

Tecumseth's contribution started 204 years ago

The nearby town New Tecumseth is named after the great Shawnee aboriginal chief Tecumseth (or Tecumseh) of the midwestern United States.

He was born and raised in the Ohio Valley. He played a great part in us being Canadian and the great nation that all of us have built here.

It was recently the 204th anniversary that the good ole USA decided to invade Canada and annex us into the territory they resided over. A good part of that was taken when they declared war on Mexico and the half of Florida they stole from France.

England was at war with France and France's Napoleon had a pretty good army, so U.S. President James Madison thought it would be a cake walk to send in a few hundred soldiers and take us over. His thinking was that England's navy, the best in the world at that time, would be too engaged in the battles over there to ever send ships here.

So on July 12, 1812, American General William Hull invaded Canada. He was holed up at Detroit, so he sent 2,500 men over in the opening campaign in the War of 1812. But what he didn't count on was the fact Canadians don't give up easy. That and the fact that the aboriginals in the States had been treated so badly that they despised America.

The Canadians united, and with a few British regulars and a lot of volunteers, the battles raged on for a number of years. The Americans had the upper hand for a while and got in so far as to burn our Fort York and a lot of buildings in York (now Toronto) to the ground.

Hull expected to be welcomed as a liberator, but after three defeats at Duck River he headed back to Detroit within a month. In August, Hull surrendered to General Issac Brock and Tecumseth and the Canadians took over Detroit.

The battles raged on for the next number of years until Britain finally defeated Napoleon and was able to send its navy and more military to North America. Once the navy arrived, things really went in favour of Britain and soon the U.S. was ready to talk peace. Before that happened though, the British pushed so far into the U.S. that the British military burned the White House to the ground along with all but one outbuilding.

During these battles, Tecumseth led his warriors into many battles with Brock, but unfortunately both men were killed during these skirmishes. Brock is buried just outside Niagara Falls, near the old Fort George. Tecumseth was killed near Chatham and to this day his body has never been recovered.

A great man, a great town, New Tecumseth.

John Archibald,

Beeton