

HOW AMERICA REMEMBERS:
ANALYSIS OF THE ACADEMIC INTERPRETATION AND PUBLIC
MEMORY OF THE BATTLE OF TIPPECANOE

Brent S. Abercrombie

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Philip V. Scarpino, Ph. D., Chair

Modupe Labode, Ph. D.

Master's Thesis
Committee

Marianne S. Wokeck, Ph. D.

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Introduction

On November 7, 2007, persons unknown vandalized the Tippecanoe Battlefield Monument in the middle of the night. The vandals spray-painted the monument with the words “America repent,” “Justice will be served,” “Coward,” “Give us back our spiritual capital” and “Tecumseh's not dead.”¹ Police officers and park employees were at a loss as to why anyone would deface the monument that turns 100 years old in 2011. “We see the battlefield as hallowed ground where 196 years ago brave men, red and white, fought and died courageously,” said Allen Nail, superintendent of the Tippecanoe County Parks and Recreation Department. “I don't know how anybody could hope to do honor by doing this sort of thing.”² The date of the incident was not lost on the officials of the park.

November 7, 2007, was the 196th anniversary of the Battle of Tippecanoe.

The bicentennial of the Battle of Tippecanoe in 2011 sparked renewed interest in remembering and commemorating this event. This thesis will examine why the Battle of Tippecanoe occurred, and how the interpretation and meaning of the battle changed over time. The first chapter contains the historiography on the development of the Northwest Territory, also referred to as the Old Northwest, and the events that led to the Battle of Tippecanoe. The second chapter takes a closer look at the causes and immediate ramifications of the battle. The final section focuses on how the importance and significance of the battle's interpretation changed in the last 200 years.

At the heart of this conflict was a clash between Anglo/American and Native American cultures, whose incompatible ways of understanding and living on the land and

¹ “Tippecanoe Battlefield Monument Defaced”, *USA Today*, November 9, 2007. Accessed November 5, 2010. http://www.usatoday.com/travel/news/2007-11-09-tippecanoe-monument-vandalism_N.htm.

² Ibid.

religious views made co-existence improbable. The Battle of Tippecanoe was a last ditch effort by young, desperate warriors following the orders of a Prophet whose promises of invincibility and dominance proved untrue. Settlers hailed the victory as the final blow securing American dominance in the region. William Henry Harrison used his success as American Commander at the Battle of Tippecanoe as his slogan when running for President: “Tippecanoe and Tyler too.”

The first chapter examines how historians have interpreted the development of the Old Northwest, U.S. relations with Native Americans, and the causes of the Battle of Tippecanoe.³ The historiography will begin with the earliest accepted interpretation, by historian Frederick Jackson Turner, to a recently written analysis of the Old Northwest by Robert Owens. Early historical thought argued that the settlement of the Old Northwest by Euro-Americans was inherently good and legal. Their work and research centered predominantly on Anglo sources and treated the Native Americans in the region as the “children of Great Britain.” Late 19th and early 20th century historians addressed the development of the Old Northwest as an extension of the wider issue of western expansion. While there are few primary sources from Native Americans, interpretation has shifted with efforts to incorporate their viewpoints.

Beginning in the 1970s, recent scholarship concerning the Northwest Territory argues that much of animosity between colonists and natives was a result of a clash of cultures, which embraced fundamental differences over the “ownership” and use of land. U.S. treaty negotiations were generally with tribes who currently lived on the land, not necessarily within the greater tribal councils. This led to dissent among the tribes,

³ The Old Northwest consists of the following states: Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, and parts of Minnesota.

creating competition over payment for land that was heretofore-communal property. Historians also argue that of two cultures, Native Americans were concerned that the constant accommodation and acceptance of American goods, practices, and religion was erasing their cultural identity, while the settlers were anxious about their safety on this disputed land.⁴

Current historical research examines the relationships between the U.S. and Natives Americans, those among the different tribes of the region, and relationships within the tribes themselves. The Shawnee Indians, for example, were a collection of tribes or villages that had differing views on the most effective ways of leading the tribe. There was animosity between old chiefs and younger warriors over how to deal with the American government and its growing western expansion. U.S. agents were able to exploit the fractured front of the regions tribes to negotiate favorable terms during treaty discussions. This practice continued until the U.S. systematically acquired the majority of useful land east of the Mississippi River by 1810.⁵

The same historical analysis is true with the motives of the leaders behind conflict: William Henry Harrison, the Shawnee Prophet, and Tecumseh (see images 1, 2, and 3). Despite not being directly involved in the battle, Tecumseh is synonymous with the Battle of Tippecanoe. Each man influenced the political and military movements within their respective groups. Their highly publicized meetings, particularly between Harrison and Tecumseh in Vincennes, have cultivated the intertwined legacies of all three with the Battle of Tippecanoe serving as the common thread even though Harrison was

⁴ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁵ Gregory Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

the only person directly involved in the fighting. The Shawnee Prophet oversaw the battle, some sources say, from high above on a rock just west the battleground, but Tecumseh was out of region recruiting warriors to join his confederacy. Despite this fact, all three figures remain linked to each other and the Battle of Tippecanoe.

The second chapter will discuss the complex chain of events that led to the battle. Harrison and Tecumseh first crossed paths in 1794 at the Battle of Fallen Timbers near present day Toledo, Ohio. Harrison, serving under General Anthony Wayne, was part of the successful raid against the Native American tribes located in central Ohio. Although outnumbered, Tecumseh distinguished himself during this battle by successfully helping lead a retreating group of Shawnee warriors. The resulting U.S. victory led to the signing of the Treaty of Greenville giving the United States claim to the majority of Ohio and the eastern part of Indiana. This was a point of contention for Tecumseh, who argued that the signed treaty was with tribes who did not have sole claim to the land. During the fifteen years preceding the Battle of Tippecanoe, the United States negotiated a number of land cession treaties (see map 1) increasing animosity and betrayal among competing tribes escalating to violence between the U.S. and a pan-Indian alliance led by the Shawnee Prophet and his brother Tecumseh.

Growing hostility was more than a simple matter of U.S. versus Native Americans, as several tribes, including many Shawnee villages, sided with the U.S. government over the Shawnee brothers' pan-Indian alliance. There was a great divide among native tribes on how to interact with the U.S. The majority of the Shawnee tribes were in favor of accommodation, or assimilating into American culture realizing that due to the growing number of white settlers moving to the area that the best course of action

would be to find means of co-existence. The Shawnee Prophet and his followers were opposed to accommodation, instead choosing to embrace the traditional cultures of their ancestors. Tecumseh was able to gain the support of younger warriors who were against American encroachment and interference, while their older tribal chiefs favored negotiations with Americans over annuities and goods. The debate within tribes also provided the divide that Harrison ultimately exploited to ensure victory and control in the region.⁶

The third chapter discusses how the significance and legacy of the Battle of Tippecanoe changed in the public's memory. Early accounts reported by local businessmen and military officials included high praise for both William Henry Harrison and Tecumseh. Harrison was the victorious commanding general for the U.S. Army, whose triumph at Tippecanoe helped preserve peace in the Northwest Territory. Many Americans hailed Tecumseh as the "noble savage" whose militaristic leadership and compassion were unparalleled. Those who met Tecumseh noted his stature, presence, and command. Tecumseh's presence and warrior status registered with American values of bravery and honor on the battlefield. Promoting his military accolades was also a self-serving way to justify the fighting against Native Americans enhancing the significance of the American victory. While Tecumseh received popular praise, reports on the character of the Shawnee Prophet depicted him as ugly, deceitful, manipulative, and opportunistic.

The earliest historical synopsis, written by Benjamin Drake in 1841, of the Battle of Tippecanoe and the lives of Tecumseh and the Shawnee Prophet glorified Tecumseh

⁶ Evidence of animosity among tribes can also be found in John Sugden, *Tecumseh: A Life* (New York: Henry Holt and Co, 1998); R. David Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

and vilified the Prophet.⁷ Tecumseh distinguished himself as a bold, stoic leader, whose compassion against cruelty endeared him to his opponents. Drake detailed one particular event early in Tecumseh's life that exemplified his stance against the practice of burning or killing prisoners. "The conduct of Tecumseh in this engagement (the killing of a white prisoner), and in the events of the following morning, is creditable alike to his courage and humanity."⁸ The majority of negative opinions regarding the Prophet originate from his religious role as a prophet, his physical appearance, and his over-confidence. Drake states, when first discussing the Prophet that, "one trait of his character which may be appropriately mentioned in this place – his disposition to boast, not only of his own standing and importance, but also of the rank and respectability of the family to which he belonged."⁹ Drake argued, while acknowledging the Prophet's prominence, that his rise was a direct result of the fact that he was Tecumseh's younger brother.¹⁰

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century historians (notably Reed Beard and Beverley Bond) viewed the Prophet as a subordinate; Tecumseh's "crazy" little brother whose influence depended on the presence and relationship of his older brother.¹¹ The efforts during the Progressive Era to educate the public, especially immigrants new to the country, of the values and characteristics that embodied the American spirit reinforced the negative opinion of the Prophet. Historical interpretation regarding the Prophet

⁷ Benjamin Drake, *Life of Tecumseh and of His Brother the Prophet: With a Historical Sketch of the Shawanoe Indians* (Cincinnati: H. H. Green Press, 1840).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 63, 86-99.

¹¹ Reed Beard, *The Battle of Tippecanoe; Historical Sketches of the Famous Field Upon Which General William Henry Harrison Won Renown That Aided Him in Reaching the Presidency; Lives of the Prophet and Tecumseh, with Many Interesting Incidents of Their Rise and Overthrow. The Campaign of 1888 and Election of General Benjamin Harrison* (Chicago: Conkey, 1911); Beverley W Bond Jr., *The Civilization of the Old Northwest; A Study of Political, Social, and Economic Development, 1788-1812* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934).

shifted in the 1970s and 1980s as new historians re-examined the life and legacy of Tecumseh's little brother.¹² This new work on the Prophet portrayed him, and not Tecumseh, as the leader of the pan-Indian alliance. The negative view of the Prophet's character was behind the earlier interpretations of him, downplaying his significant contribution to the growth of the pan-Indian alliance. Despite the change in interpretation of the legacy of the Prophet among scholars, the general public memory still mimics the teachings during the Progressive Era. Understanding the proper roles of the prominent figures associated with the battle was only part of the issue that created the public's distorted memory of the Battle of Tippecanoe. The other aspect that contributed to the mythology of the battle was putting the military achievements within the actual context period, the War of 1812, and eventual statehood of Indiana.

Immediately after the victory at the Battle of Tippecanoe, American soldiers and settlers were fearful of a full-force attack by British-backed native tribes. The popular thought at the time was that British Indian agents were responsible for instigating the native warriors of the region to take arms against the United States. In fact, it was one of the stated reasons of the United States government for declaring war against England in 1812.¹³ By the end of the war, the United States had effectively removed the perceived threat of the British from the Old Northwest. Within ten years of the end of the war, the U.S. Army began forcing tribes in eastern Ohio and Indiana out of their villages and moving them west of the Mississippi onto reservations in Oklahoma (see map 2).

¹² Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet*.

¹³ William Henry Harrison, *Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Two Letters from Gov. Harrison of the Indiana Territory Reporting the Particulars and the Issue of the Expedition Under His Command against the Hostile Indians on the Wabash : December 19th, 1811, Read, and Referred to Mr. M'Kee, Mr. Sevier, Mr. Breckenridge, Mr. Morrow, Mr. Alston, Mr. Lefevre and Mr. Maxwell.* (Washington City: R.C. Weightman 1811).

By the mid 1840s, the majority of those who fought in the battle and subsequent war were dying. The deaths of Harrison and Indiana Senator John Tipton, who also fought at Tippecanoe, sparked an interest by those who resided in Indiana when the battle occurred to create a memorial for them. Gatherings took place at the site of the battle, claiming the victory at Tippecanoe was the decisive battle that led to peace in the territory. However, once the remaining soldiers passed away, public outcry to memorialize the battle subsided until the centennial anniversary approached in 1911 and followed by Indiana's centennial in 1916, at the height of the Progressive Era.

The culmination in memorializing the Battle of Tippecanoe occurred in 1908 with the creation of the Tippecanoe Monument that literally set the popular Progressive Era interpretation of the battle in stone. The monument celebrated the accomplishments of the American soldiers who fought at Tippecanoe, and neglected to acknowledge the fighting of local militia or the native warriors. Commemoration reached its height during this period as the centennial of the battle, 1911, and the centennial of the State of Indiana, 1916, kept historical awareness prominent throughout the state. Along with the creation of the Tippecanoe Monument, cities and counties throughout Indiana held festivals and plays associated with the Battle of Tippecanoe. The lasting effects of the Progressive Era activities still permeate with today's public memory.

For Native Americans, Battleground, Indiana, the site of the battle represents a completely different set of emotions and memories. Battleground, Indiana remains the site of another injustice suffered by natives, the Potawatomi Indians, from Twin Lakes near Plymouth, Indiana, rested at the site during their forced march, known as the Trail of Death, to the west of the Mississippi River to the new Oklahoma Territory. While the

coincidence did not appear intentional, the site of Battleground, Indiana, witnessed the beginning and end of the U.S. – American Indian power struggle, from combat to removal.

During the centennial celebration of Indiana's statehood, local residents set up a battle re-enactment to commemorate historic events in the state's history, including the Battle of Tippecanoe. Some white residents wore military uniforms, while others dressed up as Indians, wearing clothing that typified tribes of the Great Plains, perhaps based on images seen in early silent western movies (see photograph 1). The approaching bicentennial in 2011, offers an opportune time to take a fresh look at the Battle of Tippecanoe. Those associated with the Tippecanoe Battlefield Memorial are planning exhibits, battle re-enactments, and other special events to honor the battle's significance. Planners of the bicentennial should endeavor to frame public programming within the content of recent scholarship that provides a more balanced and nuanced interpretation following the social history movement of the 1970s and 1980s.

[Image 1]
The Shawnee Prophet



[Image 2]
Tecumseh

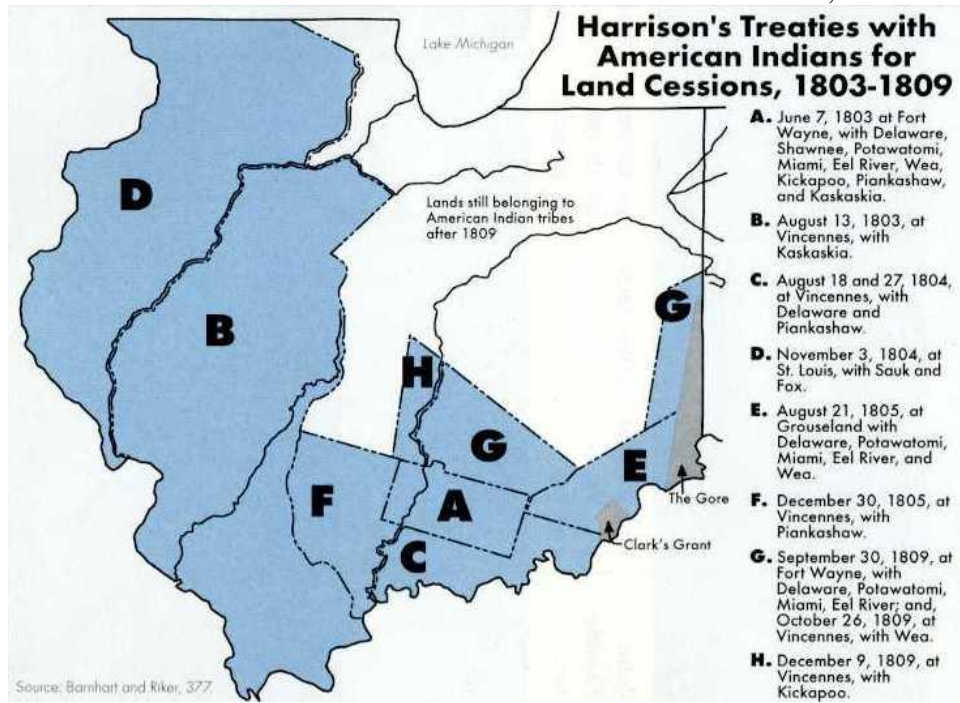


[Image 3]
William Henry Harrison



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[Map 1]
Harrison Treaties with American Indians for Land Cessions, 1803-1809

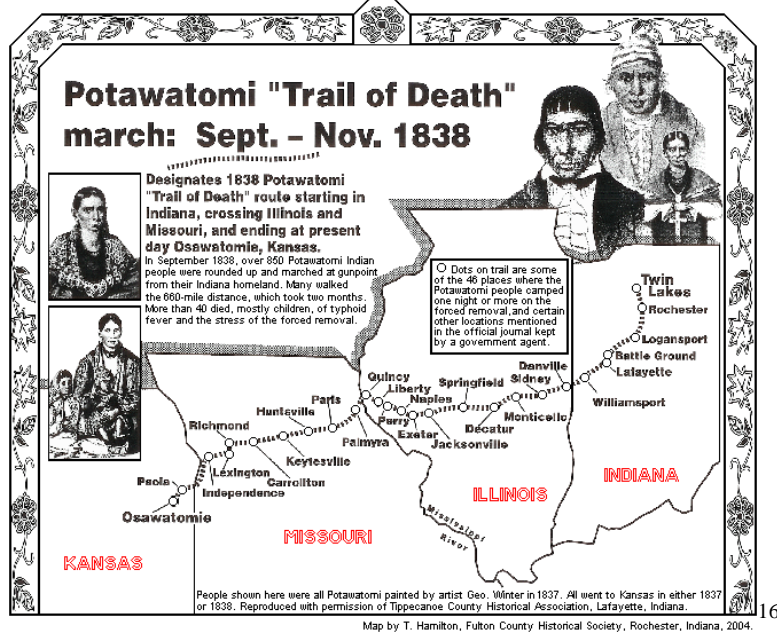


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¹⁴ Indiana State Library, Manuscripts and Rare Books Division. Picture Collection. Portraits (Pr-Py, Te, and Harrison, William H.).

¹⁵ John D. Barnhart and Dorothy Riker, *Indiana to 1816: The Colonial Period*. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1994) 377.

[Map 2]
Potawatomi Trail of Death



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[Photograph 1]
Parke County Centennial Pageant – Resident Painted as a “Red Man”



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¹⁶ Hamilton, T. Fulton County Historical Society. (Rochester, Indiana. 2004); Internet; Access March 5, 2011.

¹⁷ Indiana State Library. Manuscripts and Rare Books Division. Picture Collection. Parke County.

Chapter 1: Historiography

Historians' interpretations, victors' accounts, and public memory have shaped the legacy of the Battle of Tippecanoe. Over time, the interpretations surrounding the battle changed from a focus on key figures like Tecumseh and William Henry Harrison to larger issues of how the development of the Northwest Territory affected the United States as a whole. Scholars view the Battle of Tippecanoe as one of the significant events in the development of the Old Northwest and by understanding the origins of how the tensions escalated into combat one can better comprehend its historical importance (see map 3). Local leaders, Territorial Governor Harrison and tribal chiefs, negotiated treaties and land cessions based upon fundamentally incompatible concepts of property and ways of living on the land. Yet, those differences do not fully explain how or why hostilities in the Northwest Territory escalated to bloodshed. The issues between the indigenous population and Anglos ran deeper than land disputes.

One way to achieve an understanding of conflicting philosophical and cultural differences among white settlers, American government, and Native Americans from the Northwest Territory is to study the work of the most prominent and influential historians. These histories when looked at over time illustrate a change in interpretation of the meaning of the Battle of Tippecanoe. Several books and articles discuss the events and actions surrounding the Battle of Tippecanoe, but up until recent historic scholarship, most neglected to address the motivations of the Native American tribes. Early historical interpretations of the Old Northwest incorporated the views and intentions of the various tribes into a singular voice. Historian Stephen Warren's, *The Shawnees and Their Neighbors, 1795-1870* (2005), succinctly describes the way fellow historians have

interpreted this topic: “Writers have sought to discover the period in which Euro-Americans and Indians contested for land, game, and cultural primacy.”¹⁸ Native Americans’ history is an oral one, and consequently the majority of native sources are from transcribed speeches or messages by Indian agents or settlers who could communicate with the local tribes. The result is that early historical analysis of Native Americans is heavily one-sided.¹⁹

The historical works discussed in this chapter focus on the overall development of the Northwest Territory as opposed to specific volumes on the Battle of Tippecanoe. The purpose of this approach is to analyze how historical interpretation changed over time. Historians’ focus changed with the advance of newly accepted historical theory. The following works display the change in historical thought ranging from a broad overview of the development of the Northwest Territory to the focus of a particular tribe or individual representing aspects of the social history movement during the 1970s and 1980s. As later chapters will discuss in more detail, scholarly interpretations thought pertaining to the Battle of Tippecanoe evolved to represent a more balanced and nuanced interpretation, while public memory of the event remained dominated by popular Progressive Era thought.

¹⁸ Stephen Warren, *Shawnees and Their Neighbors, 1795-1870* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 10.

¹⁹ Early accounts that represent one-sided accounts with little recognition of the Native Americans objection to western expansion by the United States include books by Benjamin Drake, *Life of Tecumseh and of His Brother the Prophet: With a Historical Sketch of the Shawanoe Indians* (Cincinnati: H. H. Green Press, 1840) and Reed Beard, *The Battle of Tippecanoe; Historical Sketches of the Famous Field Upon Which General William Henry Harrison Won Renown That Aided Him in Reaching the Presidency; Lives of the Prophet and Tecumseh, with Many Interesting Incidents of Their Rise and Overthrow. The Campaign of 1888 and Election of General Benjamin Harrison* (Chicago: Conkey Press, 1911).

The theme of this chapter is the discussion of how historians have construed the role the Battle of Tippecanoe played in the development of the Northwest Territory. Specifically, I will examine how historians characterized the region as a way to understand the pivotal issues of land cession, cultural differences between settlers and Native Americans, and the looming threat of violence resulting from continued growth of the United States as a country. These issues, along with Americans from the Atlantic Coast settling in the area, have led some historians, notably Frederick Jackson Turner, to state the Old Northwest region as distinctively American and influential to the development of the country as a whole. The selected works below focus on the settlement and development of the Northwest Territory as opposed to biographies of William Henry Harrison, Tecumseh, and the Shawnee Prophet to provide a larger context to place the Battle of Tippecanoe within the history of the Old Northwest. The only exception being R. David Edmund's, *The Shawnee Prophet* (1993), whom is of Native American decendency, which offers unique perspective on the historical interpretation of the region. This chapter organizes the historical works chronologically to illustrate how interpretation of the Old Northwest changed over time.

The first professionally trained, academic historian who argued that the development of the frontier (Old Northwest and westward) was the distinctive quality that best defined America was Frederick Jackson Turner. Turner expanded upon his frontier thesis with, *The Frontier in American History* (1920). The book, which is a collection of thirteen articles ranging from 1893 to 1920, is central to the majority of historiography on the subject. Turner stated that the existence of an area of free land, coupled with the continuous recession caused by the Revolutionary War, increased the

advance of American settlement westward.²⁰ His central theme focused on the influence that the frontier played in shaping American life and character. This idea led Turner to believe that the western frontier was more influential, “the true point,” to the development of American society and identity than the Atlantic coast.²¹ American identity developed in the frontier through the fighting and removal of Native Americans, and the settlement of Americans on newly “acquired” land.

Turner unveiled his thesis to the country at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair at the dawn of the Progressive Era. Historians at that time were looking at the transition of the United States from the agricultural age to a modern, idealized, industrial nation. Their research centered on the various characteristics that embodied what they believed constituted American identity. Turner argued that with the increase of immigration of Europeans coupled with the realization that the frontier no longer existed, Americans had lost their identity. It was the frontier, Turner proclaimed, that represented the values and characteristics of this ideal American identity.²² The timing of Turner’s argument is important to note, as his work came after the 1890 U.S. census that claimed the end of the frontier region.²³

Turner stated that as the United States continued to grow, Americans began to look for new frontiers to explore and integrate as ways to improve the country. He declared the frontier as a distinctive characteristic in how the public viewed the newly formed United States. As the frontier continued to move west, American values changed along with western movement; the frontier regions of our country typified American

²⁰ Frederick Jackson Turner, *Frontier in American History* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1920) 1.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

²² *Ibid.*, 2-3, 37-38.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1.

identity. Turner summarizes the many attributes of the Old Northwest as, “not only a local history worthy of study, a rich heritage to its people, but also that it has been an independent and powerful force in shaping the development of a nation.”²⁴ In Turner’s opinion, the Northwest Territory was more than the growth of the country geographically, but for establishing American principles of democracy, politics, and foreign policy through settlement.²⁵

Turner’s interpretation of the settlement of the “Middle West” as the area whose melting pot of citizens and values that represented American character, but lacks in-depth study of the role Native Americans played in the country’s development. Turner viewed the Indian resistance as an obstacle in the path of American growth, like a mountain range. Turner notes, “The conception of the Northwest as an Indian reserve strikingly exhibits England’s inability to foresee the future of the region, and to measure the forces of American expansion.”²⁶ To Turner, American expansion was inevitable, and the removal of Native Americans was a matter of when not if. His analysis underscores the fluid nature of the Old Northwest region, where the settlement of the frontier was far from certain.

While Turner’s study centered on the advance of the frontier and its effect on creating an American identity, Beverley W. Bond Jr.’s, *Civilization of the Old Northwest* (1934), offered a descriptive analysis of the settlement of the region. Bond argued that the growth of the Northwest Territory was unique compared to the development of the rest of the country. Bond’s method was to present a composite view of the civilization of the Old

²⁴ Ibid., 175.

²⁵ Ibid., 173-175.

²⁶ Ibid., 131-132.

Northwest from 1787 to 1840.²⁷ His purpose in writing this book was the lack of historical attention the Northwest Territory received compared to New England and the Southern regions of the United States.²⁸ Bond's work begins with the implications of the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. According to Bond, these ordinances shifted American policy of westward inhabitation from simply acquiring sufficient land for settlement to claiming lands as far reaching as possible for the sake of ownership.²⁹

Bond noted that many of the Americans who settled in the Northwest Territory were veterans of the Revolutionary War, and they brought with them "a distinctively modern and progressive point of view" on how to advance the region.³⁰ Just as influential to the maturation of the area were the American families who settled in the Northwest Territory. While regions like New England and the South progressed mainly independent from one another (Puritans in New England and Anglo-Americans in the South), Americans from New England, the central, and the southern states inhabited the Northwest Territory.³¹ The interaction between Southerners and New Englanders in Ohio and the rest of the Old Northwest led Bond to argue that the Northwest Territory settlement was distinctive and then duplicated in the settlement of future frontier regions.³²

While the work of Frederick Jackson Turner influenced many future historians, skepticism began to grow during the 1930s and 1940s that the frontier was not

²⁷ Beverley W Bond Jr., *Civilization of the Old Northwest, A Story of Political, Social, and Economic Development, 1788-1812* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1934) vii.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, vii.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 508-510.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 508.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 508.

³² *Ibid.*, 527-528.

responsible for national development.³³ A strong supporter of the Turner frontier thesis, Ray Allen Billington broadened the scope of the settlement of the region in his book *Western Expansion: History of the American Frontier*. Billington's edition, which was initially published in 1949 with future revisions as recent as 1974, focused on the entire western expansion, starting from the Atlantic Coast extending all the way to the Pacific Coast. The section of his book that is relevant to this historiography is on the Trans-Appalachian Frontier. While Billington does not wholly agree that the continuing western frontier typified an American identity, he does agree with the approach Turner used in defining the frontier. Billington's main objection to the Turner thesis is that the frontier was "too complex to fit such a neat formula."³⁴

Billington argues that two loosely defined overlapping but ultimately separate groups inhabited the western frontiers: those who were interested in using nature (i.e. fur trappers, herdsman, etc.) and those who tried to subdue nature (i.e. farmers, merchants, millers, etc.).³⁵ These two adverse methods of developing the frontier helped to create its regional identity. Billington's thesis echoed Turner's beliefs: Americans migrating to the frontier did more to "Americanize" the nation and its institutions than the continued civilization behind the advancing frontier.³⁶ Most of Billington's analysis on the Northwest Territory centered on the region's problems with land occupation, devising a form of government, and improving relations with the Native Americans.³⁷ While the land ordinances of 1785 and 1787 improved problems with land occupation, and the

³³ Ray Allen Billington, *Western Expansion: A History of the American Frontier*, 4th ed. (New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1974) ix.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 7-9.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 216.

progress made to solidify the government, there were still conflicts in the territory with Native Americans.³⁸ The situation worsened for natives after the end of the War of 1812, when they no longer had the illusion of British support.³⁹

A shift in the analysis of the Old Northwest occurred during the mid-twentieth century where historical thought moved from interpretation of the development of the region to examining how U.S. policy enabled the government to acquire control of the land. Barnhart and Riker's, *Indiana to 1816* (1971), portrayed Harrison as a tool used by the government to acquire and populate frontier land. In the ten years that Harrison was governor of the Indiana Territory, he negotiated nine treaties with the tribes in the region. Through those treaties, the United States acquired large chunks of land from Ohio to Illinois. Barnhart and Riker state that Governor Harrison was following the principles of President Jefferson.⁴⁰ It was Jefferson's idea to acquire as much land on the frontier from the Native tribes as possible. Jefferson's approach was to lure Native Americans into debt to the point that tribes would be more open to selling claim to their land. Jefferson believed this tactic would be effective as long as the Native Americans were dependent upon American goods and/or tools.⁴¹ The tactic worked as Harrison was able to acquire land through treaties with tribes desperate to receive annuity payments or these goods (see map 4).

³⁸ Congress passed the Land Ordinance of 1785 as a way to raise money following the Revolutionary War created the rectangular survey to purchase land tracts. The Land Ordinance of 1787 created the Northwest Territory and blueprint for territories to become states, enabling the possibility of American growth.

³⁹ Billington, 278.

⁴⁰ John D. Barnhart and Dorothy Lois Riker, *Indiana to 1816, the Colonial Period. The History of Indiana*, vol. 1 (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1971).

⁴¹ William Henry Harrison, "Letter President Jefferson to William Henry Harrison, February 27, 1803," *Governor's Messages and Letters, Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison*, ed. Logan Esarey, vol. 1 (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Commission, 1922) 70-71.

Barnhart and Riker argued these negotiated treaties were at the crux of the animosity between the pan-Indian alliance and U.S. The Shawnee Prophet and his brother Tecumseh objected to the claims of the signed treaties arguing that the contested lands belonged to all the tribes in the region and all the tribes had to agree to the terms for the treaty to be legal. The Shawnee Prophet urged the surrounding tribes to avoid all American goods and resort to their traditional native ways, and avoid dependency on American materials. Barnhart and Riker stated that until the Treaty of Ft. Wayne in 1809, the Shawnee Prophet, and not Tecumseh, was the leader of growing pan-Indian alliance. Tecumseh vaulted into the forefront of treaty negotiations after the signing of the treaty of Ft. Wayne. Despite assurances that Tecumseh's growing alliance was of a peaceful nature, Harrison was becoming wary of a potential conflict.⁴²

Barnhart and Riker's study of the development of the Northwest Territory and Battle of Tippecanoe signified a noticeable contrast to previous historical interpretations. Instead of viewing these events solely through the lens of the Anglo perspective, Barnhart and Riker approached the topic with a more sympathetic view towards Native Americans. Their analysis was more critical of American action and government policy than the actions of Native Americans like previous historical interpretations. Barnhart and Riker's focus was less about what frontier and development of the Old Northwest meant to the U.S. and its identity, and more about why these different cultures were unable to co-exist.⁴³ This new wave of historical interpretation revolved around the concept that the conflict between the U.S. and American Indians was essentially a clash of cultures.

⁴² Barnhart, 379-381.

⁴³ Ibid., 370-381, 410-411.

While all the authors previously discussed are of European descent, historian R. David Edmunds, a Native American, offered a different perspective with *The Shawnee Prophet* (1983). The primary focus of his analysis was to dispel the myths of the character and contributions of the Shawnee Prophet. Edmunds argues that it was the Prophet, and not Tecumseh, who was the leader of the pan-Indian alliance. He states that the Shawnee Prophet, who also went by the name Tenskwatawa, offered young disenchanting warriors who were against accommodation with the U.S. government a different set of ideals that called for American Indians to return to their native traditions. The Prophet urged his followers to stop trying to acquire land and other monetary goods, renounce the ways of the white man, and return to the communal life and traditional lifestyle they had prior to encountering Europeans. Most of the Prophet's dogma attacked the decline in traditional religious and social values.⁴⁴ By returning to the traditional lifestyle of the Shawnees, the Prophet's followers would be welcomed by the Great Spirit.

Andrew R. L. Cayton's book, *The Frontier Republic*, (1986) studied the challenges that Ohio faced in its quest to obtain statehood. Cayton provided an interpretive and ideological account of events. His examination dissected how post-revolutionary citizens began "thinking about the natures of government, society, and the exercise of power."⁴⁵ During its developmental years from 1790-1825, Ohio faced severe ideological and political conflicts. The issues that emerged in Ohio would affect Indiana fifteen years later. Cayton stated the primary cause of the turmoil in the area was the lack

⁴⁴ R. David Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983) 34, 37.

⁴⁵ Andrew R.L. Cayton, *The Frontier Republic: Ideology and Politics in the Ohio Country, 1780-1825* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1986) xi.

of consensus among a diverse population of American settlers in the frontier society.⁴⁶ The Northwest Territory consisted of upland Southerners and westward moving New Englanders, whose views on social issues (including race and slavery) and policies differed due to their societal and religious perspectives. In the end, Ohio settled with specific emphasis on national authority over individual liberty or local interests.⁴⁷ The progression of Ohio and Indiana into statehood highlighted similar issues that were essential to each state's advancement. Both states faced uneasiness surrounding the diversity of their population, similar concerns over relations with the Native Americans, and internal differences over the best way to govern their land.

Gregory Dowd's *A Spirited Resistance* (1993), argues that inter- and intra-tribal politics were vital themes for understanding the history of the territory. Dowd stated that native tribes argued amongst themselves, and with other tribes, on the most effective way to negotiate with the United States. Dowd described the region as a place where the U.S. government attempted to identify key tribal figures that were more cooperative in treaty negotiations, while the accommodating tribal leaders faced increasing defiance by warriors who wished to return to traditional tribal heritage before contact with whites. The Prophet's followers opposed all native leaders who advocated accommodation, and who allowed the U.S. government to exercise political, economic, and cultural authority over their followers.⁴⁸ Renewed interest in traditional spiritual beliefs grew in popularity and practice, led by Neolin, Handsome Lake, and Tenskwatawa who were the preeminent prophets in the region. Their popularity grew with increasing unhappiness and

⁴⁶ Ibid., 152.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 152-155.

⁴⁸ Gregory Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) 123.

desperation among many Native Americans over serious and fundamental threats to their way of life and their very existence based upon the combined impacts of depredation of land, dependence on trade goods, disease, and Christianity.⁴⁹

The U.S. government was extremely aggressive in negotiating treaties with Native tribes. Between 1804 and 1808, the U.S. government negotiated six treaties with annuity chiefs, those who accepted money and supplies that gave the U.S. claim to large portions of land in southeastern Michigan, southern Indiana, and Illinois.⁵⁰ The accommodating chiefs had galvanized and alienated a growing number of Indians who wished to return to their traditional native culture. The turning point was the Treaty of Fort Wayne, signed September 30, 1809, which gave the U.S. large portions of northern Indiana and Illinois. The fallout from the treaty pushed the Shawnee Prophet's brother Tecumseh into a more prominent leadership role. Tecumseh was vehemently against signing the treaty, stating that no man had the right to lay claim to the land.⁵¹ Tecumseh urged the territorial governor William Henry Harrison to nullify the treaty, warning him that he was building a force of all the native warriors in the region who resisted this American expansionism.⁵²

Dowd also noted that the practices of the regional prophets and Tecumseh were not unique, following the customs of Indians leaders and prophets before them. He argued that Tecumseh's popularity among whites was because his goal to unify the tribes was quintessentially un-Indian. The natives still viewed the world from a tribal perspective and an Indian alliance represented a "white" solution to an Indian problem.⁵³ However, Tecumseh's plan for a pan-Indian union was not his creation; he drew upon the

⁴⁹ Ibid., 126-127.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 139.

⁵¹ Ibid., 140.

⁵² Harrison, *Messages and Letters*, vol. 1, 467-469, 548-551.

⁵³ Dowd, 142-143.

traditions of American Indians throughout the trans-Appalachian borderlands. His vision of an Indian alliance may have been grander than previous coalitions, but Tecumseh still followed others' paths.⁵⁴

Dowd acknowledges that Tecumseh's response to growing American settlements was not a unique Native American reaction. As early as 1676, King Philip attempted to unify neighboring tribes against the growing European settlers in New England leading to the outbreak of King Philip's War. Although separated by distance and time, the same issues (dependence on trade goods, alienation of land, disease, and impact of Christianity) engendered desperation but energized the followers of King Philip and Tecumseh and his brother the Prophet.⁵⁵ Tecumseh's idea for his pan-Indian alliance derived from the success of Little Turtle and Blue Jacket at St. Clair's defeat in 1791. In 1890, the Ghost Dance religious movement, led by the prophet Jack Wilson, attempted to unite Great Plains tribes and to adopt the lifestyle that existed before contact with whites.⁵⁶ Wilson's Ghost Dance movement, which coincided with and contributed to the Lakota Sioux resistance, ended on December 29, 1890, with the Wounded Knee Massacre. Ultimately, the common goal of Native Americans was to expel encroaching whites and return to life before their first encounter with them.⁵⁷

R. Douglas Hurt's book, *The Ohio Frontier: Crucible of the Old Northwest, 1720-1830* (1996), provides a thorough and descriptive analysis of frontier Ohio. The book centers around two main ideas: the history of the Native American tribes of the area and

⁵⁴ Ibid., 143-145.

⁵⁵ Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1999) x-xvii.

⁵⁶ William S.E. Coleman, *Voices of Wounded Knee* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000) 35-36.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 329-333.

the settlement of Ohio.⁵⁸ Hurt uses these two themes to explain his overarching argument that at the root of the conflicts between the natives and the Europeans (mainly France and England) was a clash of cultures. Some of the tribes of the region realized that they “stood alone against both the French and the British.”⁵⁹ A common critique of the analysis of the development of the Old Northwest was that most historians focused their study on the roles the United States, England, and France played, with the Native Americans merely as a side note in the discussion.

Hurt’s argument pinpoints the interactions between the Native Americans and England, France, and eventually the United States. The major issue of contention between settlers and Native Americans was the acquisition and control of land. Even before Anglo-Americans tried settling the region, the Native Americans were struggling with France and England over control of the area. The French claimed all the lands north of the Ohio River, while the British were claiming all lands south of the river.⁶⁰ This same problem continued even after the Revolutionary War. Despite the fact that American troops were unable to take control of northern Ohio, the Native Americans still lost in the war (tribes siding with the British) due to provisions in the Treaty of Paris.⁶¹ The importance that land played almost guaranteed post-Revolutionary War conflicts along the frontier. Land ownership was especially important to the European-born settlers, for it meant a place to build a home and establish a farm. Livestock, which required land, represented the backbone of the economy.⁶²

⁵⁸ R. Douglas Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier: Crucible of the Old Northwest, 1720-1830* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996) ix.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 40-42.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 94-95.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 211.

Native Americans did not believe in the idea of ownership of land. In general, land was a gift from the Great Spirit, and that it was not rightfully theirs to exclusively claim or sell.⁶³ While Hurt's book centers on the problems with land occupation, the issue did lead to other major problems for both natives and the Americans. Often government officials believed that they had completed a treaty that had the support of all the native tribes in the region, but this was not the case. Most of the time, the signed treaties did not have the support of all the tribes.⁶⁴ His work broadened the scope of understanding Northwest Territory issues. As Hurt stated, "culture rather than the Ohio River remained the great divide between the Indians and the frontier people."⁶⁵

Stephen Warren's, *The Shawnees and Their Neighbors, 1795-1870*, examines the tribal politics and positioning for power and dominance in the region. Warren breaks down into a confederacy of five main divisions within the Shawnee Nation united by a shared common language and culture. Warren examines how the Shawnee Nation was at a cultural crossroads, when European and American goods and traditions began to seep into the tribes' way of life and society. Over time, this created a rift between those who accepted European/American influence, and those who chose to stay true to their native culture and heritage. Warren's book is effective in explaining the complexities of inter- and intra-tribal relations during the settlement of the Old Northwest, as each division tried to gain control of the region. He characterized the Prophet as the main figure behind the pan-Indian Alliance, but did not have the full support of the entire Shawnee Nation in his rebellion against the Americans.⁶⁶

⁶³ Ibid., 24.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 97.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 94.

⁶⁶ Warren, *Shawnees and Their Neighbors*, 13-23.

Colin G. Calloway's, *The Shawnees and the War for America* (2007), centers on the history of the Shawnee Indians and their complex relationships with other tribes and encroaching countries. Calloway approached the development of the Old Northwest through the viewpoint of the Shawnee Indians. The book begins with the breakdown of the tribal structure of the Shawnee Nation leading up to their first interactions with the Europeans; examines the efforts of significant leaders like Cornstalk, Blue Jacket, Black Hoof, and finishes with final resistance led by Tecumseh and the Shawnee Prophet. Calloway's work is a sharp contrast from earlier histories on the development of the Old Northwest. He argued that the contest was more than who wins control of the land, but about whose vision of America would prevail.⁶⁷

Robert Owens, *Mr. Jefferson's Hammer* (2007), chronicles the life of William Henry Harrison and examines the role he played in implementing Jeffersonian policy on Indian relations. Owens portrays Harrison as having the central role in the U.S. government's policies regarding American-Indian relations and land acquisitions.⁶⁸ He notes that it was Jefferson's view that the best way to deal with the Indian land conflicts was to create a cycle in which Native Americans would become dependent upon American goods and that the rising cost would inevitably force them to sell their land in return for forgiveness of debt and more goods. Harrison, the author notes, was highly effective in hashing out these treaties with desperate tribes. It is these treaties, and the

⁶⁷ Colin Calloway, *The Shawnees and War for America* (New York: Viking Press, The Penguin Library of Indian History, 2007) 175.

⁶⁸ Robert M. Owens, *Mr. Jefferson's Hammer: William Henry Harrison and the Origins of American Indian Policy* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007).

way in which these negotiations occurred, that provided Tecumseh and his brother with the impetus to build up their pan-Indian alliance.⁶⁹

The Battle of Tippecanoe marked a shift in U.S. Native American policy from negotiated treaties to combat in the Northwest Territory. Earlier battles occurred between natives and forces of the U.S. government, but the Battle of Tippecanoe resulted from failed efforts to negotiate peace with tribes in the Old Northwest. The story behind the battle, including the key figures involved, represent many of the characteristics that signify the American frontier. The result of the battle launched the careers of men like William Henry Harrison, John Tipton, and others to prominent local and national offices. Stories of glory and triumph over Native Americans grew over the years, reaching heights of popularity during the centennials of the battle and Indiana's statehood that remain in today's public memory.

Historical interpretation regarding the Battle of Tippecanoe and development of the Old Northwest region changed over time from a predominantly Anglo focus to more balanced, nuanced analysis of the complex relationship of settlers and natives. Early historical work from the Progressive Era remains ingrained in public memory today, even as scholarly study shifted with the rise of social history in 1970s and 1980s. The historians represented in this chapter depict the change in interpretation, but are hardly the only works on the subject. While publications by R. David Edmunds and Gregory Dowd provided more even and thorough interpretations of the Old Northwest and Battle of Tippecanoe, public memory of the region and battle continue to hold to opinions popularized during the Progressive Era. Aided by monuments, entertainment, and fairs,

⁶⁹ Ibid., 203-213.

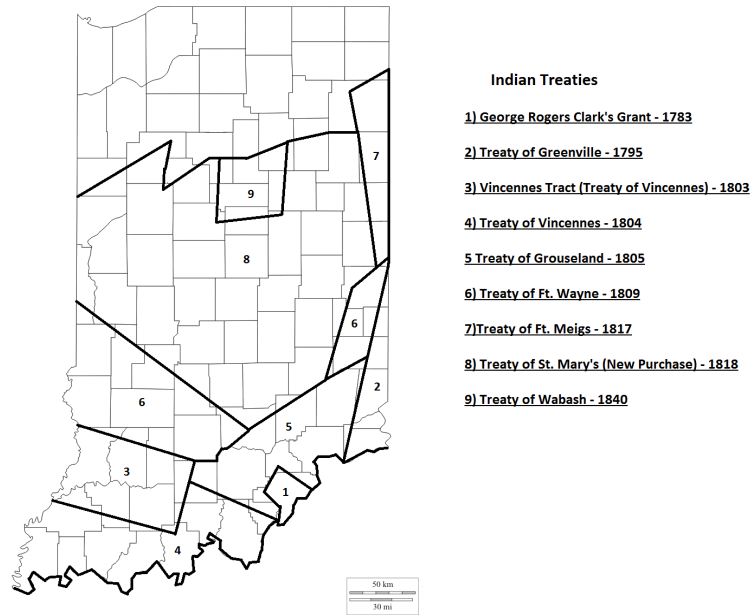
Progressive Era interpretation continues to influence the history and significance of the Battle of Tippecanoe.

[Map 3]
Map of the Old Northwest



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[Map 4]
Indiana Land Cession Treaties



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⁷⁰ Map of Northwest Territory, Ohio Historical Society, available from www.ohiohistoryteachers.org; Internet; accessed 3 November 2010.

⁷¹ Adapted Map from Indiana Junior Historical Society, and Indiana Historical Bureau. *The Indiana Junior Historian*. (Indianapolis, Ind.: Indiana Historical Bureau for the Indiana Junior Historical Society, 1995), and History of South Central Indiana, Indiana's Hoosier National Forest Region, <http://www.foresthistory.org/ASPNET/Publications/region/9/hoosier/sec1.htm>; Internet; access 3 Feb. 2011. Map is an approximation of the lands ceded to the U.S from 1783 to 1840.

Chapter 2: The Battle of Tippecanoe

A shot rang out at 4:15 am on a dark and cloudy morning on 7 November 1811. The sound startled the Territorial Governor, General William Henry Harrison, as he was getting dressed. Attempting to catch Harrison and his men off guard, native warriors attacked their encampment's left flank under the cover of darkness on orders from their spiritual leader Tenskwatawa, the Shawnee Prophet (see map 5).⁷² With that shot, the Battle of Tippecanoe began. Soon the entire encampment faced attack from all sides. The goal for the Indians was simple: kill Harrison. Despite breaking through Harrison's lines, the pan-Indian coalition failed to achieve its goal.

With reinforcements protecting his flanks and the rear, Harrison ordered Major Daviess to lead a counterattack with mixed results. The charge forced the Native forces to retreat but cost Daviess his life. The attack was effective in dislodging the warriors from their superior positions.⁷³ Harrison's lines held until daylight, when he was able to see his attackers, and ordered a final counterattack. Supported by dragoons (cavalry), Harrison's infantry (including militia) charged with bayonets fixed towards the warriors driving them back. The Prophet's force retreated into a marsh and abandoned the field of battle.⁷⁴ Harrison stood victorious of the Battle of Tippecanoe.

⁷² William Henry Harrison, *Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Two Letters from Gov. Harrison of the Indiana Territory Reporting the Particulars and the Issue of the Expedition Under His Command against the Hostile Indians on the Wabash : December 19th, 1811, Read, and Referred to Mr. M'Kee, Mr. Sevier, Mr. Breckenridge, Mr. Morrow, Mr. Alston, Mr. Lefevre and Mr. Maxwell.* (Washington City: R.C. Weightman 1811) 11.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 12-13. Another account found in the address by Capt. Alfred Pirtle mentioned in Alva O. Reser, *The Tippecanoe Battle-Field Monument; A History of the Association Formed to Promote the Enterprise, the Action of Congress and the Indiana Legislature, the Work of the Commission and the Ceremonies at the Dedication of the Monument* (Indianapolis: W.B. Burford, 1909) 43.

⁷⁴ Harrison, *Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Two Letters from Gov. Harrison of the Indiana Territory*, 14.

The Battle of Tippecanoe was the culmination of sixteen years of tension between the U.S. and the Great Lakes native tribes. The hostilities stemmed from a clash of cultures that pitted two distinctively different philosophies against one another. At the center of the conflict were incompatible attitudes towards land. Americans viewed land as a commodity to be bought and sold. Natives understood land as communal ground, and thus impossible to own. The U.S. government's lack of interest in gaining approval of land sales with all the tribes angered many tribes. Many Native Americans argued that the U.S. needed to reach agreement with all the tribes that inhabited the land for a treaty to be legitimate. They believed that the U.S. was creating unnecessary competition among tribes over risk in receiving no concessions for the loss of their land.

The U.S. government launched an aggressive foreign policy aimed at securing control of all land east of the Mississippi River. From 1800 to 1812, the government, under the orders of Presidents Adams and Jefferson, promoted the idea of acquiring land through monetary means (see map 6). The Northwest Territorial Governor, William Henry Harrison, was responsible for determining which tribal chiefs would be more open, or accommodating, to the negotiations of land sales. Harrison's orders were simple: acquire as much land from as many tribes as possible.⁷⁵ The U.S. initiated these negotiations with little regard to the actual authority over lands claimed by any accommodating chiefs. From 1794 to 1811, the United States and the tribes of the Great Lakes region negotiated terms of land, settlement, and authority over crime with native peoples steadily losing control of land that was vital to their way of life.⁷⁶ These

⁷⁵ Robert M. Owens, *Mr. Jefferson's Hammer: William Henry Harrison and the Origins of American Indian Policy* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007) 76-78, 81-84.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 249-250.

fundamental disagreements over land and the way each utilize it intensified as more white settlers arrived, culminating with the Battle of Tippecanoe.

Even before the Revolutionary War, the Ohio frontier was a hotbed as Native Americans struggled with France and England over control of the land. The French were claiming all the lands north of the Ohio River, while the British were claiming all lands south of the river.⁷⁷ The competition to acquire control, either through trading or land ownership, resulted in the French and Indian War. England's victory over French and Indian forces signified British dominance in North America. The problem continued after the Revolutionary War, as American soldiers attempted to take control of the Old Northwest by force. Through the terms of the Treaty of Paris in 1783, the U.S. government successfully acquired the land that the British Empire claimed.⁷⁸ The treaty signed between the United States and England gave the U.S. claim to land east of the Mississippi River and south of Canada despite the fact that Native Americans, not Anglo settlers, inhabited the area. Neither the British nor the United States acknowledged the natives' claim to their land.

This land was necessary to the future of both the United States and Native Americans. For natives, it was obvious this was their home, where they and their families before them had lived. For the Americans, it marked an incredible opportunity for growth. The U.S. government was in serious debt following the American Revolution, and the newly acquired land represented the most logical method of generating income. Many of the earliest settlers in the region were American veterans of the Revolution

⁷⁷ R. Douglas Hurt, *Ohio Frontier: Crucible of the Old Northwest, 1720-1830* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996) 40.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 94-95. The Treaty of Paris, in 1783, recognized American Independence over England. It also laid claim that the Americans controlled land east of the Mississippi, except for New Orleans, and south of what is now the Canadian border.

aspiring for prosperity in the western frontier. Instead of levying taxes, the American government sold the newly acquired land to its citizens. The plan worked; the money gained from the land transactions helped pay off national debts, and provided many citizens with a chance to own land.⁷⁹ The land that would later become the Northwest Territory was essential to the growth of the country in size and power. Despite the claims stated in the Treaty of Paris, native tribes from the Ohio frontier were not anxious to give up the land they had previously fought to preserve.

Immediately following war with the English, the newly formed United States of America began to focus its attention on various methods of removing tribes from the Ohio frontier. One of the first actions by the U.S. government was the adoption of the Land Ordinance of 1785. The Land Ordinance of 1785 established a rectangular survey system in advance of settlement in order to rationalize and streamline the orderly sale of land to private parties. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 created the country's first official territory, and a mechanism for transitioning dependent territories to independent states.⁸⁰ The next task at hand for the U.S. government was securing this land from the tribes that populated it.

In 1787, President Washington named General Arthur St. Clair the first governor of the Northwest Territory. St. Clair's order was to subdue native hostilities through force. Aided with roughly a thousand troops, St. Clair moved west to present day Ft. Recovery, Ohio. His campaign ended badly on November 4, 1791, as a confederation of tribal forces, totaling 1,500 warriors led by Miami Chief Little Turtle and Shawnee Chief Blue Jacket ambushed St. Clair and his men resulting in the worst defeat ever suffered by

⁷⁹ Andrew R. L. Cayton, *Frontier Indiana. A History of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996) 101.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 104.

the U.S. military at the hands of Native Americans. Following the defeat, St. Clair resigned his post and Washington replaced him with successful Indian fighter General Anthony Wayne.⁸¹ The future success of the country rested on the stability of the western frontier and subduing the native tribes.

Government officials concluded that St. Clair's campaign was unsuccessful because the soldiers did not properly train for combat against Native Americans who employed guerilla-warfare style tactics as opposed to the traditional European style of combat. A congressional hearing concluded that St. Clair's men were under-trained and undisciplined resulting in their defeat.⁸² Wayne embarked on a second campaign the following year, this time with over 4,500 troops. Before launching an attack on the pan-Indian confederacy, Wayne spent most of 1792 and 1793 training his men and correcting the errors made by his predecessor. By the summer of 1794, Wayne began his assault on the native confederacy. The Battle of Fallen Timbers occurred later that summer, this time with the American troops significantly outnumbering the native warriors. Wayne and his company defeated the warriors at the banks of the Maumee River.⁸³ The resulting victory allowed the U.S. to negotiate a favorable treaty with the tribes.

The Battle of Fallen Timbers also marked the first encounter between two respected warriors: a young Shawnee, Tecumseh, and William Henry Harrison, who served as aide to General Wayne. Tecumseh's older brother Sauwaseekau died at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, but Tecumseh emerged from the battle as a strong fighter and leader. He successfully led a small group of warriors down the Maumee River to safety.

⁸¹ Ibid., 157-161.

⁸² Ibid., 161.

⁸³ John Sugden, *Blue Jacket: Warrior of the Shawnees* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000) 172, 176-180.

Despite the success of Tecumseh in the battle, the pan-Indian confederacy created and led by Little Turtle and Blue Jacket suffered. The U.S. now had a stronghold in Ohio for negotiating more land terms that would serve to divide tribes over their course of action. Tribal leaders faced the dilemma of agreeing to American terms or retreating to fight another day.⁸⁴

Initially most of the tribes favored negotiations, as over a thousand Native Americans, led most notably Little Turtle of the Miami, met in Greenville, Ohio, with General Wayne to discuss a peace treaty. Representatives of 1,130 native warriors arrived at Greenville, including 381 Delawares, 143 Shawnees, 72 Miamis, and 12 Weas and Piankashaws, and officially agreed to the Treaty of Greenville on August 3, 1795 (see maps 6 and 7). Tecumseh gained some notoriety among some natives over his refusal to take part in negotiations for this treaty. The Treaty of Greenville ordered the regional tribes to give up their claim to south-central Ohio and a portion of Indiana and allowed Americans to take land to build posts in the Wabash-Maumee region. In exchange for ceding their land, the tribes received \$20,000 in goods, exchange of prisoners, protection from white intruders on native lands, installment of licensed traders, annuities ranging from \$500-\$1,000, and peace.⁸⁵

In addition to the favorable land secessions the U.S. obtained after victory at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, the government successfully negotiated Jay's Treaty with the British that removed forts and garrisons from the Old Northwest region over a period of ten years. The U.S. government had the autonomous authority in the region identified as

⁸⁴ John Sugden, *Tecumseh: A Life* (New York: Henry Holt and Co, 1998) 89-90.

⁸⁵ R. David Edmund, *The Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983) 16, 31; Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 164-166; "Treaty of Greenville (1795)" *Ohio History Central*, <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=1418>; Internet; accessed 16 April 2011.

the Northwest Territory. During the summer of 1795, Tecumseh began to gather support from warriors of different tribes in the area, Delaware, Miami, some of his own Shawnees, and others to start a pan-Indian alliance to challenge the western American expansion.⁸⁶ The main concerns of the alliance were the expansion of whites upon the lands of the tribes, trading issues, and their overall safety and protection. The four chiefs who established this alliance were Tecumseh, Blue Jacket, Roundhead (or Sti-agh-ta), and Panther. Their goals were simple: stop western expansion and continue the preservation of their heritage and culture⁸⁷.

Other growing problems among tribes were the spread of European diseases and alcohol that ravaged many tribes of the Old Northwest. The increased interactions with whites caused many natives to fall ill to diseases that white forefathers brought over from Europe. Alcohol promoted dependence and undermined treaty negotiations, as intoxicated natives were susceptible to agreeing to trades that heavily favored whites. Even Governor Harrison admitted that alcohol abuse by Native American was becoming a problem. Harrison spoke to Secretary of War Henry Dearborn about this issue. “This poisonous liquor, not only incapacitates them from obtaining a living by hunting, but it leads to the most atrocious crimes—killing each other has become so customary amongst them that it is no longer a crime to murder those whom they have been most accustomed

⁸⁶ The Shawnee Nation was essentially a group of semiautonomous villages who were united more so by language and culture than by politics and leaders. All Shawnees belonged to one of five divisions in the tribe: Mekoche, Hathawekela or Thawekila, Pekowi, Kispoko, and Chillicothe. Each division served a purpose in the tribe. Chillicothe and Thawekila divisions generally took care of the political concerns affecting the whole tribe, and often produced the most tribal political leaders. The Mekoche division focused on health and medicine. They provided the healers and counselors. The Pekowi division was responsible for religious matters and rituals. The Kispoko division was generally the warriors of the tribe. They took the lead in preparing and training for war. Their division supplied the most war chiefs. Each division served a part in the collection of the whole tribe. Information discussed in Stephen Warren, *Shawnees and Their Neighbors, 1795-1870* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2005).

⁸⁷ Benjamin Drake, *Life of Tecumseh and of His Brother the Prophet: With a Historical Sketch of the Shawanoe Indians* (Cincinnati: H. H. Green Press, 1840) 83, 97.

to esteem and regard.”⁸⁸ Alcohol furthered the wedge between these two cultures. The territorial government prohibited the sale of alcohol by whites to natives as its consumption resulted in increased occurrence of crime or violence.

In 1799, the General Assembly of the Northwest Territory organized in Chillicothe, Ohio, to select a non-voting delegate to the U.S. Congress. The territorial government narrowly selected Harrison over Arthur St. Clair Jr., son of then Territorial Governor. The selection of Harrison was hardly a surprise. Harrison gained acclaim for his military service and Indian fighting background, serving as aide to General Wayne during the Battle of Fallen Timbers. Prior to becoming Territorial Governor, Harrison served on several important committees that dealt with American Indian affairs, and as the Chairman of Public Lands, where his responsibility was to keep Congress informed on the progress and development of the territory and update the government on potential problems or issues such as indigenous hostilities. In short, Harrison became the voice of the territory in Washington, and eventually its leader.⁸⁹

Harrison showed himself to be an apt politician, playing an influential role in the decision to divide the Northwest Territory in preparation for the likely statehood of Ohio (see map 8). In 1800, Congress signed into law the establishment of the Ohio Territory (consisting of Ohio and the eastern half of Michigan) and the Indiana Territory (consisting of Indiana, Illinois, western Michigan, Wisconsin and parts of Minnesota). The division dissolved the Northwest Territory costing Harrison his spot in Congress. However, the day before President Adams finished his term in office he rewarded

⁸⁸ Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 201.

⁸⁹ Freeman Cleaves, *Old Tippecanoe; William Henry Harrison and His Time*. (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1969) 28-32.

Harrison's efforts by appointing him Governor of the Territory of Indiana.⁹⁰ In 1801, Harrison became the first governor of the Indiana Territory, a position he held for twelve years until the outbreak of the War of 1812. While Harrison was not initially eager about moving to the west, soon after his arrival in Vincennes, he acknowledged that the place was better than expected. Harrison aspired to have a successful political career, and realized the only place he had a chance to make a name for himself was to agree to move west.⁹¹

Territorial Governor Harrison's primary objective was to obtain land titles from tribes in hope of securing statehood for Indiana. While John Adams appointed Harrison Territorial Governor, Harrison worked prominently with Adam's successor, Thomas Jefferson, from 1801 to 1809. Jefferson's publicly stated ideal was to provide Native Americans with their own towns where they could farm and raise animals under the guidance of American agents or guides. In reality though, Jefferson offered little support to any natives interested in assimilating into the American culture. The private policy instructed to Harrison on Feb. 27, 1803, was to get native tribes to become dependent on American goods and annuities to build up debt that the Americans could use to acquire favorable land cessions.

“But this letter being unofficial, and private, I may with safety give you a more extensive view of our policy respecting the Indians. . . . To promote this disposition to exchange lands which they have to spare and we want for necessaries, which we have to spare and they want, we shall push our trading houses, and be glad to see the good and influential individuals among them run in debt, because we observe that when these debts get

⁹⁰ Lorethea Hamke, *All About William Henry Harrison* (Vincennes, Ind: L. Hamke, 1975) 7.

⁹¹ Cleaves, 34.

beyond what the individuals can pay, they become willing to lop them off by a cession of lands.”⁹²

By 1803, Jefferson had granted Harrison the authority to negotiate and conclude treaties with any willing tribe.

The U.S. government attempted to acquire land from natives through any means possible, monetary or militarily. Congress, in Washington, urged the territorial governors of Indiana and Mississippi, as well as their Indian agents, to educate indigenous villages in farming, domestic manufacturing, monogamy, and Christianity.⁹³ The goal of this plan was to get the natives to abandon their traditions and beliefs in favor of Anglo-American values and culture. The U.S. government was going to teach Native Americans how to be American or remove them by force from the region. Either way the effect would be the same, the eradication of native culture and heritage.

As Harrison maneuvered to gain further titles to tribal lands, Tecumseh and his brother the Prophet attempted to strengthen their alliance by preaching to unite all tribes together to defeat their common American enemy, and return to their way of life prior to their interactions with whites.⁹⁴ Tecumseh witnessed firsthand the success a pan-Indian

⁹² William Henry Harrison, “Letter President Jefferson to William Henry Harrison, February 27, 1803,” *Governor’s Messages and Letters, Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison*, ed. Logan Esarey, vol. 1 (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Commission, 1922) 70-71.

⁹³ Harrison, *Messages and Letters*, vol. 1, 39.

⁹⁴ The legend of how the Prophet, also known as Tenskwatawa, came to prominence is uncertain. One night in 1805, Tenskwatawa’s, whose name at the time was Lalawethika, reached into his fire to grab a brand to light tobacco in his long-stemmed pipe. As he was raising the pipe to his lips, Lalawethika grasped, dropping his pipe and toppled over onto his side. His wife rushed out of their tent to find aide for her apparently sick husband. As she returned to their hut, Lalawethika appeared to be lying on the ground dead. Suddenly Lalawethika began to move and eventually awoke. Upon waking he began to tell a story of life, death, and resurrection, where he explained that sinners would suffer a fiery wrath, while virtuous souls would be able to enter the gates of heaven. Overcome by his vision, Lalawethika began to weep and renounce his evil drunken ways. He wanted Indians to renounce the ways of the white man and return to their traditional lifestyle, before encountering Europeans. By returning to the traditional lifestyle of the Shawnees, one would then be welcomed by the Great Spirit. Information found in Gregory Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance* (Baltimore. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992) 124-126; Andrew Cayton, *Frontier Indiana* (Bloomington. Indiana University Press, 1998) 206-207.

confederacy could achieve at the St. Clair's Defeat. The Shawnee brothers' preaching proved more effective with younger warriors who were more eager for combat than older, wiser chiefs and warriors who had experienced warfare. The Shawnee brothers argued that these accommodationalist chiefs effectively made tribes pawns of the American government. Followers of the Prophet launched a campaign to hunt down and kill Native Americans who signed the Treaty of Greenville or interacted peacefully with whites, creating a turbulent atmosphere in some villages. These generational purges carried out by followers of the Prophet appeared to the settlers and territorial government officials as a sign that the Prophet's influence and leadership were growing stronger.⁹⁵

In 1805, Harrison successfully negotiated the Treaty of Grouseland with the Miami Indians that gave the United States a tract of land 70 miles long, that connected the land acquired from Treaty of Greenville to the Vincennes tract (see map 6). The treaty marked the second major land cession in the Old Northwest by regional tribes and created new problems for the U.S. government. The American government needed to settle the land quickly to ensure that the Native Americans would leave the area. This resulted in further negotiations by Harrison and his Indian agents with the tribes to create a more definitive boundary between the two nations.⁹⁶ Harrison urged Congress to approve legislation, commonly referenced as the Harrison Land Act, which made it easier for Americans to purchase land reducing the minimum amount of land that settlers could purchase from 640 acres to 320 acres and created a credit system that required the

⁹⁵ Stephen Warren, *The Shawnees and Their Neighbors, 1795-1870* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005) 28.

⁹⁶ Harrison, *Messages and Letters*, vol. 1, 44.

purchaser to pay only a fourth of the value upfront.⁹⁷ The Harrison Land Act enabled more settlement into unoccupied areas recently ceded in treaties.

The increase of settlers in the region precipitated a rise in crime and violence perpetrated by whites and natives against each other, further escalating tension. Kidnappings and robberies became more common by both sides, and the threat of greater escalation loomed. The increased tension and conflict was especially disturbing for many tribes who accurately believed that violence perpetrated by whites often went unpunished, while American Indians usually faced punishment for similar offenses toward whites.⁹⁸ The uneven treatment of law enforcement only furthered the gap between whites and Native Americans. To avoid immediate conflict, the U.S. needed to cede back some of the acquired land where the tribes still encamped, as well as increase some of the tribes' annuities.⁹⁹ At the same time, many natives were at odds among themselves regarding the best negotiating tactics to secure their land, as competition arose over which tribes primarily inhabited the land and received the largest annuity payment from the U.S.

In an effort to reinforce his coalition, the Prophet met with the western Potawatomi chief from Illinois, Main Poc, who exercised considerable leadership among natives in the Illinois and Wisconsin area.¹⁰⁰ Both men agreed that moving headquarters from Greenville to a more centrally located base would provide the Prophet with the best means of spreading his religious and cultural beliefs among other tribes. By 1808, the

⁹⁷ “An act providing for the sale of lands of the United States, in the territory north-west of Ohio, and above the mouth of the Kentucky river.” – referred to as Harrison Land Act of 1800. *U.S. Statutes at Large*, II, (1937) 73-78.

⁹⁸ Harrison, *Messages and Letters*, vol. 1, 60.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁰⁰ Edmunds, 63.

Prophet established the village Prophetstown near the junction of the Tippecanoe and Wabash Rivers. It allowed easy access for the Prophet to travel to most of the villages located in the territory.¹⁰¹ The move proved to be successful as recruitment increased following the relocation.¹⁰²

Between 1808 and 1811, the pan-Indian alliance increased from fewer than one hundred followers to close to one thousand supporters.¹⁰³ The Prophet preached about the need for American Indians to return to their native cultures and give up Anglo goods and practices. For the Prophet, the alliance was as much a religious quest as it was a physical one. He promised his followers salvation and a return to the times before their contact with whites. It was a promise many young warriors believed; resist American influence and the Native Americans would succeed. The Prophet's preaching only furthered the divide between both cultures (white and indigenous), and fueled speculation among Americans that ulterior motives were at play.¹⁰⁴

Harrison in particular believed that the British government supplied the Prophet and his followers with weapons and encouraged them with assurances of support. Harrison worried that the Prophet and his brother, Tecumseh, were growing stronger in force as further negotiations with the U.S. left many natives without land and significantly fewer natural resources. Harrison notes this in a letter to the Secretary of War:

“The influence of the Prophet has been great, and the advice to the Indians injurious to them and the United States. We have the fullest evidence,

¹⁰¹ Harrison, *Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Two Letters from Gov. Harrison of the Indiana Territory*, 14.

¹⁰² Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 210, 213.

¹⁰³ Warren, 31.

¹⁰⁴ Colin G. Calloway, *The Shawnees and the War for America* (New York: Penguin Library of American Indian History, 2007) 126, 130-135; Dowd, 142-143.

which his object has been to form a combination of them in hostility to the United States. The powerful influence of the British has been exerted in a way alluring to the savage character.”¹⁰⁵

Stories emerged from friendly tribes and various Indian agents that Tecumseh traveled from village to village passing the war belt promising victory with the help of their “brothers” the British. An image of Tecumseh posing wearing a British officer’s jacket became the popular lithograph viewed by Americans. The true extent of British interference is unclear, but the belief among the American decision-makers was that the threat was legitimate, as the U.S. cited the Battle of Tippecanoe as an example of British interference when declaring war in the War of 1812.¹⁰⁶

A turning point in relations between Harrison, representing the U.S. government, and the Prophet’s coalition came on September 30, 1809, with the Treaty of Fort Wayne (see map 6). The treaty signed by the leaders of Delaware, Miami, Eel River Miami, and Potawatomi, ceded tribal claim to over two and a half million acres to the United States. In return, the U.S. gave each tribe roughly a \$250-\$500 increase in their annuities as a whole plus \$5,200 in trade goods. According to reports, 956 Native Americans were present at the signing of the treaty. Most of the American Indians who signed the Treaty of Ft. Wayne were tired of bloodshed and the inconsistent support of the British, and hoped that this treaty would bring peace to the region.¹⁰⁷ Especially significant were the Chiefs who signed the document: Anderson and Beaver from the Delawares, Winamac, and Five Medals from the Potawatomis, and Little Turtle and Peacan of the Miamis. All of these men were governing chiefs who shared in U.S. government annuities, but the

¹⁰⁵ Harrison, *Messages and Letters*, vol. 1, 348.

¹⁰⁶ Harrison, *Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Two Letters from Gov. Harrison of the Indiana Territory*, 15-22.

¹⁰⁷ Harrison, *Messages and Letters*, vol. 1, 359-378.

younger more militant members of their tribes despised their actions.¹⁰⁸ The treaty was supposed to be the climax of Harrison's seven years of negotiations with the tribes of the Wabash and Maumee valleys.¹⁰⁹ Unfortunately, it was this agreement that put Harrison on a path towards combat with Tecumseh and the Prophet.

Tecumseh was adamant that the American government exploited the poverty of the most deprived tribes to get land treaties signed.¹¹⁰ The Shawnee brothers denounced the Treaty of Fort Wayne as illegal and argued that the ceded land belonged to all Native Americans not just the ones who signed the treaty. While the Delawares and Miamis had legitimate claim to the land they ceded, the Potawatomis only hunted in this region and did not have any established villages.¹¹¹ After the treaty signing, according to reports by Harrison and others, the Shawnee brothers became increasingly hostile not only to Americans but also to the chiefs they believed guilty of accommodation.¹¹²

While Harrison considered the Treaty of Fort Wayne a victory, it did create further hostilities that strengthened the claims made by the Prophet and Tecumseh that the Americans were trying to remove native tribes from the region. Soon young warriors from the Miami, Wyandots, and even Senecas, who had lost their native lands in New York, were questioning their governing chiefs and beginning to show support for the militant pan-Indian movement.¹¹³ Tecumseh and the Prophet angrily denounced the accommodations made by those tribal leaders who signed the treaty, because it left the

¹⁰⁸ 5 Delaware chiefs, 10 Putawatimies, 6 Miamies, and 3 Eel Rivers signed the treaty in the presence of Peter Jones, secretary to the commissioners, John Johnston, Indian agent, and others. Information found in Edmunds, 81; Weightman, 7-8.

¹⁰⁹ Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 215.

¹¹⁰ Sugden, *Tecumseh: A Life*, 187.

¹¹¹ Edmunds, 80-81.

¹¹² Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 216.

¹¹³ Edmunds, 81.

natives permanently dependent upon U.S. money and goods.¹¹⁴ The treaty also pushed Tecumseh into more of a leadership role. Prior to the treaty, Native Americans recognized him primarily as “the brother of the Prophet.” Now Tecumseh was traveling to visit other tribes trying to gain followers to the pan-Indian alliance.¹¹⁵

In the spring of 1810, the Prophet sent messages, through his followers, to the tribes in Michigan and northern Indiana to denounce the Treaty of Ft. Wayne, and to warn them against further land cessions initiated by the American government. To gain more support, the Prophet arranged a meeting with the Ottawas, Chippewas, and Potawatomis at St. Joseph, near present-day South Bend, Indiana.¹¹⁶ While the Shawnee brothers were gaining strength in numbers, not all tribes were ready to join arms with the Prophet and Tecumseh. Other tribes, specifically the Delawares, still aspired to negotiate deals with the U.S. government to keep their land. The Delaware chiefs effectively urged their tribes to reject any association with the Prophet. When the Delawares met with U.S. officials, they acknowledged their meeting with the Prophet, but stated their desire remain civil with the Americans.¹¹⁷

Harrison continued to have concerns over the threat of violence by the Native Americans who followed Tecumseh and the Prophet.¹¹⁸ The brothers were gathering support from other Native American tribes in areas outside of the Great Lakes region, as well as from the British. The British aided the pan-Indian resistance by providing guns

¹¹⁴ Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 216.

¹¹⁵ Calloway, 138; Sugden, 187.

¹¹⁶ Harrison, *Messages and Letters*, vol. 1, 417-418.

¹¹⁷ Edmunds, 82.

¹¹⁸ Harrison, *Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Two Letters from Gov. Harrison of the Indiana Territory*, 15.

and ammunition in the event that war with the United States broke out.¹¹⁹ Harrison suspected British interference on U.S. Native American relations. He expressed his concerns in a letter June 26, 1810, to Secretary of War William Eustis: “I have as little doubt that the scheme originated with the British and that the Prophet is inspired by the superintendent of Indian affairs for Upper Canada, rather than the Great Spirit, from whom he pretends to derive his authority.”¹²⁰ With the Shawnee brothers’ numbers growing, coupled with the threat of British aid, the concern over violence in the area escalated. President Madison appointed Harrison to take charge of resolving this growing conflict. Harrison had several meetings with the Native Americans between 1805 and 1811 with the hope of avoiding conflict and successfully negotiated land treaties.¹²¹

Harrison proposed that the Prophet go to Washington, D.C., to discuss with the President his displeasure over the treaties. The Prophet declined this invitation, but his brother agreed to meet at the territorial capital of Vincennes on August 12, 1810. Harrison found Tecumseh to be arrogant and insolent. Tecumseh had turned down Harrison’s invitation to stay in a house, and instead set up shelter underneath an elm tree. The council officially began three days later on August 15. Tecumseh refused any accommodations offered by Harrison, and charged, in detail, how the French had treated the natives fairly, yet the British and then the Americans took advantage of the tribes’ dire situation. The point was clear; the Americans were no friends of the Indians.¹²² At the meeting, Tecumseh spoke at great length about the treatment American Indians

¹¹⁹ “Requisition for Indian Presents in Case of War with the United States,” Indian Department Upper Canada, *Michigan Historical Collections*, Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, and Michigan Historical Commission, vol. 23 (Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission, 1989) 70. <http://books.google.com/books?id=5pYUAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=editions:OCLC8069520&lr=#v=onepage&q&f=false>; Internet; accessed 5 November 2010.

¹²⁰ Harrison, *Messages and Letters*, vol. 1, 485.

¹²¹ Cleaves, 58-59.

¹²² Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 217-218.

received from the French, British, and United States. In his message, Tecumseh praised the French, and to a certain extent the British, for their behavior towards Native Americans. Tecumseh's critique of American treatment was not favorable. He also left a stern warning with Harrison that white settlers for their own safety should not advance any farther. Stating, "since the peace was made you have kill'd some of the Shawanese, Winebagoes Delawares and Miamies and you have taken our lands from us and I do not see how we can remain at peace with you if you continue to do so."¹²³

Harrison and Tecumseh met one more time the following summer in August 1811 with similar results. After the council, Tecumseh journeyed farther south to get more Natives to join his resistance movement. Harrison was certain that an attack orchestrated by the Prophet's pan-Indian alliance was imminent. Harrison wrote to Secretary of War Eustis on August 13, 1811, stating "the necessity of breaking up the Prophet's establishment upon the Wabash."¹²⁴ With Tecumseh down south recruiting, Harrison thought it was the perfect time to put an end to this resistance from Indian adversaries at Prophetstown. Harrison believed that he could squash the fabric and foundation of Tecumseh's work. The Secretary of War agreed with Harrison and arranged plans for the expedition.¹²⁵

The following month, September 26, 1811, Harrison requested and received permission to embark on a military expedition to Prophetstown (see map 9), taking advantage of the fact that Tecumseh was out of the territory, recruiting for the pan-Indian alliance. Harrison assembled an army of 1,225 troops, roughly 700 of which were militia

¹²³ Harrison, *Messages and Letters*, vol. 1, 464.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 554.

¹²⁵ Harrison, *Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Two Letters from Gov. Harrison of the Indiana Territory*, 22-23; Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 220-221.

from Indiana and Kentucky, while the rest were regular soldiers of the 4th U.S. Regiment.¹²⁶ Harrison marched his men north along the banks of the Wabash River until reaching present-day Terre Haute with orders to build a fortification. Fort Harrison took one month for its completion, after which time Harrison continued north towards Prophetstown. He sent Delaware scouts ahead to Prophetstown with notice of his eventual arrival. While Harrison's message to the Prophet requested a peace summit, Harrison had received orders to kill any hostile natives west of the Wabash. Major John Tipton, who would later become U.S. Senator from Indiana, wrote in his diary that his orders to shoot any hostile Indians west of the Wabash as "good news."¹²⁷

The Prophet reacted angrily upon news of Harrison's expedition, as it showed a clear sign of disrespect of the Prophet's power, leadership, and reputation. He sent spies to track the movement of Harrison's army.¹²⁸ Harrison's expedition from Ft. Harrison to Prophetstown took nine days, as he cautiously marched his men north fearful of a surprise attack by the Prophet's men. When Harrison approached the Prophet's village, November 6, 1811, followers of the Prophet claimed that he wanted to set up negotiations and avoid conflict. Harrison agreed, feeling obligated to negotiate one last time, and scheduled a meet the following day on November 7, 1811. Both sides also agreed to remain peaceful until negotiations had ended. After meeting with native scouts, the army set up encampment along Burnett's Creek, a couple miles from Prophetstown, where the

¹²⁶ Harrison, *Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Two Letters from Gov. Harrison of the Indiana Territory*, 5; Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 221.

¹²⁷ John Tipton, Diary entry, October 31, 1811, John Tipton Collection (L160), Manuscripts and Rare Books Division, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis.

¹²⁸ Harrison, *Messages and Letters*, vol. 1, 605.

high ground positioned between two valleys provided Harrison the best defense from a possible attack.¹²⁹

Harrison established a defensive position in an unevenly shaped trapezoid 150 yards long and roughly 50 to 75 yards in width (see map 5). He ordered his soldiers to sleep at their posts and to be ready for a potential attack. Harrison took various measures to protect his encampment, but did not expect an armed conflict from the Shawnee Prophet during the night. Since Tecumseh was out of the territory, Harrison believed that if the Prophet's forces had intended to attack they would have done so while the army was marching towards Prophetstown. Harrison's extensive experience in Indian fighting proved particularly insightful in this tense situation. He had his men sleep at their stations in case of a surprise attack, while making preparations of an assault of his own.¹³⁰

While Harrison was preparing for potential attacks, the Prophet's supporters (roughly 600-700 warriors) urged him to launch a sneak attack against Harrison before daylight. Agreeing with his followers that this was the opportune time for battle, the Prophet assured his warriors that the Great Spirit would provide them with the necessary medicine for victory. The Great Spirit would bring rain and hail to dampen the soldiers' powder, while their own weapons remained unharmed. The Great Spirit would also provide darkness so the warriors could move without notice, while the American soldiers would run around in confusion. Most importantly, the Prophet stressed that during this attack, the essential task for success was to kill Harrison. The Prophet likened killing

¹²⁹ Edmunds, 109.

¹³⁰ Edmunds, 110.

Territorial Governor Harrison to chopping the head off the head of a snake.¹³¹ Without Harrison, American expansion would cease.

The Prophet's forces quietly surrounded Harrison's nighttime positions, and roughly, one hundred specifically chosen warriors prepared to penetrate Harrison's defenses. The natives attacked a couple of hours before dawn, and the initial surprise worked, confusing the American soldiers and allowing the warriors to penetrate all the way to Harrison's quarters. Caught up in the confusion of battle, Harrison's aide mounted the distinctive white horse the General rode into Prophetstown. The mix-up proved to be life saving for Harrison, whose death may well have influenced the outcome of the battle. Two warriors made it to Harrison's quarters and seeing a soldier riding a white horse believed it to be Harrison and killed the rider. Harrison eluded the assassination attempt, and drawing upon his combat experience arranged a counter assault.¹³²

Despite the initial success of the surprise attack, they failed to kill Harrison, and daylight would reveal their numeral inferiority. As dawn broke, and with no signs of victory, the Prophet's men retreated to Prophetstown, collecting what goods and medicine they could before they decamped further west. Harrison seized the moment, and ordered his troops to attack the retreating warriors, driving them into the marshes.¹³³ After securing the field, Harrison led his troops to the Prophetstown, where he ordered it burned to the ground. The Battle of Tippecanoe had ended victorious. Harrison reported 126 wounded and at least 62 killed.¹³⁴ Harrison listed the native casualties in the hundreds, the actual number killed was closer to 50 and the number of wounded was

¹³¹ Ibid., 110-111.

¹³² Harrison, *Messages and Letters*, vol. 1, 666-672; Owens, *Mr. Jefferson's Hammer*, 219.

¹³³ Edmunds, 112-113.

¹³⁴ Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 223.

around 70 or 80.¹³⁵ More important, the Battle of Tippecanoe did not represent a decisive American victory. While warfare between the U.S. and the pan-Indian movement raged on, for a variety of reasons the Battle of Tippecanoe captured and held a significant place in America's public memory.

While the defeat at Tippecanoe damaged the power of the Shawnee brothers' pan-Indian alliance, their influence with the tribes in the region was still significant. Prophetstown lay in ashes, but many followers still maintained their confidence and loyalty to the Prophet.¹³⁶ Both the Prophet and Harrison were experienced in fighting each other, and had sound strategies heading into the battle. The fact that Harrison survived and was victorious at Tippecanoe did not underscore the leadership abilities of the Prophet. Harrison was lucky to be alive. The victory at the Battle of Tippecanoe did little to quell the threat of continued native resistance.

The concern of the U.S. government now was that the defeat at Tippecanoe had made the remaining tribes desperate and they feared that "all of the Indians" would go to war.¹³⁷ There remained uncertainty concerning reprisals by Tecumseh for initiating a military campaign to Prophetstown while he was away. The Battle of Tippecanoe also confirmed Harrison's belief that the British interfered in domestic matters (i.e. Native American relations). While British support was negligible, the battle gave credibility to the American belief that there was an outside influence instigating the Indians against the United States. The U.S. assumed that England, with its forts and garrisons in upper

¹³⁵ Ibid., 224.

¹³⁶ Harrison, *Messages and Letters*, vol. 2, 5.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 15.

Michigan and Lower Canada (also known as New France, or the Province of Quebec), was the force behind the native hostilities.¹³⁸

In June 1812, the United States declared war against England. In the Declaration of War, the U.S. government listed the Battle of Tippecanoe as example of British interference in the region. The Committee on Indian Affairs published a report, given to the President Madison, which outlined the various problems with the Indians. The U.S. government believed that the British were responsible for agitating Indians who disagreed on land treaties, supplying Native Americans with guns and ammunition, and influencing American Indian decision-making.¹³⁹ Following the Battle of Tippecanoe, on September 17, 1812, just months after the start of the War of 1812 Harrison resigned his position as Territorial Governor to become the Commander of the Army of the Northwest.¹⁴⁰

While victorious at the Battle of Tippecanoe, the defeat did little to secure peace and stability for the Indiana Territory. Threat of more violence and fighting loomed throughout 1811 and continued until the start of the War of 1812.¹⁴¹ Harrison narrowly managed victory at Tippecanoe, and while the Prophet's stature among his followers suffered due to his proclamation that the American bullets would not harm the Indians, Tecumseh still had strong support of the movement. Fighting continued through the War of 1812, with the significant turning point being the death of Tecumseh at the Battle of Thames (near present day Chatham, Ontario, Canada) on October 15, 1813.

¹³⁸ Harrison, *Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Two Letters from Gov. Harrison of the Indiana Territory*, 2-10.

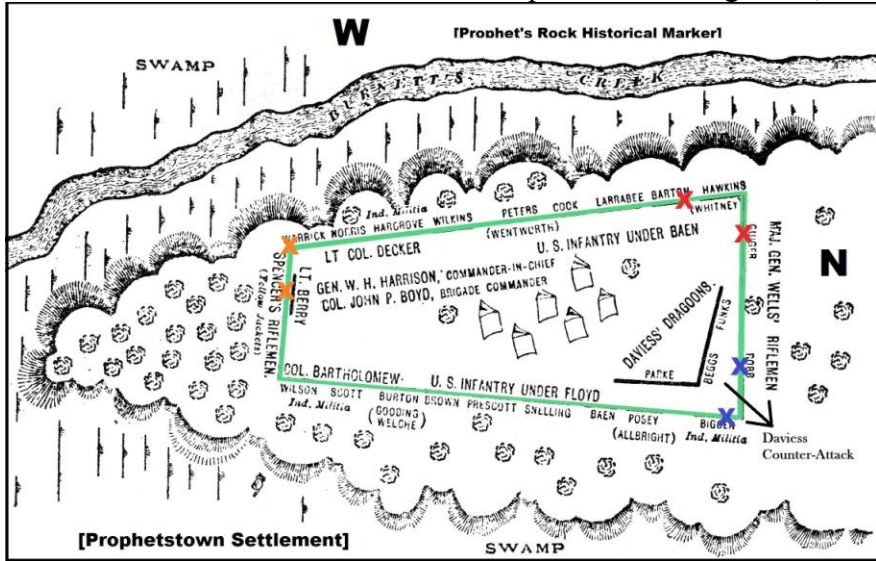
¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 8-12.

¹⁴⁰ Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 224.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 222-223.

Tecumseh's death and conclusion of the War of 1812 brought security to the Great Lakes region. The Battle of Tippecanoe later came to symbolize American victory over Native Americans in the Old Northwest during Progressive Era (Indiana became a state in 1816). Within ten years of the end to the War of 1812, the U.S. began the process of removing Ohio Valley tribes west of the Mississippi River, most notably the Potawatomi Trail of Death in 1838. Harrison used his success at Tippecanoe and during the War of 1812 to rise to national fame as a great Indian fighter. He earned the nickname "Old Tippecanoe," and in 1840 parlayed his military endeavors into a successful presidential bid.

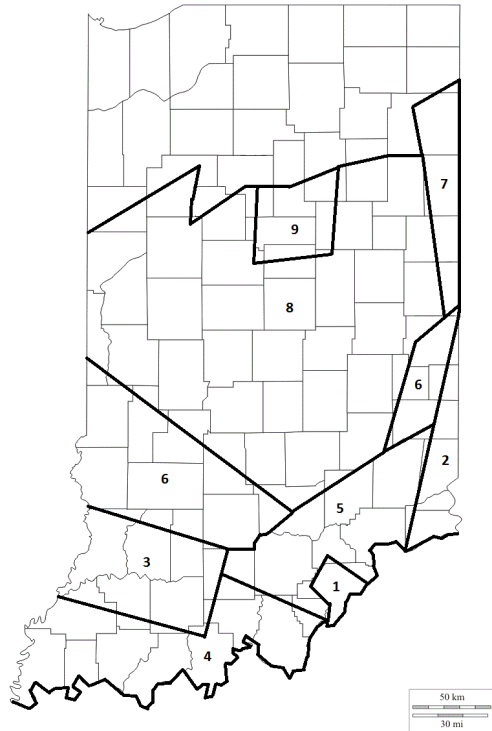
[Map 5]
Harrison's Encampment at Battleground, IN



Legend:
 X - Designates Indian attack (order of attacks are top-right, bottom-right, and top-left)
 Arrow - Represents counter-attack charge led by Major Daviess
 Map is arranged with West direction located at the top (where the Prophet's Rock Historical Marker is located) and the North direction located to the right.
 Prophetstown settle is located southeast of Battleground, IN

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[Map 6]
Indiana Land Cession Treaties



Indian Treaties

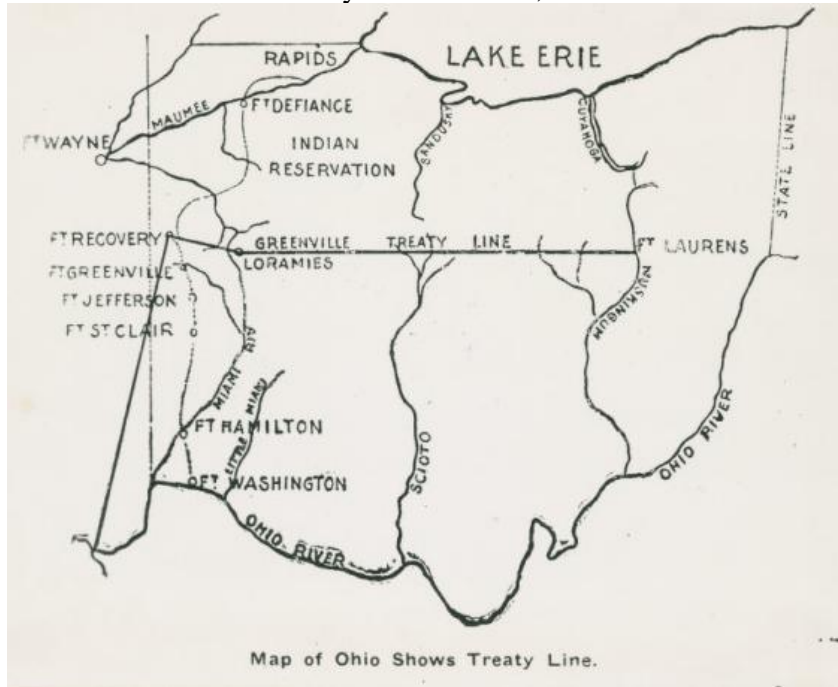
- 1) George Rogers Clark's Grant - 1783
- 2) Treaty of Greenville - 1795
- 3) Vincennes Tract (Treaty of Vincennes) - 1803
- 4) Treaty of Vincennes - 1804
- 5) Treaty of Grouseland - 1805
- 6) Treaty of Ft. Wayne - 1809
- 7) Treaty of Ft. Meigs - 1817
- 8) Treaty of St. Mary's (New Purchase) - 1818
- 9) Treaty of Wabash - 1840

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¹⁴² Adapted Map from image found at Indiana State Library, Manuscripts and Rare Books Division, Picture Collection, Tippecanoe County – Lafayette.

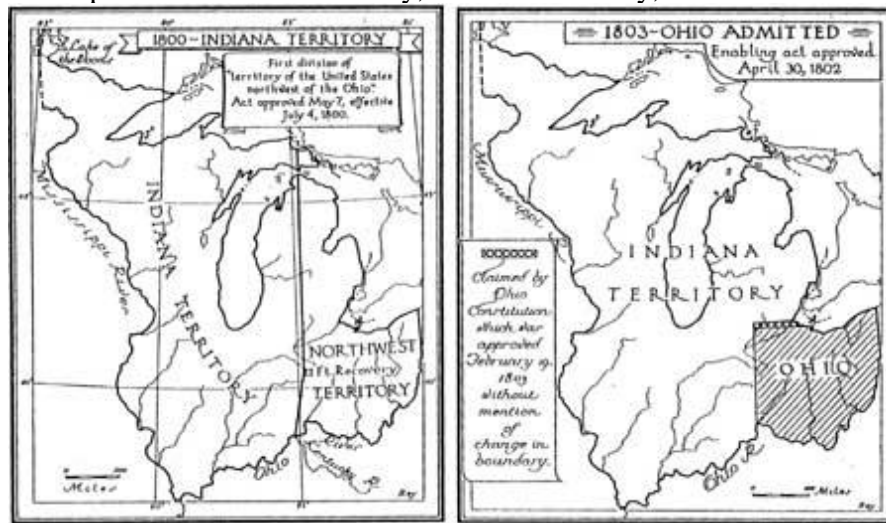
¹⁴³ Adapted Map from Indiana Junior Historical Society, and Indiana Historical Bureau. *The Indiana Junior Historian*. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau for the Indiana Junior

[Map 7]
Treaty of Greenville, Ohio



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[Map 8]
Maps of Northwest Territory, Indiana Territory, and State of Ohio



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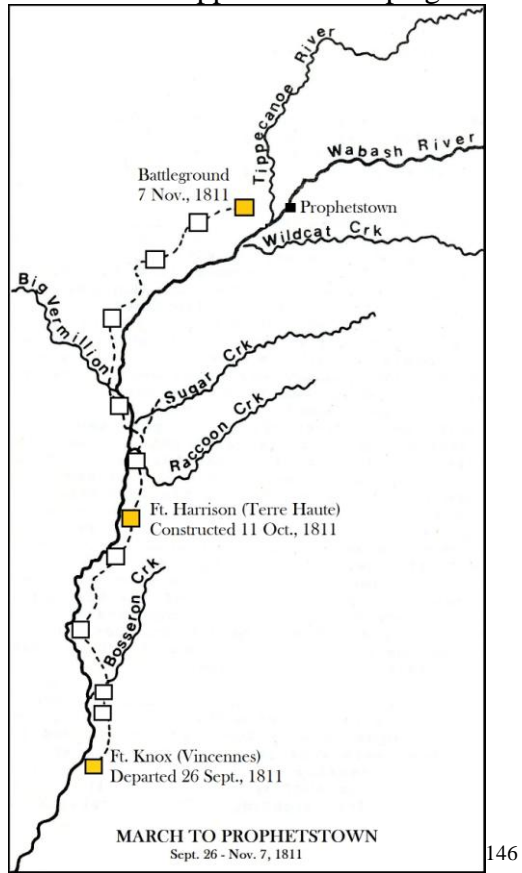
Historical Society, 1995), and History of South Central Indiana, Indiana's Hoosier National Forest Region, <http://www.foreshistory.org/ASPNET/Publications/region/9/hoosier/sec1.htm>. 2/3/11.

Map is an approximation of the lands ceded to the U.S from 1783 to 1840.

¹⁴⁴ Map of Treaty of Greenville, Ohio Memory, Collaboration between Ohio Historical Society and Ohio State Library, available from http://www.ohiomemory.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/p267401coll34&CISOPTR=2637&CISOBX=1&REC=7; Internet; accessed 15 April 2011.

¹⁴⁵ 1800 and 1803 Maps of Indiana Territory. R. Carlyle Buley, *The Old Northwest Pioneer Period, 1815-1840*, (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1950) 62.

[Map 9]
Path of Tippecanoe Campaign



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¹⁴⁶ Map amended from image found at the Indiana State Library. Manuscripts and Rare Books Division. Photo Collection. Tippecanoe County.

Chapter 3: The Public Memory of the Battle of Tippecanoe

The Battle of Tippecanoe represented the clash of two fundamentally different cultures that passed the point of coexistence. The military victory by the U.S. at Tippecanoe, led by Territorial Governor William Henry Harrison, launched the national reputation of the governor and ensured a Eurocentric interpretation of the battle. Over time, the American public hailed the Battle of Tippecanoe as the defining military victory that removed the threat of Native Americans from the Old Northwest and secured peace in the region. The military accomplishments of the battle proved under-whelming compared to the celebrated history constructed by the victors. While Harrison's forces destroyed Prophetstown and controlled the high ground on the battlefield, the result was the battle fostered more violence and hostilities in the Old Northwest Territory concluding through the War of 1812. The following year after the Battle of Tippecanoe, warriors loyal to the Shawnee Prophet and Tecumseh rebuilt Prophetstown and began recruiting again for the pan-Indian alliance. Despite the modest achievements of the U.S. military, generations of Americans told their descendants about the battle, embellishing the account during subsequent decades.

Historian, David Glassberg, in his book, *A Sense of History*, states that Americans attach meaning to their neighborhoods through the collective memory of their past.¹⁴⁷ Glassberg asserts that the combination of written and spoken accounts of the past shape our memory of a particular event. The early written accounts, particularly from Benjamin Drake and Reed Beard, lack balanced interpretation and historic methodology first taught

¹⁴⁷ David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001) xiii.

at U.S. universities during the 1880s and 1890s.¹⁴⁸ As a result, the early works contain only the Anglo-American point of view and reflect cultural biases against the Native Americans, and particularly the Shawnee Prophet. It was not until the late 20th Century that historians like Alfred Cave acknowledged the legacy and leadership of the Shawnee Prophet, or even legitimized the animosity of the natives over the issue of land occupation. Despite recent interpretations by historians, the early historical accounts remain important as a window into past understandings and for their continuing impact on public memory. A historical marker commemorating the Battle of Tippecanoe (1974) rests next to the Tippecanoe Monument and summarizes the accepted interpretation of the battle for most of the 20th century:

Here on this site, military forces commanded by General William Henry Harrison, engaged in battle with the Indians of the Wabash country led by the Prophet, brother of the great Indian leader Tecumseh. This battle destroyed forever the hope of Tecumseh for a complete Indian Confederacy, launched Harrison toward the Presidency of the United States twenty-nine years later, and considered one of the primary events leading to conflict between the United States and Great Britain in the War of 1812.¹⁴⁹

How did the Battle of Tippecanoe become the defining moment in the settlement of the State of Indiana? Why did the chair of the Tippecanoe Battlefield Monument, Alva Reser, proclaim in 1908 at the unveiling of the monument that, “the Battle of Tippecanoe

¹⁴⁸ Benjamin Drake, *Life of Tecumseh and of His Brother the Prophet: With a Historical Sketch of the Shawanoe Indians* (Cincinnati: H. H. Green Press, 1840) and Reed Beard, *The Battle of Tippecanoe; Historical Sketches of the Famous Field Upon Which General William Henry Harrison Won Renown That Aided Him in Reaching the Presidency; Lives of the Prophet and Tecumseh, with Many Interesting Incidents of Their Rise and Overthrow. The Campaign of 1888 and Election of General Benjamin Harrison* (Chicago: Conkey Press, 1911). Information regarding the history of the profession historian (university taught) is found in Carol Kammen, *On Doing Local History: Reflections on What Local Historians Do, Why, and What It Means* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1995) 20-36.

¹⁴⁹ The Indiana State Society erected historical marker in 1974. The Indiana State Society is a not-for-profit historical organization based out of Washington D.C. For more information on the society, visit their website: http://ncss.typepad.com/my_weblog/indiana_state_society/.

was the last important engagement with the Indians east of the Mississippi River?”¹⁵⁰ As discussed in Chapter 1, one of the biggest problems in presenting an accurate description of the battle is that most of the accounts come from the victors. There are no written primary sources by Tecumseh or the Prophet. Most Native American tribes practice an oral tradition and do not have a written language. The only evidence that remains by natives are transcribed speeches translated by Indian agents. It is much easier to discover the views of Harrison and other settlers on tribal relations, because their letters remain.

Due to the lack of written works by Native Americans themselves, historians’ interpretations of these cultural differences are largely through a Euro-lens. The result, created uneven depictions of central figures, like the Shawnee Prophet, whose role in the struggle ranges from an incompetent bit part to the more accurate view as a leading force of the pan-Indian movement.¹⁵¹ Early opinions by Harrison, Thomas Jefferson, and others of the period depict the Prophet as a fraud, whose rise to prominence resulted from guile not merit.¹⁵² The conflicting studies on the role of key players and the battle’s subsequent outcome further perpetuated the erroneous misjudgments of the battle’s significance.

As word spread of the Battle of Tippecanoe, the event came to be a symbol for the Americans’ victory over the Native American tribes. Following the Revolution, America’s most pressing military threat came from regional tribes. The signing of the Treaty of Paris (1783) ceded land claimed by the British to the U.S. without any

¹⁵⁰ Alva O. Reser, *The Tippecanoe Battle-Field Monument; A History of the Association Formed to Promote the Enterprise, the Action of Congress and the Indiana Legislature, the Work of the Commission and the Ceremonies at the Dedication of the Monument* (Indianapolis: W.B. Burford, 1909) 27.

¹⁵¹ R. David Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983); Andrew R.L. Cayton, *Frontier Indiana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 204-210. William Henry Harrison, *Governor’s Messages and Letters, Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison*, ed. Logan Esarey, vol. 1 (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Commission, 1922) 651.

agreement or input from native tribes. The Native Americans in the region were not ready to acknowledge defeat. Despite this, both England and America dismissed any claim of ownership of the land by natives. The succeeding outcome at Tippecanoe and the American triumph in the War of 1812 resulted in the eventual removal of a large number of Indian tribes living east of the Mississippi River, eliminating any issue of land ownership. As time passed, the Battle of Tippecanoe came to symbolize dominance over Native Americans, as the battle was the initial conflict in the region that ultimately ended with the removal of the indigenous populations while enabling substantial growth of the United States.

American military victories over the Native Americans and British during the War of 1812 provided the United States government the advantage to dictate terms for land cession treaties. After Indiana officially became a State in 1816, the U.S. negotiated with the Wyandots the Treaty of Fort Meigs, 1817, for land in Indiana and Ohio. The area later became part of a larger cession with the Miami and Potawatomi tribes in the Treaty of St. Mary's, 1818 (see map 10).¹⁵³ The subsequent years resulted in the continued relinquishing of land claims by the majority of tribes within the state of Indiana. By the 1820s, governmental policy shifted away from negotiated cessions to forced removal, which effectively ended any pretense of co-existence between the two cultures. During the forced removal of the Potawatomi Indians in the 1830s, also known as the Trail of Death, the natives camped at the site of the Tippecanoe battleground. While there was no immediate connection between the two events, the occurrence further substantiated for Anglo-Americans the battle as a symbolic representation of American supremacy over

¹⁵³ *Treaty of St. Mary's, 1818*. Manuscripts and Rare Books Division. Indiana State Library; R. Douglas Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier: Crucible of the Old Northwest, 1720-1830* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996) 1.

Native Americans. Upon visiting the museum in November 2011, only a historical marker acknowledges the Potawatomi's stop along the forced march out of Indiana.

During the height of the Progressive Era, the Battle of Tippecanoe symbolized U.S. victory over native resistance that exemplified American qualities of valor and perseverance that were essential to the country's growth in land and population. The symbolic memory of the battle explains why its legacy is overstated, why Tecumseh continues to be associated with a battle he never fought, and why the battle's outcome became a defining career achievement for William Henry Harrison. Eventually the battle's symbolism narrowed to a specific object, the Tippecanoe Monument, which commemorates one side of the combat. The monument memorializes only the U.S. regimental forces that died during the skirmish, and not militia or any acknowledgement of the Native American adversaries who also fought to preserve a way of life and the right to live on the land.

The memory and significance of the Battle of Tippecanoe developed over time as subsequent generations defined its meaning within the context of an evolving understanding of the nation's history. Early settlers who taught their children about the battle retold a one-sided perspective affected by what public historian David Glassberg describes as one's "sense of history."¹⁵⁴ Depending on one's personal background, their memory or view of this battle was distinct and different. Glassberg's point holds true, that the manner in which we remember events can differ depending on one's personal connection to that past. The memory of the Battle of Tippecanoe took on a meaning that was a product of the early American cultural perspective. Soldiers who fought in the battle, or whites who lived close to Tippecanoe, retold the battle through the lens of their

¹⁵⁴ Glassberg, 6.

own experiences and understanding. Military figures have long exploited their own achievements in battle as career steppingstones. Likewise, with the Battle of Tippecanoe, many people who fought used their success on the battlefield to advance their careers.

The historic marker located at the Battle of Tippecanoe states the victory over Indians brought peace to the Northwest Territory and destroyed Tecumseh's quest to create a pan-Indian alliance. However, the actual events that transpired after the battle depict a more complicated situation. Despite the victory at Tippecanoe, hostilities still occurred in the area. The prevailing thought among American military officials was that British Indian agents were intentionally sabotaging Native American relations with the U.S. and encouraging warfare. The extent to which the British assisted or encouraged tribes hostile to the U.S. is debatable, but the perceived threat was real enough to not dismiss the notion of British and native forces joining together to attack the United States.¹⁵⁵ The belief that the Battle of Tippecanoe secured peace in the Old Northwest overlooks the continued fighting that occurred during the War of 1812, including an engagement near the site of the first Battle of Tippecanoe.

A second Battle of Tippecanoe called Spur's Defeat, occurred almost exactly one year after the first Tippecanoe battle, just a couple miles away from the original battleground. The second battle at Tippecanoe shared similar characteristics with the first. The American forces again had a future U.S. president, Zachary Taylor, who also capitalized on his military career as an Indian fighter, leading the attack against the native warriors. The expedition had more regular soldiers than the original Battle of Tippecanoe,

¹⁵⁵ William Henry Harrison, *Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Two Letters from Gov. Harrison of the Indiana Territory Reporting the Particulars and the Issue of the Expedition Under His Command against the Hostile Indians on the Wabash : December 19th, 1811, Read, and Referred to Mr. M'Kee, Mr. Sevier, Mr. Breckenridge, Mr. Morrow, Mr. Alston, Mr. Lefevre and Mr. Maxwell.* (Washington City: R.C. Weightman 1811).

yet the accounts of this defeat at the hands of another pan-Indian coalition go largely unnoticed. The battle's moniker, Spur's Defeat, refers to the manner in which the U.S. retreated from battle, by wildly spurring their horses to retreat.¹⁵⁶ The defeat at the Second Battle of Tippecanoe did not prevent the U.S. from removing Native Americans from land east of the Mississippi River, so because the battle had little effect in impeding western expansion, the story of Spur's Defeat remains unknown to most.

During the War of 1812, fighting occurred throughout the Northwest Territory, from Michigan to Wisconsin and through the northern half of Indiana. Despite Harrison's victory at Tippecanoe, tribes like the Shawnee, Miami, Delaware, and Pottawatomie continued to inhabit parts of the region. Even when Indiana became a state in 1816, the northern part of the State remained largely uninhabited by whites. As the map in figure 1 illustrates, it was not until the Treaty of St. Mary's in 1818, and later treaties in 1826 and 1832 that the State of Indiana gained control of their northern land. The Battle of Tippecanoe simply started the shift from purchasing land to military campaigns to secure land east of the Mississippi River. Removal of native tribes and villages in Indiana did not begin until the 1820s and continued through the 1830s, nearly twenty years after the Battle of Tippecanoe. Spur's Defeat, along with several more skirmishes in the region, counter the claim that victory at Tippecanoe ended hostilities in the territory.

The Shawnee Prophet's legacy and leadership evolved the most with historical interpretation of the battle. The first American accounts describe Tecumseh as the

¹⁵⁶ Joseph Bartholomew to Jonathon Jennings, Dec. 11, 1812. Jonathon Jennings Papers. Manuscripts and Rare Books Division. Indiana State Library. In letter, Bartholomew writes of news regarding crime and violence near Prophetstown. "Delaware Indians stealing horses on frontier may have killed people retaliation of account of a scouting party being defeated near Prophetstown." Another account of Spur's Defeat is mentioned in Lasselie Collection. Box 18. Manuscripts and Rare Books Division. Indiana State Library.

greatest Native American leader of all, a hero to his people, while they depict Tecumseh's brother the Prophet as sneaky, manipulative, and deceitful.¹⁵⁷ The traditional American interpretation of the Prophet was one of failure; that he rode the coattails of his wiser and stronger older brother to a status undeserving of his feats. He began to symbolize the defeated Indian warrior, unable to change his ways. The Prophet's legacy remained that way until the middle of the twentieth century. In reality, the Prophet was in fact a very influential and vocal leader in the pan-Indian resistance.

The Prophet's spiritual and religious movement was at the heart and soul of the Native American militant resistance to America's western expansion.¹⁵⁸ At the crux of the conflict between the United States and American Indians was two incompatible cultures forced to interact with each other due to their close proximity. Early historical interpretation fails to examine or explain why the Prophet was able to attract a large following. Historians and biographers initially stated that Indians followed Tecumseh, and not the Prophet, in unifying to fight their common enemy. Yet, this rationale is Eurocentric, an idea most Americans can understand. To the followers of the Prophet and Tecumseh, the pan-Indian alliance was as much a spiritual journey as it was a military one. Recent historical scholarship delves deeper into the Prophet's role in the pan-Indian alliance and influence among Native Americans to discover why his teachings of spirituality and need to return to old traditions became popular. Among the most vocal about the Prophet's importance are historians R. David Edmunds and Alfred Cave. In his article, "The Shawnee Prophet, Tecumseh, and Tippecanoe: A Case Study of Historical

¹⁵⁷ Harrison, *Messages and Letters*, vol. 1, 685-721. Several letters written by Territorial officials, Indian agents, and Harrison discuss hostility and presence of Native American tribes between 1815 and 1816.

¹⁵⁸ Alfred Cave, "The Shawnee Prophet, Tecumseh, and Tippecanoe: A Case Study of Historical Myth-Making." *Journal of the Early Republic.*, vol. 22. no. 4 (Winter 2002): 639.

Myth-Making.”¹⁵⁹ Cave focused his attention on Tenskwatawa and his leadership, specifically the Prophet’s decision to attack Harrison and his men at Tippecanoe.

Cave argues that much of the criticism about the Prophet is inaccurate either embellished by rival chiefs or entirely made up. Cave states that the Prophet did not eagerly seek combat, but only agreed to fight at the urging of his supporters to attack after Harrison’s men killed two warriors. He also states that the accounts by some Native Americans who spoke unfavorably of the Prophet were really his enemies, such as the Shawnee Chief, Black Hoof, hoping their denouncement of the Prophet and his ways would improve negotiations for their tribes.¹⁶⁰ Black Hoof favored negotiating terms and treaties with the U.S. He was a former warrior who was involved in many battles against white people and believed that there was no end to whites settling the land they inhabited. The best course of action, according to Chief Black Hoof, was to figure out a way to coexist.¹⁶¹

By contrast, the pan-Indian alliance, led by Tecumseh and the Shawnee Prophet, attracted followers who desired to return to their native roots and traditions. The rationale was that Euro-culture and products corrupted the soul of indigenous people, and that only by returning to the traditional native customs before contact with white men could they defeat the Americans. Negotiating with the U.S. was pointless, as they consistently did not honor the signed treaties. Western expansion was a dire threat to Native Americans, and if the tribes did not band together, they faced the possible fate of extinction. The pan-

¹⁵⁹ Cave; R. David Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983)

¹⁶⁰ Cave, 654.

¹⁶¹ Colin G. Calloway, *Shawnees and the War for America* (New York: Penguin Library of American Indian History, 2007).

Indian alliance recruited warriors who supported combat as the preferred policy when interacting with white settlers.¹⁶²

The memory and legacy of the Battle of Tippecanoe still exemplifies U.S. government oppression or control. The battle signifies American victory over Indians. On the battle's anniversary, November 7, 2007, vandals spray-painted the Tippecanoe Monument with graffiti (see photograph 4). The steps and monument were spray painted with the words "repent" and "Tecumseh still lives." The memorial, built nearly ninety years after the battle during the Progressive Era, commemorates the soldiers who fought and died at the Battle of Tippecanoe. The monument serves as a literal interpretation, set in stone, of the battle during a time in the United States history when Americans were attempting to discover the qualities that defined the country.

The Progressive Era represented a period of great growth and change in the United States that necessitated a re-interpretation of its history to help define the characteristics of what comprised this country. The period, ranging from 1890s to the 1910s, marked the largest influx of immigration in America's history at the time. One of the hallmarks of the era was acculturation through education. To Progressives, it was important that immigrants and Native Americans learn American history and culture as these reformers viewed them. The Progressive Era displayed a heightened sense of civic duty as rapid urbanization and industrial growth brought in a large immigrant workforce. The popular idea of the time was that it was leaders' obligation to educate those new citizens. The retelling of Battle of Tippecanoe during this period created greater public awareness and significance, particularly within the state of Indiana. The account of the battle received increased focus as Indiana's centennial approached in 1916. While battle

¹⁶² Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 206-210.

re-enactments were popular means of education, Progressives also used other ways such as films, stories, and festivals to teach the immigrants about important figures and events in their new country's history.¹⁶³

The public's interpretation of the Battle of Tippecanoe originated, without debate or discussion, from civic leaders of the region who intended to educate the America's immigrants and youth about the characteristics and values of the country. The renewed attention to the United States' history that peaked during the Progressive Era began with the nation's centennial in 1876. Local interest relating to the Battle of Tippecanoe began soon after, and grew with the centennial of the battle, 1911, and of the State of Indiana, 1916. The local histories from the period highlighted notable figures and significant events that occurred in the area.¹⁶⁴ The county history of Tippecanoe County, *Biographical Record and Portrait Album of Tippecanoe County, Indiana* (1888) contains a biography of U.S. Presidents from Washington to Cleveland, history of the State of Indiana, biographies of prominent men of the state and county, family histories of leading families in the community, and a history of the county and its cities and towns.¹⁶⁵ The local historical societies and associations became a refuge for citizens who feared change and a loss of identity from the influx of new ethnicities and cultures. The local history movement during the Progressive Era aimed to combat the increased in immigrants

¹⁶³ Examples of films that teach amalgamation of Indian and American cultures are *Red Eagle's Love Affair* (1910), *Strongheart* (1914), *Braveheart* (1925), and *Redskin* (1929).

¹⁶⁴ Carol Kammen, *On Doing Local History: Reflections on What Local Historians Do, Why, and What It Means* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1995) 20-26.

¹⁶⁵ *Biographical Record and Portrait Album of Tippecanoe County, Indiana: Containing Portraits of All the Presidents of the United States From Washington to Cleveland, with Accompanying Biographies of Each; A Condensed History of the State of Indiana; Portraits and Biographies of Some of the Prominent Men of the State; Engravings of Prominent Citizens in Tippecanoe County, with Personal Histories of Many of the Leading Families, and a Concise History of Tippecanoe County, and Its Cities and Villages*, (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1972).

entering the country that threatened native-born Americans' hegemony on social and cultural issues.¹⁶⁶

The Indianapolis Fall Carnival offers one Progressive Era example of a community's effort to celebrate, and educate its citizens about noteworthy figures and events of America's past. Organized by prominent city clubs and officials, the festival, which occurred each year from 1900 to 1903, commemorated popular individuals of both the past and the present with speeches and parades. A front-page advertisement from *The Indianapolis News* on the upcoming Fall Carnival displays Tecumseh reaching up to shake the hand of Lady Liberty (see image 4). Each year the Fall Carnival opened with Tecumseh, portrayed by a white actor leading a parade to the Indiana State House to receive a wooden key and the "freedom of the city" (see images 5 and 6). The festival's existence spanned three years, from 1900 to 1903, when financial strains forced the festival to close. The festival contained various exhibits and entrainments that exemplified American culture and uniqueness, yet this was not the only example of similar commemorations.

County pageants that occurred throughout the state celebrating Indiana's centennial (1916) created elaborate theatrical performances, re-creating the great accomplishments in Indiana history and landmark events. The pageants occurred throughout the state as Indiana celebrated its 100th year in the union with re-enactment plays that focused on three different periods in the state's history: Pioneer Period (European discovery/Native American resistance), Statehood, and the American Civil War. The Pioneer Period concluded with performances portraying various aspects of the Tecumseh-Harrison rivalry, from Henry County's depiction of Harrison and Tecumseh's

¹⁶⁶ Kammen, 17-21.

meeting in Vincennes to a Parke County's scene "Harrison's Army and the Departure of the Red Man, 1811".¹⁶⁷ The plays included many of the common biases that characterized the Progressive Era representation of Native Americans with whites playing the parts of Indians (see photographs 2 and 5).

The "Pageant of Indiana" at Indianapolis, October 2-7, 1916, represented a typical play, in three parts, of the Tippecanoe Campaign (1811). The play began with Tecumseh and his brother the Prophet (though he is referred to as Elskwatawa in the play) meeting with British Colonel Elliot, to show solidarity and to give the warriors guns and ammunition. Throughout the scene, the Prophet is portrayed chanting incantations, in a mocking way, as "Tecumseh looks at him half scornfully, yet also half credulously."¹⁶⁸ Eventually Territorial Governor Harrison arrives to speak with Tecumseh and the Prophet, ignoring the fact that Tecumseh in reality was south of Indiana recruiting followers. The play depicts Harrison and Tecumseh as stoic leaders whose fundamental differences were insurmountable. The scene continues with the Prophet, alone onstage, with fighting heard in the background. Eventually native warriors run across stage soundly defeated, with the Prophet fleeing shortly after. The last scene shows Hoosier pioneers migrating north of the Wabash River, as "nothing disturbs their onward silent progress."¹⁶⁹ The "Pageant of Indiana" added to the accumulating public memory of the Battle of Tippecanoe.

Even with the festivals and plays commemorating the Battle of Tippecanoe, the most identifiable symbol of battle remained the Tippecanoe Battlefield Monument. The

¹⁶⁷ Indiana State Library, Col., *Indiana Centennial Pageant Books*. vol. 3, Parke County Centennial Pageant. Presented at Rockville, Indiana (August 12, 1916)

¹⁶⁸ Indiana State Library, Col. . *Indiana Centennial Pageant Books*. *The Pageant of Indiana at Indianapolis October 2-7*, (1916) 25.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 30.

path to erecting the Tippecanoe Monument was not short or easy, despite the regional and national acclaim of the battle's achievement. From the first idea to commemorate the battle, the process lasted ninety-five years before the monument stood completed. Initial interest in creating a Tippecanoe Monument began in the 1830's, with the key promoters being the men and their families who fought at Tippecanoe, headed by General William Henry Harrison and General John Tipton. General Tipton, U.S. Senator from Indiana, purchased the battlefield and donated the land to the state at the battle's anniversary ceremony in 1836. By the 1840's, both Harrison and Tipton died, and interest in memorializing the battle faded as the number of veterans who fought dwindled. By the 1850's, issues over slavery and states' rights eventually led to the Civil War, putting on hold any effort to memorialize the battle.

Interest in commemorating the Battle of Tippecanoe resurfaced in May 1892, when the Tippecanoe Battlefield Monument Association formed. The association consisted initially of Hoosier soldiers, both currently enlisted men at the time and veterans from the Civil War.¹⁷⁰ The association's numbers grew as more citizens agreed that the event warranted commemoration. The growth of the Tippecanoe Battlefield Monument Association paralleled the rising Progressive movement. President Theodore Roosevelt approved and signed the Tippecanoe Monument Bill on March 4, 1907. McDonnall and Sons, from Buffalo, NY, created the monument for the sum of \$24,500.¹⁷¹ The ceremony to unveil the monument occurred a year later on the anniversary of the Battle of Tippecanoe, November 7, 1908.

¹⁷⁰ Reser, 8, 9.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 18, 20.

The monument's creation at the height of the Progressive Era, literally and figuratively, set the popularly accepted interpretation of the battle in stone. Erected November 7, 1908, through a joint effort from the U.S. and Indiana; the monument commemorated those who fought and died at Tippecanoe (see photograph 3). The base of the monument contains on separate panels the names of the officers and enlisted men who died. Another panel engraved a brief account of the battle:

AMERICAN FORCES. MEN ENGAGED 910. GENERAL Wm. HENRY HARRISON COMMANDING ATTACKED AT 4:00 O'CLOCK AM. INDIAN FORCES LED BY PROPHET. NUMBERS ENGAGED ABOUT THE SAME AS AMERICANS. LOSS: AMERICANS, KILLED 73, WOUNDED 151. INDIAN LOSS UNKNOWN.

The final panel on the base of the monuments features the engraved dedication, "in the memory of the heroes who lost their lives in the Battle of Tippecanoe November 7, 1811."¹⁷²

The unveiling of the Tippecanoe Monument included a dedication ceremony attended by many leaders from Indiana. The program that circulated during the ceremony included printed speeches by significant figures from Indiana's past like former President, Benjamin Harrison, and noted Civil War General and author of *Ben Hur*, Lew Wallace. Each speech, given on separate occasions at the site of the battle, celebrated the victory at Tippecanoe as the defining moment that shaped the history of the state. In 1899 at the Tippecanoe battleground, Lew Wallace, proclaimed the battle as the "crowning achievement, this rescue of civilization, this final extinguishment of savagery," in Indiana.¹⁷³ The day of the Tippecanoe Monument ceremony, Indiana Congressman E. D. Crumpacker proclaimed the Battle of Tippecanoe as, "more than a milepost in the

¹⁷² Text taken from personal photographs of the Tippecanoe Monument in Battleground, IN.

¹⁷³ Reser, 83.

conflict between civilization and savagery, because it had a vital bearing upon the Second War of Independence with the mother country.”¹⁷⁴ The dedication was the culmination of years of effort by many men who were both directly and indirectly associated with the battle.

The Tippecanoe Monument and subsequent creation of the Battleground Museum, opened in 1971, lacks context for the conflict between two cultures and accurate representation of the natives who fought in the battle. The fact that the Monument does not acknowledge the native warriors on one level remains consistent with the fact that most American war memorials salute only U.S. soldiers. On another level, however, Native Americans retained a continuing though deliberately marginalized presence in America society. A process of forced Americanization undercut their traditional culture and muted their story and their history in the broader society. The Progressive Era interpretation of history, represented by the Tippecanoe Monument and its dedication ceremony, accentuated this trend. The Battleground’s visitor center magnifies the misrepresentation problem where the electronic account of the battle perpetuates inaccuracies about Native Americans. The electronic map chronicles the movements and sequences of the battle with an outdated illuminated map and a voice-over that does little to provide accurate or a balanced historical context for the battle and as of 2009 referred to warriors as “savages” on more than one occasion.¹⁷⁵

Despite the fact that the Battle of Tippecanoe was the start of violence between the U.S. Army and the tribes of the territory, Hoosier children continue to learn about the battle as the definitive event that paved the way for Indiana’s statehood. On December

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 23.

¹⁷⁵ As of 2009, map is still on display at the Battleground Museum.

11, 2008, during the celebration of Indiana's Statehood Day, Lieutenant Governor Becky Skillman told hundreds of schoolchildren in attendance at the Statehouse that the Battle of Tippecanoe was influential battle that secured Indiana's bid for statehood.¹⁷⁶ In the Lieutenant Governor's account, the battle pitted two great leaders against each other: William Henry Harrison and Tecumseh. Historians have researched and debunked this common misperception, yet the public continues to believe the Battle of Tippecanoe was William Henry Harrison versus Tecumseh.

In many ways, the popular interpretation of the Battle of Tippecanoe typified by the Lieutenant Governor's speech represents a "conflict" between deeply ingrained public memory and present scholarship. The quickest way to change the entrenched public memory relating to the Battle of Tippecanoe is through the education system. Indiana public schools teach Indiana history in the fourth grade. Students learn about Battle of Tippecanoe and the influential role that the conflict played in securing Indiana's statehood. The idealistic teachings during the Progressive Era still resonate through the public's historical memory, a phenomenon historian Michael Frisch explains: "how the past does or does not figure in our lives and what this in turn tells us about both history and ourselves."¹⁷⁷ The traditional Progressive Era account of the Battle of Tippecanoe still taught from fourth graders to high school, remains one of the biggest reasons for the disconnect between public memory and scholarship surrounding the battle.

¹⁷⁶ Statehood Day Celebration at Indiana State House. Dec 16, 2009. As representative of the Indiana State Library, The author was present during the speech given by Lt. Gov. Skillman to a group of 4th grade students.

¹⁷⁷ Michael H. Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History*. SUNY Series in Oral and Public History (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990) 21.

The Progressive Era served an influential role in establishing and maintaining the public legacy of the Battle of Tippecanoe. The interest in teaching American history, culture, and values directly coincided with the large number of immigrants entering the country. The story of the Battle of Tippecanoe contained several qualities valued in American culture: leadership, bravery, compassion, and determination. Both Tecumseh and William Henry Harrison, the two leaders at the heart of the popular interpretation of the conflict, represented many of those qualities. Harrison was a valiant leader and soldier whose bravery on the battlefield enabled him to become the President of the United States. Tecumseh's legacy rose to greatest Indian leader in history, whose reputation reached mythical proportions.¹⁷⁸ Indeed, in many ways Tecumseh's stature as a warrior validated and elevated the accomplishments of Harrison, his soldiers, and the growing "remembered" significance of the Battle of Tippecanoe. Their struggle for control of the frontier in the Old Northwest represented the great fight for dominance between Native Americans and the U.S. As a result, Tecumseh and Harrison remain linked with one another despite the fact that neither warrior faced each other at the battle with which they are most associated.

¹⁷⁸ Reser, 23.

[Photograph 2]

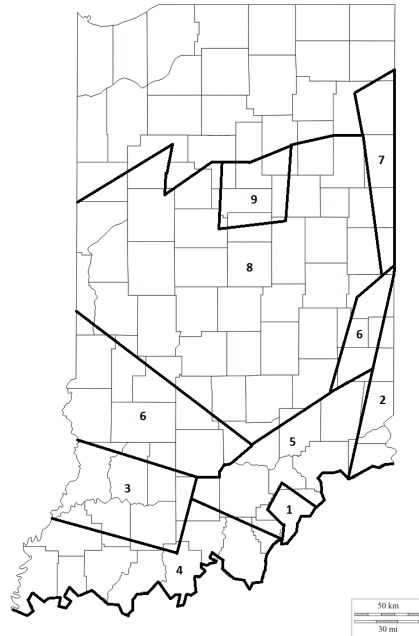
Parke County Indiana Residents Dressed as “Red Men” During Centennial Pageant, 1916



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[Map 10]

Indiana Land Cession Treaties



Indian Treaties

- 1) George Rogers Clark's Grant - 1783**
- 2) Treaty of Greenville - 1795**
- 3) Vincennes Tract (Treaty of Vincennes) - 1803**
- 4) Treaty of Vincennes - 1804**
- 5) Treaty of Grouseland - 1805**
- 6) Treaty of Ft. Wayne - 1809**
- 7) Treaty of Ft. Meigs - 1817**
- 8) Treaty of St. Mary's (New Purchase) - 1818**
- 9) Treaty of Wabash - 1840**

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¹⁷⁹ Indiana State Library. Manuscripts and Rare Books Division. Picture Collection. Parke County.

¹⁸⁰ Adapted Map from Indiana Junior Historical Society, and Indiana Historical Bureau. *The Indiana Junior Historian*. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau for the Indiana Junior Historical Society, 1995), and *History of South Central Indiana, Indiana's Hoosier National Forest*

[Photograph 3]
Tippecanoe Monument



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[Photograph 4]
Vandalized Tippecanoe Monument



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Region, <http://www.foresthistory.org/ASPNET/Publications/region/9/hoosier/sec1.htm>. 2/3/11.
Map is an approximation of the lands ceded to the U.S from 1783 to 1840.

¹⁸¹ Tippecanoe Monument. Indiana State Library. Picture Collection, Tippecanoe County.

¹⁸² http://www.usatoday.com/travel/news/2007-11-09-tippecanoe-monument-vandalism_N.htm.

[Image 4]
Tecumseh Shaking the Hand of Lady Liberty
GREETING TO TECUMSEH.



"GLAD TO SEE YOU, SIR!"

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[Image 5]
Actor Portraying Tecumseh



THE TECUMSEH OF THE CARNIVAL IN HIS WAR PAINT AND FEATHERS.

¹⁸³ The Indianapolis News, Oct. 9, 1900. Indiana State Library. Newspaper Microfilm.

[Image 6]
Actor Portraying Tecumseh without Makeup



THE INDIANAPOLIS MAN WHO IMPERSONATED TECUMSEH. WHO IS HE. 184

[Photograph 5]
Parke County Centennial Pageant – Residents Painted as “Red Men”



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¹⁸⁴ The Indianapolis News, Oct. 8, 1900.

¹⁸⁵ Indiana State Library. Manuscripts and Rare Books Division. Picture Collection. Parke County.

Conclusion

In many ways, the examination of the events and legacy associated with the Battle of Tippecanoe represents a micro-history of how one single incident affected the development of a larger region. The purpose of this thesis was to examine the disconnection between the Battle of Tippecanoe's actual outcome and evolving public memory. In the larger scheme of early U.S. history, the major significance of the battle is that it marked the end of seventeen years without military combat with the tribes of the Old Northwest. However, as time went on the legacy of the battle grew from skirmish to the defining battle responsible for securing Indiana's statehood. The result: current perception of the battle since the Progressive Era, contains cultural biases cemented in the public's memory that simplifies the complexity of the Northwest Territory's settlement and key figures, the Shawnee Prophet, Tecumseh, and William Henry Harrison.

The early historical interpretation regarding the Battle of Tippecanoe explains some discrepancies between actual events and legacy. Initial interpretation of the battle included little perspective of the Native Americans side of the conflict. Accounts by Benjamin Drake and Reed Beard represented the traditional Euro-centric interpretation that still dominates public memory. Their interpretations were based on three main assumptions: the United States legally obtained right to land west to the Mississippi River from the British; Native American tribes failed to properly utilize available land; and natives who fought against the U.S. were followers of a phony prophet whose lies led to the battle. This traditional analysis was accepted, embraced, and retold as U.S. military history. The battle gained extra attention during the Progressive Era, as greater emphasis on remembering accomplishments and perceived American values that coincided with the

greatest rise of immigration at the time in U.S. history. The result of these efforts was that dated accounts and sentiments regarding the Battle of Tippecanoe remained in the public's education and memory that are still prevalent today.

The Battle of Tippecanoe became synonymous with American military dominance of Indians regardless of whether the facts supported this claim. The Battle of Thames, near Ontario, Canada, the site where Tecumseh died in action, provides greater evidence of military superiority over Native Americans than the fighting that occurred at Tippecanoe. The pan-Indian alliance did not dissolve at Tippecanoe. The death of Tecumseh at the Battle of Thames ultimately served as the decisive blow to the movement. The fact that the battle occurred in Canada, and not the United States, partially explains the lack public awareness compared to the Battle of Tippecanoe. Throughout the retelling of the battle, overstatements distorted the context of events that aided the development of the Old Northwest for the United States.

The historical display board next to the Tippecanoe Monument states the battle occurred because of two fundamentally different cultures trying to inhabit the same region. The site's interpretation of the cultural differences fails to take into account the strong spiritual movement that successfully attracted many Indian warriors. The lack of emphasis regarding the leadership of the Prophet in the pan-Indian alliance substantiates the desired legacy that pits two great leaders against one and other: William Henry Harrison versus Chief Tecumseh. The popular sentiment to enhance the Battle of Tippecanoe as the climax of the Harrison-Tecumseh rivalry underscores the integrity of the battle's significance, ignoring the fact that Tecumseh did not fight Harrison at Battleground.

Despite scholarly efforts to provide balanced interpretations of the Battle of Tippecanoe, one aspect lacking public awareness is the spiritual and cultural influences that attracted many of the Prophet's followers. The simple explanation of the pan-Indian movement focuses on the Euro-accepted concept that if Tecumseh could unite all the Indians together to fight the Americans, as previous Indian leaders of Tecumseh's youth had done, the natives might have been able to remove the settlers from the area. Fundamental differences regarding land and its use lay at the heart of the two culture's incompatibilities. Conflicts remained widespread as tribes struggled to come to a consensus on the best ways to negotiate, if at all, with the United States. Ultimately, tribal differences ran too deep that the parties were broken into two groups: accommodationists and isolationists. Accommodationists, like Shawnee Chief Black Hoof and Miami Chief Little Turtle, believed the best way to ensure survival and land was through negotiating land cessions and treaties with the U.S. Both chiefs survived years of fighting to realize the inevitable truth, that white settlers would continue to come and the best course of action for tribes was to make peace. Tecumseh and the Prophet opposed all negotiations with the U.S. and were in favor of military resistance if white settlers continued to encroach on native land.

Public historian Michael Frisch likens cultural memory to a "subsurface reef," when explaining the difficulty of changing the public's entrenched memory of an event.¹⁸⁶ The community's remembrance of the Battle of Tippecanoe remains Tecumseh versus William Henry Harrison, with each figure representing the symbolic leader of Native Americans and the United States. When the Tippecanoe Monument was

¹⁸⁶ Michael Frisch. "American History and the Structures of Collective Memory: A Modest Exercise in Empirical Iconography," *Journal of American History*, vol. 75, no. 4, (March, 1989) 1154.

vandalized in 2007, “Tecumseh’s Not Dead” was one of the phrases spray-painted, despite the fact that the Shawnee Prophet orchestrated the attack at Tippecanoe (see photograph 6). The power and sustainability of public memory remains the most difficult challenge to overcome 100 years of unbalanced and unchallenged Progressive Era historical interpretation.

The Tippecanoe Monument still resonates with the public, as evidenced by its defacement. “America Repent,” “Tecumseh’s Not Dead,” “Give Us Back Our Spiritual Capital,” and the other phrases spray-painted depict deeper emotions than that of juveniles causing trouble.¹⁸⁷ If that were the case, one would expect to see profanity or crude drawings on display than words directly related to the memory of the battle. The Battle of Tippecanoe continues to generate emotional responses, both positive and negative. Yet, those emotional reactions illustrate the need to present a balanced nuanced interpretation that provides the public with enough information to understand the complex situation in the Old Northwest from 1795 to 1815. The legacy and memory of the battle do not align with the actual events. There is nothing wrong with celebrating the military success of one’s country. The problem arises when the commemoration exceeds the genuine achievements of the Battle of Tippecanoe.

The approaching bicentennial, Nov. 7, 2011, provides another opportunity to examine the complexities associated with the Battle of Tippecanoe beyond the prism of our own cultural teachings. The actions and people connected with the Tippecanoe conflict are noteworthy, but the interpretation of the battle needs to be within context of larger, more complex issues between the two cultures. Educators must explain how the

¹⁸⁷ “Tippecanoe Battlefield Monument Defaced”, *USA Today*, November 9, 2007. Accessed November 5, 2010. http://www.usatoday.com/travel/news/2007-11-09-tippecanoe-monument-vandalism_N.htm.

issues and tension in the region offer more to the history of Indiana than the battle itself. The Battle of Tippecanoe needs a more thorough study of the role it played in the larger context of frontier fighting of Tecumseh's War. The escalation of violence that occurred at Battleground marked a drastic change of policy in the U.S. Native American relations. Greater emphasis is needed regarding why the battle happened, and not how.

[Photograph 6]
Vandalized Tippecanoe Monument



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¹⁸⁸ http://www.usatoday.com/travel/news/2007-11-09-tippecanoe-monument-vandalism_N.htm.

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**Curriculum Vitae
Brent S. Abercrombie**

Education

IUPUI

- Master of Arts from Indiana University in Public History

Indianapolis, IN
December 2011

Butler University

- Bachelor of Arts in History, minor in Political Science

Indianapolis, IN
May 2004

Experience

Indiana State Library

Manuscripts Librarian

- Process Manuscript Collections
- Create Collection Finding Aids and Manuscript Databases
- Create and Plan Exhibits

Indianapolis, IN
May 2008-Present

Indiana State Library

Manuscripts Intern

- Process Manuscript Collections
- Create Finding Aids

Indianapolis, IN
Jan. 2008-May 2008

Indiana Historical Society

Collections and Library Intern

- Process Manuscript, Photograph, and Pamphlet Collections
- Create Finding Aids for all Processed Collections

Indianapolis, IN
Aug. 2006-Aug. 2007

IUPUI Special Collections and University Archives

Graduate Intern

- Process Archival Collections
- Assist with Patron Requests
- Shelve and Retrieve Archival Material

Indianapolis, IN
Aug. 2005-Aug. 2006