embedded in the concern of a standing army was the fiscal crisis that the United States had experienced since its inception. When Alexander Hamilton became the first Secretary of the Treasury in the fall of 1789, the United States had suffered under its war debts and an inability to encourage investments. Many European countries expected that the addition of further financial burdens would cause the United States to fall apart.
President Washington had hoped that the preferred course of action would be peaceful negotiations with the tribes in the Ohio Country. He and his administration understood that a war, especially a protracted one could be ruinous to the country. The fiscal burden that the war against the Indian Confederation imposed upon the United States posed a very real national threat. It was possible that the United States would not have been able to fiscally continue the war if it hadn’t ended in 1794 or soon after.

The United States was a new nation that was still developing its national identity in the early 1790s. The problem the United States had with a lack of national identity within the states east of the Appalachian Mountains was exacerbated even further in the western portions of the country after the Revolutionary War. The frontiersmen and settlers that crossed the mountains into Kentucky and the Ohio Country prior to the Battle of Fallen Timbers saw themselves as Virginians and Pennsylvanians before being Americans. But this identification became tenuous given the vast distances between the seats of the state and federal governments and the frontier. The lives and the concerns of the western population were significantly different from the East Coast communities that controlled the government. The eastern cities saw the lack of a sufficient naval force as the primary strategic lesson from the Revolutionary War. They wanted to ensure that coastal defense and continuing trade would be part and parcel of the federal government’s efforts. The western settlements may have realized the need for these concerns but they were in dire need of assistance from the federal government in other areas themselves.

First, the western lands were continually facing the instability created by the aggressively hostile Indian tribes. Kentucky was not experiencing the peace and
prosperity that went with the end of the fighting for the War for American Independence.
The western settlements were involved in a war of survival and attrition. The settlers that
located into the Ohio Country itself were constantly facing the possibility of Indian raids
both large and small. At times the settlers in the Ohio Country felt it necessary to
 evacuate back from the frontier to safer lands nearer the Ohio River towns.61 The federal
government started selling the lands that they now had claim to but were unable to
guarantee to the buyers that they would be able to peacefully settle their property. This
meant little demand for the lands the federal government started selling in the Seven
Ranges in the fall of 1787.62 The federal government’s efforts at securing peace with the
Indians had failed. Their efforts to enforce the treaty stipulations by keeping white
settlers out of the Indian territories had failed. Finally, the two federal military
campaigns to end the hostilities also had failed.

The Kentuckians saw a war of merely trading raid for raid with the Indians as
maybe a never-ending conflict. The British were still in the American forts and the
United States government was helpless to do anything about it. There was little reason
for the western population to have confidence in the government in Philadelphia. Hence
they conducted the war on their own terms. The frontiersmen traded atrocity for atrocity
with the Indians and at times did them one better.63 They repeatedly conducted raids that
weren’t authorized by the Congress of the United States.64 These were both preemptory
and/or retaliatory for depredations against them. They fought the Indians through raids
that were meant to destroy whatever they could find, sometimes with little differentiation
between friendly and hostile tribes.65 These raids were never meant to conquer or occupy
but to strike hard and exact a heavy toll from the Indians and eventually discourage the tribes from further hostile actions.

Another strong factor that led to western disaffection with the United States were the Spanish intrigues into the affairs of the western political situation. The boundary of Spanish West Florida was in conflict because of changes to its borders by the British between 1763 and 1783, the Spanish were trying to instigate the southern tribes at times against the interests of the United States, but the most important issue of Spanish complicity was the closing of the Mississippi River to American boat traffic in 1784. This had a tremendous effect upon the western population. The Appalachian Mountains were a very imposing barrier that could not be crossed very easily. It was easier and more dependable for the western settlements to ship their goods and products down the various riverways to the Ohio River and then to the Mississippi River. Then the cargo was delivered to the City of New Orleans from where it was shipped back usually to the American East Coast markets for sale. This circuitous route was actually more profitable and faster than attempting to ship their goods overland across the mountains. Therefore the closing of this method of exporting their goods to the markets back east meant that many of the western endeavors were no longer profitable and the value of their land and improvements dwindled. It was ruinous for many of the farmers and tradesmen. Once again the United States appeared to be powerless to force the issue on another aggressive western power. Spain wanted the United States to agree to a negation of their claim to the right of navigation of the Mississippi River for a 25-30 year period. The negotiations gave the appearance that the eastern interests of the United States would dictate the conclusion of a vital aspect of western life. Charles Pinckney answered John Jay,
Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in an address to Congress on the issue of navigation rights on the Mississippi River:

But should it be surrendered, you at once deprive the citizens of the Atlantic states from navigating it, or from having any intercourse with the settlements on its banks, and within your territory. You immediately destroy all connection between them and the inhabitants of the western country: for, after you have rendered them thus dependent on Spain, by using the first opportunity in your power to sacrifice their interests to those of the Atlantic States, can they be blamed for immediately throwing themselves into her arms for that protection and support which you have denied them – for the enjoyment of that right which you have placed it out of your power to grant. Is it not to be clearly seen by those who will see, that the policy of Spain, in thus inducing us to consent to a surrender of the navigation for a time, is, that by having a clear and unencumbered right, she may use it for the purpose of separating the interests of the inhabitants of the western country entirely from us, and making it subservient to her own purposes – Will it not produce this, It will – Will it not give her influence the entire command of the numerous and extensive Indian tribes within this country, It will certainly have this effect. When once this right is ceased, no longer can the United States be viewed as the friend or parent of the new States, nor ought they to be considered in any other light, than in that of their oppressors.

There is one consideration, and of some consequence, which ought to be recollected; that is, the impropriety of the United States ever acting under the influence of that kind of policy which is calculated to acquire benefits for one part of the confederacy at the expense of the other.67

These conditions led some Americans to believe that their best interests lay not with the United States. The Spanish were able to convince some settlers to leave Kentucky and cross the Mississippi River and establish settlements under the Spanish flag.68 Issues such as Congress’s acquiescence to the navigational closing of the Mississippi River, continued Indian depredations, and the elimination of slavery from the Northwest Territories by the Ordinance of 1787 caused many westerners to be receptive to entreaties by the Spanish and/or British. Others became convinced that they and Kentucky would be better off if it declared its independence from the United States entirely. General Harmar wrote to Secretary of War Knox to express this concern in December 1788:
The inhabitants of Kentucky, I am informed, have it in contemplation to declare themselves not only independent of the State of Virginia, but of the United States altogether.\textsuperscript{69}

One such person was James Wilkinson, Brigadier General for the Legion of the United States and second-in-command to Major General Anthony Wayne. He was working as a Spanish agent in attempting to foment rebellious activities in Kentucky. Others, such as Wayne, suspected his participation in these events\textsuperscript{70} but it wasn’t until Spanish archival records became available in the twentieth century that the full extent was known.\textsuperscript{71} This subject would take a thesis by itself to appropriately cover. So little justice is done to it by my abbreviated comments but I also believe that it doesn’t go to the core of my thesis issue. Though it is very illustrative to my discussion that one of the most important characters in the actions that decided the fate of the western territories was working for his skewed self-interest during his efforts to defeat the Indian Confederation. I argue that what was accomplished at Fallen Timbers coincided with or at least didn’t strongly contradict any plans of his for Kentucky independence and/or alliance with the Spanish. Kentucky needed a respite from Indian raids and if the Legion had lost at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, Kentucky would possibly have been open for large-scale Indian raids again.

It would seem obvious that any army that had split loyalties from its second-in-command would be at a disadvantage if all other considerations were equal. This is true and I don’t mean to dismiss this factor. St. Clair’s campaign was beset with a lack of respect and trust between its commander and Major General Richard Butler, its second-in-command.\textsuperscript{72} This lack of cooperation and communication may have led Butler to keep a scout patrol report of the night before the attack, of large groups of Indians in the area,
to himself.\textsuperscript{73} He went to bed with the information and didn’t share it with St. Clair or send out additional patrols and paid for it with his life the next morning. This presents itself as another potential benefit for the Indian cause that would have helped their chances for victory. The military chain of command partially broke down as Wilkinson came to despise Wayne. He was able to gather a cadre of officers that believed and expressed similar attitudes towards their Commander-in-Chief. This schism could not help but break down the efficiency of the Legion. But the counter to this was the energetic determination of General Wayne, who was criticized by some of his officers for this behavior, especially from those in the Wilkinson group. He didn’t allow the Legion’s affairs to happen without his attention and he didn’t parcel out responsibility generously. Colonel James O’Hara, the Legion’s Quartermaster General, in a critique of Wayne wrote:

…”observations on the temper of the C. in C.\textsuperscript{74} which he said would neither brook advice or suffer any person to do any thing but himself – he is at once the C. in C., pioneer, scout, Quartermaster, and adjutant.”\textsuperscript{75}

Wayne understood that Harmar’s decision to divide his forces near an enemy of unknown size and disposition was his undoing and he would not commit the same mistake\textsuperscript{76}. He was an officer that liked to view the proceedings himself, sometimes placing himself in harm’s way.\textsuperscript{77} One of the reasons Wilkinson had such hatred of Wayne is obviously because Wayne would not share the glory.\textsuperscript{78} Wilkinson wrote:

…”the Old man unfortunately cannot consent to divide the smallest portion of reputation with any officer; he is therefore unwilling to make respectable detachments or to suffer any officer of Rank to precede him at any point of his march – to be first everywhere, even at an Indian Cabbin, Corn-Crib or Vine-patch, he deems absolutely essential to the glory of a Commander in Chief and considers every mite of reputation acquired by a subordinate as so much ravished from his rightful pretensions.”\textsuperscript{79}
As it turns out, it was the best thing for the Legion to have Wayne hold on to the reins so tightly since Wilkinson’s motivation may have lent itself towards decisions that might not have benefited the Legion or the United States.

Wayne’s health was also an issue that could have aided the Indian Confederation. Anything that would have incapacitated Wayne would have led to Wilkinson assuming command. This wasn’t just a theoretical concern. General Wayne had developed Gout after being shot by his own sentry on September 2, 1782 during the operations around Yorktown. This disease was to bother him for the rest of his life. During the campaign into the Ohio Country it became very bothersome and at times it was incapacitating. He had to be helped on and off his horse at times and at other times he couldn’t ride at all. The Legion had to delay leaving Fort Defiance for Fallen Timbers because Wayne was so ill and confined to his bed. This illness would undoubtedly have effected Wayne’s cognitive judgement on occasion. If it had worsened, as it did two years later when he died from the affliction, he would have had to step down from command. The transfer of command, especially between two officers that don’t like or agree with each other’s decisions, would only hurt the combat efficiency of the Legion. Another unique incident on August 3, 1794 almost cost the General his life. While resting in his tent a large tree came crashing down upon the tent injuring Wayne and another officer. Lieutenant Clark wrote that if the tree had fallen a few feet either way it would have killed Wayne. The loss of Wayne’s command skills however it might have happened would have been a major setback for the Legion and its mission.

One final issue that could have contributed to an Indian victory was the Whiskey Rebellion in the fall of 1794. I have discussed it in chapter two because it was also a
factor towards securing the long-term peace for the Americans but it had the potential to bring about an Indian victory if it had been a larger uprising. The Whiskey Rebellion is also linked to the subject of western disaffection. The “Rebellion” in itself was very bloodless and never constituted a real threat to the government but it had the potential to be the catalyst that turned the west away from the republic. If Wayne had lost to the Indians at Fallen Timbers the month before, then the westerners would have had ample reason to no longer trust their affiliation with the United States. What turned out to be a relatively minor insurrection could have been the start of serious efforts to solve the western problems for themselves. Wayne’s victory was partially predicated upon the frontier being garrisoned by the Legion within insurmountable fortifications after Fallen Timbers. If the Whiskey Rebellion had been a large-scale uprising it could have required the regular army to return from the frontier and give up all that had been won. The British at first believed that when Wayne retrograded back to Fort Defiance following Fallen Timbers that it must have been because he was being recalled to assist with the Whiskey Rebellion. If Wayne had been forced to retire from the frontier forts, they would have been destroyed and the Indian Confederation would have really lost nothing to his campaign except a misplaced trust in British intentions. The Indian Confederation would most likely have been politically rejuvenated and then resupplied by the British and Wayne would have had to start all over again.
Anthony Wayne accepted the appointment of Commander-in-Chief on April 13, 1792. His effective date of commission was established as March 5, 1792.

Some of the delay was based upon the failed efforts at negotiating a peace settlement during the summer of 1793. Though Wayne was clearly anxious to start his campaigning by early fall 1793; the Legion benefited by the extra months to train and supply provisions at the head of the line.

The probability of their occurrence isn’t of primary concern to this chapter. The accuracy of this discussion should be based upon the conjecture that these factors were at least contemporarily possible.


Clark, 429.

Leonard Covington, *Leonard Covington Papers*, (Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan), (8-20-94). Hereafter cited as Covington. Editorial note: I believe that this entry was most likely written after the day of the battle since the disposition of the Indian force wasn’t known until later except to those that questioned Lassalle.

Wayne had Kibbey’s scouts out in this area but not enough to thwart a large Indian probe.

Ibid., 299.

Ibid., 89.

Sword, 203.

Most supplies were transported by river to Fort Washington but this was always contingent upon the season and water level. From there the supplies were moved by packhorse trains or wagon pulled by oxen.

When Wayne advanced to the head of the line, the Legion made a few changes in the trail made by St. Clair so to follow what they then knew was better terrain.

Sword, 251.

Cruikshank, 188.

Ibid., 146.

This most likely would not have been the case since the United States’ western position was far more powerful in 1812 than in 1794.

Knopf (1960), 337. Knox’s orders to Wayne were to dislodge the British at Fort Miamis if it became necessary and “to treat them with humanity and politeness and to send them immediately to the nearest British Garrison”. It is clear that if Wayne had provoked an engagement at Fort Miamis it would not have been in the spirit of his orders.


Cruikshank, 10.

Gaff, 322. Wilkinson (1929), 87, 88. This point could be argued either way. Wilkinson would have taken command of the Legion and he may not have felt compelled to avenge Wayne. He also disagreed with Wayne’s assessment of the fort’s vulnerability.

Tanner, 85.

Gibson, 269.

This assumes that the Northern and Southern theaters of war would be coordinated enough that the Americans would have to face both Indian forces at the same time. This would have required the United States to either split Wayne’s forces or attempt to recruit another army to combat the southern threat. As it was, the Ohio Country was pacified and Wayne’s Legion was split up after Fallen Timbers to augment the southern forces.

Tanner, 29-35. Sometimes known as the Iroquois Wars or the Beaver Wars.

Gibson, 252.

This included his own tribesmen who had signed away the rights to the lands south of the Ohio River.

Knopf (1960), 48, 114.


Denny, 170.

Gaff, 162. Even Wayne’s vaunted Dragoons were susceptible to this fear. While the Legion was headed north from Fort Jefferson on October 16, 1793, a patrol of Dragoons discovered lurking Indians and
attacked. When other Indians who were hiding fired and killed two troopers all but two turned and fled in the face of the enemy. The private who led the desertion was sentenced to death but had it commuted by Wayne prior to enforcement.

32 William Wells, Christopher Miller, and the Chickasaws and Choctaws too name the most important.

33 Today’s military operations tend to rely upon the total war methodology, which reeks havoc on most infrastructures within the war zone. But in 1794, it was till an advantage to fight near home and supplies.

34 Gaff, 3. John Hoyt Williams, “Defeated Army in Shame”, *Military History*. (December 1988), 22. Hereafter cited as Williams. St. Clair was lost and fought this battle believing that he was on the banks of a tributary of the Maumee River rather than on a small branch of the Wabash River.

35 Though the Ohio Country was vacated for a while during the Iroquois Wars, the tribes had still considered it their ancestral lands.

36 Harmar’s campaign was supposed to be timed to coincide with an offensive push up the Wabash River by Major Hamtramck. This coordination of action fell apart and Hamtramck’s offensive gained very little. Hamtramck also lost very little since he turned back to Fort Knox (Present day Vincennes, Indiana) prior to engaging any large contingent of warriors. This is an example of the advantages of interior lines and since the timing was poor it allowed the Indian forces to prepare to engage one enemy’s approach then wheel quickly about and prepare in force for Harmar’s second incursion (Gaff, 98).

37 Clark, 434.

38 Forts Adams, Defiance, and Wayne.

39 Sugden, 11.

40 Knopf (1960), 22. The tribes living at the confluence of the St. Mary and St. Joseph Rivers after the attack by Harmar in 1790, moved from the Miami Towns to the Grand Glaize.

41 Cruikshank, 21. The Indians fled the Grand Glaize downriver where they established a temporary village at Swan Creek.

42 Thornbrough, 277. Hamtramck wrote in December 1790, that the Indians could not be subdued by the mere destruction of their villages and their crops because they can live off the game and quickly rebuild their towns “as a bird does his nest”.

43 Harmar’s attack at the Miami Towns in 1790 and Wayne’s approach at the Grand Glaize in 1794 both tactically dictated that the Indians leave some of their vital agricultural stores behind. In Wayne’s situation it was a tremendous benefit to continuing the campaign.


45 Gaff, 241.

46 Sword, 20. An Indian council was held in Sandusky in September 1783 to discuss the Treaty of Paris ramifications prior to meeting with the American peace delegates. Alexander McKee stated the British policy for the gathered “You are not to believe, or even think that by the line that has been described, it was meant to deprive you of an extent of country, of which the right of soil belongs to you... Neither can I harbor an idea that the United States will act so unjustly or impolitically as to endeavor to deprive you of any part of your country under the pretext of having conquered it.”

47 Ibid., 43.

48 Allen, 57.

49 James, 87.

50 Thornbrough, 59.

51 See discussion on page nine – endnote #9.

52 The Constitution replaced the Articles of Confederation when New Hampshire ratified it on June 21, 1788 but President Washington wasn’t sworn in until April 30,1789.

53 Fort Stanwix 1784, Fort McIntosh 1785, Fort Finney 1786.

54 Sword, 33-41.

55 Constitution of the United States, 1789.

56 Case, 55.

57 Knopf (1960), 165, 170-171.

58 Sword, 47. Gibson, 265.

59 I use the term distance not only in its primary definition but also as a sociological term to reflect the changes in the political and social aspects of the human environment.

60 Weigley, 40.

61 Gibson, 267.
The massacre at Gnadenhutten in 1782 of approximately 90 peaceful Christianized Moravians was particularly heinous. They offered no resistance and all were clubbed to death.

The British acquired this territory from the French in 1763 and gave it up in 1783. The British moved the northern border during the time they held it and Spain and the United States argued which border should be recognized after the conclusion of the War for American Independence.

Charles Pinckney’s address to Congress on August 16, 1786.

Colonel George Morgan founded New Madrid on the Mississippi opposite the mouth of the Ohio River.
Conclusion

The threat posed to both the United States and the Ohio Indian tribes was inevitable and very real in the twelve years following the end of the Revolutionary War. The threat to the Americans was to their frontier settlements’ safety and stability. The threat to the United States was to its national image, its westward expansion, and to its political solidarity. The threat to the Indians was to the safety of their persons, families, and their villages. The threat to the tribes was to the very stability of their way of life.

This conflict was inevitable because it was more cultural than political in origin. The two societies were diametrically opposed to the manner and lifestyle that was intrinsic to the other. The clash was fundamentally between a society that relied upon hunting and limited agriculture and required the necessity for large tracts of wildlife habitat and the other that metamorphosed the land by domesticating what they could and eliminating what they could not. The competing designs of the British and the Americans resembled the familiar nature of the Euro-centric desire for land, power, and dominion but the conflict between the Americans and the Indians went far deeper and would be more insidious for the loser.

The threat became immediately primary. White westward settlement quickly developed after the conclusion of the Revolutionary War. As this pace of migration increased, the cultural pressures increased to a degree that coexisting and living in peace became unattainable. All attempts to deal with these problems through peaceful
negotiations had failed and all militia campaigns had failed to produce the death stroke to Indian hostilities and depredations. The situation came to a head in 1790 for the federal government when Brevet Brigadier General Harmar was ordered to campaign against the hostile tribes along the Maumee River. It was acknowledged that the raids and depredations across the frontier were equal in cause and effort. It was decided by the United States government that it must now act decisively. As has been covered earlier in the body of the thesis, this and the second federal military expedition led by General St. Clair failed to achieve what had been hoped for. Now the United States found itself in the uncomfortable position that it must defend its frontier and its international image by defeating a staunch enemy and it must do so relatively quickly.

The threat also had increased in dimension and was unavoidable. The frontier situation in 1783 was more diminutive and more manageable than in 1792. The number of whites in Kentucky that demanded federal intervention and the number of settlements that were endangered were far less in 1783 than after St. Clair’s Defeat. The clamor for unilateral political decisions in Kentucky was quieter and the United States had not yet staked its political and military reputation on the line and lost. The United States might have come apart and split east from west if the federal government had refused to effectively act in 1792. The Northwest Territory and its Indian problem had become a crisis that truly tested the resolve and resources of the young nation.

A cursory view would appear to indicate a contradiction in the military scenario in the Ohio Country in 1792. How could the United States really be threatened so gravely when they had held their own against the combined strength of the Indians and British in the west while fighting the British regulars in the eastern theaters during the
Revolutionary War? Part of the reason is that the United States did not have a powerful ally like France that could bring her military and naval resources to bear. More of the answer lies in the nature of the fighting and the degree of effort and sacrifice the United States was initially prepared to make. The western theater of war was a stage dominated by the vastness of the wilderness. The most appropriate fighting tactics were based upon the ambush and the hunt. The lack of wide-open spaces for European style military maneuvering meant that the strategies that worked during the Revolutionary War on the East Coast with larger armies were of limited value in the Old Northwest. Also the strategy of attrition and limited engagements so well understood and executed by the General, Washington was employed by the Indians and was in 1792 working against the President, Washington.

The military capacity (strength and endurance) of the young United States had been proven during their war for independence. General Washington had an army of 19,000 men in the defense of New York City in the summer of 1776. President Washington raising an army of over 13,000 to quell the rebellious western counties of Pennsylvania during the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794 further demonstrated it. Had the United States accepted the fiscal and resource expenses and human cost as necessities, they might have attempted to produce a Legion of the United States that dwarfed Wayne’s forces. The number of men under arms during the Revolutionary War was greater by factors compared to Wayne’s Legion.

There was a fundamental problem with this though. A much larger army had the possibility of failing in the wilderness as well. Recruitment was difficult for Wayne’s Legion and it was never filled to its original quota of 5,000 men therefore a larger force
might never have been realized. The logistics of providing supplies to Wayne’s Legion were almost insurmountable. If his force had been doubled or tripled it might never had been supplied as needed. Wayne’s Legion relied upon fortifications for defense until they were ready to move to the offensive. Building one fortification or a series of interdependent forts that could accommodate a much larger force would have been an expensive Herculean effort in the wilderness. Finally, Wayne was able to achieve victory partially because the Indian Confederation decided to engage him in open combat rather than fade away at his approach. If his force had been significantly larger, the Indian Confederation would never have faced him in open battle as such and would have continued to ambush targets of opportunity such as supply convoys, distant settlements, and smaller military detachments. Most importantly, an effort of this magnitude would have crushed the fragile treasury of the United States. In 1792, it was not politically or financially feasible for the United States to send a huge regular army against the Ohio Indian Confederation. Thus the western fortunes of the United States depended upon the efforts and decisions that Anthony Wayne and his Legion would make to solve their frontier dilemma.

The entirety of the efforts of Anthony Wayne and the Legion of the United States during their campaign was necessary to bring about the capitulation of the Indian Confederation. Wayne had exposed the British as paper allies at Fort Miamis and he had destroyed the Indians’ crops needed for the coming winter. He had forced them off their lands, destroyed their villages at the Grand Glaize and along the Maumee River, and erected fortifications at the Glaize and at the Old Miami Towns to garrison their region. The Indians had suffered more of a psychological and logistical defeat to Wayne’s forces
than they had a military defeat. The subordination of the tribes in 1795 at Fort Greeneville was as much voluntary as it was a requirement. The building of the Forts Greeneville, Recovery, Adams, Defiance, and Wayne, the victory at Fort Recovery, the sustaining of the supply chain, the victory at Fallen Timbers, the relatively agreeable terms of peace, the humiliation of the British Flag at Fort Miamis, and a lack of British political desire to become involved in another American war all were necessary to produce the final effect of the Indian Confederation’s defeat/capitulation.

The duration of the fighting, the loss of confidence in the British and their circumstances of new found impoverishment led the chiefs of the various tribes to accept the terms that Wayne was offering from Fort Greeneville. The Indian tribes had fought for many years for different patrons and by 1795 it may have all looked for naught. The Indians, their villages, and their tribes had suffered much already. Most of the lands designated to be given up in the Fort Harmar Treaty of 1789, that they were currently fighting to preserve, had been abandoned already by the tribes because of the constant raids and depredations from the white settlements of Kentucky. Some Indians believed that the American victory meant
just a change once again in patronage. After all, the Americans were willing to pay for the lands again, guarantee an annual stipend/tribute, and their forts offered protection against both white and red men. Blue Jacket is quoted as saying in February 1795, “Our hearts and minds are changed, and we now consider ourselves your friends and brothers.”  The clear difference between the eventual intent of the American settlers versus the British traders had not yet crystallized for many of the Indians. Therefore, the Indians didn’t have to be badly defeated militarily for them to agree to the terms of the Treaty of Fort Greeneville. They just needed the appropriate psychological and social stimulus to stop fighting. Fallen Timbers was just a significant step in this process not the devastating and militarily decisive event mentioned by so many authors.

In a final analysis, it was quite possible for the Indian Confederation to achieve a military victory against the Legion’s 1794 campaign whether through attacks on supply lines, at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, or at another field of battle either before or after the events of August 20, 1794. Many factors existed that could have led to Wayne’s demise. But even with a victory, the Indians most likely would not have been able to resist the sociological trends and cultural pressures that arrived with the white settler influx. It was estimated that by 1810, there were over one million white settlers in the Trans-Appalachian areas from Tennessee northward. This same area had previously held only about 50,000 Indians.  By 1820, there were 581,000 whites in Ohio alone.  Also the Indian “confederation” was not the type of organization that would have been capable or sophisticated enough to politically combat these encroachments of the Americans. The Indians would have had to drastically adapt away from their culture towards something more resembling the American/European model. The Indian tribes relied upon a
duality of leadership wherein the war chiefs held power only during time of war and another set of sachems and chiefs held authority during times of peace. This created an inefficient and disjointed system of political control, which worked fine with and against their Indian brethren but would never prevail over the American cultural hegemony that would surely remain relentless, regardless of the military outcomes. They would have needed a more centralized political power that could have been able to pursue courses of action that benefited the long-term at a sacrifice of the immediate. They would have needed to develop a pre-industrial economy, which would have required utilizing the natural resources far differently and/or maintain a strong political and trading relationship with a reliable one. Their diverse cultures with many languages and lack of political unity would never have lent itself to any such long-range solutions. Even the heralded communal land ownership and pan-tribalism professed by Joseph Brant at numerous Indian councils was foreign to the Ohio Country tribes including the Iroquois.

In the end, the Ohio Country Indian Confederation, which had produced extraordinary military victories, was too diverse and was based too much on momentary self-interest. The vaunted valor and martial skill of the Indian warrior was never enough to win the battle of the cultures. It is an ironic conundrum that this intrinsic factor of the Ohio Country Indian culture was capable to achieving spectacular short-term military victories but that a permanent truce and victory for the Indian Confederation would have required changing that very culture and therefore maybe losing their strongest military characteristic.
The continual warfare from the French and Indian War until 1795 had caused much suffering for the tribes of the Ohio Country. Their population and military strength had waned.

The Cherokee tribe evolved towards some of these goals by developing a written language, political and judicial institutions, and an educational system but it mattered not in the end because they no longer had the military capacity to defend themselves.
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