

Leatherlips and Bill Moose, Last of the Wyandot of Central Ohio

The Hurons, or Tobacco tribe, were driven from Ontario, Canada by the Iroquois and arrived in the Mackinac Straits in 1670. They called themselves Wendat from which is derived the name "Wyandot" and they sided with the British in the Indian wars until the Treaty of Greenville in 1795.

The first proposal to remove the Wyandots from Ohio was made in 1825, but they remained on a reservation near Upper Sandusky until 1842. Two Wyandot Indians are especially noteworthy in central Ohio: Chief Leatherlips and Bill Moose.

Wyandot Chief Leatherlips refused to turn against the white settlers and cooperate with Roundhead and Tecumseh. As a result he became the victim of a trumped up charge of witchcraft and was executed June 1, 1810. At the time of his death, Leatherlips lived on the banks of the Scioto, just north of Columbus. The Wyandot Club purchased the land at the southeast corner of Stratford Road and State Road 257 in June 1889 for a memorial to Leatherlips which was finally deeded to Columbus on April 18, 1929.

Sixty years ago on July 12, central Ohio's last Wyandot Indian, Bill Moose or "Ki-Hue", died in the county infirmary where he was brought in June 1930. He was born around 1833 near Upper Sandusky and began hunting on the site of the State Deaf School on Morse Road in 1862. He traveled with various circuses for a time but settled permanently on his old hunting grounds around 1917. Throughout his life, he spun tales of past Indian ways. Later in his life, his declining health prompted Columbus City Council to approve his burial site at what is now the northeast corner of Lane Road and Riverside Drive on May 19, 1930. His burial was attended by 10,000 people. Wyandot Park on Lane Road, his burial site, was dedicated October 13, 1940.

Sources:

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