



Tecumseh

October 5, 1813

Died: Battle of the Thames, near Moraviantown, Upper Canada (now Chatham-Kent, Ontario)

Tecumseh, the Shawnee leader who tried to unite the Native nations of the Ohio Valley and the Great Lakes against the loss of their land, was killed on October 5, 1813, at the Battle of the Thames, near the Moravian mission town of Moraviantown in Upper Canada. He was about forty-five years old.

He was born around 1768 in the Shawnee towns along the Scioto River in what is now Ohio. His father was killed at the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774, when Tecumseh was a small child, and he grew up through years of raids, burned villages and treaties that steadily pushed his people west. As a young man he fought against American armies in the Northwest Territory, including at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, and he refused to accept the Treaty of Greenville that followed.

With his younger brother Tenskwatawa, a religious leader known as the Prophet, he founded a village called Prophetstown near the Tippecanoe River in Indiana Territory in 1808. From there Tecumseh traveled thousands of miles, from the Great Lakes to the Gulf South, arguing that the land belonged to all the tribes in common and that no single nation could sell it. He confronted Governor William Henry Harrison face to face at Vincennes over the 1809 Treaty of Fort Wayne.

While he was away in the South in November 1811, Harrison's troops fought the Battle of Tippecanoe and burned Prophetstown. When war broke out between the United States and Britain the next year, Tecumseh allied with the British and helped capture Detroit in August 1812.

After the American naval victory on Lake Erie, the British retreated up the Thames River. Tecumseh insisted on

making a stand. When the British line broke, his warriors fought on in the swamp until he fell. Kentuckian Richard Mentor Johnson was later credited with killing him, a claim that helped make Johnson vice president. Tecumseh's body was never identified with certainty, and his grave remains unknown.

Notice Nearby remembers a leader whose vision of a shared homeland still shapes how Americans tell the story of their own frontier.

Services

Killed at the Battle of the Thames, near Moraviantown, Upper Canada (now Chatham-Kent, Ontario), October 5, 1813. Shawnee war leader and organizer of a pan-tribal confederacy in the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes. Burial place unknown. Born about 1768 in the Scioto River country of present-day Ohio; exact birth date not recorded. Portrait: posthumous public-domain painting, hosted by Notice Nearby; no confirmed life portrait exists.

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