The Conflict Continues

This engraving depicts the meeting between Tecumseh and Harrison in Vincennes on August 20, 1810. No known source indicates that Tecumseh actually raised a tomahawk. The scene represents clearly the tension between Native Americans and American settlers. No certain information about the date of the engraving or its artist has been located.
Focus

The September issue focused on "The Gentle Invasion" of the land which is now Indiana. First the French traders came, using only a small amount of land for their needs.

Next came the English who helped to settle the east coast of North America and fought the French for possession of the land to the west.

Finally, the colonies formed the United States and fought for independence from Great Britain. Native Americans soon realized that they were losing more and more land as white settlers pushed farther west. This issue focuses on the continuing conflict over land ownership.

An early Native American leader in this western arena was Pontiac. As the material on page 3 indicates, Pontiac was a major force for unified Native American resistance.

During the British period after 1763, there was constant unrest and violence in this area. White settlers moved beyond treaty boundaries. Native American tribes moved west to stay in front of them. Rival tribes fought each other and the settlers. Some Native Americans sided with the British; some remained loyal to the French; others became friendly with the settlers.

The government of the United States "... took the position that the red men were a defeated nation, that they had no right to the soil on which they lived." 1 American leaders saw land sales as a source of money to finance the government. American representatives signed treaties with tribal leaders. Violence between Native Americans and settlers increased.

The Ordinance of 1784 and the 1787 Northwest Ordinance made it clear that the United States was committed to western expansion. The Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794 was a clear victory of Americans over Native Americans. The 1795 Treaty of Greenville called for a stop to the Indian attacks on settlements. It also set a boundary between Native American lands and lands open to American settlement.

In 1800 the Indiana Territory was formed from the Northwest Territory. William Henry Harrison was its first governor. Vincennes was its capital. It was Harrison's job to get more land for the United States from Native American tribes. He signed treaties with tribal chiefs to get that land.

Native Americans had begun to follow a new leader—a man Americans called The Prophet. The Prophet called for a return to old ways and beliefs, and his following grew. By 1809 The Prophet's brother, Tecumseh, had begun to lead this confederacy—or union of tribes.

The confrontation between Tecumseh and Harrison symbolizes the collision between Americans and Native Americans.

Central to that collision are opposing views of land ownership. Americans were driven by a concept of individual land ownership, which was a foreign notion to Native Americans.

Tecumseh believed that Native American land belonged to all tribes. He wanted to stop the American advance. Harrison supported American western expansion. There was no compromise.

Pontiac, Ottawa Chief

Pontiac was the great Ottawa chief who first united villages and tribes for a common cause—to preserve their lands.

The top map shows Pontiac's 1763 victories, including two in what is now Indiana. He could not capture Detroit and Pitt—the most important British forts.

When he learned Britain and France had made peace in 1763, Pontiac and his allies returned to their villages. Pontiac later became an ally of the British.

The bottom map includes two boundary lines set by the British to hold back settlers and stop fights with the Indians. Neither boundary worked. Settlers kept pushing westward and fought with the Indians for the lands on which they had lived.

**Activities**

Using the maps on this page, answer the following questions.

- Which forts were captured first? List the forts in order of their capture.
- Which forts in Indiana were captured?
- Which forts could Pontiac's forces not capture?
- Which Indian tribes had the most villages in Indiana?

© Copyright Indiana Historical Bureau 1995
Continuing Conflict: Tecumseh vs. Harrison

Matt: Good evening, viewers. I'm Matthew Tobias and it's time for our election special on "Hoosier History Revisited."

Tonight we go to the site of the Battle of Tippecanoe. Chris Richards is live at the Great Whig Rally, May 29, 1840. A crowd is gathering in support of William Henry Harrison for President of the United States.

Chris: Harrison has been nominated by the Whig party to run against President Martin Van Buren. Although Harrison could not attend today, there is still a great deal of excitement here. I'm estimating the crowd to be at least 30,000. What better place for the rally than the battlefield where Harrison met the forces of Tecumseh and his brother The Prophet.

Right behind me is a group of enthusiastic supporters singing a Harrison campaign song. I think that you can hear them.

"What has caused this great commotion... All the country through? It is the ball a-rolling on For Tippecanoe and Tyler too!" 1

Tippecanoe, of course, refers to Harrison's most famous battle which took place on this site in 1811. His running mate is John Tyler from Virginia.

Matt: Chris, the reaction to Harrison seems to be very positive.

Chris: Yes, it is, Matt. Many here remember Harrison when he was governor of the Indiana Territory from 1800 to 1812. At that time many settlers lived in what is now Indiana. But more settlers were needed to become a state, and more land was needed to get more settlers.

Harrison was very good at getting that land through treaties with the Native American chiefs.

Many here also remember Tecumseh, the great Shawnee leader. Tecumseh and The Prophet had become major problems for Harrison by the summer of 1810.

I'm speaking with Abram Smith who was present at the first meeting between Harrison and Tecumseh in August, 1810, in Vincennes.

Mr. Smith, we understand that Tecumseh was very
angry at that meeting. Please tell us why he was so angry.

**Smith:** To understand Tecumseh's anger, you must go back to the 1795 Treaty of Greenville. That treaty gave much Indian land to the United States for settlement. Most of the present state of Indiana remained Indian land.

American settlers kept pushing west, and there was much wrongdoing against the Indians by Americans.

**Chris:** What you're saying is that the Americans didn't honor the treaty?

**Smith:** Exactly. Americans wanted land to farm, and the United States government tried to get that land peacefully through treaties. Harrison signed several treaties for land with Indian chiefs. By one treaty at Fort Wayne in 1809, chiefs signed away three million acres of very fine Indian land.

**Matt:** Excuse me Chris, we have a close up of a map showing these land purchases for our viewers.

**Smith:** Tecumseh was furious at the 1809 treaty. He believed that chiefs had no right to sign treaties. The land belonged to no individual tribe and no chief had a right to sign it away.

He and his brother, The Prophet, saw these treaties and the ever growing number of white settlers as a real threat to all Indians and their ways of life. His plan was to unite all tribes against the Americans.

He believed that together, as one great force, they could keep the whites from taking more Indian land. That is why he met with Harrison at Vincennes in August 1810. He was a powerful speaker. I shall never forget that day.

**Chris:** Matt, I have a copy of an English translation of the speech he gave that day. Harrison included a copy of it with his regular report to Secretary of War William Eustis.

I cannot possibly recreate the drama and passion with which he spoke these words, but I can tell you some of what he said. He begins with a brief history of the Native Americans. I am quoting now: 2

When we were first discovered, it was by the French who told us that they would adopt us as their children and gave us pre-
sents without asking anything in return but our considering them as our fathers.

They asked us for a small piece of country to live on which they were not to leave and continue to treat us as their children... the British and French came to quarrel.

The next father we found was the British... they would occupy the same land they [the French] did and not trouble us on ours... but at last they changed their good treatment by raising the Tomahawk against the Americans and put it into our hands...

Now we begin to discover the treachery of the British they never troubled us for our lands but they have done worse by induc-
ing us to go to war...

Chris: It is obvious he was well-schooled in the history of his people. He next refers to the 1795 Treaty of Greenville. He makes it very clear that Americans have broken the treaty.

You ought to know that after we agreed to bury the Tomahawk at Greenville we then found their new fathers in the Americans...

Since the peace was made you have kill'd some [Indians]... 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.

Chris: He then accuses Harrison of trying to divide the tribes against each other in order to get Indian land.

you wish to prevent the Indians to do as we wish them to unite and let them consider their land as the common property of the whole...

You are continually driving the red people when at last you will drive them into the great lake where they can't either stand or work.

Chris: He then reinforces his commitment to unite the tribes and threatens both whites and Native American chiefs who sign treaties with them.

Since my residence at Tippecanoe we have endeavoured to level all distinctions to destroy village chiefs by whom all mischief is done...

... If you continue to purchase [land] of them [Indian chiefs] it will produce war among the different tribes and at last I do not know what will be the consequence to the white people.

Smith (Interrupting Chris): After Tecumseh finished speaking, Harrison began his speech. Tecumseh became furious and called Harrison a liar. I thought we were going to have a battle right then and there.

Tecumseh's warriors, armed with tomahawks, war clubs, and spears, stood ready. I was mighty nervous, I tell you. Anyway, they calmed down and met again the next day. But it did no good.

Chris: Thank you Mr. Smith. You're right about that. According to Harrison's report, Tecumseh left no room for doubt the next day:

... [the Indians] want to save that piece of land [the three million acres]... I want the present boundary line to continue, should you cross it. I assure you it will be productive of bad consequences.3

This is Chris Richards returning you to the studio.

Matt: Thanks Chris. For a different view of that turbulent time, we are going to go to Paul Wallace.
Paul: Thank you Matt. I'm standing here with Shabonee, an Ottawa and a chief of the Potawatomi, who fought against Harrison's troops at Tippecanoe. Chief Shabonee, what happened at the Battle of Tippecanoe?

Shabonee: If he [Tecumseh] had been there it would not have been fought. It was too soon. It frustrated all his plans. Paul: What about his brother The Prophet?

Shabonee: Elskatawwa was a great medicine. He was called "The Prophet." Your people knew him only by that name. He was very cunning, but he was not so great a warrior as his brother.

Paul: What about Harrison himself? Did you know him?

Shabonee: I knew their great war chief, and some of his young men. He was a good man, very soft in his words to his red children, as he called us; and that made some of our men with hot heads mad. I listened to his soft words, but I looked into his eyes. They were full of fire. I knew that they would be among his men, like coals in the dry grass. The first wind would raise a great flame. I feared for the red men that might be sleeping in its way.

Paul: I know the battle plan of the Indians was to send a group of warriors into camp and kill Harrison first.

Despite the darkness, Harrison would be recognized because he often rode a white horse. After this was done, they would signal the others waiting nearby to rush in. We know now, of course, that this plan didn't work. Can you tell us why?

Shabonee: The men that were to crawl upon their bellies into camp were seen in the grass by a white man who had eyes like an owl, and he fired and hit his mark. That Indian was not brave. He cried out.

Our people were more surprised than yours. The fight had begun too soon. They were not all ready. In one minute from the time the first gun was fired I saw the great war chief mount his horse, and begin to talk loud. The fires were put out, and we could not tell where to shoot.

we soon found to our terrible dismay that the "big chief on a white horse" that was killed was not Gen. Harrison. He had mounted a dark horse.

The map at left shows a plan of Harrison's Tippecanoe camp on the evening before the battle. From: Reed Beard, The Battle of Tippecanoe, 4th ed., (Chicago: Hammond Press, 1911), 58.
As soon as daylight came our warriors saw that the Prophet's grand plan had failed—that the great white chief was alive riding fearlessly among his troops in spite of bullets, and their hearts melted.

Paul: Thank you Chief Shabonee. Some would call it fate, or destiny, some would call it luck. Whatever the reason, Harrison was spared that day, November 7, 1811. And now, back to you, Matt.

Matt: Thank you Paul. We have here in the studio Frank Jordan, our political advisor, to discuss Harrison's encounter with Tecumseh from a 1990s perspective.

Frank: During the summer of 1810, Harrison first found himself face-to-face with Tecumseh, the great Shawnee war chief.

Harrison knew that he had a dangerous foe. In his frequent letters to Secretary Eustis, Harrison commented on his adversary.

On August 6, 1810, he wrote from Vincennes before he met Tecumseh: This brother is really the efficient man—the Moses of the family... He is however described by all as a bold, active, sensible man daring in the extreme and capable of any undertaking.6

On June 25, 1811, Harrison wrote to Secretary Eustis: Nothing but the great talents of Tecumseh could keep together the heterogeneous mass [many different tribes] which composes [composes] the Prophet's force.7

In July 1811, Harrison was waiting for Tecumseh to return to Vincennes.

On July 10, he wrote to Secretary Eustis:... Tecumseh has taken for his model the celebrated Pontiac and I am persuaded that he will bear a favourable comparison in every respect with

---

Native Americans in Code

Did you know that the 1990 U. S. Census of Population lists over 12,300 Native Americans living in Indiana today in all 92 counties? Use the code below, to decipher the names of tribes of Native Americans that have lived in Indiana.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
10 14 3 7 19 81 34 26 8 91 1 6 44 63 18 2 76 55 13 21 17 82 57 49 100 96

1. 7 ___ 19 ___ 6 ___ 10 ___ 57 ___ 10 ___ 55 ___ 19 ___
2. 2 ___ 18 ___ 21 ___ 10 ___ 57 ___ 10 ___ 21 ___ 18 ___ 44 ___ 8 ___
3. 44 ___ 8 ___ 10 ___ 44 ___ 8 ___
4. 2 ___ 8 ___ 10 ___ 63 ___ 1 ___ 10 ___ 13 ___ 26 ___ 10 ___ 57 ___
5. 44 ___ 10 ___ 13 ___ 3 ___ 18 ___ 17 ___ 21 ___ 19 ___ 63 ___
6. 1 ___ 8 ___ 3 ___ 1 ___ 10 ___ 2 ___ 18 ___ 18 ___
7. 57 ___ 19 ___ 10 ___
8. 13 ___ 26 ___ 10 ___ 57 ___ 63 ___ 19 ___ 19 ___

© Copyright Indiana Historical Bureau 1995
that far-famed warrior... 8

Matt: What was Harrison's response to Tecumseh?

Frank: He held council with Tecumseh in 1810 and again in 1811. At each meeting, Harrison was firm in his position about American settlement.

He wrote to Tecumseh on June 24, 1811:

Brothers,

Listen to me, I speak to you about matters of importance, both to the white people and yourselves; open your ears, therefore, and attend to what I shall say. ... our citizens are alarmed, and my warriors are preparing themselves; not to strike you, but to defend themselves and their women and children. ... what can be the inducement for you to undertake an enterprise where there is so little probability of success; do you really think that the handful of men that you have about you are able to contend with the power of the Seventeen Fires [states]. ... 9

When they met in Vincennes in July 1811, neither man was going to back down. According to Harrison's dispatch to Secretary Eustis on August 6: ... He [Tecumseh] said that after much trouble and difficulty he had at length brought all the northern Tribes to unite and place themselves under his direction....

Tecumseh said his intentions were peaceful and white settlers should not worry: ... the U. States had set him the example of forming a strict union amongst all the fires [states] that compose their confederacy. ... 10

Matt: That comment would have worried me in Harrison's place. The United States could get land more easily if the tribes were divided.

Frank: At that meeting in July 1811, Tecumseh had asked Harrison not to make any moves until he returned from the south.

On September 26 Harrison left Vincennes with a large force and headed north. On November 7 Harrison's forces met the Native American warriors commanded by The Prophet at the Battle of Tippecanoe.

Matt: What happened to Tecumseh and Harrison after that?

Frank: Tecumseh continued to unite the tribes to save their lands. War between the United States and Great Britain was declared in 1812. Tecumseh and his confederacy joined the British.

The forces of Harrison and Tecumseh met one last time at the Battle of the Thames, October 5, 1813. Prior to that battle on September 18, Tecumseh had given a speech that inspired his warriors and the British soldiers. His closing words were prophetic: ... our lives are in the hands of the Great Spirit. We are determined to defend our lands, and if it be his will we wish to leave our bones upon them. 11

Tecumseh was killed on October 5, 1813. The confederacy of tribes died with him.

Harrison was elected president in 1840. He died on April 4, 1841.

Matt: This has been "Hoosier History Revisited." Thanks for watching.
**Notes for**

"Continuing Conflict"

**NOTE:** Throughout this article, text in italic type is directly quoted from the sources cited. Three dot ellipses indicate where text has been omitted in quotations. Words in square brackets have been inserted by *Indiana Junior Historian* editors. Spelling and punctuation remain as in the original source cited. Only sources for quotations are specifically cited; works in the "Apple" provide the general background information.

Abram Smith is not an historical figure.

1. Quoted in McCollough, p. 30.
2. The full speech is printed in Esarey, pp. 463-468. Excerpts quoted here are on pp. 464, 465, and 466.
3. The full speech is printed in Esarey, pp. 468-469. The excerpt used here is on p. 469.
5. Robinson knew and interviewed Shabonee. Robinson indicates that he has often put Shabonee's oral testimony in his own words. Recent research indicates that the Shabonee material contains questionable information.

The Shabonee account has been excerpted in McCollough, Gray, and the *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 17:4 (December 1921).

Shabonee seems to be the preferred spelling; Robinson used Shobonier. Since there were not written languages, Native American names written in English often have various spellings.

6. The modern preference for The Prophet's name is Tenskwatawa. See Edmunds, *Shawnee Prophet*.
8. Esarey, p. 525.

---

**Activities**

- As a classroom project, create a mural of the Battle of Tippecanoe.
- Find eyewitness accounts of the Battle of Tippecanoe. Check McCollough, *The Battle of Tippecanoe* for accounts of the battle. Are the accounts similar? List the similarities and differences in chart form.
- Political cartoons are drawn to make us laugh and think. These cartoons often use symbols and satire. Check the editorial page of your local newspaper to find a sample of a political cartoon. Draw a political cartoon using the Battle of Tippecanoe or the circumstances surrounding the battle as your topic.

---

**A Rebus**

Translate this puzzle. Remember each picture can have several meanings.

*They* + L + ED.  

wanted the Territory for

A + i +  

wanted the Territory for

C + +  

and his

lost.
An Apple for Everyone

Selected Sources

Student Reading
  This is a good student biography with excellent pictures.
  This is an easy-to-read account.
  This leaflet is available from the Indiana Historical Bureau.
  A lengthy but good biography.
  An accurate and easy-to-read account of the Ottawa warrior.
  Easy-to-read biography.

Advanced Reading
  Excellent information regarding Pontiac. Research notes are provided, but the work is not footnoted. For interested secondary and adult readers.
  There is interesting information about Tecumseh in this volume.
  This is an excellent biographical narrative of Tecumseh for adult readers.
    Highly recommended biography of Tenskwatawa, the Prophet.
    Highly recommended biography.
  An important work for this period.
    This book of readings includes Shabonee's account.
    This is a brief but interesting biography of Tecumseh.
    An engaging novel written by a Purdue history professor.
    This book is a facsimile of the 1869 edition and contains many illustrations by the author.
    This 36 page booklet contains background and accounts of the battle. It can be obtained from the Tippecanoe County Historical Association.
    This book traces the events leading up to the defeat of Tecumseh's efforts to build an Indian nation.
    Peckham uses many primary sources in his research and is still considered authoritative.
    An excellent source for Great Lakes Indian history.
    The author offers a new account of the interactions between Europeans and Native Americans.
**The Indiana Historian**

**October 1992**
**Revised May 1995**
**ISSN 1071-3301**

**Contributing Editors**
Carole M. Allen, Janine Beckley, Paula Bongen, Alan Conant, Dani B. Pfaff, Virginia Terpening

**Layout and Design**
Carole M. Allen and Dani B. Pfaff

The *Indiana Historian* fulfills the mission of the Indiana Historical Bureau by providing resources and models for the study of local history to encourage Indiana's citizens of all ages to become engaged with the history of their communities and the state of Indiana.

*The Indiana Historian* (formerly *The Indiana Junior Historian*) is issued four times annually from August through June.

It is a membership benefit of the Indiana Junior Historical Society. It is distributed free to school media centers, libraries, and other cultural and historical groups in Indiana. Annual subscriptions are available for $7.50. Back issues are available at individual and bulk pricing.

This material is available to visually impaired patrons in audio format, courtesy of the Indiana History Project of the Indiana Historical Society. Tapes are available through the Talking Books Program of the Indiana State Library; contact the Talking Books Program, 317-232-3702.

The *Indiana Historian* is copyrighted. Educators may reproduce items for class use, but no part of the publication may be reproduced in any way for profit without written permission of the Indiana Historical Bureau.

---

**Indiana Library and Historical Board**
Charles J. Bertram, Evansville, President
Jeanne Mirro, Fort Wayne, Vice President
Donald Groenleer, Rochester, Secretary
Robert Trinkle, Unionville

**Mission Statement**
The Indiana Historical Bureau provides programs and opportunities for Indiana's citizens of all ages to learn and teach about the history of their state and its place in the broader communities of the nation and the world.

**Programs and Services**
- State format historical markers
- Governors' Portraits Collection
- Books on Indiana, midwestern, and local history
- Classroom materials for Indiana history
- *The Indiana Historian*
- Indiana History Day
- Indiana Close Up
- REACH: Resources Educating in the Arts, Culture, and History

**Staff**
Pamela J. Bennett, director; Virginia L. Terpening, deputy director; Janine Beckley and Alan Conant, editors; Dani B. Pfaff, manager, publication production/information services; Paula A. Bongen, manager, Indiana History Day; Carole M. Allen, manager, Indiana Close Up; Judy A. Rippel, administrative assistant/manager, Historical Markers Program; Janice K. Hood, financial officer; Barbara J. Hembree and Shirley R. Stanfield, secretaries.

**Opportunity for Support**
Associates of the Bureau receive subscriptions to *The Indiana Historian* and the *Indiana History Bulletin*; discounts on publications of the Bureau, Indiana University Press, and the American Association for State and Local History; and occasional special opportunities. Cost is an initial $25 donation to the Bureau and an annual fee of $10 billed in January.

© Copyright Indiana Historical Bureau 1995