

His Reputation of Aggressive Warfare Earned the Name of "Mad" Anthony Wayne



Mad Anthony Wayne

Anthony Wayne was born in Easttown Township near the present-day Paoli, Chester County, Pennsylvania. His father was an Irish immigrant and part of a Protestant Anglo-Irish family. Wayne was educated to be a surveyor at the private academy of his uncle in Philadelphia. He also attended the College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania), where he was in the class of 1765, but did not earn a degree there. In 1765 he was sent by Benjamin Franklin and some associates to work for a year surveying land granted in Nova Scotia and the following year he assisted the formation of a settlement in Monckton. In 1767 he worked in the tannery of his father, also as a surveyor. He became a prominent figure in Chester County and served in the Pennsylvania Legislature from 1774 to 1780.

When the war for independence commenced in 1775, Wayne raised a militia unit and earned the title of Colonel of the 4th Pennsylvania Regiment the following year. He and his regiment were sent to the aid of Benedict Arnold in an attempt to help the Continental Army to invade

Canada. Wayne had some success in the Battle of Trois-Rivieres and led distressed forces on Lake Champlain at Fort Ticonderoga and Mount Independence. His service resulted in a promotion to brigadier general on February 21, 1777. Later on that year, Wayne commanded the Pennsylvania Line at Brandywine, where his troops were sent to protect the American right flank and hold off General Wilhelm von Knyphausen. The two forces fought for three hours until the American line withdrew, and Wayne was ordered to retreat. Later, Wayne was ordered to harass the British rear in order to slow down the advance of General Howe into Pennsylvania.

His camp was attacked and the Battle of Paoli ensued. General Charles Grey ordered his men to remove their flints and attack with bayonets in order to keep their assault secret. The attack earned General Grey the nickname "No Flint," but the Americans used the tactics and casualties as propaganda regarding British brutality. Thus, the reputation of General Wayne was somewhat tarnished because of American losses and he demanded a formal inquiry in order to clear his name. In October, Wayne led his forces against the British in the Battle of Germantown. Wayne's soldiers pushed ahead of other American units, and, according to his report, when the British retreated, they "pushed on with their Bayonets taking ample vengeance."

Generals Wayne and Sullivan advanced too quickly, however, and became entrapped when they found themselves two miles ahead of other American units. As General Howe arrived and reformed the British line, American forces retreated. General Wayne was again ordered to hold off the British and cover the rear of the retreating body. Wayne had more bad luck when he led the American attack at Valley Forge in 1778. During this battle, his forces found themselves abandoned by General Charles Lee and pinned down by a superior British force.

Wayne held out until relieved by reinforcements sent by Washington. Wayne reformed his troops and continued to fight. Then, when the body of

Lieutenant Colonel Henry Monckton was discovered by the 1st Pennsylvania Regiment, rumors spread that Monckton had died fighting Wayne.

In July 1779 Washington named Wayne to command the Corps of Light Infantry, a temporary unit of four regiments of light infantry companies drawn from all the regiments in the Main Army.

Wayne went on to have some successes during the war, but suffered embarrassment when his two brigades and four cannons failed to destroy a blockhouse at Bulls Ferry opposite New York City. But Wayne was the commanding officer when there was a mutiny in the Pennsylvania Line.

Wayne successfully resolved the mutiny by dismissing about one half of the line. Wayne largely returned the Pennsylvania Line to full strength by May 1781, but doing so delayed his departure to Virginia, where he had been sent to assist the Marquis de Lafayette against British forces operating there.

The line's departure was delayed once more when the men again complained about being paid in the nearly worthless Continental currency. It was in Virginia that Wayne led the advance forces of Lafayette in an action at Green Spring to determine the location of Lord Charles Cornwallis. But they fell into a trap.

Once again, Wayne held out against numerically superior forces until reinforced by Major John Wyllys. Then Lord Cornwallis attacked his slim forces of about 900 men. In the counter-attack, Wayne led a bayonet charge against the British, and retreated before night.

After the British surrendered at Yorktown, Wayne went further south and severed the British alliance with Native American tribes in Georgia. He then negotiated peace treaties with both the Creek and the Cherokee, for which Georgia rewarded him with the gift of a large rice plantation. He was

promoted to major general on October 10, 1783.

After the evacuation of Savannah, Georgia, Wayne occupied the city in hopes of being awarded some of the confiscated plantations of loyalists, but instead was awarded a land grant for his military service. state legislature for a year in 1784.

He then moved to Georgia and settled upon an insignificant tract of land granted him by for his military service.

As he rode into town, he remarked upon the destruction of the great homes and plantations perpetuated by the British. He remained in Georgia and became a delegate to the state convention which ratified the United States Constitution in 1788 and in 1791, he served in the Second United States Congress as a U.S. Representative of Georgia's 1st congressional district.