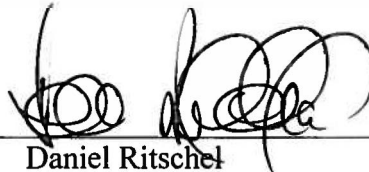


APPROVAL SHEET

Title of Thesis: "The Canadian Bicentennial of the War of 1812: The Problem of Tecumseh

Name of Candidate: Stephanie Smith  
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Thesis and Abstract Approved:



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## ABSTRACT

Title of Document: THE CANADIAN BICENTENNIAL OF THE  
WAR OF 1812:THE PROBLEM OF  
TECUMSEH

Stephanie Mija Smith, Master of Arts, 2017

Directed By: Professor, Dr. Daniel Ritschel, Department of  
History

In June 2012 Canada and the United States celebrated the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 that concluded in February 2015 with the anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Ghent. Except in Baltimore and New Orleans, the bicentennial was largely ignored in the United States. In comparison, Canada went all out to celebrate the bicentennial. The government under Prime Minister Steven Harper spent \$58 million over the four year celebration. The government placed the war as an important moment in the foundation of Canada. Prime Minister Harper used the militaristic memory of the war to try and rebrand Canada as a warrior nation.

This Thesis looks at the Canadian Bicentennial of the War of 1812 and the Co-opting of Tecumseh. Chapter One is a brief history of Tecumseh and the War of 1812. Chapter Two looks at the historical memory of the War of 1812 from the early memories of the 19th Century to the centennial of the war in 1912. In this chapter I also discuss the “Tableau of Heroes of 1812” who are Isaac Brock, Laura Secord, General Charles de Salaberry, and Tecumseh. These figures would become the public face of the Bicentennial in 2012. The Canadian Bicentennial of the War of 1812 is discussed in

Chapter Three. This chapter examines the Harper Government's narrative of the war and how the First Nations fit into this narrative, the public response to the celebrations and lastly the absence of the First Nations in the bicentennial. The thesis concludes with Chapter Four that discusses the Co-opting of Tecumseh in the Canadian Bicentennial of the War of 1812. The Chapter provides a look at the memory of Tecumseh in America and Canada to understand the issues with the government's co-option of the Tecumseh.

THE CANADIAN BICENTENNIAL OF THE WAR OF 1812: THE  
PROBLEM OF TECUMSEH

By

STEPHANIE M.SMITH

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of the University of Maryland in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
2017

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2017



## **Dedication**

To my Mom and Dad, who have supported me and have pushed me to do my very best in all I set my mind to do in school and wherever my future takes me. I hope to repay you one day.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my committee members for reading, editing and giving suggestions enhance this thesis. To Professor Rubin, my first advisor, thank you for helping me edit my early prospectus and narrow my focus on looking at the Canadian memory of the War of 1812. Professor Meringolo, I want to thank you for teaching me to challenge the traditional historical narrative and to tell the story of the lesser known figures of history. To Professor Ritschel who helped me take my broad topic of the Canadian memory of the War of 1812 to focus on the Bicentennial which lead me to discovering the Canadian Co-opting of Tecumseh along with the history of centuries of government mistreatment of the First Nations. You helped me navigate Canadian sources, politics and history and helped me turn this thesis from abstract ideas into a narrative of the history of the War of 1812, Tecumseh, and the commemoration of the war.

I give deepest thanks to: Guy Poirier: Director of Operations Assembly of First Nations, Alexandra Clemence: Library and Archives Canada, Jane Nesbitt: Head Researcher Canadian War Museum, David Sharron: Head of Special Collections Brock University, Jerge Paquet: Archives of Ontario, Amy Klassen: Niagara Historical Museum, and Susan Ramsay: Curator Battlefield House Museum and Park. Your advice on sources helped guide my research and made this thesis possible.

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Lastly, I would like to thank my parents for supporting me through my college career. You have always pushed me to do the best I could do. Your constant support helped me to push on when I felt like giving up.



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## Introduction:

The War of 1812 is commonly known in American historiography as the “Forgotten War,” neglected not only by the general public, but also by many historians who study the Early Republic. The roots of the War of 1812 are to be found in part in the Napoleonic conflict raging in Europe. On the American side, the conflict was prompted by British seizures of American merchant ships on the high seas, meant to ensure that America was not trading with France, and British impressment of American sailors, believed to be deserters from the Royal navy.<sup>1</sup> However, the American invasion of what is today Canada, then known as British North America, was also motivated by a desire to wrest Canada away from Britain. Unfortunately, the American invasion was a complete disaster, and no captured Canadian territory remained in American control for long. The only American victories in the war were the successful repulsions of the British in Baltimore and New Orleans. American inability to advance into Canada and British preoccupation with their conflict with Napoleon soon brought the war to an inglorious end. Indeed, the peace treaty of 1815 returned the boundaries between the two Nations to the way they had been before the war. The most important legacy for the United States was Francis Scott Key’s poem, “The Star Spangled Banner,” which eventually became the national anthem in 1931.

For Canadians, then and since, however, the war meant something very different: they beat back the American invaders and could claim for themselves an impressive victory.<sup>2</sup> Even a longer lasting legacy for Canada, is that the experiences in the war would help constitute a

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Hickey: *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict Bicentennial Edition* (University of Illinois Press: Chicago, 2012),9

<sup>2</sup> Hickey, 1-3

nationalist myth that would be used to support a united Canadian national identity in later centuries. The most prominent example of the deployment of this myth came in the Bicentennial Commemorations of the war in 2012.

### **Background of the Bicentennial:**

Historical commemorations can bring people together to remember the past and to pay homage to those who paved the way for the future. In the case of official celebrations, it is usually the relevant public authorities and associated sponsors who decide which narrative is to be told to the general public. Historians are often consulted for their opinion, but they are usually encouraged to give into what the public authorities want the general public to remember. According to historian Karim Tiro, “For Public Historians, the War of 1812 is a tough row to hoe. Public interest in the war is limited. The war’s causes and effects are generally regarded as obscure, especially in the United States. Military heroics can always be celebrated, but both sides fumbled the fighting.”<sup>3</sup> This is the case for both American and Canadian public historians. In Canada, the 2012 bicentennial of the War of 1812 was used by the Conservative government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper to reinforce a patriotic myth of a united Canada. In a long-term sequence of historical commemorations planned by the federal government in the build-up to the sesquicentennial of Canadian unification, planned for 2017, the bicentennial of 1812 was designed to celebrate the first example of a united struggle by the people of Canada-to-be against a foreign aggressor. More specifically, the Canadian government sought to fashion a “usable past” of how, well before its official birth in 1867, Canada’s diverse and multi-ethnic society was successfully defended by a united front of its many constituent peoples.

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<sup>3</sup>, Karim M Tiro. 2013. “Now You See It, Now You Don’t: The War Of 1812 In Canada And The United States In 2012.” *The Public Historian* 35 (1): 87–97. doi:10.1525/tp.2013.35.1.87. 89

The bicentennial celebration featured the four main historical figures who have long been the popular “faces” of the War of 1812.<sup>4</sup> As in past commemorations, each figure was featured in 2012 as a representative of one of the different groups that would later go on to make up the Canadian nation: British and English-speaking Canadians; French-speaking Quebecers; women; and Native Americans or, as the Canadians now call them, people of the “First Nations.” The British were represented by the figure of Sir Isaac Brock, the British officer and leader of the military forces in Upper Canada (today’s province of Ontario). He was the military leader who had forged an alliance with the Shawnee Chief Tecumseh that successfully defeated the American army at engagements at Fort Detroit and Queenston Heights, where Brock himself was shot and killed by an American sharpshooter. He came to be remembered after the War as the “Hero of Upper Canada.”<sup>5</sup> The second figure featured in the commemoration of 1812 was Laura Secord, long known as the “Heroine of Beaver Dams,” a Canadian victory that kept the Niagara Peninsula out of American control. Secord, who had moved from Massachusetts to Canada after the American Revolution, became famous for making a 13-mile trek through the woods to take the word of a planned American ambush at Beaver Dams that she had overheard while American troops were quartered in her house. Her effort allowed for the British military and First-Nations allies to ambush the Americans and prevent them from taking over the Niagara Peninsula.<sup>6</sup> Charles de Salaberry is the third of the Canadian heroes of 1812, and the only one of them who was actually born in what is today’s Canada. Salaberry, a French-speaking officer from Lower Canada (Quebec), was in command of a light infantry unit called the Canadian Voltigeurs.<sup>7</sup> He is

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<sup>4</sup> “About the Commemoration: Accessed Jan 2015 <http://canada.pch.gc.ca/1812%20-%20a9>

<sup>5</sup> “Major figures of the War of 1812” Accessed March 2015.  
<http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1442597039902/1442597079211#a1>

<sup>6</sup> “Major Figures of the War of 1812”

<sup>7</sup> “Major Figures of the War of 1812”

famous for his victory at the Battle of Châteauguay on October 26, 1813, which saved Montreal from American occupation and likely destruction.<sup>8</sup>

The fourth heroic figure honored in the Canadian bicentennial commemoration of 1812 was Chief Tecumseh, a Shawnee chief who had a dream of a pan-Indian confederacy that would halt American incursion into ancestral native lands by establishing a powerful Indian state in the mid-West. This Indian state was to give native nations a land of their own, free from white incursion. Tecumseh rallied a large number of First Nations tribes to this cause and then allied with the British in 1812, believing that they would help him achieve their goal of an Indian state. Tecumseh personally negotiated the alliance with Sir Isaac Brock, and was then instrumental in the successful taking of Fort Detroit and at Queenston Heights.<sup>9</sup> Like Brock, Tecumseh was killed in the conflict in October 1813. Tecumseh's dream of a pan-Indian confederacy disappeared with his death, and Native Americans on both sides of the border would soon lose their ancestral lands and be forced onto reservations. Before the Bicentennial of 2012, Tecumseh was portrayed in poetry as a great military leader who died in service to the British Crown and for his dream of a Pan-Indian Confederacy.<sup>10</sup>

By featuring these “four heroes,” the Canadian government sought to make the bicentennial inclusive of all the groups that had come together to drive American forces from British North America, and thus helped bring into being the diverse Canadian nation of the future. The website for the federal agency Public Libraries and Archives Canada summarized the official view:

The War of 1812 is an important milestone in the lead-up to the 150th anniversary of Canada's Confederation in 2017. Canada would not exist had the American invasion of

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<sup>8</sup> “Major Figures of the War of 1812”

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Benjamin Drake, *Life of Tecumseh, and of his Brother The Prophet with a Historical Sketch of the Shawanoe Indians*, (Cincinnati: E Morgan & Company, 1841), 197

1812-15 been successful. The end of the war laid the foundation for Confederation and the emergence of Canada as a free and independent nation. Under the Crown, Canada's society retained its linguistic and ethnic diversity, in contrast to the greater conformity demanded by the American Republic.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to celebrating Canadian diversity, the Harper government used the bicentennial of 1812 in an effort to bolster public support for the Canadian military. At a time of increasingly unpopular Canadian engagement in the war in Afghanistan, the government took the opportunity to focus attention on the role of Canadian armed forces in defeating the invaders. Besides highlighting the many military regiments in Canada that can trace their origins to the War of 1812, the government's martial message celebrated the four heroes that were the face of the bicentennial. Only one, Laura Secord was neither a warrior nor in the armed forces, but even her significance lay in the fact that she helped the Canadian military by warning them of the plans for a surprise attack by American troops. The militarization of the bicentennial had been part of Harper's platform in the 2011 election, when the Conservative party promised to:

Celebrate our Victory in the War of 1812, and Other National Milestones: Commemorate The War of 1812: The Fight for Canada: Designate October 2012 as a month of commemoration of the heroes and key battles of the war. Sponsor hundreds of events and re-enactments across the country Honour the contributions of First Nations to the Canadian victory. Recognize and honour current Canadian regiments which perpetuate the identities of War of 1812 militia units. Invest in the restoration of monuments and historic sites connected to the war ensure a proper interment of the remains of those who fell in the Battle of Stoney Creek. Establish a new national War of 1812 monument in the National Capital Region<sup>12</sup>

Official literature for 2012 presented the War of 1812 as the military midwife of Canada's subsequent birth. The War of 1812 was presented as a model for the nation Canada

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<sup>11</sup> "Did you Know?: Some Interesting Facts about the War of 1812. Accessed Aug. 2016 <http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1442344384984/1442924691345>

<sup>12</sup> The War of 1812 Magazine. "Honor our 1812 Heroes" *The War of 1812 Magazine Issue 16 September 2011*. [http://www.napoleon-series.org/military/Warof1812/2011/Issue16/c\\_HonourourSoldiers.html](http://www.napoleon-series.org/military/Warof1812/2011/Issue16/c_HonourourSoldiers.html) This Magazine is not published by the federal government but online through The Napoleon Series. This online magazine features articles from notable military historians. The original quote contains no punctuation.

would become. The government explicitly argued that if the outcome of the war would have been different, Canada would not be as diverse as it is today. The two main groups the promotional literature argued would not exist in Canada if the military had failed to drive out the American invaders were the French Canadians and the First Nations, the two Canadian ethnic sub-groups with a long tradition of deep political discontent within Canada and a very difficult relationship with the contemporary Harper government. The 2012 celebration of Canadian unity in 1812 was meant explicitly to reaffirm the existential wisdom of their original commitment to the Canadian nation. James Moore, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, made this revealing statement at the opening celebration of the Bicentennial on June 18, 2012:

Which is to say that without the War of 1812, Canada as we know it would not exist. Without their bravery in the War of 1812, we might be flying a very different flag here at Fort York today.  
 Without the War of 1812, the French fact in Canada would not exist.  
 Without the War of 1812, the identity of our Aboriginal population would have been fundamentally changed.  
 The War of 1812 paved the way to Confederation for Canada in 1867.  
 The War of 1812 was the fight for Canada.<sup>13</sup>

The attempt to use the celebrations of 1812 to invent a new martial national tradition in Canada had some successful moments, but was generally deemed a failure for a number of reasons. First, the Bicentennial celebration drew harsh criticism from academics and commentators, many of whom did not share the government's sense of the importance of the war in Canadian history and culture. The celebration was meant to glorify Canadian patriotism, but often offended many of the communities that had helped secure the victory. For instance, the bicentennial often used the title of "The Fight for Canada," and frequently suggested that, had

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<sup>13</sup> Speaking Notes for the Honorable James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages on the Occasion of the Official Launch of Commemorative Events for the 200th Anniversary of the War of 1812. <https://web.archive.org/web/20130807200911/http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1342616885503>. Excerpted from larger Quote found in Chapter 2.



Britain lost the war, “Quebec’s French speaking identity would not exist.”<sup>14</sup> Yet French-Canadian critics felt that the history of 1812 celebrated contained a deep British imperial memory of the war, and therefore snubbed the commemoration.<sup>15</sup> Another concern was that a large budget of \$28 million was allocated for the Bicentennial while, at the same time, the National Archives of Canada had their budget cut by \$9.6 million and other grant programs in the humanities had been eliminated. There were complaints about the irony that the government spent unprecedented amount of funds celebrating this one obscure historical event, while at the same time imposing severe cuts in the funding for the arts and higher education in Canada.<sup>16</sup> The government had also chosen to celebrate 1812, but overlooked other important events in Canadian history, like the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms or the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which defined the boundaries of Canada after the end of the Seven Years war, and is an important event to the First Nations People in Canada.<sup>17</sup> To many critics, it appeared as if the Harper government privileged military history while neglecting more peaceful aspects of the Canadian past.<sup>18</sup> Surveys conducted for the Institute for research of public policy found that, compared to the 47.1% of Canadians that would have favored a celebration of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, only 28.6% supported the celebration of the war of 1812.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Jennifer Ditchburn, “War Of 1812 Bicentennial: Tories Spending Big To Become Party Of Patriotism”. *The Huffington Post*. Accessed June 2016. [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2011/10/12/canada-bicentennial-tories\\_n\\_1007877.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2011/10/12/canada-bicentennial-tories_n_1007877.html)

<sup>15</sup> Tiro, 92

<sup>16</sup> Meagan Fitzpatrick, “Conservatives draw fire for War of 1812 spending” *CBC News*. Accessed August 2016. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/conservatives-draw-fire-for-war-of-1812-spending-1.1265851>

<sup>17</sup> Stan Beardy, “Open Letter Commemoration of the 250 the Anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of 1763” March 18, 2013. Accessed Nov. 2016. [http://www.chiefs-of-ontario.org/sites/default/files/news\\_files/Ltr%20to%20PM%20Harper%20RE%20Commemoration%20of%20250th%20Anniversary%20of%20the%20RP%20of%201763%20-%20March%2018%202013\\_0.pdf](http://www.chiefs-of-ontario.org/sites/default/files/news_files/Ltr%20to%20PM%20Harper%20RE%20Commemoration%20of%20250th%20Anniversary%20of%20the%20RP%20of%201763%20-%20March%2018%202013_0.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> “Conservatives Draw Fire”

<sup>19</sup> John Geddes, “How Stephen Harper is Rewriting History”. *Macleans*. Accessed Nov. 2016. [www.macleans.ca/news/Canada/written-by-the-victors/](http://www.macleans.ca/news/Canada/written-by-the-victors/).

Finally, the celebrations came under criticism because of the very strained relationship between the government and the First Nations. For many commentators, it proved difficult to reconcile the praise for the contribution of the Shawnee leader, Tecumseh, with either the tragic history of the First Nations in Canada after 1812 or the government's acrimonious relations with the First Nations' leadership in the run-up to the celebrations in 2012. If anything, the attempt to include Tecumseh in this celebration of Canadian nationalism only highlighted the historically tragic and currently very difficult position of the aboriginal First Nations in Canadian society. Gerald Caplan, a former Liberal minister, made this complaint bluntly: "It is typical of Stephen Harper that he chose to spend significant public resources publicizing the War of 1812 instead of the war against Canada's First Nations."<sup>20</sup>

The Harper government ultimately failed in its commemoration of the War of 1812. The commemoration did not accomplish the goals that were set in 2012. The government did not garner more support for the war in Afghanistan or make Canadians prouder of their military heritage. Instead the bicentennial brought Canada against the Harper government in their overwhelming dislike of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812. A majority of the Canadian public would have rather commemorated more important events like the Charters of Rights and Freedoms or Women's Suffrage. The Harper government wanted to make the bicentennial inclusive of all peoples living in Canada but fell short in this goal. The French Canadians who felt the celebration focused on the British imperial memory of the war. The First Nations who refused to participate in the celebrations and instead wanted the government to commemorate and remember the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of 1763.

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<sup>20</sup> Gerald Caplan, "We Must reconcile ourselves to the real history of Canada" *The Globe and Mail*, Accessed Nov. 2016. <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/we-must-reconcile-ourselves-to-the-real-history-of-canada/article24828881/>

This thesis explores the ways that the Canadian government planned, organized and celebrated the Bicentennial of the War of 1812, by looking specifically at the use of Tecumseh as one of the four historical figures presented as the symbolic faces of the celebration in 2012. I examine the design for the bicentennial, how Tecumseh fit into this design. Finally, I will explain why Tecumseh proved such a difficult fit in the government's Bicentennial message of Canadian unity.

The problem with Tecumseh's appropriation for the Canadian bicentennial falls into two parts: one relates to the failure of his original motives for participating in the war; the other to its ultimately tragic consequences for his people on both sides of the border. On the most basic level, Tecumseh was neither a Canadian, nor did he fight in 1812 primarily for the preservation of Canada. Compared to Brock, Salaberry, and Secord, who were fighting to protect their homes and livelihoods from American invasion, Tecumseh's main goal in fighting in the war of 1812 was the creation of an Indian Confederacy meant to protect Indian tribal lands. More tragically, while the first three successfully defended what was theirs in 1812, Tecumseh's dream remained as distant as ever. The British early in the war had promised Tecumseh and his Native allies that they would push in the peace talks for an Indian border zone to protect the lands of their allies from incursions by American settlers. However, because the Americans refused to end the war as long as Britain wanted the border zone, Britain eventually betrayed her original promise to her native allies and dropped the condition from the final peace settlement.<sup>21</sup> Tecumseh's fears were soon borne out. On the U.S. side of the border after the war, Native Americans came to be violently displaced and moved to reservations where conditions were deplorable and in many instances continue to be so to this day. In Canada, the forcible move of the First Nations to

reservations was perhaps slower and less violent, but was also completed by the Indian Act of 1876. Over the course of subsequent decades, the Canadian First Nations were deprived of their lands outside of the reservations, subjected to an official policy of cultural assimilation in Residential schools, and left to suffer poverty and discrimination that differs little from the brutal conditions endured by their American cousins.

It is therefore at best tragically ironic that Tecumseh's memory had been appropriated by the Conservative Harper government in an attempt to make him a "Canadian" hero. To illustrate this contradiction, I will look at the relationship of the First Nations people with the Canadian government in the years after 1812, including with an examination of more recent developments, like negotiations over unresolved land-claims and the Oka Crisis in the 1990s. I will then discuss the difficult conditions endured by the First Nations people under the Harper government, such as the poverty, education and high death rates on the reserves. I will use these events to highlight why the inclusion of Tecumseh in the bicentennial does not fit with the history and current conditions of the First Nations people in Canada.

### **Heritage, History, and the Canadian Memory of Tecumseh:**

According to David Lowenthal, the concept of "heritage history" – the popular celebration of our past - has many benefits for the community. Among the most important is that it provides a "linkage with ancestors and offspring, bonds neighbors and patriots, certifies identity, and places roots in time honored ways."<sup>22</sup> However, while heritage has many benefits, Lowenthal also concludes that it comes together with many negative aspects: "it is oppressive, defeatist, decadent, and can breed xenophobic hate, and glamorizes narrow nationalism."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> David Lowenthal. *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press , 1997), xiii

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv

David Lowenthal discusses that heritage is present in every aspect of modern culture and shapes how we act towards members of ethnic minorities in our midst, as well as other communities and nations.

According to Lowenthal, one of the more important, yet dangerous, functions of heritage history is that serves to shape our collective identity: “Heritage passes on exclusive myths of origin and continuance, endowing a select group with prestige and common purpose...”<sup>24</sup> This both gives such heritage beliefs their immense power and explains their disregard for even the flimsiest pretensions to scholarly objectivity or accuracy: “we exalt our own heritage not because it is demonstrably true but because it out to be.”<sup>25</sup> Such heritage myth of origin and identity explains the reason why the War of 1812 is celebrated differently in the United States and Canada. Heritage develops version of the past that are based in both truth and deliberate fabrication. According to Lowenthal, “Heritage thrives on persisting error, ‘Getting its history wrong is crucial for the creation of a nation.’”<sup>26</sup> Lowenthal therefore carefully distinguishes heritage from scholarly history: “heritage is not history at all; while it borrows from and enlivens historical study; heritage is not an inquiry into the past but a celebration of it, not an effort to know what actually happened but a profession of faith in a past tailored to meet present day purposes. Heritage clarifies pasts so as to infuse them with present purposes.”<sup>27</sup>

Lowenthal’s concept of “heritage history” thus helps us analyze the Canadian Bicentennial of the War of 1812. Stephen Harper’s War of 1812 bicentennial offered a typically nationalistic version of Canadian heritage history, one that focused on the patriotic combination of the themes of sacrifice, unity, and diversity that has long underpinned official efforts to

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<sup>24</sup>Lowenthal, 128

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 128

<sup>26</sup> Lowenthal, 130

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, x, xv

generate a Canadian national consciousness. The Harper government invoked a “heritage” version of the War of 1812 to remind Canadians of their past sacrifices and their duty to maintain the unity of the many different peoples who had fought and died for Canada in the past. This use of the War of 1812 fits exactly into Lowenthal’s concept of heritage. Harper used the bicentennial to invoke a heritage founded in military tradition in any attempt to change the Canadian popular identity from a benign peacekeeping nation to a proud warrior nation.

On the surface, it may be difficult to find fault with such seemingly harmless celebration of Canadian patriotism. However, the Canadian commemoration of the War of 1812 serves also as a perfect example of the less benign aspects of “heritage history.” According to Lowenthal, “heritage” myths are celebrated not only in praise of the communities that embrace them, but also in complete disregard of their impact on outsiders and “others” within the community that is held together by such beliefs.<sup>28</sup> Curiously, in the Canadian case, this characteristic disregard affected less the past antagonists in the war itself - Americans – and far more the First Nations who had been Canada’s allies.

The heritage memory the Harper government sought to construct in its commemoration of the War of 1812 not only appropriated Tecumseh himself as a Canadian hero in ways that neglected entirely his dream of an independent Indian state, but also employed him as a symbol of the purportedly multi-cultural nature of Canadian society, including its claim to respect and include the people of the First Nations. The implicit message of the bicentennial was that, like French- and English-speaking Canadians, the First Nations had fought to preserve Canada, and their courageous sacrifices were then rewarded with their inclusion as one of the many distinct strands that made up the multi-ethnic fabric of Canadian society. Yet for many native Canadians,

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<sup>28</sup> Lowenthal, 68

as well as historians, the First Nations can only be seen as the biggest losers in the War of 1812, for they were rewarded with a tragic history of dispossession, forcible assimilation and discrimination.

The bicentennial failed to acknowledge the bitter irony of celebrating Tecumseh while many in the First Nations are still suffering from the years of abuse at the Residential Schools and are waiting for monetary compensation from the government for their lost lands. In a typically “heritage” fashion, the bicentennial focused on their contributions to the war effort, but took no responsibility for the damage done to the First Nations both since then and today, whether that be land claims issues or government inaction on a more recent an epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous women. Perhaps it was for this reason that, while elevating the mythical image of Tecumseh, the bicentennial failed to adequately include the First Nations in the commemoration. During a bicentennial event in Halifax the First Nations were not even represented. According to Betty Ann Lavallee of the Congress of Aboriginal people, “Most Canadians do not know the significance of the aboriginal commitment to the formation of this country to begin with. It’s not taught in schools.”<sup>29</sup>

### **Outline of Chapters:**

Chapter One is a history of Tecumseh and his role in the War of 1812 to better understand why Tecumseh is included in the Canadian Celebrations of the War of 1812. This chapter looks at Tecumseh’s dream of a Pan-Indian confederacy. Chapter Two is about the Bicentennial celebration of the War of 1812 and what the government hoped to achieve with the celebration. I explore the focus of the celebration on the four “historical faces” that, in Canada, who were used to represent their nation’s participation in the War of 1812: Sir Isaac Brock,

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<sup>29</sup> “First Nations Omitted from War of 1812 Re-Enactment,” *CBC News*, accessed April 4, 2017, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/first-nations-omitted-from-war-of-1812-re-enactment-1.1219097>

Laura Secord, Sir Charles de Saulsberry, and Tecumseh. Chapter Three is about the attempt to co-optation of Tecumseh by the Harper government. Chapter Four looks into the Canadian Bicentennial commemoration of the War in 2012. My research has shown that the Harper government neglected the First Nations while at the same time putting out millions of dollars to celebrate the bicentennial



## **Chapter One: Chief Tecumseh & The War of 1812**

When the United States declared war on June 18, 1812, many Native American tribes viewed the war as an opportunity to secure an independent state of their own, one that would block the westward expansion of the U.S. into their sacred lands where they could live in relative peace. Since the first contact with Europeans in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the growing number of settlers coming to North America forced Native Americans off their ancestral lands. Native Americans were used extensively as military auxiliaries during the Seven Years War and the American Revolution. In the years between the American Revolution and 1812, Native Americans continued to fight the American settlement of their lands in the west. Yet after every conflict, the Native allies would be forgotten and only given minimal protection from encroaching white settlers for twelve years, the Shawnee, Wyandots, Delaware, Miamis, Ottawa's and Detroit River Wyndots were forced to accept the Treaty of Grenville in 1795. The Treaty "ceded all but the northwestern corner of Ohio to the Americans and guaranteed the United States military reservations within the remaining Indian Territory."<sup>30</sup>

Native tribes continued to resist American expansion after 1795, relying increasingly on Britain for the supplies to keep up their war. Understandably, the tribes allied with the side that promised them land protection from land-hungry American settlers. In these difficult circumstances, the British were more successful in winning and keeping the support of Native allies. The British gave their Native allies promises to help protect their lands from the French and American settlers. They supplied them with guns and ammunition to protect their lands. The British were also more willing to use their Indian allies in main auxiliary forces and at least seemed interested in their welfare. The British had their own Indian Department that was set up

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<sup>30</sup> Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 472

by Sir William Johnson, and by the time of the war of 1812 had offices in Montreal and Fort George.<sup>31</sup>

### **Tecumseh**

The most famous Native leader in 1812 was Shawnee Chief Tecumseh. He came from a mixed Shawnee background. Tecumseh's parents were Pukeshinwau, a warrior of the Kispolo division of the Shawnee and Methoataaskee of the Pekowi division of the Shawnee tribe.<sup>32</sup> Historians have argued about Tecumseh date and place of birth, but John Sugden places his birth in March of 1768 on the Scioto in either a Chillicothe or Kispolo town.<sup>33</sup> From his youth, Tecumseh was haunted by the constant losses of his tribal homelands due to war and mass incursions by Americans. He grew up at a time when the European population of North American was rapidly expanding, and First Nations were being pushed ever further west. In some instances, lands were lost because the Iroquois, who claimed they had conquered the Ohio territory in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, sold the land to the British. The Iroquois allowed the Shawnee and other tribes to live on the land. In other cases, it was direct military defeats, as well as destruction of homes and villages during the American Revolution, which forced tribes to relocate further west.<sup>34</sup> Tecumseh's own father was killed in a battle at Point Pleasant Ohio in 1774. This constant warfare and loss of Shawnee lands shaped Tecumseh's hostility toward Americans, or Big Knives, as the Native tribes called them.<sup>35</sup>

Tecumseh spent his young adult years fighting white settlers in the west and south in vain attempts to protect Shawnee and Native land. He established himself as a great warrior fighting

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<sup>31</sup> George F.G. Stanley, "The Indians and the War of 1812," *The Canadian Historical Review* vol. 31, 145

<sup>32</sup> John Sugden, *Tecumseh: A Life* (New York: Henry Holt and Company Inc., 1997), 14

<sup>33</sup> Sugden, 22. This information was based on the writings of Anthony Shane and Stephen Ruddell who were friends of Tecumseh.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 24

<sup>35</sup> Sugden, 37

in engagements against militia and military from the states of Tennessee, obtaining victories for Native tribes living in the Wabash. Tecumseh and the other native warriors thought that these victories against the Americans would give them advantage in getting concessions from the Americans or even the British, who still held onto military post in the west even after the Treaty of Paris that ended the American Revolution.<sup>36</sup> With the start of the prolonged conflict with Napoleonic France in the 1790s, the British sought to bolster the defenses of Canada in the likelihood that war would spread to North America. They also sought to rebuild their relationship with the native allies they had neglected after the American Revolution.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, with their defeat at the Battle of Fallen Timbers at the hands of Major General “Mad” Anthony Wayne in 1794, the Native Americans suffered a major setback that would propel them to the side of the British.

By 1795, Tecumseh had enough Shawnee warriors following him to start his own village, located on either Buck Creek or Deer Creek to the west of the Shawnees of Ohio. His village consisted of 250 people, including his brother Tenskwatawa (the prophet).<sup>38</sup> This community included not only Shawnees, but also Delawares, Mingoes, and Ohio Cherokees. These tribes would eventually follow him into his alliance with Great Britain.

In the early Nineteenth century, the American government under President Thomas Jefferson continued to negotiate minor treaties and buy Indian land. William Henry Harrison was sent by President Thomas Jefferson to help convince the Indians living in the newly acquired land of the Louisiana Purchase to give up their land and move further west. Harrison was sent to be governor of the Indiana territory and had close friendships with land speculators, whom he

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<sup>36</sup> James Laxer, *Tecumseh and Brock*, (Berkeley, CA: House of Anansi Press, 2014), 39

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 40

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 43

would help get land from the Miamis and Shawnees.<sup>39</sup> By 1809, William Henry Harrison had acquired 240,000 square kilometers of land from the native peoples.<sup>40</sup> Tecumseh, however, did not accept these land purchases as valid, viewing the treaties as theft of land that belonged to the tribes, and wanted to resist the purchase of more native land. Tecumseh met with Harrison in 1810 at a tribal council at Vincennes, Indiana, bringing an escort of 40 warriors who were a part of his growing confederacy of Indian Warriors that was made up of tribes including the Delaware's, Ohio Cherokees, Mingoe's, and Shawnees.<sup>41</sup> Tecumseh's imposing appearance greatly impressed Harrison and the other Americans present. Sugden describes him at length:

He stood about five feet ten inches- a little over medium height, though his erect carriage made him look taller- he had an athletic, spare, and well-proportioned frame, with a full chest, broad square shoulders, and finely formed muscular limbs. He exuded energy and activity, and an old leg injury did not prevent him from walking with a graceful, brisk, elastic step. Tecumseh's complexion was light for an Indian. His head was moderately sized, his face oval, and his features were regular, large, and handsome. Beneath a full high forehead, big dark penetrating eyes flashed dramatically under heavy arched brows. The cheeks were high, the nose slightly aquiline, and the well-formed mouth, when opened, revealed fine white teeth. Tecumseh spoke fluently in the Shawnee tongue, adding weight to his emphatic and sonorous words with elegant gestures. One listener was reminded of Aaron Burr, and marveled at his 'impetuous and commanding' speech.<sup>42</sup>

Tecumseh argued that the Americans had taken the land illegally from the Native tribes and that if these fraudulent land sales continued to happen that the Natives and the Americans could not remain at peace. He threatened that a great council of tribal leaders would meet in a location near the British to determine what should be done to the chiefs who had sold land to the Americans and what action would be taken against those living on tribal lands. After a brief but intense moment when Tecumseh's warriors and Harrison's entourage almost fought one another,

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<sup>39</sup> Sugden, 106

<sup>40</sup> Laxer, 78

<sup>41</sup> Sugden, 76

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 6

Harrison agreed that he would take Tecumseh's complaints about the land sales to President Madison.

In a clear indication that he did not think anything would come from his negotiations with the Americans, Tecumseh met with the British in October of the same year at Fort Malden in Upper Canada to renew the alliance between Britain and the native Confederacy. There had been previous alliances between Britain and the Native Tribes living in North America. These alliances were fostered during periods of conflict between Britain, France and the United States. The first of the major alliances was during the Seven Years War (1756-1763) and then again in the American Revolution (1775-1783). The British in the inter-war years continually supplied the tribes with weapons and other goods for trading. For Tecumseh, however, this was not a way merely of ensuring aid. For Tecumseh wanted full British support if war was to break out between the Indian confederacy and the United States. For their part, the British wanted Tecumseh to be at their side in case of open hostilities with the United States, but did not want to be accused of inciting the Natives to attack settlers in the west. The conclusion of the talks was that the British wanted to keep the Native Allies on their side in the case of War breaking out between Great Britain and the United States, but to keep the Native Allies from declaring war against the United States.<sup>43</sup>

Tecumseh spent the next two years traveling the extent of Indian country, going as far south as the Carolinas and the lands of the Cherokee. The main part of Tecumseh's tour took place between August 1811 and January 1812, and he visited the lands of the Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, Osages, the western Shawnees and Delawares, Iowas, Sacs, foxes, Sioux,

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<sup>43</sup> Laxer, 85

Kickapoos and Potawatomis.<sup>44</sup> His goal was to bring as many other tribes into his Indian Confederacy as possible to fight the United States in the event that war broke out between either Britain or the U.S. or between the Native Confederacy and the U.S. Many of the allies who would fight alongside Tecumseh in the War of 1812 joined him during his grand tour of the tribes. Some Native American tribes did not want to join Tecumseh's Confederacy or his alliance with Britain. The seven nations of the Iroquois Confederacy in Canada did not have an interest in aiding or allying with the British. Alliance with the British could hurt their relationship with the United States. The only major tribal group ready to take up arms against the Americans was the Shawnees, but other native tribes believed that the British would not need their aid if war broke out between Great Britain and the United States.<sup>45</sup> Many of the tribes like the Iroquois chose their allegiances carefully, since they had developed an amicable relationship with the United States, and aiding or allying with the British could have destroyed that friendship. Many of the Iroquois tribes in Canada allied with the British, while the tribes in the area around New York allied with the Americans. Historian Carl Benn argues that the Iroquois participated in the war of 1812 on the sides of both the American and British as independent allies and not as subjects. The Iroquois had power to influence their allies to secure their objective of protecting their lands from American incursion.<sup>46</sup>

Meanwhile growing hostilities in Europe and harassment by the British of American shipping on the high seas, along with attacks on American settlers by Native Americans, led President Madison to urge Congress to declare war on Britain. On June 18, 1812, the United

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<sup>44</sup> John Sugden, "Early Pan-Indianism; Tecumseh's Tour of the Indian Country, 1811-1812." *American Indian Quarterly* 10 (4) 1986: doi:10.2307/1183838. 274

<sup>45</sup> Stanley, 150

<sup>46</sup> Carl Benn, *The Iroquois in the War of 1812* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 4

States officially declared war on England, British forces in Canada began to mobilize their forces to defend the primary American target of Canada.

Tecumseh's early role in the War of 1812 was to ambush and cut General William Hull's supply lines at Fort Detroit. His well-planned attack led to the death of one hundred troops and helped fuel the fear of Native warriors that would lead to Hull's downfall later in the year.

Tecumseh and his allies excelled at what would soon come to be known as guerilla combat and gave effective support to the more rigid European-style tactics of the British.<sup>47</sup> On August 13, 1812, General Sir Isaac Brock, Commander of the British army in Canada, arrived at Amherstburg near Fort Malden to join forces with Tecumseh. Tecumseh never great trust in the British, due to their history of repeated backstabbing of their native allies. However, he readily joined with Brock because he was eager to fight the Americans and liked Brock's bold plan for a frontal assault on Fort Detroit, even though the British forces were outnumbered and the Americans were in a fortified fort.<sup>48</sup> Brock during their meeting inquired about why Tecumseh was fighting against the Americans. While historians do not know what Brock actually said to Tecumseh, it has been suggested that he promised Tecumseh that he would do everything in his power to ensure that the Indians were not forgotten in the peace talks.<sup>49</sup>

Brock and Tecumseh immediately set about attacking Fort Detroit. Brock commended Tecumseh and his warriors for their early successes in cutting Hull's supply line and shaking up American morale in the invasion of Canada: "I have fought against the enemies (Americans) of our father, the king beyond the great lake, and they have never seen my back... I am come here

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<sup>47</sup> Laxer, 141

<sup>48</sup> Sugden, 300

<sup>49</sup> Laxer, 157

to fight his enemies on this side of the great lake, and now desire with my soldiers to take lessons from you and your great warriors, that I may learn how to make war in these great forests.”<sup>50</sup>

The assault on Fort Detroit began on August 16. Brock had sent Hull a demand for surrender warning “the numerous bodies of Indians who have attached themselves to my troops will be beyond control the moment the contest commences.”<sup>51</sup> He was playing on the American fear of the brutality of the Native American warriors and the memory of men and women being cut down by native warriors. This memory was not founded in fact because there were very few cases of civilians being attacked by Native warriors. As the battle commenced, Brock and his British lines were ready to assault the fort directly, with support from their artillery. Tecumseh, however, had his warriors march his men through an opening in the trees in view of the fort to make it appear that there were anywhere between two or three thousand Indians. Upon seeing this, Hull ordered the Fort to surrender without even putting up much of a fight.<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately, this would be the last and only time that Tecumseh would fight alongside Brock, who would soon die at the Battle of Queenston Heights on October 13, 1812. However, Tecumseh continued to fight side-by-side with the British, now led by Colonel Henry Proctor.

Tecumseh marched with Col. Proctor to their assault on Fort Meigs on the April 29, 1813 in which the British and the American forces proceeded to fire musket and Cannon from behind redoubts and entrenchments, which disgusted Tecumseh who wanted to have fighting man to man and saw this strategy as cowardly. The British and Tecumseh were able to repulse the Americans and take Fort Meigs after a long siege that ended May 5, 1813. Tecumseh, however, then criticized Proctor for his conduct in the attack on the Fort, complaining that he

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<sup>50</sup> Laxer, 146

<sup>51</sup> Sugden, 301

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 303



was not as great of a commander as Brock because he favored less direct offensive strategies. When Proctor did go on the offensive, he often preferred to fight behind batteries or earthworks whereas Tecumseh favored a direct charge.<sup>53</sup> Tecumseh's disdain for Proctor came to a head in September 1813. After the American victories on Lake Erie, Proctor decided to abandon Fort Malden and to fall back to the Thames River. Upon learning about this, Tecumseh tried to get Proctor to man up and stay and fight the Americans. According to contemporary British reports, Tecumseh ridiculed Proctor to his face, comparing him to a scared animal with its tail between its legs. He concluded his barrage of insults saying that if the British intended to retreat they should leave their weapons for the native warriors: "Our lives are in the hands of the Great Spirit- we are determined to defend our lands, and if it is his will we wish to leave our bones upon them."<sup>54</sup> His criticism did not dissuade Proctor from retreating to the Thames, burning Fort Malden before leaving, to not let the Americans have the fort.

The British gathered around Moraviantown where Tecumseh continued to berate Proctor for not being ready for a fight against the Americans. Tecumseh's own men even began desert because of the apparent lack of enthusiasm by the British, but also because the coming winter and the arduous conditions that the women and children who came with the warriors would have to endure. By October 5, 1813, Tecumseh only had 500 warriors left with him as 1000 had left over the previous month.<sup>55</sup> The Battle of Moraviantown was a disaster for Tecumseh, mostly because of Proctor's cowardice, as Proctor abandoned Tecumseh and his warriors to fight on their own against the American forces led by Harrison. When Tecumseh went to the front line to rally his men, an American soldier fired at Tecumseh, striking him in the left side and killing

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<sup>53</sup> Sugden, 332

<sup>54</sup> Laxer, 202

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 206

him. When the Native warriors heard of Tecumseh's death, they also withdrew from the field, leaving the Americans victorious.

Tecumseh's dream of Indian Confederacy died with its leader.<sup>56</sup> It is evident that Brock had promised to support Tecumseh's plan for an Indian state in return of their alliance in the defense of Canada. In his brief time with Tecumseh, Brock had clearly understood the former's goal of such an Indian state. According to Sugden, "Exactly what had passed between Tecumseh and Brock is unknown... [But] There can be little doubt that Brock assured Tecumseh that Indian land claims would be supported, but equally that he had not entered into the detail of the subject."<sup>57</sup> Certainly, in his correspondence with Lord Liverpool, Brock demonstrated his support for Tecumseh's war goals:

They appear determined to continue the contest until they obtain the Ohio for a boundary. The United States government is accused, and I believe justly, of having corrupted a few dissolute characters, whom they pretended to consider as Chiefs, and with whom they contracted engagements, and concluded Treaties, which they have been attempting to impose on the whole Indian Race. Their determined opposition to such fictitious and ruinous pretensions which if admitted would soon oblige the Indians to remove beyond the Mississippi is the true ground of their enmity against the Americans.<sup>58</sup>

We also know that Brock had wished to ensure that the British supported Tecumseh's plans, because he had asked George Prevost, the governor General of Canada, to request London that the demand for an Indian state be brought up during the eventual peace talks. Earl Bathurst, Sectary of war and colonies, agreed that, as a reward for the Indians for their services during the war should have a large Indian state to keep the Americans from taking their land as they have

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<sup>56</sup> Laxer, 207

<sup>57</sup> Sugden, 311

<sup>58</sup> Laxer, 157

been doing since 1783.<sup>59</sup> The British themselves supported the idea of an Indian State because it would provide protection along the border of Canada from further American invasion.

Unfortunately, the Americans would not budge on the Indian State in the peace negotiations. The death of Brock, loss of Fort George, and the loss at Moraviantown, along with American Naval victories on the Great Lakes, had changed the tide of peace in favor of the Americans. Then there were the news of the repulsion of British forces in Baltimore and New York, which meant that the British could no longer use their stronger military position to push for the demands of their Indian allies. In the end, the British abandoned the idea of a border country and left their Indian allies to fend for themselves in the years following the war. By the war's formal end in February of 1815, many of the issues that had started the conflict had been resolved. Since Napoleon had been defeated, the British Navy no longer needed to impress American sailors on the high seas. The orders-in-council had been repealed before the official declaration of the war. The peace treaty therefore simply re-established the pre-war borders. An editorial published in the *Toronto Star* two hundred years later sums up the evident futility of the war perfectly:

So, in the end, thousands of lives were lost, communities burned and wealth squandered with no material gain of any importance for either Britain or the United States. In one final irony, the Battle of New Orleans was fought more than two weeks after the peace treaty was drafted, resulting in a U.S. victory and 2,000 British casualties. They suffered in vain, not knowing the war was over.<sup>60</sup>

### **The War's Legacy for Native Americans:**

Tecumseh's death left his confederacy in Lake Ontario, trying to find a leader who could take Tecumseh's place to lead the alliance, for the rest of the war Tecumseh's brother,

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<sup>59</sup> Sugden, 311

<sup>60</sup>. "The War of 1812 Shaped Canada Forever" *The Toronto Star*. Accessed May 2016.  
[http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/2012/06/17/the\\_war\\_of\\_1812\\_shaped\\_canada\\_forever.html](http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/2012/06/17/the_war_of_1812_shaped_canada_forever.html).

Tenskwatawa,” was elected War Chief, but he failed to keep the confederacy together. He strained relationships with the British by continually asking for supplies of rum.<sup>61</sup> The Prophet failed to keep the tribes together, as he continually brought up their differences and lacked the courage to lead them himself in the fight against Americans. The Ottawa chief Naiwash, who was present at the battle of Moraviantown states in October of 1814, described the resulting divisions and lack of leadership within the confederacy:

We Indians... from westward, perhaps the Master of Life would give us more luck if we would stick together as we formerly did... and we probably might go back and tread again upon our own lands. Chiefs and warriors, since our great Tecumtha has been killed we do not listen to one another. We do not rise together. We hurt ourselves by it. It is our own fault... We do not, when we go to war, rise together, but we go one or two, and the rest say they will go tomorrow.<sup>62</sup>

Tecumseh’s allies within the Pan-Indian confederacy tried to hold together after his death, but in the end, no other chief could do what Tecumseh had done in making large groups of native tribes unite. Tecumseh’s allies and descendants had undoubtedly the least to celebrate from the outcome of the war. If the British would have kept true to their word on the Indian Border country then perhaps the tragic history of the Native Americans may have been entirely different. As Kevin Williams, Absentee Shawnee (one of three federally recognized groups of Shawnee located in Oklahoma) explains in *We Shall Remain*: “He and his brother were trying to get the Shawnee people back to their roots and trying to keep their lands from being taken. He was a visionary. And I think today what would have happened if he had succeeded in his plan, it would have changed history.”<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Sugden, 384

<sup>62</sup> Sugden, 384

<sup>63</sup> ICMN Staff, “The War of 1812 Could Have Been the War of Indian Independence,” Indian Country Media Network, June 18, 2012, <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2012/06/18/war-1812-could-have-been-war-indian-independence-118851>

One of the question that arose in the years following the war was about who actually won the war. For the Native Americans who fought in the war, they received the worst part of the conflict. *The Indian Country Today Media Network* argued that the War of 1812 could have been the War of Indian Independence if the British would have not neglected their Indian allies again and if Tecumseh would have not been killed at the Battle of the Thames in October 1813.<sup>64</sup> Most historians agree that the most important thing to come out of the war of 1812 would be either The Star Spangled Banner or the military victory at New Orleans that would propel Andrew Jackson to the presidency. The far more significant consequence of the war was that it was the turning point for Native Americans in their struggle to maintain control of their lands.<sup>65</sup> According to James Loewen, “The American Indians were the only real losers in the War.”<sup>66</sup> After the war of 1812 without aid from Britain, the Indian wars that followed 1815 were merely “mopping up operations” with no hope that the Native tribes of the United States winning.<sup>67</sup> During the years 1815-1830. The United States government negotiated over 200 Indian treaties that forced the Indians to cede their lands, and 99 of the treaties created the reservations west of the Mississippi.<sup>68</sup> In Loewen’s judgment, the land loss was not the only consequence of the Native American defeat in the War of 1812 the other loss was a part of American history:

Another result of the war of 1812 was the loss of part of our history. As historian Bruce Johansson put it, ‘A century of learning [from Native Americans] was coming to a close. A century and more of forgetting-- of calling history into service to rationalize conquest-- was beginning.’ After 1815 American Indians can no longer play with sociologist call the role of conflict partner- an important other that must be taken into account-- so Americans forget that natives had ever been significant in our history. Even terminology

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<sup>64</sup> The War of 1812 Could Have Been the War of Indian Independence

<sup>65</sup> The War of 1812 Could Have Been the War of Indian Independence

<sup>66</sup> James W. Loewen. *Lies my teacher told me: Everything your American History Got Wrong*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 122

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 122

<sup>68</sup> Donald Fixico, A Native Nations Perspective on the War of 1812. Accessed May 2016.

<http://www.pbs.org/wned/war-of-1812/essays/native-nations-perspective/>

changed until 1815 the word *Americans* had generally been used to refer to Native Americans; after 1815 it met European Americans.<sup>69</sup>

The war of 1812 was the final nail in the coffin for many tribes like the Shawnee and the Ohio Cherokee. They were forced onto reservations and forced to adopt European styles of dress and culture. Their fate was followed over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by a vast array of Native cultures and people. Even those tribes that allied with the United States would not be safe from being forced onto reservations, as if their service meant nothing because they were not white. After the war of 1812, Native Americans had three choices, fight and die protecting ancestral lands, become “white” by abandoning native dress and religion, or move onto reservations where conditions were deplorable.

### **Canada’s First Nations: The Forgotten Allies:**

Before the end of the War of 1812 the British had given aid to First Nations tribes living in Canada against the American incursion in the West, but now with peace between the United States and Great Britain secured the Natives’ usefulness had run its course. The Indians came to be seen as a nuisance and their possession of lands in Canada as a hindrance to colonization and development.<sup>70</sup> The vital role played by Indian forces in the war would soon be forgotten due to the introduction of the Canadian “militia myth.” Canada would then follow the American lead by appropriating native land by treaties and forced purchases, and by herding their people onto enclosed “reservations.” According to Jeffery Wasson, “between 1815 and 1824 the Upper Canada government would force 4.4 million acres of land sessions from its native population. By 1820s most of the 8000 Indian inhabitants of Upper Canada would be forced to live on reserves,

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<sup>69</sup> Loewen, 123

<sup>70</sup> Gordon Gibson. *A New Look at Canadian Indian Policy: Respect the Collective- Promote the Individual.* (Canada: The Fraser Institute, 2009), 36

which were similar to their American counterparts.”<sup>71</sup> American Indians after the War of 1812 were forced onto reservations in a shorter timeframe than their Canadian counterparts.

The federal Department of Indian Affairs was the agency charged with the task of “civilizing” the natives on reservations in the Nineteenth century. This process could include cutting of long hair into more European hairstyles, wearing Western or European style clothing, and the use of non-native names. Gordon Gibson writes, “Many of these programs were so insensitive even brutal, that the concept of ‘assimilation’ gained a dreadful name in Canada at the same time the superficially similar idea of the ‘melting pot’ was becoming received wisdom in the United States. In any event, the actual operational policy was not assimilation. It was isolation. Out of sight, out of mind, out of the way. Indians cease to be a barrier or even a factor to the fullest exportation of Canadian territory by others.”<sup>72</sup> Conditions on the Canadian reservations were just as inhumane as on their American counterparts. Unlike in the United States, the Indians living in Canada could move further north to avoid contact, but in doing so isolate themselves from trade routes and supplies.<sup>73</sup> The Natives who avoided the reservations were able to maintain their cultural way of life longer than those forced onto reserves, who struggled to survive and maintain their way of life. Wasson quotes a description of the Indians living Upper Canada in 1845:

[Indians] no longer lead a wild and roving life in the midst of a numerous and rapidly increasing white population. Their hunting grounds are broken up by settlements; the game is exhausted, the resources as hunters and trappers are cut off; want and disease spread rapidly among them, and gradually reduce their numbers. To escape these consequences they have no choices left but to remove beyond the pale of civilization or to settle and cultivate land for a livelihood.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Jeffery Wasson, “Inventing a Foundation Myth: Upper Canada in the War of 1812.” (2014) *Student Works. Paper 6*. <http://commons.clarku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=studentworks> , 69

<sup>72</sup> Gibson, 37

<sup>73</sup> Wasson, 69

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 69

Paradoxically, one option for young native men became military service. In every conflict Canada engaged in after 1815, natives would have high rates of service in the Canadian military.<sup>75</sup> In fighting loyally for the British, the Indians hoped to turn the tides to more favorably improve conditions for the people.

### **The Indian Act of 1876: Putting the First Nations in Their Place**

To avoid conflict with the First Nations and to secure land to strengthen the Province of Canada the government negotiated some treaties to secure large amounts of land. The definition of a treaty in the context of Indian- Canadian relations is as follows, “A compact or set of fundamental principles that formed the basis for future negotiations between Indians and non-Indians.”<sup>76</sup> When Confederation occurred in 1867, the Canadian government had already negotiated 123 treaties and land surrenders.<sup>77</sup> The government took advantage of the First Nations concept of treaties and agreements, for First Nations people agreements are not permanent and were renegotiated and renewed. The government concept of treaties and agreements were permanent and not meant to be changed or altered. Olive Patricia Dickason states, “By this time treaties had become the federal government’s tool for extinguishing Indian land rights; it regards them as the final, once- and-for-all means of opening up Indian lands for settlement and development.”<sup>78</sup>

The most important measure of suppression of the First Nations in Canada came with the passage of the Indian Act of 1876, which was the culmination of various other laws passed in the years leading up to Confederation. The Act laid out every detail of the transference of all

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<sup>75</sup> Wasson, 70

<sup>76</sup> Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada’s First Nations: A history of Founding People from Earliest Times*. (London: Oxford University Press, 2002),255

<sup>77</sup> Dickason, 252

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, 255



important Indian rights and privileges to the Canadian government.<sup>79</sup> Gibson explains that the Act treated Indians as wards of the state that had no control over any property they owned. The First Nations could not vote thus taking away their political and economic power.<sup>80</sup> . The Act explicitly delineated the areas in which the Indians could move and hunt and how to sell items collected on the reserves. The government also acquired the right to allocate and subdivide the reserve lands at any time without Indian approval. Point number five the Act stated that larger tracts of land could be subdivided into smaller lots without First Nations consent.<sup>81</sup> .

This point ensured that the land protected by the government did not belong to the natives as it did before, and they no longer had a say in the breaking up of their lands for the creation of reservations. The act also took away the freedom of Association for tribes and nations. Gibson explains that “Indians were assigned to bands, bands were assigned to reserves, and that was that. Mobility ended.”<sup>82</sup> The transfer of lands and territories in the Indian Act and treaties of the government clashed with the Aboriginal concepts of land possession. For Europeans, a person owns or leases the land that they live on, but for the First Nations, there was no concept of private land ownership. Instead, the use of land and its resources was a collective tribal right. Allen Greg explains: “For the aboriginals, the land was an extension of the self and the Indian people. As Tecumseh noted, it could no more be bought or sold in the air or sea. The notion that land could be surrendered therefore was completely inimical to their very understanding of what

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<sup>79</sup> Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. “A History of Treaty Making” Published Sept. 2011. <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1314977704533/1314977734895>

<sup>80</sup> Gibson, 40

<sup>81</sup> Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. “A History of Treaty Making”

<sup>82</sup> Gibson, 41

was at issue. As aboriginal saw it, they were not selling the land but merely sharing it and letting the crown use it.”<sup>83</sup>

The Indian Act of 1876 would remain the law in relationship to Indian affairs into the Twentieth century, which saw continuing land transfers by the Canadian government. The government wanted to gain more land for the growing settler population, and also to secure land that was bountiful with natural resources. The Indian Act received modifications in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some of these took away native rights on the reservations. Two examples of the change in Indian policies were the 1927 amendment to the Indian Act, which forbade Indians from hiring lawyers or organizing without permission for the purpose of making or protesting land claims.<sup>84</sup> The amendment took away the ability to lay charges or protest against the government in disputed land claims.

### **The Oka Crisis:**

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the First Nations continued their struggle to fight the government to resolve land claims and grievances brought about because of the treaties made in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After World War II, First Nations veterans pushed to have the Indian Act amended. Their pressure led to the creation of a Joint Senate and House of Commons Committee on the Indian Act that conducted hearings from 1946-1948 that permitted Native input to the revisions.<sup>85</sup> The revised Indian Act of 1951 gave members of the First Nations over the age of 70 a pension that had been denied in earlier revisions; they also received control of the management of reserve lands, band funds, and by-laws, which gave the reserves the ability to fund lawsuits

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<sup>83</sup> Allan Gregg, “The Real Story of Canada’s ‘Good Indian.’” 2016. *The Huffington Post*. Accessed May 4. [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/allan-gregg/tecumseh-death-anniversary-b\\_4044845.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/allan-gregg/tecumseh-death-anniversary-b_4044845.html). Story of Canada’s

<sup>84</sup> Gibson, 42

<sup>85</sup> Dickason, 310

and fight for land claims.<sup>86</sup> In 1980, the Canadian courts overturned their land claim decision from the court case *St. Catherine's Milling v. The Queen (1885)*. This gave land claim rights back to the First Nations and acknowledged the 1763 Proclamation.<sup>87</sup> In *Baker Lake v. Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (1980)* the judgement listed the conditions that had to be met for the First Nations title to land be upheld. These required that the First Nations prove that their ancestors lived on the land at the time England took control of the area, and that they were members of an organized tribe that claimed title to the area.<sup>88</sup> This did not make claims easier to resolve because of the difficulty finding documentation of First Nations tribes at the time of English settlement of Canada. In some cases the First Nations resorted to violence to make their case heard.

One of the most recent examples of the fight to protect of First Nations' lands was the Oka Crisis of 1990. The crisis occurred as the dramatic and violent culmination of centuries of land-claim abuses by all levels of the Canadian government. The town of Oka is about 37 miles west of Montréal. The conflict arose over a developer's plans to expand a nine-hole golf course onto traditional burial lands jointly claimed by the adjacent Mohawk community of Kanesatake. The golf course would disturb and desecrate the burial grounds of their ancestors. The protest began March 10, 1990, when masked Mohawk warriors put up barricades and took up arms around the area known as "The Pines."<sup>89</sup> A provincial Quebec court issued an order to have the barricades removed. When this did not occur on July 11, 100 members of the Quebec provincial police, the Surete du Quebec, positioned themselves around the barricades in an attempt to move

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<sup>86</sup> Dickason, 311

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 321

<sup>88</sup> Dickason, 336

<sup>89</sup> Alex K. Paterson, *My Life at the Bar and Beyond: The Oka Crisis*. (McGill- Queen University Press, 2005), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt80zbr.18>, 122

in and dismantle them. When the police moved in, the Mohawk warriors resisted, resulting in a gunfight that killed Cpl. Marcel Lamay. Some First Nations argue it was friendly fire that killed Lamay.<sup>90</sup> However, a coroner's report filed in 1993 concluded that it was likely that a Mohawk killed him, since the bullet that was recovered was from the type of gun the Mohawk were using.<sup>91</sup> Shortly after the firefight, another group of Mohawks on a reservation just outside of Montreal set up a barricade the block Mercier Bridge, which that linked the city with the southern shore of the St. Lawrence River.<sup>92</sup>

The standoff between the provincial government and the Mohawk turned into a fierce and lengthy confrontation. The Mohawk demanded their land, but the Quebec government was not willing to submit to an armed protest. The barricades would take another month before coming down and, even after their removal, tensions were still high. The laying down of arms and surrender occurred on September 26, at around 7 PM. The seventy-eight-day standoff was over. The Quebec government would eventually acquire the piece of contested land, and it would eventually be given to the Mohawk in 1999.<sup>93</sup>

However, giving the Mohawk control of the contested piece of land in Oka scarcely addressed the far larger problem of the general land claims and other issues sovereignty of the Native people. In the days after the end of the crisis, Henry Swain was asked to speak at a special committee for the federal government he brought forth five points to better help the government

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<sup>90</sup> Kahentinetha Horn, "Corporal Lemay: LITTLE KNOWN FACTS ABOUT CORPORAL LEMAY'S DEATH IN OKA IN 1990" *Mohawk Nation News*. Accessed May 2017. <http://mohawknationnews.com/blog/2009/09/19/corporal-lemay-little-known-facts-about-corporal-lemays-death-in-oka-in-1990/>

<sup>91</sup> Windspeaker, "Report finds Mohawk warrior responsible for policeman's death" *Aboriginal Multi-Media Society*, Accessed May 2017. <http://www.ammsa.com/publications/windspeaker/report-finds-mohawk-warrior-responsible-policemans-death>

<sup>92</sup> Paterson, 122

<sup>93</sup> Paterson, 137

amend Indian issues to prevent another incident like it Oka. His most important point was about the need to change the Indian Act which is the basis of all government handling of aboriginal land claims from its passing in 1867:

Finally, and crucially, the statutory base for Indian people needed radical overall. There were limits and how far the dominant society ought to go and to consult and accommodating the existing Indian political structure, itself a creature of the Indian Act. At stake was the honor of euro Canadians, who had invented this mess. But our goal should be to create options for Aboriginal people, not take them away. Parliament should enact modern statutes to cover the subject matter of the Indian Act, as well as those areas that were usually in the provincial domain but were constitutionally assigned to the feds, and make the choice of whether or when to move from the old Indian Act to a new one in matter of community choice. Over a period of decades, the old act would be hollowed out, relevant to fewer and fewer people, and could eventually be consigned to history's dust heap.<sup>94</sup>

### **2012: Land Still a Contested Issue:**

In the 21st century, the relationship between the First Nations and the Canadian government appeared to deteriorate further. Stephen Harper and his Conservative government showed their lackluster support for First Nations in the continual delay of a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women. (The inquiry was only greenlighted by the new Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in 2016.) Harper also ignored calls for a celebration of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which had protected and given lands belonging to the First Nations residing in Canada at the end of the Seven Years War.<sup>95</sup>

While the government-sponsored celebrations of Tecumseh were under way, the First Nations were still fighting for rights to land and resources that they claim as legally theirs. As a

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<sup>94</sup> Harry Swain,. Oka : A Political Crisis and Its Legacy. (Vancouver, BC : Douglas & McIntyre, 2010) 159

<sup>95</sup> Stan Beardy. Open Letter- Commemoration of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, (Ontario, Canada) Accessed Nov. 8, 2016. [http://chiefs-of-ontario.org/sites/default/files/news\\_files/Ltr%20to%20PM%20Harper%20RE%20Commemoration%20of%20250th%20Anniversary%20of%20the%20RP%20of%201763%20-%20March%2018%202013\\_0.pdf](http://chiefs-of-ontario.org/sites/default/files/news_files/Ltr%20to%20PM%20Harper%20RE%20Commemoration%20of%20250th%20Anniversary%20of%20the%20RP%20of%201763%20-%20March%2018%202013_0.pdf)

result of the failure of the Royal Commission, the issue of land claims remained unresolved into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This became particularly ironic in the commemorations of 2012, which highlighted that Tecumseh and other Native warriors had fought and died to protect native land from incursion by the new European states, and cast a harsh spotlight on the fact that the descendants of his people in Canada had been unsuccessful over the next two centuries in their struggle for a return of the lands they had lost. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) in Canada celebrated the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 by highlighting and remembering the contributions of the First Nations in helping defend Canada. On October 2, 2012, a National Recognition Ceremony took place that honored 48 Metis and First Nations for their sacrifices during the War of 1812. The AFN did not mention the contribution of Tecumseh and the Shawnee were not listed among the 48 tribes honored.<sup>96</sup> The reason the Shawnee were not mentioned is that they are an American Indian tribe and Tecumseh was a Native American and not a part of the First Nations.

The First Nations used many different avenues to petition the Canadian government to redress problems and to settle disputes. The official body representative of the First Nations in Canada is the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), based in Ottawa, Ontario. In 2012, the national chief was Shawn A-in-that Atleo, who served as the intermediary between the other first nation Chiefs and the Prime Minister of Canada. The website for the Assembly of first Nations gives a wealth of information into official meetings, as well as official letters and resolutions being sent to the Canadian government. The site also details policy areas that the First Nations are working to better the lives of first Nations people. One area is land rights and land claims which details all

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<sup>96</sup> Assembly of First Nations, "Assembly of First Nations Recognizes War of 1812 Bicentennial, Honors First Nations Contributions" Accessed Jan. 18, 2017. <http://www.afn.ca/en/news-media/latest-news/assembly-of-first-nations-recognizes-war-of-1812-bicentennial-honours->

open claims and gives information on specific claims between the government and first Nations.<sup>97</sup> The documents illustrate the ways in which first Nations are fighting for their ancestral lands. The AFN primary action in confronting the government on issues like land claims, housing, health, social development and other issues of the First Nations is by political resolutions and bills put forth in Parliament. Another method of getting the government's attention is by sending open letters to the Prime Minister of Canada. These Open Letters pertain to issues that are more pressing and require the government's immediate attention. While the website of the AFN does not always discuss protests happening on the Reservations, it illustrates what is being done on the national level and in Parliament. One example is the Open Letter sent in December 2012 to the Gov. Gen. David Johnston and Prime Minister Harper by from Chief Theresa Spence, whose hunger strike began on December 11, 2012. The hunger strike was "to call attention to the dire conditions which many First Nation communities face, and to protest the disrespect and shameful treatment of First Nations by the Government of Canada."<sup>98</sup>The chief was harking back to the centuries of the government's treatment of exploiting the native land for its resources. Spencer charged that Stephen Harper wanted to expand oil markets and new pipelines, but was impeded because the oil-industry needed lands that were constitutionally owned by first Nations. Chief Spencer further charged that the government would try and install the pipelines without consulting the first Nations.<sup>99</sup> The debate over the pipelines is still an ongoing battle between the government and the First Nations people.

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<sup>97</sup> Assembly of First Nations, "Land Rights and Claims" Accessed Nov 2016 <http://www.afn.ca/en/policy-areas/land-rights-and-claims>

<sup>98</sup> Shawn a-in-chut Atleo, "Open Letter on Behalf of the First Nations Leaders to the Right and Honorable Governor General David Johnston and the Right Honorable Prime Minister Stephen Harper." Published Dec. 2012. Accessed Nov. 2016 <http://www.afn.ca/en/news-media/latest-news/open-letter-on-behalf-of-the-first-nations-leaders-to-the-right-honour>

<sup>99</sup> Shiri Pasternak & Russ Diabo. "Harper v. First Nations: The Assimilation Agenda" Accessed Nov. 2016. <https://ricochet.media/en/125/harper-first-nations-assimilation-agenda>

Chief Spence entered the hunger strike to call attention to the horrible conditions on the reservations and issues involving Treaty Nine. The treaty, signed in 1905, had transferred the land in northern Ontario from the first Nations to the federal government.<sup>100</sup> The letter ends with National Chief Atleo calling out the Harper government for their lackluster response to helping the First Nations. He wrote that “Canada has not upheld the honor of the crown and it's dealing with First Nations, as evidenced in its inadequate and inequitable funding relationships with our nations and its ongoing actions in bringing forward legislative and policy changes that would directly impact on the inherent and treaty rights of First Nations.”<sup>101</sup>

### **Stephen Harper v. the First Nations:**

The relationship between the Canadian government and the First Nations has never been good. After centuries of brutal colonialism and uncaring neglect, the first nations have learned to be wary of trusting the government. Through the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the government had attempted to make steps to address the past grievances of the indigenous people. When Stephen Harper was prime minister from 2005-2015, he had many opportunities to push the relationship in the right direction, from the apology on residential schools and the chance at opening a federal inquiry into the missing and murdered indigenous women, to adding the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary the Royal Proclamation of 1763 to his plethora of history celebrations. Harper failed on all fronts, further deepening the resentment of the First Nations of his government. For example, after his apology for the residential schools and the harm done to indigenous language and culture, his

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<sup>100</sup> “Open letter on Behalf of the First Nations leaders to the Right Honorable.”

<sup>101</sup> “Open letter on Behalf of the First Nations leaders to the Right Honorable.”



government cut funding for indigenous languages.<sup>102</sup> Harper's treatment of the first Nations is in line with the colonial belief that indigenous people were inferior to white Canadians.

First Nations have been very critical of the Harper government calling out its shortcomings on policy and betrayal of promises made but unfulfilled. The agenda of the Harper government cannot escape the notice of First Nations who were fighting to protect against illegal government incursion on native lands. Pamela Palmater, Mi'kmaw, and member of the Eel River Bar first nation and Associate Professor at Ryerson University has a scathing opinion of Stephen Harper: "Harper isn't simply neglectful - his government knowingly allows conditions that lead to the preventable death of first Nations to continue unmitigated. For Harper's majority, this is, in fact, the plan- to make conditions so unbearable on reserves the first Nations are forced to leave their communities and give up the lands for resource extraction."<sup>103</sup> The Harper government has hit back against critics. The government passed Bill C-5, the government's new anti-terrorism act, was passed – to stop threats to national security – including threats to infrastructure and the economy."<sup>104</sup> His government has equated First Nations leaders and those who speak out against the government as "rouges" and threats to national security, leading many to be arrested for criticizing and protesting the government.<sup>105</sup>

Harper's failure to help First Nations people and overall lack of respect have been called out and recognized by the United Nations in a report that speaks about the marginalization of First Nations society. The report released in May 2014 condemned his "government's pattern of victim blaming, racist stereotyping, and using this information to vilify first Nations leaders in the media

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<sup>102</sup> Pamela Palmater. "Harper's 10 Year War on First Nations" Published July 2015 Accessed Nov. 30, 2016. <http://www.theharperdecade.com/blog/2015/7/14/harpers-10-year-war-on-first-nations>

<sup>103</sup> "Harper's 10 Year War on First Nations"

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

has that even the most reserved voices at the United Nations to conclude that Harper's actions have put "social peace" at risk."<sup>106</sup> The United Nations also has ruled that the poverty of the first Nations is a crisis that should be handled by the Harper government. This is supported by first Nations "low socioeconomic status, the crisis of children in foster care, murdered and missing indigenous women, abusive behavior by police against indigenous women and the lack of consultation with first Nations on legislation."<sup>107</sup>

The Harper government drew more attention from the UN on September 22 and 23 2014 when they were the only country to reject the second version of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The declaration reestablished the protection of indigenous people stating "setting a minimum standard of survival, dignity, and well-being of indigenous peoples"<sup>108</sup> Due to the track record of the Harper government rejection is not surprising for they rejected the same declaration in 2007. The reason for the rejection was due to a requirement in the declaration, which called for "free, prior and informed consent" in all relationships with indigenous populations.<sup>109</sup> The Canadian government's complaint was that this would mean that the First Nations would have a veto on all the government law and regulations dealing with the First Nations. Saskatchewan Indian nation's chief Perry Bellegarde disagreed with the government's interpretation of the phrase, arguing that "Veto does not exist in the declaration anywhere, why are they misleading and misusing that word."<sup>110</sup> In the end, the Canadian government agreed to sign the UN document due to pressure from the first Nations leaders who were concerned with what the rejection could

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<sup>106</sup> Palmater, "Harper's 10 year War on First Nations"

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> Zi-Ann Lum. "Canada is the only UN member to Reject Landmark Indigenous Rights Document" *The Huffington Post*. Accessed Nov. 30, 2016 [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/10/02/canada-un-indigenous-rights\\_n\\_5918868.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/10/02/canada-un-indigenous-rights_n_5918868.html)

<sup>109</sup> "Canada is the only UN member"

<sup>110</sup> "Canada is the only UN member"

mean. Sadly according to Diabo the government has refused to implement any of the other parts of the declaration.<sup>111</sup> Thus, continuing the Canadian government's refusal to the basic rights for first Nations people

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<sup>111</sup> Russel Diabo, "Mr. Harper, one short meeting Won't End Native Protest" The Globe and Mail

## **Chapter Two: The “Four Heroes” and the Changing Canadian**

### **Memory of the War of 1812:**

For the British, Americans and Canadians there were no far-reaching consequences of winning or losing the war. Militarily, the British came to be seen as the victors: they had won more of the battles and were able to hold off the American invasion of Canada. In Baltimore and New Orleans, on the other hand, they felt that the Americans had won the war, for the American military was able to defeat the British at New Orleans and to hold the British at bay in Baltimore. The British conduct at New Orleans fit into the beloved American stereotype of the bungling Britons unsuited for war in North America. The victory at New Orleans was thanks to the artillery of the regular army and not the rifleman from the frontier that are typically celebrated in song and poems.<sup>112</sup> Even with the psychological victory of New Orleans and Baltimore, the overall war was confusing to the American imperial ideals because the American forces did not gain any new territory and no large sweeping American victories except New Orleans, which happened after the war was already over and would have not occurred if the news traveled faster.<sup>113</sup> The only important legacy to come out of the war was Francis Scott Key’s poem “The Star Spangled Banner” and even that would not be made into the American national anthem until 1931, several years after the Centennial.

For Canadians, the end of the war meant rebuilding and trying to return to life before the war, but with a stronger anti-American sentiment. The American army left many Canadian homes and towns in complete ruins. John Goldie, American tourist who visited Canada in 1819,

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<sup>112</sup> Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, & Indian Allies*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf.,2010), 420

<sup>113</sup> “The War of 1812 Shaped Canada Forever.” *The Toronto Star* . Accessed June 17 2016.  
[http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/2012/06/17/the\\_war\\_of\\_1812\\_shaped\\_canada\\_forever.html](http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/2012/06/17/the_war_of_1812_shaped_canada_forever.html).

to report on the destruction that Americans had wrought during the war: “The Americans carried on the war in this part of the country more like Savages than civilized Beings. They carried off all that they could seize even household furniture, burnt a great number of private houses, and cut down most of the fruit trees.”<sup>114</sup> Many Canadians after the war despised their American neighbors, reversing the friendly relations between Americans and Canadians before the war. William Forsyth, an innkeeper, complained after the war, “The U.S. army had robbed his house of every moveable article & even the baby linen of his infant in the cradle was taken.”<sup>115</sup> The treatment of the local Canadian population by the American forces helped foster a deeper sense of loyalty to the Crown to ensure protection from any future American invasions.

Following the war, the government of Canada sought to protect Canada from any future foreign invasion. Reverend Alexander MacDonnell urged the government to cease land grants to Americans who were coming over the border for free land, because he felt that these Americans would threaten the security of Canada.<sup>116</sup> The British government now came to see Canada as a vulnerable outpost, with need for a more heavily guarded border against the American republic. They also had to write more strict definitions of what qualified someone as a loyal subject of Great Britain and the monarch. In the years after the war to increase, the amount of truly loyal subjects MacDonnell urged large-scale immigration of highlanders from Scotland, but also immigrants from Ireland, England and Wales.<sup>117</sup> This policy of immigration bolstered the defenses of Canada for in the case of invasion the amount of those loyal and willing to volunteer

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<sup>114</sup> Taylor, 443

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 443. Forsyth even disinherited his eldest son because he had joined with the American forces during the war, possibly thinking his son could have aided in the destruction of the other areas of Canada.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 442

<sup>117</sup> Taylor, 453. Between the years 1815 and 1842 the number of immigrants that came to the colony were 78,000 Irish, 41,000 English and Welsh, and 40,000 Scots. This helped the number of British subjects outnumber the Americans 5 to 1. Thirty years after the war of 1812, the American populations in Canada were a minority.

would be higher than it was in 1812 and there would be no question of where the soldier’s loyalties would lie.

### **Early Memories:**

Canadian memory of the role of their Native allies soon began to change after the end of the war. In the first histories of the war written in the 1840s, Tecumseh was treated as a central figure on the Canadian side, and all mentioned his alliance with Brock and his heroic death in 1813. Benjamin’s Drake’s *Life of Tecumseh (1841)* recalls Tecumseh’s death and paints him as a valiant hero who fought more bravely than the British troops led by Proctor: “Had general Proctor and his troops fought with the same valor that marked the conduct of Tecumseh and his men, the results of the day would have been more creditable to the British arms. It has already been stated that Tecumseh entered this battle with a strong conviction on his mind that he would not survive if further flight he deemed disgraceful, while the hope of victory in the impending action, was feeble and distant. He, however, heroically resolved to achieve the latter or die in the effort.”<sup>118</sup> Early accounts gave Tecumseh’s fighters significant credit for the Canadian victory. John Richardson’s , *War of 1812* contained letters written by Canadian citizens and soldiers who had served and survived the war. One important letter, written by Col. John Askin to Charles Askin, a member of the militia dated Dec. 28, 1812 stated that the military were indebted to the Indians for the capturing of the forts and that the King would reward them for their contribution to helping defend Canada.<sup>119</sup> Askin wrote, “Surley England will not abandon a people to whom

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<sup>118</sup> Drake, 197

<sup>119</sup> Major John Richardson, *Richardson's War of 1812: with notes and a life of the author* (Toronto: Historical Publishing Company, 1902)  
<https://books.google.com/books?id=4gKKQ0LMW9YC&printsec=frontcover&dq=John+Richardson+War+of+1812&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjNtPH38uDQAhUGwWMKHdT0DjoQ6AEIKjAA#v=onepage&q=Indians&f=false>

we are not only indebted for the preservation of our posts but also for the taking of those we got.”<sup>120</sup>

By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, Canadians ceased to remember their debt to their native allies for their assistance in the war. An example of this change comes from an 1853 Royal Canadian Society’s commemoration of the Battle of Queenston Heights, which gave little or no the praise to the Indian allies who had earlier been given full credit for causing the Americans to retreat so disastrously.<sup>121</sup> William Hamilton Merritt, the keynote speaker at the commemoration, instead gave credit to the Second Lincoln Militia, stating that they “came up behind the enemy and ‘the Americans of course ran away and some fell down the Banks and broke their arms and others their legs, and one man hung.”<sup>122</sup> According to historian Jeffrey Wasson, Merritt completely erased the Indian allies from his narrative, despite the fact that they had been the ones who had forced the Americans to abandon their post and flee. Within a little more than a generation after the war, the Indian contributions were being neglected and pushed to the sidelines of Canadian history.

This neglect has its roots partly in the diminished Native involvement in the last years of the war. Tecumseh’s death, along with American attacks on native settlements, prompted many Native allies to leave the military front to return to their homes and protect their families. This had then lead many British officials to doubt the integrity and reliability of their former allies. This is seen in Governor Drummonds complaint in 1814 that “experience has taught me that Indians are not a disposable force and far from a manageable one when brought into action. Their cooperation is never to be relied on.”<sup>123</sup> Nevertheless, the neglect of the Native

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<sup>120</sup> Richardson, 301

<sup>121</sup> Wasson, 63

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 63

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 63

contribution to the war came mainly with the emergence of an Anglo-Canadian narrative in both formal history and popular memory that began to give nearly all the credit to the settler militia for the defeat of the American invader. Its original formulation was by John Strachan, an Anglican minister in Upper Canada, when he declared in a sermon in December 1812 that it would be loyal Canadian volunteers who had successfully defended their country against the American invaders:

It will be told by the future historian, that the province of upper Canada, without the assistance of men or arms, except a handful of regular troops, repelled its invaders, slew or took them all prisoner, and captured from its enemies the greater part of the arms by which it was defended... In addition, never, surely was greater activity shown in any country, then our militia have exhibited never greater valor, cool resolution, and war approved conduct; they have emulated the choicest veterans and they have twice saved the country<sup>124</sup>

Strachan’s claim was the beginning of what Canadian historians would later come to call the “militia myth” of the war of 1812. The idea did not become fully implanted in Canadian popular memory until the 1840s, after the Canadian militia along with British regulars successfully put down another attempted invasions, this time by a group of American terrorists (called the “Patriot Hunters”) who wanted to annex Canada to the U.S.<sup>125</sup> According to Donald Graves, the reason the myth was able to plant itself into Canadian ideology was because regular British troops regularly left North America and therefore allowed the local Canadian population to forget that the regulars helped put down the rebellion.<sup>126</sup> By the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Canadian writers were beginning to write out even the British regulars from their accounts of the War of 1812. For example, William Withrow, in his popular *History of the Dominion of Canada*

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<sup>124</sup> Donald E. Graves, “The Canadian Militia Myth of the War of 1812: Its Origin, Course and Dissolution,” *The War of 1812 Magazine* Issue 25 (May 2016). <http://www.napoleon-series.org/military/Warof1812/2016/Issue25/CanadianMilitiaMyth.pdf> . 1

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 2

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 2



(1878) wrote that it was “the militia with little help from the British regulars who won the brilliant victories.”<sup>127</sup> The militia myth was a central theme in the centennial of the war in 1912, and in the anniversaries of the battle of Queenston Heights and the battle of Lundy’s Lane, which highlighted almost exclusively the bravery and fighting prowess of the Canadian militia.

The “militia myth” came to be employed in efforts to establish a distinctive Canadian collective identity. The myth, for instance, was the aspect of the War of 1812 that was used in 1912 to teach Canadians strong loyalty and dedication to their country. Sam Hughes, the Minister of Defense, called for the creation of a new military force called the Canadian Expeditionary Force that would rely only on volunteer service. For Hughes believed that far better soldiers were derived from the volunteer-militia units than men in the regular army.<sup>128</sup> During the celebration of the Battle of Lundy’s Lane in July 1914, which came only two weeks before the start of the First World War, Dr. Alexander Fraser spoke about how the American foe was defeated by a Canadian people “with iron in their blood. Were strong in their faith, strong in our loyalty, and invincible in the defense of our home and country.”<sup>129</sup>

The devastating casualties of World War I killed the spirit of the militia myth in the real world, but it continued to thrive in histories of the war of 1812. Authors Earnest Albert Cruikshank and William Charles Henry Wood wrote military histories of the War.<sup>130</sup> Cruikshank published from 1896-1908 a nine volume *Documentary History* that comprised articles about the units that served in Niagara region, the Detroit Campaign and the United states invasion of the Niagara. Woods wrote a book, *Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812* that was published in four volumes from 1920-1928. Both books contained primary source

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<sup>127</sup>Graves, 3

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 9

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 9

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 10

documents that refuted the militia myth, but they chose to ignore the fact for both men served as militia officers.<sup>131</sup>

The “militia myth” became a major foundation of Canadian national identity. The war was the only major conflict fought on Canadian soil in which large numbers of Canadians served to defend their homes and the interest of the British Empire. The war of 1812 has come to be seen by Canadian scholars to have shaped Canada socially and politically by confirming its separate identity from the United States. As political scientist, James Laxer argues about its impact in the province of Upper Canada:

The War of 1812 was Upper Canada’s War of Independence. Upper Canadians emerged from the conflict with a North American sensibility and conservative political culture. Loyalty to the Crown became the highest expression of public virtue. Those who refused to proclaim their loyalty were tainted with the double sin of being both overtly or covertly republican and pro-American. In sharp contrast to the Americans, Upper Canadians believed that maintaining strong ties to the British Crown was the route to independence- not within the Empire, but from the United States.<sup>132</sup>

Historian Donald Hickey agrees with Laxer about the power of the War of 1812 in shaping Canada as both a loyal member of the Empire and eventually an independent Commonwealth nation. The heroes of the War of 1812 came to be seen as people who helped achieve the goal of Canadian unity and defined what it meant to be Canadian. Isaac Brock, Laura Secord, Tecumseh, and Charles de Salaberry came to be enshrined as heroes and symbols of an independent Canada. The battlefields of Queenston Heights, Chrysler’s Farm, and Chateauguay were celebrated as victories that saved Canada from foreign conquest and domination.<sup>133</sup> Hickey argues that it was not just the people and places that were used as symbols for fostering a unified Canadian identity, but also the myths that emerged in the years leading up to Confederation.

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<sup>131</sup> Graves, 10-11

<sup>132</sup> Laxer, 299

<sup>133</sup> Hickey, 308

Hickey writes, “Powerful myths also took root—that the militia had saved Canada that the British and French populations had joined hands to fend off the invader from the south and these myths served as glue for the nation.”<sup>134</sup> These symbols and myths echoed through the Centennial in 1912 and were still entrenched in the memory of the war celebrated in the Bicentennial in 2012.

### **The Canadian Centennial: A Local Affair:**

The 1912 centennial celebration for the War of 1812 in Canada was a relatively minor affair. It was, for example, on a much smaller scale than the far larger Canadian celebration of the anniversary of the Canadian Navy in 1912.<sup>135</sup> The latter celebration was targeted at young men to try to bolster enlistment into the Naval Service of Canada.<sup>136</sup> The centennial was also interrupted with the outbreak of World War I in 1914. There were some celebrations of the major battles like Queenston Heights and Lundy’s Lane. The main figure celebrated was Sir Isaac Brock for his death at Queenston Heights. There was no commemoration of Tecumseh, Charles de Salaberry or Laura Secord, the three other figures who would come to be featured so prominently in the bicentennial of the war in 2012. Unlike the national scale and large government support behind the bicentennial, the commemorations in 1912 were focused almost exclusively on the Niagara region of Ontario, and were organized and funded by local historical societies and other organizations, led by the United Empire Loyalist.<sup>137</sup> The turnout of government officials was also starkly different. In the centennial, the Prime minister and other government officials did not attend, in a sharp contrast to the multitude of important government

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<sup>134</sup> Hickey, 308

<sup>135</sup> Rene Chartrand. “Royal Canadian Navy” *Military Collector & Historian: Journal of the Company of Military Historians* Vol. 62, No. 4 (Winter 2010). 305, Back Cover.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 305, Back Cover.

<sup>137</sup> Michael Eamon . “The War against Public Forgetfulness: Commemorating the War of 1812 in Canada.” *London Journal of Canadian Studies* 29, no. 1 (November 1, 2014): 145

officials involved at the far larger Bicentennial events of 2012 in which even smaller events were attended by government officials.

The centennial commemoration for the Battle of Queenston heights was attended by around 2,000 people, including members of the families of Brock and John MacDonnell, another Canadian who had been killed during the battle, along with militia officers and members of the local government.<sup>138</sup> The message of the celebration evoked the “militia myth” of heroic settlers, and did not mention either the British or Tecumseh and his native warriors. Dr. James L. Hughes, Chief Inspector of Public School in Ontario spoke of the lesson the war would teach, “With a splendid courage that can never be dismayed, by telling how a few determined settlers scattered widely across a new county successfully repelled invading armies coming from a country with a population twentyfold larger.”<sup>139</sup>

### **The Tableau of Four Heroes of 1812:**

It would only be over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that Canadian heritage memory would replace the earlier “militia myth,” that celebrated solely the role played in the war by Canadian settlers, with the “four heroes,” who came to epitomize the diverse yet united self-image of the Canadian nation in the last century. Brock is the best-known figures of the War of 1812, and the only one of the “four heroes” who came to be featured prominently in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One reason for his prevalence in the commemorations is his premature death in 1812. This earned him martyrdom status in the first accounts of the war. In the earliest monument erected at the battlefield at Queenston Heights in 1824, Brock was celebrated as a war hero who sacrificed his life to defend Canada. The monument was funded by a grant of the Parliament of

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<sup>138</sup> Eamon., 144

<sup>139</sup> Graves, 8

the Province and comprised of a Tuscan column that stood 135 feet. The plaque read, “Erected at the public expense, to the memory of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, who gloriously fell on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October MDCCCXIII. In resisting an attack on Queenston, In Upper Canada.”<sup>140</sup> The ceremony to dedicate the statue occurred on 13 October 1824 and involved the removing of Brock and his aide-de-camp, Lt. Colonel McDonnell remains from Ft. George to be interred into the monument. The procession contained members of the Canadian provincial government, military and the Indian chiefs of the Six Nations, who attracted the most attention from the crowd. According to the author John Symons, “But amongst the assembled warriors and civilians none excited a more lively interest than the chiefs of the six nations Indians from the grand river whose warlike appearance, intrepid aspect, picturesque dress and ornaments, and majestic demeanor, accorded well with the solemn pomp and general character of a military procession; among these young Brant, Bears Foot, and Henry, were distinguished.”<sup>141</sup>

The monument would not stand long for an Irishmen who participated in the rebellion of 1837 would destroy the monument on April 17, 1840. Voluntary contributions of the militia and Indian warriors of the province funded a new monument and a grant from Parliament, the new monument was completed and dedicated in 1856.<sup>142</sup> The new inscription reads:

Upper Canada has dedicated this monument to the memory of the late Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, K.B., Provincial Lieut. Governor and commander of the forces in this province, whose remains are deposited in the vault beneath. Opposing the invading enemy, he fell in action here on these heights, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October, 1812, In the 43<sup>rd</sup> year of his age. Revered and lamented by the people whom he governed, and deplored by the Sovereign to whose services his life had been devoted.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> John Symons Esq., *The Battle of Queenston Heights: Being a Narrative of the Opening of the War of 1812, with notices of the life of Major- General Sir Isaac Brock, K.B., and description of the Monument Erected to his Memory* (Toronto: Thompson & Co. 1859) [http://archive.org/stream/battleofqueenst00symo\\_1#pase/20/mode2up](http://archive.org/stream/battleofqueenst00symo_1#pase/20/mode2up)

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 25

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 31

<sup>143</sup> Symons, 31

Secord, Brock, and Tecumseh were chronicled together for the first time in William F. Coffin’s 1864 book, *1812: The War and its morals: A Canadian Chronicle*, a highly patriotic Canadian history of the war.<sup>144</sup> Coffin described Brock as the idol of Upper Canada, and compared him to Caesar’s standard-bearer launching himself in battle.<sup>145</sup> Tecumseh is first introduced in this text waiting to meet Brock before the capture of Fort Detroit. Tecumseh is placed in the narrative as standing equally with Brock, though his warriors are described as being unruly and taking a liking to rum. Brock, by contrast, was given all the credit for the Battle of Detroit, while Coffin gave none to Tecumseh and his allies.<sup>146</sup> Coffin described Brock’s engagement at Queenston heights on October 13, 1812 as if he was writing about an epic battle of antiquity in which the hero sacrifice himself for the good of the community. According to Coffin, “Thus fell, and thus died a brave soldier, an able leader, and a good man, who honored by his life and a good man, who honored by his life and ennobled by his death the soul on which he bled, and whose name remains even beloved and respected, a household word and a household memory in Canada.

Coffin’s text used the story of Laura Secord’s desperate trip to warn the British of a surprise American attack to illustrate how women did their duty to country while maintaining respectable gender roles for the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Secord is portrayed as a devoted wife and a proud and loyal Canadian who risked her life to stop the Americans from ambushing the British at Beaver Dams. According to Coffin, “The pair [Laura Secord and her husband James], were in consternation, they were loyal Canadians – their hearts were in the cause.”<sup>147</sup> His treatment

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<sup>144</sup> William F. Coffin, *1812: The War and its morals: A Canadian Chronicle*. (Canada: John Lovell, St. Nicholas Street, 1864), 17. <https://archive.org/details/1812waritsmoralc00coff>

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 17

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-49

<sup>147</sup> Coffin, 147

neglected the complicating fact that Secord was an American, and a member of the United Empire Loyalists, who came over from the United States after the American Revolution. In his patriotic narrative of the war, Coffin had rewritten Secord as a Canadian and not as an American Loyalist. Similarly, while her 23-mile walk to warn the British was uncommon for a woman living in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Coffin ensured that his account did not upset contemporary gender norms. Coffin carefully explained that she decided to go to warn the British only because her husband had been himself injured, and only after she first submissively secured her his permission: “She spoke out, she would go herself, would he let her? She could get past the sentries; she would go, and put her trust in God. He consented.”<sup>148</sup>

Coffin dedicated a large portion of the second half of his book to Tecumseh and his native warriors. Coffin picked up Tecumseh’s narrative in mid-1813, when Tecumseh was fighting alongside General Proctor. Coffin’s portrayal of Tecumseh in this chapter illustrated both stereotypes of the bloodthirsty savage and as a great warrior and orator that were to compete against one another in nearly all future depictions of Tecumseh. Tecumseh described heroically in his first meeting with Proctor and Colonel Elliot, Tecumseh’s translator: “Calm, cool, deliberate thinking in look, very hard in what he said.”<sup>149</sup> Yet Coffin also depicts Tecumseh as a savage after the first siege of Fort Meigs in April 1813, during in which he is said to have driven his tomahawk into the skull of an American prisoner.<sup>150</sup> Coffin’s version of this story is strikingly different from the version in modern histories of the war, where Tecumseh is said to have prevented prisoners from being scalped and murdered.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> *Coffin*, 147

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 210

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 209

<sup>151</sup> *Sudgen*, 336

Yet Coffin dedicated his entire chapter on the Battle of Morviantown to Tecumseh. The chapter opens with a description full of allusions to both classical and more recent colonial heroes: “But the great episode of this fatal field has yet to be related. Here fell Tecumseh. Here fell the untaught Shawnee, the friend and comrade of Brock. It is difficult to do justice to the memory of this worthy compeer of Spartacus, of our own Caractacus, and of that noble Aethiop, Toussaint L’ Ouverture. No braver barbarian ever graced Roman triumph. Here he fell.”<sup>152</sup>Coffin then also explained that the reason that Tecumseh and his warriors were so bloodthirsty and savage in fighting the Americans was because the constant American encroachment onto tribal lands had forced the Shawnee to move ever further west. According to Coffin, Tecumseh’s hostility was that of a patriot avenging his badly damaged nation: “He hated the ‘Long-Knives’ with an intensity of hatred. In battle, in actual conflict, he was unsparing. To the wounded, he was pitiful; from the conquered, he turned with contempt. At the capture of Detroit, to a remark from Brock, he replied, haughtily: ‘I despise them too much to meddle with them.’”<sup>153</sup>

In Coffin’s version of the story, Tecumseh’s true loyalty in the War of 1812 was both to the British and his dream of an Indian confederacy. According to Coffin, “True to King George, true to British men, true to his faith in a cause and in a people of whom he had but an indistinct idea, he died fearlessly in that faith, true to the last. His death sheds a halo on the story of a much abused and fast departing race. May the people of England and their descendants in Canada never forget this noble sacrifice of Tecumseh and the other native warriors after the war.”<sup>154</sup> The chapter ends with the narrative of Tecumseh’s death by a fatal American gunshot wound delivered by Colonel Richard Johnston. Tecumseh was shot when he went to charge at Johnston

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<sup>152</sup> Coffin, 232

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 284

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 235-236



with his Tomahawk during the Battle of Moraviantown.<sup>155</sup> Tecumseh’s death meant the end of his hope for an Indian Confederacy and strong native support of the war. Coffin again equated Tecumseh’s sacrifice as a soldier for England. According to Coffin, “And so died as brave and as true a soldier for England as ever trod the heather of the highlands or the wealds of Kent.”<sup>156</sup>

The interesting fact is that Coffin only included Brock and Tecumseh as the two of the four “immortal” heroes in Canadian history. The other two figures considered by Coffin as among the “Four Heroes of Canada” were Major General James Wolfe and the Marquis de Montcalm, who had fought and died in the Seven Years War during the Battle of Quebec in 1759.<sup>157</sup> According to Coffin, “Tecumseh completes the tale of the immortal four, who, to the end of time, will hold up in the face of all nations, the young scullions of Canada. Four more chivalrous supporters of a national trophy have never before adored the pages of history or the triumphs of sculpture, than Wolfe and Montcal, Brock and Tecumseh.”<sup>158</sup>

Coffin did not include among the “immortal four” other military leaders from the War of 1812 like Charles de Salaberry, who eventually would join the three above heroes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and then be featured among the Canadian Bicentennial. Coffin did recount Salaberry’s most illustrious moment at the Battle of Chateaugay on October 26, 1813. A majority of Coffin’s account was taken from a secondhand narrative written by Dr. L.E. Dorian who translated a narrative from Commander Jacques Viser, who had been present at the battle. Salaberry was given all the credit for the plan of attack and the victory over the larger American force.<sup>159</sup> Salaberry’s plan was he ordered a division of his men to fire a musket volley then retire

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<sup>155</sup> Coffin, 237

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 237

<sup>157</sup> Tabitha Marshall “Battle of the Plains of Abraham” The Canadian Encyclopedia. Accessed May 2017. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/battle-of-the-plains-of-abraham/>

<sup>158</sup> Coffin, 237

<sup>159</sup> Coffin, 252

back with the main division of the force. The Americans thought that Salaberry’s force was retreating and charged the line. To fool the American troops to the actual size of the regiment, Salaberry had the musicians blow their bugles to make it appear that the force numbered around 6-7,000 men. This ruse worked and stopped the American assault at Chateaugay for the Americans surrendered for fear of being cut down by Salaberry’s force that only numbered around 300 men.<sup>160</sup> The reason Salaberry was not considered a hero in Coffin’s text is that he did not die in defense to Canada, but lived to a ripe old age of 51. Wolfe, Montal, Tecumseh and Brock all died in battle in service to Canada.

The first major book to combine Canadian and British history was *Britannia History Reader* (BHR), published in 1910. The text gave an overview of Canadian history from the earliest settlers until 1910. In the reader, the figures mentioned from the War of 1812 in detail are Brock, and Tecumseh. The Second section focused more on the battle of Beaver Dam than her dangerous voyage to warn the British forces before the battle. Salaberry was only given a paragraph at the end of the section about Tecumseh. The reader argued that the war was a foolish war and that many Americans did not agree with the war, especially in New England.<sup>161</sup> The book placed the Americans as the aggressors in the conflict and the Canadians as the victims. When the American army invaded, their victory seemed assured. According to the *Reader*, “But the Canadians loved their flag and their independence. They made up their minds to resist as long as they could.”<sup>162</sup>

The first of the four heroes written about in the *Reader* was Brock, pertaining to his capture of Detroit and the Battle of Queenston Heights. Later histories of 1812 have Tecumseh

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<sup>160</sup>Coffin, 256

<sup>161</sup> *The Britannia History Reader* (BHR), (The Copp, Clarck Company, Limited: Canada: 1910)  
[http://ia601301.vs.archive.org/13/items/cihm\\_80161/cihm\\_80161.pdfuploaded2/15/2013](http://ia601301.vs.archive.org/13/items/cihm_80161/cihm_80161.pdfuploaded2/15/2013)

<sup>162</sup>*Ibid.*, 61

and his allies helping Brock capture Detroit. In this text, however, the native allies are not given credit or even mentioned.<sup>163</sup> The description of the Battle of Queenston Heights is short and focused on the fatal shot that killed Brock, and his death is depicted as the rallying cry that pushed the Canadian forces to drive the Americans out of Canada. Brock’s sacrifice was not be forgotten by future generations of Canadians. According to the *Reader*, “On the place where he fell stands a stone monument that can be seen for miles around. But even if no monument stood there, Canadians would never forget Isaac Brock.”<sup>164</sup>

Tecumseh’s section in the *Reader* gives a brief account of his failed fight against white settlers in Indiana and explains that they came to Canada to fight in order to protect their land. The main focus of Tecumseh’s story is his death at the Battle of Morviantown. Tecumseh and his allies are written as braver than the Canadians under Proctor are. The battle was described as a great tragedy because Tecumseh is killed. Proctor and his men are portrayed as cowards for running away from the battle.<sup>165</sup> Tecumseh’s section ends by elevating Tecumseh to the Pantheon of Canadian heroes: “He was not of our race and he was not even born in Canada. Yet this time he fought more bravely than either the English or Canadians who were with him. He was one of the best Indians whom we know about, and a hero who died for Canada.”<sup>166</sup>

The next of the figures to be discussed was Laura Secord and her walk to warn the British military of the surprise military attack at Beaver Dam. According to the BHR, “Beaver Dams was twenty miles away. It was a lonely road too, through the woods, and she knew she would meet parties of Indians... It took her nearly all the night to reach Fitzgibbon’s camp. She often stumbled in the dark, for the road was rough, and the bushes and twigs would tear her clothes.

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<sup>163</sup> BHR, 61

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 62

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 63

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 64

But through she was very tired and footsore she kept on until she had given her warning.”<sup>167</sup> The *Reader* then focused on how Lt. Fitzgibbon used the information Secord provided to trick and defeat the Americans.<sup>168</sup> Fitzgibbon created an illusion that he had more men than the Americans by having his men scattered around the Americans. Then he ordered his men and native warriors to fire and created as much noise as possible. The Americans quickly surrendered thinking they were outnumbered. Fitzgibbon’s force was only 65 men while the Americans had 600 men. The BHR credits Fitzgibbon’s victory to Laura Secord.

Of the four heroes, Salaberry received the smallest amount of space in the *Reader*, as he was discussed only at the end of Tecumseh’s section. Salaberry received a short paragraph about his victory at Chateauguay, where Salaberry was able to defend the Quebec town with 350 men who were nearly all French Canadians against an American force of 3,000.<sup>169</sup> The main point of the account is that the battle proved that French Canadians would fight fiercely under their new flag after being annexed after the Seven Years War.<sup>170</sup> According to the BHR, “The Americans fought fiercely, but the Canadians fought even better. At last the Americans gave it up and went home.”<sup>171</sup>

Histories of the War of 1812 published through the Twentieth century continued to feature Tecumseh and the other three Canadian heroes. Some of the books were general histories of the war, while others concentrated only on the Canadian front. Examples include Reginald Horsman’s *The War of 1812*, published in 1969, which is a comprehensive history of the war though it lacks mention of Laura Secord. From the Canadian perspective, there is Morris

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<sup>167</sup> BHR., 65

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 65

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 64

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 64

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.* 64

Zaslow’s *The Defended Border Upper Canada and the War of 1812: A collection of Writings* (1965) this text is comprised of primary source documents, and mentions Brock, Secord, Tecumseh and Salaberry. Pierre Berton’s *The Invasion of Canada Vol. 1 1812-1813* and *Flames Across the Border 1813-1814 (1980-1981)* combined history with literary narrative to give a very detailed and compressive history of the war. Berton’s book mentions Brock, Tecumseh, and Salaberry. The most famous of the histories of the war is Alan Taylor’s *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, & Indian Allies (2009)* that highlights the blurred lines of loyalty during the war and includes more details about the role of women and the Indian Allies in the war.

### **The Four Heroes in Sites and Monuments:**

Canadian historical monuments of the War of 1812 also tell a story of an ever-widening circle of “heroes.” Historical locations in Canada are mostly controlled and maintained by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC), founded after World War I. Many of the sites controlled by the HSMBC concern with the War of 1812.<sup>172</sup> HSMBC have commemorated Laura Secord three times with a plaque at the site of the Battle of Beaver Dams. The first plaque placed in 1921 read, “Warning of the approach of the Americans was given by the heroic Laura Secord as well as by an Indian.”<sup>173</sup> This plaque was replaced in 1980, when Secord was placed in secondary status in the history and the Indian given dominance. The second plaque read, “Warned of their approach by an Indian scout and by Laura Secord.”<sup>174</sup> Secord also

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<sup>172</sup> Eamon, 146 According to Eamon, “as of 2011, approximately 76 of Canada’s approximately 2,021 national historic sites, events, and people address the memory of the war of 1812.”

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 147

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 147

was commemorated in 1910 at the monument at Queenston Heights near the monument to Brock, the most commemorated of the four historical figures.

Brock is often referred to as the “Hero of Upper Canada,” as can be seen in one of six plaques sanctioned by the HSMBC. One of the plaques about the Battle of Detroit placed at Port Dover in 1923 read: “His brilliant capture of Hull’s army at Detroit with a much smaller force saved this province to the Empire and made Brock, ‘THE HERO OF UPPER CANADA’”<sup>175</sup> This inscription echoed the “militia myth,” and made no mention of Tecumseh and his allies in helping take Fort Detroit. Around the same time that Secord’s plaque was removed and re-written in 1980, Brock’s plaque was also taken down and revised. Here again, the native allies were then given a more significant role, though the new plaque still highlighted the role played by the militia and only mentioned that Brock used the quick capture of Fort Detroit to win the full support of the native allies:

To counter the American Invasion of the Detroit frontier, Major General Isaac Brock mustered a force of about 50 regulars and 250 militia here at Port Dover. They embarked on 8 August 1812 and, proceeding along the north shore of the lake in open boats, arrived at Amherstburg five days later. The enemy had already withdrawn across the Detroit River; so on 16 August Brock made a daring and successful assault on Detroit. This important victory raised the spirits of the Canadians and ensured the continuing support of Britain’s Indian allies.<sup>176</sup>

Significantly, though the new plaque mentioned the Indian allies, it did not mention Tecumseh by name. Brock was commemorated at several other historic places and thought other monuments, like the Fort George National Historic Site (1921) and Fort Malden National Historic site (1921), Queenston Heights National Historic Site (1968) and the Brock monument at Queenston heights.<sup>177</sup> Salaberry was honored on three federal plaques, his home was made a

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<sup>175</sup> Eamon, 148

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 149

<sup>177</sup> Eamon, 149

national historic site in 1968, and the battlefield where he distinguished himself was made a national historic site as early as 1920. In this context of sites and plaques, Tecumseh was the least celebrated figure from 1812. He was made a National Historic Person in 1931, and has a plaque describing his actions been erected near Thamesville, Ontario.<sup>178</sup> He was included in the Brock commemorations and plaques, though often relegated to only one line, if mentioned by name at all.

Similarly, while Brock, Secord and Salaberry all received the honor of being commemorated on Canadian stamps, up until the Bicentennial, Tecumseh was never featured on any postage stamps. This may be attributed either to the fact that Tecumseh was not British subject or because of his alliance with Brock. Tecumseh in early histories is always placed alongside Brock sharing the glory of being Canadian heroes. Tecumseh was also Shawnee and is more of an American Indian than a member of the First Nations is. Therefore, he should have been commemorated on American postage stamps. This is seen in the explanatory notes that were published with the Brock stamp, where he is distinguished for being able to reach out to the First Nations people and Tecumseh to secure their aid in the war. The explanatory note read:

Upon the outbreak of war with the United States of America in 1812 Brock had some 1450 British regulars under his command; organizing militia units to bolster his strength, he sought and won [the] cooperation of the native people, particularly the Six Nations Indians on the Grand River... [In reference to Tecumseh] immediate reciprocation of respect [and] consequently the famed Indian leader led his people in cooperating.<sup>179</sup>

Revealingly, Tecumseh was also left out of a major memorial project as recently as 2003, called the “Valiants Memorial,” that was erected on the Sappers and Miners Bridge in downtown

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<sup>178</sup> Eamon, 146

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 151

Ottawa. The memorial features nine busts and five statues of key military figures from Canada’s past. Salaberry, Brock and Secord represent the war of 1812. The memorial omitted Tecumseh while putting a bust of Mohawk leader, Thayendanegea (known also as Joseph Brant), who aided the British in the Seven Years War.<sup>180</sup> Curiously, Brock himself was not officially recognized as a national Historic Figure by the HSMBC until 2010, which makes him the last so recognized out of the other three main figures. For the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Queenston Heights in October 2012, a new plaque was unveiled that mentioned Brocks signature “the hero of Upper Canada” title, but also finally made reference to Tecumseh and his alleged “friendship” with Brock, even if they only served together once.<sup>181</sup>

The history of the figures that would become the public face of the bicentennial illustrated how their histories could be reshaped to fit the need of the history or commemoration being told or celebrated. The Harper government would attempt to use the four to create a unified image of Canada and to unify Canadians. The government would fail in this endeavor for the bicentennial to bring Canadians together to celebrate their history. Canadians would unify in their disgust of the governments message.

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<sup>180</sup> Eamon, 152

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 149. The wording on the plaque is “forging of a crucial alliance with Shawnee Chief”



## **Chapter Three: The Canadian Bicentennial: A Conservative**

### **Memory:**

The Canadian Bicentennial of the War of 1812 was shaped by the Conservative Party Canadian government that would place emphasis on the importance of the military history to reshape the history of Canada. The bicentennial placed the War of 1812 as the key moment that began the process of creating the Canadian nation. The Harper government wanted to reshape Canadian history to glorify its military heritage instead of focusing on peace-keeping achievements which was a change from the Liberal government memory of Canadian history. The celebration of the Bicentennial was criticized by historians, politicians, First Nations members and the Canadian public. Many saw the large scale celebration a waste of money that could have been used to support libraries and museums. Other critics did not feel that the War of 1812 was that important of an event to celebrate and that the government should celebrate the anniversary of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms or the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which was an important document in British- First Nations relations. Though its relationship with the First Nations was difficult and deteriorating rapidly, the Harper government nevertheless desired that the 1812 Bicentennial would be inclusive in its symbolism and historical interpretation. The Harper government wanted to promote them as figures to whom everyday Canadians could relate. The same icons of Sir Isaac Brock, Laura Secord, Tecumseh, and Charles de Salaberry were celebrated to fight against what Michel Eamon calls the “public forgetfulness” of the war of 1812.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>182</sup>Eamon., 142

The Canadian Bicentennial was funded by the federal government, with a price tag of \$28 million for the four-year celebration along with \$50 million for the restoration and improvement of historic War of 1812 sites. The Harper government promoted the Bicentennial as a part of the large buildup to the celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Confederation. The government felt that the bicentennial would thus be a perfect lead up to the celebration of confederation. In the Parliament first session of October 25, 2011, the Hon. Carolyn Stewart Olsen, a Conservative senator, summarized the government's view of the war as an important symbol of Canadian identity:

Canada's victory in the War of 1812 helped decide who we are today, what side of the border we live on, and which flag we honor. In forgetting our old fights and conflicts, Canadians came together in a common cause. The peoples in Canada — English, Scottish, Irish settlers, French, Acadians and many diverse First Nations — all came together to fight for our country. Rudyard Kipling once said, "If history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten,"<sup>183</sup>

However, besides seeing the war as an historical symbol of Canadian nation building, there was another, very contemporary reason why the War of 1812 came to be celebrated by the Canadian government. Harper had committed Canadian armed forces in support of the U.S. in Afghanistan, which proved to be a deeply unpopular intervention with the Canadian public. The government hoped to use the commemorations of 1812 in order to try to promote pride in Canada's military heritage, and to bolster Canadian support for the war in Afghanistan and enlistment in the Canadian military. The focus on military heritage picked up significant momentum after the Conservative victory in 2006.<sup>184</sup> The bicentennial would be designed

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<sup>183</sup> Hon. Carolyn Stewart Olsen, Parliament of Canada. Accessed Nov. 2016  
[http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/sen/chamber/411/debates/022db\\_2011-10-25-e.htm#8](http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/sen/chamber/411/debates/022db_2011-10-25-e.htm#8)

<sup>184</sup> Yves Frenette. "Conscripting Canada's Past: The Harper Government and the Politics of Memory, (*Canadian Journal of History/Annales canadiennes d'histoire* 49 spring summer/printemps-ete. 2014), 55

specifically to glamorize Canadian sacrifices and victory in combat, and critics of the commemoration eventually came to see it as an attempt by the government to build up Canadian public support of the Afghan intervention by promoting a new historical myth of the Canadian nation being born out of this early military conflict. According to a speech delivered by Harper on September 14, 2012, “The regiments honored include of course the Royal 22e and the Voltigeurs de Quebec. The 22e Regiment in particular is well known for its important role in both world wars and more recently in Afghanistan. But its origins date back in fact to the fight for Canada in 1812, in particular the battles of Chateauguay region under De Salaberry.”<sup>185</sup> In the assessment of the historian Yves Frenette “According to the Conservative governments version, the war of 1812 brought together loyalists from the United States, British immigrants, French-Canadians, and aboriginal people to defend Canada, which, it bears mentioning did not exist before 1867. Without this valiant defense, Canadians of all origins would have become Americans, including French-Canadians, who fully understood that their language and culture had no chance of survival under Uncle Sam.”<sup>186</sup> Sjolander also argues that the Harper government’s choice in celebrating the war of 1812 helped to defend its foreign policy agenda in fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. She writes, “The advantage of the War of 1812 as part of a new national narrative was that not only would it allow the government to begin to recast the place of the war (and of war more generally) in Canadian popular history, it would do so in and against a particular context- that Canadian internationalism- long identified by the liberal party of Canada.”<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Claire Turenne Sjolander,. 2014. “Through the Looking Glass: Canadian Identity and the War of 1812.” *International Journal: Canada’s Journal of Global Policy Analysis* 69 (2): 158

<sup>186</sup> Frenette, 56

<sup>187</sup> Sjolander, 155

The War of 1812 is not the only era that suffered this revision; it was Canadian history in general. Eamon quotes Canada Heritage Minister James Moore: “that in only four of Canada’s provinces are students required to take history in secondary school and mused that ‘I think that’s a sadly low number so I want to work on improving that.’ His ministry, he continued, could be instrumental in the solution and added that ‘we’ve been very, very clear within the department that we want to make sure that those organizations that have a clear agenda for promoting Canadian history or Canadian identity are things we’d like to see get supported.”<sup>188</sup> The bicentennial could be an opportunity to get Canadians both adults and children interested in their history. The Bicentennial of the War of 1812 proved the perfect celebration to kick-start Moore’s plan of getting more history into Canadian schools. In November 2012, a few months after the kickoff of the bicentennial, schools were sent packages from the Department of Canadian Heritage. Eamon describes the contents of the package sent:

The package contained a special War of 1812 cover letter specifically addressed to social science and history teachers read, ‘ provides an opportunity to acknowledge and promote the contributions of people of diverse backgrounds and various regions that came together to defend their land, ensuring the independent destiny of our country in North America.’ The package included a bilingual poster, a pamphlet providing an overview of the War, links to educational resources on the Department of Canadian Heritage website and a free mobile phone application inspired by the *Loxley’s and the War of 1812* comic book.<sup>189</sup>

The Bicentennial events kicked off on June 18, 2012 with ceremonies commemorating the declaration of the war. The event was run by the Legacy Council of the Niagara Region, a federally sponsored event, and included speeches, a Heritage Fair, live entertainment, and educational activities and crafts for kids<sup>190</sup> The Legacy Council was a government sponsored

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<sup>188</sup> Eamon, 142

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 142

<sup>190</sup> Niagara Legacy Council Archives. Accessed May 12, 2016 <http://discover1812.com/event/1812-legacy-councils-opening-ceremonies-weekend/>

organization that was responsible for planning and executing bicentennial commemorations for the Niagara Region. Some other key events consisted of battle commemorations involving either reenactments or ceremonies to honor the dead. The commemorations emphasized the participation of the First Nations, women, African- Canadians, and French-Canadians. One example is the commemoration of the Battle of Beaver Dams on June 24, 2013. The event focused heavily on the important role played by the First Nations, whose forces helped win the encounter, in both this battle and the rest of the War of 1812.<sup>191</sup> Speakers like Rick Hill, of the Six Nations Legacy Consortium and a member of the Six Nations tribe, spoke about the battle from the view of the Native fighters and noted how the British then failed keep their word in protecting Native lands at the wars end.<sup>192</sup> Hill also referred to the division that occurred between Six Nations and the Montreal-Nations after the battle over who received the spoils of war. As an act of reconciliation between the tribes, Hill gave the representative of the Montreal tribes a carved war club.<sup>193</sup> The other commemorative events of 2012-2015 also focused on Canadian unity, the memory of past sacrifices, and efforts to reconcile the divisions between people.

There were many other organizations involved in the Bicentennial commemoration. Several of the organizations were federal government agencies, including the Department of Canadian Heritage, Department of National Defense, the Canadian armed forces, Parks Canada, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development Canada, the Canadian Post, Canadian War Museum, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Foreign Affairs, International

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<sup>191</sup> “The Battle of Beaverdams - Niagara 1812.” Accessed May 12, 2016.  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20160415043751/http://discover1812.com/event/the-battle-of-beaverdams/>

<sup>192</sup> “ The Battle of Beaver Dams”

<sup>193</sup> The Battle of Beaver Dams

Trade Canada, the Library and Archives Canada, and the Royal Canadian Mint.<sup>194</sup> For the celebrations on the Niagara, the government of Canada, Niagara Parks, and the Niagara Economic Development Corporation sponsored the commemoration of the war.

As shaped by the Harper government, the Bicentennial portrayed the conflict as a pivotal moment in the making of Canadian identity, when the diverse peoples living in Canada became unified and would help create a unified Canada in 1867 Prime Minister Harper in his official message about the Bicentennial outlined the memory he hoped to instill with the Bicentennial celebration:

The War of 1812 was a seminal event in the making of our great country... June 2012 will mark 200 years since the declaration of the War of 1812 - a war that saw Aboriginal peoples, local and volunteer militias, and English and French speaking regiments fight together to save Canada from American invasion. The War helped establish our path toward becoming an independent and free country, united under the Crown with a respect for linguistic and ethnic diversity. The heroic efforts of Canadians then helped define who we are today, what side of the border we live on, and which flag we salute.<sup>195</sup>

The national identity that the Harper government wanted to instill was that of a united Canada and its military success in 1812. The government wanted to educate Canadians about the crucial role played by the military in the making of their nation. Political scientist Claire Sjolander argues that “through the Bicentennial celebrations, the Canadian government cast itself as a history teacher, underlining the importance of ‘these historic moments’ and of educating ‘our kids about the greatness that Canada has known, the struggles that we’ve seen and the things that unite us going forward’.”<sup>196</sup> The use of the Bicentennial as an opportunity to teach about

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<sup>194</sup> “Federal Organizations - About the Commemoration,” December 29, 2012. <https://web.archive.org/web/20121229083649/http://1812.gc.ca/eng/1340020535571/1340020599355>.

<sup>195</sup> Sjolander, 152-153

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 153-154

Canada's violent and martial past was also reflected in the opening remarks of the launch of the Bicentennial on June 18, 2012. The Hon. James Moore, minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, gave a speech at Fort York to an audience of students from G.A. Brown Middle School and descendants of Laura Secord and Charles de Salaberry. Moore notes for the speech portrayed 1812 as an example of Canada's constant need for unity, military readiness, and vigilance:

You know the War of 1812 was a defining moment in our country's history. The War of 1812 was the fight for Canada.

In addition, it was here where the Battle of York came to its violent climax in 1813. The U.S. Navy stormed our shores from Lake Ontario, occupied this fort, and burned our Parliament buildings during the five-day occupation.

But our British, Canadian, First Nations and Métis troops persevered. After several more U.S. raids, British troops returned to York and rebuilt these fortifications. And, in 1814, our troops successfully repelled another American invasion using the fortifications that are still standing today.

As Canadians, we are used to thinking of our neighbors to the south as friends and allies. But, 200 years ago, American troops stormed our borders. Thomas Jefferson said the American invasion would be "a mere matter of marching."

British troops, Canadian militia and First Nations and Métis allies joined together to defend our borders. They fought bravely. They repelled the American invasion, and the Canada that we know today was the ultimate result.

Which is to say that without the War of 1812, Canada as we know it would not exist. Without their bravery in the War of 1812, we might be flying a very different flag here at Fort York today.

Without the War of 1812, the French fact in Canada would not exist.

Without the War of 1812, the identity of our Aboriginal population would have been fundamentally changed.

The War of 1812 paved the way to Confederation for Canada in 1867.

The War of 1812 was the fight for Canada.

Those who demonstrated bravery and love for our country during the War became Canadian heroes: Sir Isaac Brock, Lieutenant Colonel Charles-Michel de Salaberry, Tecumseh, Laura Secord and many others.

The 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 is an opportunity for all Canadians to take pride in our traditions and our collective history.

The War of 1812 was instrumental in the creation of our military as well, and we are honoured today to be joined by the members of the Mississauga First Nations, whose ancestors served during the Battle of York.<sup>197</sup>

Moore's message drove home the point that all Canadians came together to defend young nation. To make the Bicentennial inclusive of all people, Moore also mentioned the "four faces" of the Bicentennial that represented each group of people living in Canada at the time of the war. Present at the event was also a ceremonial unit from the Queen's York Rangers, who trace their lineage back to the York militia of the War of 1812. Moore's speech made an explicit connection between the memory of the war of 1812 and Canadian forces of today: "For more than 200 years, the Rangers have come to embody the spirit of sacrifice and service to our country. I know the Rangers and their comrades in arms across the Canadian Armed Forces are proud to commemorate the War of 1812. That is because today's men and women in uniform will be the first to tell you of the importance of remembering the sacrifices of those who fought for Canada. These regiments perpetuate the legacy of those who fought for Canada, as do the proud descendants of our heroes from the War of 1812."<sup>198</sup>

During the kickoff of the Bicentennial events for Niagara-on-the-Lake, the message of the unity and sacrifice of both the military and ordinary Canadians was also the main point of the speech given by Canada's Governor General David Johnston at the Brock Monument at Queenston Heights. Johnston's speech highlighted the government's message of unity and diversity, while also reminding those present of the devastation caused by wars, and the need to maintain peace:

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<sup>197</sup> Speaking Notes for the Honourable James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages on the Occasion of the Official Launch of Commemorative Events for the 200th Anniversary of the War of 1812.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20130807200911/http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1342616885503>

<sup>198</sup> Speaking Notes for the Honourable James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages on the Occasion of the Official Launch of Commemorative Events for the 200th Anniversary of the War of 1812.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20130807200911/http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1342616885503>



The Battle of Queenston Heights has been described as both a victory and a tragedy for the British, Canadian and First Nations peoples who fought together against the Americans — and in fact this can be said of the War of 1812 in its entirety, It was a tragedy because war, lest we forget, means we have failed to achieve our ends peacefully. The Niagara Region and other parts of Canada were turned into battlefields, and the suffering of soldiers and ordinary people was starkly real.<sup>199</sup>

According to Sjolander, the Harper government wanted to change the contemporary Canadian identity from a “peacekeeping” nation to a martial nation, one that had been “borne out of conflict” in the war of 1812.<sup>200</sup> The fact that government argued that the war of 1812 was the seminal event in the formation of a Canadian identity before the nation of Canada event existed, which would to occur until 1867. Sjolander summarizes the Harper government’s narrative in the celebration of the war of 1812 quoting member of Parliament Bruce Staton: “It is not Nobel Peace Prizes that ‘define who we are as Canadians,’ but rather the ‘veterans who defended our land and ultimately won the fight for Canada.’”<sup>201</sup> The speech was delivered in Parliament in January 2013 after the Harper Government stated it would invest money to honor graves of War of 1812 Veterans. Staton reminded those present that the sacrifices of the Veterans, ““This is a way to remember their heroic efforts, which tell the story of the Canada we know today—an independent and free country with a constitutional monarchy and its own parliamentary system.”<sup>202</sup>

The Prime Minister wanted the world and Canadians to know that Canada has a military history that should be celebrated as part of the foundations of its cultural identity and national

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<sup>199</sup> Hon. David Johnson, Gouverneur General of Upper Canada. Published June 2012. Accessed March 2017 <https://www.gg.ca/document.aspx?id=14579&lan=eng>

<sup>200</sup> Sjolander, 156

<sup>201</sup> Sjolander, 156

<sup>202</sup> Sebastien Gariepy. “Government invests in Honouring Graves of War of 1812 Veterans.” Accessed May 2017 <http://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/harper-government-invests-in-honouring-graves-of-war-of-1812-veterans-511830281.html> Source originally posted on the Canadian Heritage website. <http://1812.gc.ca/eng/1305654894724/1305655293741>

unity. In the government's version, the war was the basis for the creation of the modern Canadian military. This is seen on the government's official bicentennial website, where the Prime Minister's Message reads, "The War was instrumental in creating Canada's armed forces. Many of our current reserve regiments in Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic Canada trace their origins back to this time."<sup>203</sup> Sjolander describes the government's intention for using the bicentennial to reshape the Canadian mindset: "We are not peacekeepers, we are warriors. This is not the Canada of the Nobel Peace Prize, this is the Canada of bumper stickers reading 'War of 1812: Been There, Won That.'"<sup>204</sup> Harper highlighted his martial view of the war as the birthplace of Canadian identity in a speech on Canada Day 2012 in Ottawa on Parliament Hill: "A country born in French, a country proud of its cultural diversity, stability and prosperity, a country, Canada, that stands apart from North America... our ancestors in 1812 laid the basis for a common sense of Canadian nationality based on diversity."<sup>205</sup>

Harper's speech illustrates the idea that the Bicentennial was attempting to bring all the Canadian groups together to remember the history of the war of 1812. The message is that people of many different languages and cultures fought back against the Americans and saved their diverse way of life, which would have ended had Canada fallen to the invaders. Harper also

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<sup>203</sup> Sjolander, 161

<sup>204</sup> Sjolander, 161

<sup>205</sup> Sjolander., 160. The entire quote from Harper's Speech: Almost exactly two centuries ago, an American invasion of Canada was launched.

Our ancestors, English, French, Aboriginal, people of all backgrounds, joined in the fight for Canada.

It was during the War of 1812- the Battle for Canada- that the very foundations of this great country of ours were laid.

A country born in French, a country proud of its cultural diversity, stability and prosperity, a country, Canada, that stands apart from North America.

In fighting together, our ancestors in 1812 laid the basis for a common sense of Canadian nationality based on diversity.

In addition, the laid the basis for the vision of freedom, democracy, and justice that is our inheritance, Canada, the best country in the world.

points out that even though Canada is connected to the United States, because of the war there are wholly different in a nationality based in diversity.

The websites put up by the Toronto government and the Public Archives and Library Canada in Ottawa offer two examples of the message the government hoped people would get out of the Bicentennial. The Toronto government's celebration of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 was linked to the Federal government's celebration of the war. The Conservative majority controlled the government in power in 2012. The Toronto website portrayed the war was a pivotal event that took Canada on the road to nationhood, and argued that the Bicentennial was a way to honor those who had died to make Canada the nation it would become:

The societies living around the lower Great Lakes on both sides of the border leading up to the War of 1812 were a combination of First Nations and European communities, traditions and aspirations. The Bicentennial of the War of 1812 commemorated the tradition of pluralism that we enjoy in Canada today.

The outcome of the War of 1812 assured the continuation of our growth as a unique North American society. This is still evident in our political and judicial systems and cultures, currency, social values, sense of community, civic engagement and our approach to issues in the 21st century. The war also solidified Canada's history as a safe haven for waves of immigrants; from African slaves escaping the U.S. to Irish immigrants escaping the famine. The repercussions of alliances forged between the First Nations and the British raised issues that are still being addressed to this day.<sup>206</sup>

The 1812 site of Public Archives and Library Canada, a federal agency, echoed Harper's connection between the victory in the War of 1812 and Canada's present-day "cultural diversity": "The end of the war laid the foundation for Confederation and the emergence of Canada as a free and independent nation. Under the Crown, Canada's society retained its

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<sup>206</sup> "About the Commemoration" City of Toronto. Accessed May 2016  
<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=67724b25a98c2410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD&vgnextchannel=aa902c812a3c2410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>

linguistic and ethnic diversity, in contrast to the greater conformity demanded by the American Republic.”

The government’s narrative of the war, however, did not go unchallenged by the Aboriginal peoples. Academics tried to offer a more detailed and focused history of the war. This more detailed narrative tried to fill in the gaps of the official government narrative of the war. The Canadian War Museum, located in Ottawa, the nation’s capital, opened an exhibit in 2012 entitled *The Four Wars of 1812*, and released a book under the same title to go along with the exhibit. The book written by D. Peter MacLeod that corresponds with the exhibit divides the war of 1812 into four wars: American War, British War, Canadian War, and Native American War. Each section gives the main details for each of the wars, the important battles fought, and what was gained by the side in the war. In his introduction, MacLeod gives his views on the multiple perspectives of the war and the reason the war is used by both the American and Canadians for nation-building and other purposes. He argues:

These perspectives are not about right and wrong. They are about what a group of people think is important in a war—or any other historical episode—and what meaning it holds for them. If a group considers an episode important enough, then its members incorporate it into a collective narrative, a fact-based mythology that helps define them as a people or a nation. To create these narratives, they emphasize events and circumstances that they believe reflect their sense of which they are and use them to create their own version of history.

Canadians and Americans have used the war of 1812 as a source of nation-building narratives, centered on their distinct stories of the war... For Canadians, the War of 1812 was about American invasions. For Americans, it was about standing up to Britain. For the British, it was an annoying sideshow to the Napoleonic Wars. For Native Americans, it was a desperate struggle for freedom and independence as they fought to defend their homelands.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Peter MacLeod. *Four Wars of 1812*. (Douglas & McIntyre INC. Canadian War Museum, 2012), 9

The exhibit from the Canadian War Museum is one of the few exhibits in Canada and the United States that sought to include the many different groups involved in the story, and to give the visitor insight into why each group was fighting and how the war affected not just Canadians but also Americans, natives and even the British. Focusing on the multiple perspectives of the war changed the narrative from being all about Canadian unity and placed the conflict into the larger context of both the Napoleonic Wars and European expansion in North America. The exhibit also reminds visitors that the war left entirely different legacies for the four combatants. Americans got the Star spangled Banner and the notion that they won the war. For the British, the war was to be found mostly in the pages of naval novels, overshadowed by the final years of the conflict against Napoleon. Canadians remember they would go on to forge a free and independent transcontinental country. For the First Nations, however, the War of 1812 was a disaster. The war shattered any hopes of a united Indian state or of stopping American encroachment onto their lands;<sup>208</sup> The Canadian War Museums' exhibit did not fit into Harper's celebration of militarism, for the exhibit went beyond just glorifying the war to explore the consequences and the lives of those affected by the war. The exhibit is the way to both commemorate the war but also talk about the divergent consequences of the war for its different participants.

### **The Role of the First Nations in the Harper Government's Narrative:**

The government's narrative of 1812 placed a heavy emphasis on the First Nations' loyalty to the King during the war. This depiction of Native service to the Crown was emphasized in the commemorative banner and medal given by Harper to the First Nations

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<sup>208</sup> MacLeod, 29,47, 68,86

leaders, when they met at Rideau Hall in October 2012 to thank them for their contributions and sacrifice in the war of 1812. Harper's speech deserves quoting in full:

All those years ago at the conclusion of the War of 1812, and in recognition of their valor, Aboriginal communities were presented with military banners and King George the Third medals. Therefore, it will be today.

Successor First Nations and Metis communities will... be presented with the Canadian forces War of 1812 commemorative Banner and specially struck War of 1812 commemorative Medals. Both Banner and Medal reflect the strong connection of Canada's First Nations to the Crown.

The medal design has a likeness of her majesty the Queen on one side, and the image from the commemorative banner on the reverse. Usage of the Queen's likeness and the design of the medal itself were approved by Buckingham Palace. They are bestowed today as symbols of an unbreakable bond forged in a common struggle.<sup>209</sup>

Sjolander notes that Harper's speech did not mention the fact that involvement in the War of 1812 was, for the First Nations, less a matter of loyalty to Canada or the Crown, and far more a "desperate struggle for freedom and independence," in which they sought to protect their homelands.<sup>210</sup> Nor did Harper mention the fact that, despite the British victory in 1812, the First Nations failed disastrously to achieve this purpose, largely because their interests were largely ignored by their British allies. The inclusion of the First Nations in the celebration and the rewarding of the banner and medal also belied the subsequently tragic history of the treatment of the First Nations in Canada, not to mention the fact that the Harper government itself had an uncomfortable, if not downright hostile, relationship with the First Nations. In fact, the First Nations did not themselves celebrate the War of 1812 or honor the Indian war hero, Tecumseh. One reason may be that they were too busy fighting the Harper government's cuts to the funding for their education and healthcare. The government also persistently neglected economically

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<sup>209</sup> Sjolander, 163

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 163

depressed and crime-ridden conditions in reservations across the country.<sup>211</sup> Indeed, the Harper government repeatedly reduced federal funding for economic development and social services on the reservations. The First Nations also were fighting over outstanding land claims and the access to clean drinking water. The First Nations put forth a bill in Parliament titled An Act Respecting the safety of Drinking Water on First Nation Lands.<sup>212</sup>

### **Public Response and Criticism of the Bicentennial:**

The Canadian commemoration drew overwhelmingly negative reception from domestic commentators. Many critics complained that the war was a relatively unimportant event in Canadian history, and that the time and money spent could have been used to celebrate far more significant historical discoveries such as archeological programs and research for artifacts found in Quebec City in May of 2012.<sup>213</sup> Critics also contrasted government's recent funding cuts to universities and historical institutions, such as the National Archives, with its lavish spending on the War of 1812. Jack Granatstein, a prominent Canadian historian, complained: "This is also a government that's slashing the national archives dramatically and killing the national library by cuts. On the one hand they're good for history and on the other hand they're bad for history—you sometimes wonder if they really know what they're doing."<sup>214</sup> During Question Period on May 16, 2012, Annick Papillon, M.P. questioned the cuts to funding and the elimination of 45 positions for Parks Canada in Quebec City, a UNESCO world heritage site, along with the

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<sup>211</sup> Parliament of Canada, "Official Report Special committee on Violence against Indigenous Women Number 006 (Official Version)." Accessed April 29.

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Doc=6&Mode=1&Parl=41&Pub=Hansard&Ses=2&Language=E>.

<sup>212</sup> Assembly of First Nations, "Letter to Assembly of First Nations on proposed Bill on Clean Drinking Water" Accessed Nov. 2016 [http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/11-03-08\\_nc\\_ltr\\_fn\\_leaders\\_re\\_bill\\_s-11.pdf](http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/11-03-08_nc_ltr_fn_leaders_re_bill_s-11.pdf)

<sup>213</sup> Official Report House of Commons Debate May 16, 2012, "Oral Questions: Parks Canada". Accessed May 2015 <http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=5593508>

<sup>214</sup> Meagan Fitzpatrick, "Conservatives Draw Fire for 1812 Spending" *CBC News*. Accessed Nov. 2016 [www.cbc.ca/newspolitics/conservatives-draw-fire-for-war-of-1812-spending1.126584](http://www.cbc.ca/newspolitics/conservatives-draw-fire-for-war-of-1812-spending1.126584)

removal of artifacts from museums, which could threaten Quebec Cities UNESCO status.<sup>215</sup> She then brought up the fact that the government was spending millions of the Bicentennial of the war of 1812 and the Queen's royal Jubilee. The government's response to these criticism in Parliament skirted around the questions.<sup>216</sup> The speaker did not want to try to defend or refute the claims of wasteful government spending of historical locations while fronting the bill for a celebration of a minor and unimportant war.

The Harper government dished out a budget of \$50 million for improving 1812 sites. Ironically, they neglected one important site that should have been high on the priority list, the grave of Tecumseh himself. Liberal MP Carolyn Bennett visited the grave of Tecumseh on Walpole Island, Ontario and found it uncared for and overgrown and in need of improvement. The grave was not featured on a list of 1812 sites that were to be being repaired.<sup>217</sup> *Huffington Post Canada* quoted Bennett's dissatisfaction with the government during Question time: "Bennett said First Nations and Metis had been invaluable to the successful outcome of the War of 1812. Their role deserved appropriate attention and celebration. On Walpole Island, the mortar was falling apart between the stones that form Tecumseh's monument: 'There is no picture; there is no story of how he fought for Canada and died... With all the government is spending, what it will take for them to work with chief and council and fix this.'"<sup>218</sup> In replying to Bennett,

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<sup>215</sup> Official Report House of Commons Debate May 16, 2012, "Oral Questions: Parks Canada"

<sup>216</sup> The Honorable Peter Kent states, "Mr. Speaker, I provided an answer to this question when it was raised by the Bloc Québécois more than a week ago. That answer is we appreciate that these valuable artifacts should be on display, where possible, in museums appropriate for their exhibition. In the short term, there is no location. They will be stored. They will remain in Quebec. We are looking at a number of opportunities for those artifacts to be displayed again in museums in appropriate locations in Quebec

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=5593508>.

May 16, 2012 Accessed Nov. 2016

<sup>217</sup> Althis Raj, "Chief Tecumseh Grave: Conservative Party's War Of 1812 Spending Plans Exclude Key Figure's Resting Place" Accessed April 2015. [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2012/06/20/chief-tecumseh-grave-war-of-1812\\_n\\_1613192.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2012/06/20/chief-tecumseh-grave-war-of-1812_n_1613192.html)

<sup>218</sup> "Chief Tecumseh's Grave"



Canadian Heritage Minister James Moore explained that the government did have plans to dedicate and build a new monument to Tecumseh and to include him in a national monument dedicated to the war of 1812, but his explanation sounded far too generic for someone of Tecumseh's importance: "We are going across the country looking for projects like this one to make sure that those who served and fought in the Fight for Canada that was the War of 1812, get the respect that they are due."<sup>219</sup>

Chief among the complaints about the Bicentennial was that it was a minor conflict that happened two centuries ago that caused senseless bloodshed and destruction. Citizens had to rebuild their capital of York after it was burned by the Americans and try to get life back to prewar normalcy. The war was more a burden on the local populations for they had to give food and home to both the British and the American forces. The war also created a change in the minds of those who lived through the violence and the destruction in Canada. The end of the war created more of a bond to the Crown and Canada. According to an editorial in the *Toronto Star*, the war "wrought a deep psychological change. Before 1812, many settlers, especially in what is now Ontario, did not feel particularly Canadian. Some were United Empire Loyalists, arriving here after being driven north by the revolution. Many others were arrivals that are more recent: Americans lured over the border by the prospect of easily available land. They had no strong connection to the Crown."<sup>220</sup>

Ian McKay and Jaimie Swift argued in an article entitled, "What's wrong with Celebrating the War of 1812," that historians and those who witnessed the war's brutality remember the war differently. McKay and Swift quote William "Tiger Dunlop" a military

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<sup>219</sup> Chief Tecumseh's Grave

<sup>220</sup>"The War of 1812 shaped Canada forever" *The Toronto Star*. 17, 2012. Accessed May 2015.

[http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/2012/06/17/the\\_war\\_of\\_1812\\_shaped\\_canada\\_forever.html](http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/2012/06/17/the_war_of_1812_shaped_canada_forever.html)

surgeon who wrote in his memoirs about the bloody work he was witnessing in the war of 1812. Dunlop criticized both the President and King in fighting this senseless war. He states, “O that the King and the President were both here this moment to see the misery their quarrels lead to... They surely would never go to war without a cause that they could give reason to God on the last day, or thus destroying the creatures he has made in his own image.”<sup>221</sup> Fast forward two hundred years and the war were being celebrated as a high point in Canadian history, with no mention of its true horrors. McKay and Swift state:

Two hundred years later Canada’s Prime Minister remembers the War of 1812 as ‘the beginning of a long and proud military history in Canada.’ Stephen Harper has decided to commemorate the War of 1812 with a \$28 million heritage extravaganza, selling what Pierre Berton called a ‘bloody and senseless conflict’ to the citizenry for the simple reason that it was a war. That’s because Harper and his new Warrior supporters among historians, journalist and sundry militarist are attempting to establish was as the pith and essence of all Canadian history.<sup>222</sup>

The *Toronto Star* columnist Rick Salutin similarly criticized Stephen Harper’s celebration of the war. He argued that the glamorizing the War of 1812 was meant to justify the billions spent on weapons and other items of war instead of the more pressing problems of Canadian society.<sup>223</sup> In his speech in 2014 for the centennial of the start of World War I, given at the Canadian War Museum, Harper sought similarly to link the freedoms and comforts of Canada today with the Canadian sacrifices in the Great War:

It [Freedom] was bought and paid for on the gas-choked battlefield at Ypres, where John McCrae wrote his immortal work *In Flanders Fields*; at Vimy Ridge, where Canadian men united under Canadian leaders, achieved a victory that had eluded so many others; in the long, muddy slaughter along the River Somme; in the drenched and cratered wasteland of Passchendaele, where Lieutenant Robert Shankland earned his Victoria Cross; in the sombre and blood-soaked field hospitals, where Beatrice McNair would

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<sup>221</sup> Ian McKay and Jamie Swift, “What’s Wrong with Celebrating the War of 1812?” *Active History.Ca: History Matters*. May 16, 2012. Accessed April 2016. <http://activehistory.ca/2012/05/whats-wrong-with-celebrating-the-war-of-1812/>

<sup>222</sup> “What’s Wrong with Celebrating the War of 1812?”

<sup>223</sup> Rick Salutin, “War of 1812 bicentennial glamourizes warfare”. *The Star*. Accessed Nov. 20, 2016 [https://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/2012/06/14/war\\_of\\_1812\\_bicentennial\\_glamourizes\\_warfare.html](https://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/2012/06/14/war_of_1812_bicentennial_glamourizes_warfare.html)

become one of the first Canadian women to receive military honours for gallantry, standing by her post and comforting her patients while under bombardment.<sup>224</sup>

Salutin's critique of Harper's use of the memory of the war of 1812 was that it sought to bolster enlistment into the military to help in the war in Afghanistan. Salutin states:

But the glamorous notion of war is odious not because of what it claims; it's because of what it omits... Basically wars about killing people. But glorifying them goes a step beyond that. It's tempting to say that this gaudy celebration of the war that happened 200 years ago is obnoxious chiefly because it's being done to justify the pointless carnage of young Canadians in Afghanistan- along with similar, equally pointless adventures yet to come. But the glamorous nation of any war in any century stands as ugly on its own. Most of the people who died back then were young and innocent too. Still, at least it was a time when governments had the guts to declare war instead of backing up into it. Almost makes you nostalgic.<sup>225</sup>

The Harper narrative of the war also rode roughshod over the preferences of those who now lived in areas involved in the conflict. In the city of Stouffville, north of Toronto, the government planned for the Bicentennial celebration to focus on the military history of the town. The locals of the town argued that the celebration did not address the town's true history, which was founded by pacifists and war-resisters, who belonged to a historic Mennonite church in the town.<sup>226</sup> The CBC summarized the complaint of the local Mennonite minister, Arnold Neufeldt: "Their intent is not to rain on anyone's parade, but it Stouffville is going to be connected to the War of 1812 'then the story that has to be told is the story of Canada's first Conscientious objectors.'"<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Steven Chase, "Harper commemorates 100th anniversary of First World War" *The Globe and Mail*. Accessed Nov. 2016. <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/harper-marks-100th-anniversary-of-wwi-critical-conflict-in-canadian-history/article19906944/>

<sup>225</sup> "War of 1812 bicentennial Glamourizes Warfare"

<sup>226</sup> "Conservatives draw fire for War of 1812 spending".

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

Others complained that the government allocated money that could have been used to celebrate other historic events. Many insisted that the war of 1812 was not that important in Canadian history, and that events like the granting of women's suffrage or the signing of the treaty of Confederation were far more deserving of commemoration.<sup>228</sup> During the Question period of October 28, 2013 Senator Jane Cordy questioned why the government was allotting \$28 million for the Bicentennial, while the Status of Women's offices were only receiving \$29.6 million and their offices were being shut down.<sup>229</sup> Cordy questioned whether the government truly cared for the rights of women and the government instead cared for commemoration an event that happened before confederation: "I don't believe, either, that the families of the missing and murdered Aboriginal women would say that you are supporting women. I don't believe that the families who cannot afford child care for their children...would say that you are supporting the status of women and women's concerns in Canada."<sup>230</sup>

### **Absence of the First Nations from the Bicentennial Celebrations:**

The Harper government and the organizers of Bicentennial events tried to use Tecumseh as a hero of Canada since he was not fighting for Canada but ignored Tecumseh's history and role in the War of 1812. It was not just Tecumseh, but the First Nations generally were left out of the celebrations. The history of the First Nations after the war was over was simply not a very good background for either inclusive treatment of the First Nations or for building patriotic sentiment about being native Canadian. Typically, participants from the First Nations out of from commemorative events were sometimes left out by agencies running or planning the celebration.

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<sup>228</sup> "Conservatives draw fire"

<sup>229</sup> Hon. Jane Cordy. Question Time "Status of Women" Oct. 28, 2013. Accessed April 2016  
[http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/sen/chamber/412/debates/007db\\_2013-10-28-e.htm](http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/sen/chamber/412/debates/007db_2013-10-28-e.htm)

<sup>230</sup> Question Time October 28, 2013

One example of the First Nations being purposely omitted from a celebration was for the Arrival of the Tall Ships celebration in Halifax in 2012. Parks Canada was responsible for hiring reenactors for the event, but no one was chosen to represent the First Nations. Yet an article from *Huffington Post Canada* quoted site manager Rob Roe on the importance of the Native ally's aid in the war: "[We] certainly would not have been able to save our territory if not for the native contribution."<sup>231</sup> Parks Canada did not give reason as to why there was not a First Nations presence among the reenactors. The absence did not surprise Betty Ann Lavalle of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples. She states, "Most Canadians do not know the significance of the aboriginal commitment to the formation of this country to begin with. It's not taught in schools."<sup>232</sup>

However, some members of the First Nations were concerned that the native warriors would be forgotten in the Bicentennial celebrations due to the history of mistreatment by the government. James Bartleman, a member of the Chippewas of Rama First Nation and a sixth generation direct descendant of a native veteran of the War of 1812-1814, hoped that the Bicentennial would highlight the important role of the native warriors who helped defend Canada instead of overlooking their role. The government of Canada did not overlook the role the native warriors played in helping Canada win the war. The government of Canada mentioned three other First Nations on the War of 1812 section of the website for the government of Canada under the header of Heroes of the War of 1812. The other three men are John Norton (Teyoninhokarawen or "the Snipe") A Six Nations war chief, John Brant, (Dekarihokenh, Ahyouwaeghs, Tekarihogen) a Mohawk War Chief, and Matthew Elliott, British Indian

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<sup>231</sup>, "First Nations omitted from War of 1812 re-enactment" *CBC News*. Accessed Oct. 2016  
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/first-nations-omitted-from-war-of-1812-re-enactment-1.1219097>

<sup>232</sup> "First Nations omitted from War of 1812"

Department Superintendent. The government also ensured to name native warriors as helping win the war in all the speeches during the Bicentennial.

An example of such neglect of the First Nations in the bicentennial was the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Stoney Creek, held on May 31-June 2, 2013. In historical accounts of the battle, the First Nations are credited with helping drive back the Americans and halt their advances into the Niagara Peninsula. Yet at the 2013 event, though the First Nations were mentioned with aiding in the victory, they were not given the same attention as the British officers, who had their names mentioned and their individual deeds described. When a local newspaper watched the videos of the event, no First Nations re-enactors were seen participating in the re-enactment.<sup>233</sup> This absence could mean that either not enough First Nations re-enactors showed up to participate in the re-enactment, or that none were invited. According to the schedule, an Actor Interpreter played Tecumseh's role in the victory before and after the initial Battle Re-enactment. One thing that is odd is that the actor portraying Tecumseh was not identified.<sup>234</sup> For in most historical re-enactments if someone is portraying a certain historical figure their real name is given in the program. This is especially true for someone as famous as Tecumseh.

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, the government ministry that handles Aboriginal affairs, also had an exhibit about Native contributions to the War of 1812. The exhibit, which was placed online, follows a vein similar to the Public Archives exhibit on the War of 1812. According to the exhibit introduction panel, First Nation and Metis fighters helped

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<sup>233</sup> Bicentennial of Stoney Creek 1813-2013. Hamilton Community News, Thursday May 16, 2013, 4.

<sup>234</sup> Hamilton Community News, 11

beat the American back alongside their British allies.<sup>235</sup> According to the exhibit, Aboriginal peoples of Canada should commemorate the Bicentennial is to honor the native warriors that fell while fighting off the American invasion. The website also has links for key dates important to the First Nations and Metis participation in the war, along with a link to buy postcards of important First Nation and Metis leaders. This website and exhibit gave the same measure and treatment to the role of First Nations as compared to the “Face” exhibit or the entire Bicentennial.

Senator Sandra Lovelace Nicholas speaks on the how the First Nations have been treated since the end of the War and how they should be remembered for their aid in the defense of Canada. Nicholas writes:

The war ended with the Treaty of Ghent, which restored the original possession of land to both the Americans and the British, making the two-year war seemingly a waste of human life, money and time. Shamefully, there was no involvement in the treaty by the First Nations, and they were quickly dropped as allies of the British and forced onto reserves. Further insult to First Nations was that they were ordered by the British Indian Department not to attack American troops or settlements encroaching on their territory.

What First Nations did end up with was betrayal and despair, which has continued for 200 years. Because of past and current policies caused by paternalism, racism, inequality, denial of our lands and resources, rejection of our self-determination and sovereignty requests, we experience poverty, inadequate housing, high unemployment, and high rates of incarceration and suicide. First Nations have nothing to celebrate or commemorate!<sup>236</sup>

### **The 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of 1763: Another chance for Harper:**

While the Bicentennial the War of 1812 was being celebrated and pushed by the Harper government, another anniversary was being largely ignored by Harper: the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of

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<sup>235</sup> Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. “Indigenous contributions to the War of 1812” Accessed April 2016 <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1338906261900/1338906300039>

<sup>236</sup>Hon. Sandra Lovelace Nicholas. Senators Statements Parliament of Canada. June 18, 2013. Accessed April 2016 [http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/sen/chamber/411/debates/176db\\_2013-06-18-e.htm#2](http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/sen/chamber/411/debates/176db_2013-06-18-e.htm#2)

the Royal Proclamation of 1763. The First Nations wanted to celebrate this event because it had forged a diplomatic relationship between the Crown and the indigenous people and established land boundaries of aboriginal and non-aboriginal land. The proclamation was signed on October 7, 1763, at the end of the seven years' war and established the land boundaries between with British colonies in North America and Native Americans.<sup>237</sup> The treaty reserved for Indians all lands east of the Mississippi, west of the Appalachian height of land, south of the Hudson Bay watershed, and North Florida. The Proclamation also stated that the lands given to the Natives could not be sold unless the Native Americans had been spoken to in a public assembly by a Crown representative<sup>238</sup>. The Treaty was meant to promote a peaceful respect relationship between the crown and the First Nations, according to both the First Nations and the government of Canada. However, that relationship has since not gone as the writers of the Proclamation had planned, nor were its terms honored by the Canadian government. Atleo writes, "But these principles have been denied for too long, usurped by federal laws and policies that are paternalistic at best and assimilationist at worst. The results are clear and completely unacceptable in a first world country, too many first Nations children languish in poverty and poor health, surrounded by the riches of their traditional territories."<sup>239</sup>

First Nations were hoping to get the Harper government to help celebrate the commemoration to make the history of the Proclamation better known than just among the First Nations. Since the Harper government was celebrating a pivotal moment in Canadian history and

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<sup>237</sup> Karl S. Hele & Donald Fixico, "Royal Proclamation of 1763," *Treaties with American Indians: An Encyclopedia of Rights, Conflicts, and Sovereignty* (2008): 639

[file:///C:/Users/Stephanie/Downloads/Treaties%20With%20American%20Indians%20-%20Donald%20Lee%20Fixico\\_5121%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Stephanie/Downloads/Treaties%20With%20American%20Indians%20-%20Donald%20Lee%20Fixico_5121%20(1).pdf)

<sup>238</sup> Hele, 639

<sup>239</sup> Shawn Atleo, "The Royal Proclamation and the way forward for First Nations" *The Globe and Mail*. Accessed Nov. 2016 <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/the-royal-proclamation-and-the-way-forward-for-first-nations/article14720012/>



the buildup to the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Confederation the Proclamation could be a way to include a celebration that was clearly pivotal for the first Nations. The Chiefs of Ontario penned an open letter to Stephen Harper asking for joint cooperation in celebrating the proclamation. Stan Beardy, the regional chief reminds Harper on why the proclamation is important to First Nations in its recognition in the charter of rights and freedoms, the Constitutional Act of 1982, is used in several court cases and has been compared to the English Bill of Rights and the Magna Carta for the First Nations people.<sup>240</sup> The celebration could be beneficial to helping repair relationships by finding commonality in the proclamation for both First Nations and non-aboriginal Canadians. For both the government and First Nations have a special connection and shared fidelity to the Crown and the royal family of Britain, which the proclamation embodies for its set up the foundation of Canada.<sup>241</sup> Beardy also takes a point to remind the Prime Minister of the problem still plaguing the relationship between the government and First Nations, many of these issues go directly against the words and spirit of the treaty and have not been rectified by the government in the 250 years since its passing in 1763:

Nevertheless, in the spirit of the way and promise of 1764, I believe we can set aside some of our differences for now, and cooperatively celebrate this enduring legacy of the Royal Proclamation of 1763. Perhaps I am overly optimistic, but it is even possible that a joining of hands on this commemoration may lead to an opening of hearts on some of the daunting challenges in our nation to nation relationship.<sup>242</sup>

The 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemoration of the Proclamation took place on October 7, 2013, across the First Nations of Canada. The Union of Ontario Indians held an observation in their

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<sup>240</sup>Stan Beardy, “Open Letter- Commemoration of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of 1763”. Accessed Nov. 2016 [http://www.chiefs-of-ontario.org/sites/default/files/news\\_files/Ltr%20to%20PM%20Harper%20RE%20Commemoration%20of%20250th%20Anniversary%20of%20the%20RP%20of%201763%20-%20March%2018%202013\\_0.pdf](http://www.chiefs-of-ontario.org/sites/default/files/news_files/Ltr%20to%20PM%20Harper%20RE%20Commemoration%20of%20250th%20Anniversary%20of%20the%20RP%20of%201763%20-%20March%2018%202013_0.pdf)

<sup>241</sup> “Open Letter- Commemoration of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary”

<sup>242</sup> “Open Letter- Commemoration of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary”

building located west of North Bay on Highway 17. Students from nearby N'bisiiing Secondary School and Nipissing University history program listened to First Nations elders talk about the history of the Proclamation and the treaty history of Canada from the view of the First Nations. Walter Manitowabi, the Master of Ceremonies, stated, "The Proclamation of 1763 was the first official recognition by the British government of First Nations ownership of their land...The fact that these promises were not kept does not diminish the fact they were made."<sup>243</sup> In Ottawa, the anniversary was marked with the Creating Canada symposium organized by the Land Claims Agreements Coalition and was hosted at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. The event was attended by academics and aboriginal leaders who discussed the importance of the document, which has been nicknamed the "Indian Magna Carta," and the pitfalls of the government in upholding the promises in the document.<sup>244</sup> Chief Danny Cresswell of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation argues that the pledges in the Royal Proclamation had been betrayed by the federal government: "says [the British] can't go in and invade [our] lands without some consultation or, more than that, it says they have to be compensated, dealt with, treated fairly...It wasn't lived up to or enforced. It was nice to say..."<sup>245</sup>

National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Atleo, complained similarly in an interview on CBC Radio's "The House" about the failure of the government to respect the land usage and rights promised in the Proclamation: "The treaty relationships and aspirations that were expressed in the Royal Proclamation are about us sharing land, wealth, and resources of this country. That has not happened."<sup>246</sup> Atleo noted that other issues would be brought to the forefront

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<sup>243</sup> "Union of Ontario Indians commemorates Royal Proclamation" North Bay Nipissing News Accessed on Jan, 19, 2017. [www.northbaynipissing.com/news-story/4215362-unionofontarioindians-commemorates-royal-proclamation./](http://www.northbaynipissing.com/news-story/4215362-unionofontarioindians-commemorates-royal-proclamation/)

<sup>244</sup> "It's the 250th Anniversary of the 'Indian' Magna Carta" *CBC Canada* Accessed on Jan. 19, 2017. [www.huffingtonpost.ca/2013/20/06/Royal-proclamation-1763-anniversary-n-40549.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2013/20/06/Royal-proclamation-1763-anniversary-n-40549.html)

<sup>245</sup> It's the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 'Indian' Magna Carta"

<sup>246</sup> "It's the 250th Anniversary of the 'Indian' Magna Carta"

with the discussion of the Royal Proclamation, including child welfare and the First Nation's demand for a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.<sup>247</sup> While the commemorations were occurring across Canada, members of the "Idle No More" movement protested to mark the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Royal Proclamation. The Idle No More movement is a grassroots organization that sought to assert Indigenous resistance to the government's continuous abuses of native land claims. They also fight for Indigenous rights, return to traditional laws and nation to nation treaties that will protect Indigenous land from corporate greed.<sup>248</sup> The movement organized protest, rallies, sit-ins and other types of peaceful protest to achieve their goals. Clayton Thomas-Muller, one of the leaders of the "Idle No More" explained why they chose the Royal Proclamation: "We are using this founding document of this country and its anniversary to usher in a new era of reconciliation of Canada's shameful colonial history, to turn around centuries of neglect and abuse of our sacred and diverse nations."<sup>249</sup>

The Prime Minister released a statement about the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Royal Proclamation. Harper stated the importance of the document in the foundation of the constitutional protection of Aboriginal rights in Canada. These rights are recognized formally in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.<sup>250</sup> For the government, the commemoration was an opportunity to honor the role Aboriginals had in creating the Canadian nations from fighting in the War of 1812 to both World Wars. Harper pointed out that even with the progress the government had

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<sup>247</sup> "Idle No More protest mark 250th Anniversary of aboriginal land-claims document." *The Canadian Press* Accessed Jan. 19, 2017. [www.timescolonist.com/news/national/idle-no-more-protest-mark-250th-anniversary-of-aboriginal-land-claims-document-1.651613](http://www.timescolonist.com/news/national/idle-no-more-protest-mark-250th-anniversary-of-aboriginal-land-claims-document-1.651613)

<sup>248</sup> "The Story" Idle No More, Accessed May 2017. <http://www.idlenomore.ca/story>

<sup>249</sup> "Idle No More protest mark 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of aboriginal land-claims document." *The Canadian Press*. Accessed Jan. 19, 2017. [www.timescolonist.com/news/national/idle-no-more-protest-mark-250th-anniversary-of-aboriginal-land-claims-document-1.651613](http://www.timescolonist.com/news/national/idle-no-more-protest-mark-250th-anniversary-of-aboriginal-land-claims-document-1.651613)

<sup>250</sup> Stephen Harper, "Statement on the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the recognition of the rights of Aboriginal peoples" Published Oct. 7, 2013. news.gc.ca/web/article-endo?nid=778499, <https://www.hashilthsa.com/news/2013-10-07/statement-prime-minister-canada-250th-anniversary-royal-proclamation>

made in helping the First Nations more work still needed to be done: “This includes ongoing dialogue on the treaty relationship and comprehensive land claims. We are also taking concrete action on education, economic development, housing, child and family services, access to safe drinking water, as well as the extension of human rights protection and matrimonial real property rights to First Nations people.”<sup>251</sup> Harper’s statement came after several ignored requests from the First Nations to speak about the importance of the Royal Proclamation.<sup>252</sup> His government also only paid \$30,000 for a symposium held to commemorate the anniversary in Ottawa. This is a small amount compared to what it put out for the Bicentennial of the War of 1812.<sup>253</sup> The government also did not plan any large celebration to commemorate the Proclamation, all of the commemorative events were planned by the AFN or other First Nations groups. The Idle No More movement staged protest and rallies to get the government’s attention about recognizing treaty rights that are being denied and also giving rights back to the Indigenous people. The protestors want the government held accountable for the centuries of abuse and for the promises they continue to break.<sup>254</sup>

Governor General David Johnston had published a statement before he spoke at a symposium held to commemorate the anniversary of the Proclamation that was held by the Land Claims Agreement Coalition. Johnston’s statement began similarly to Harper’s, outlining the groundwork the Proclamation laid in the relationship between the First Nations and the Crown and

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<sup>251</sup> Statement on the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.”

<sup>252</sup> Maurice Switzer, “Harper not learning from ‘mistakes of the past’” Anishinabek News, Accessed May 2017. <http://anishinabeknews.ca/2013/05/10/harper-not-learning-from-mistakes-of-the-past/>

<sup>253</sup> “Sunrise Ceremonies Mark Royal Proclamation’s 250th Anniversary on Both Sides of Atlantic”, Indian Country Today. Accessed May 2017. <https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/news/first-nations/sunrise-ceremonies-mark-royal-proclamations-250th-anniversary-on-both-sides-of-atlantic/>

<sup>254</sup> Shari Narine Sweetgrass, “Government held accountable as anniversary of Royal Proclamation marked” Aboriginal Multi-Media Society. <http://www.ammsa.com/publications/alberta-sweetgrass/government-held-accountable-anniversary-royal-proclamation-marked>

the shaping of modern Canada.<sup>255</sup> Johnston's statement spoke more about how much more could be achieved between Canadians and Aboriginals if there were greater mutual respect: "Enshrined in our constitution; the Royal Proclamation formally recognizes a fundamental truth about Canada: that we are stronger when we respect one another's differences and when we work together."<sup>256</sup> Johnston hoped that Canadians across Canada would learn about the Proclamation and continue the work between First Nations and Canadians. Johnston's message was more simplistic in its message and in some ways called out the government's problem when dealing with the First Nations. The government always treated them as an "other" rather than as members of Canadian society.

The Harper government failed in its commemoration of the War of 1812 to unite Canadians in celebrating their military heritage and the war that made them Canadians. Instead people remained indifferent to the bicentennial feeling that the war was unimportant and more important events could have been celebrated. Harper could not successfully use the war to get support for Canada's involvement in the war in Afghanistan. Canadians wanted to celebrate the achievements that helped better the lives of people living in Canada, like the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and women's suffrage. The government also failed to really acknowledge and commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 that set the foundation for its relationship with the First Nations. The attention was solely focused on the War of 1812 in which the First Nations who helped win the war did not participate in its celebration.

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<sup>255</sup> David Johnston, "Message from the Governor General of Canada on the Occasion of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Royal Proclamation." Published Oct. 7, 2013, Accessed March 2017. [www.gg.ca/document.aspx?id=15344#](http://www.gg.ca/document.aspx?id=15344#), <http://www.afn.ca/en/his-excellency-the-right-honourable-david-johnston-speech-on-the-occas>

<sup>256</sup> "Message from the Governor General of Canada"

## **Chapter Four: Co-opting Tecumseh in the Canadian Commemorations of the War of 1812**

The Canadian Bicentennial tried to make the celebration of the War of 1812 reflect the diverse nature of Canadian society by celebrating four figures who were meant to represent the multiple nations living within Canada. Tecumseh has been traditionally included in such celebratory accounts of 1812, since he was the acknowledged leader of Britain's native allies in the war, but such portrayals have not been a full and accurate portrait of Tecumseh and the First Nations. This chapter will examine critiques of these celebrations offered by several historians, both American and Canadian. They each approach the topic by examining different sources, but they share their discomfort with the blatant and highly misleading appropriation of Tecumseh in Canadian celebrations of the war, both before and during the Bicentennial. Eamon discusses how Tecumseh could not be fully made Canadian in the same way that Brock, Secord, and Salaberry could. Tecumseh could not in the end be co-opted by the Harper government as one of their traditional Canadian cultural self-images or to fit the Nationalistic message of the Harper government.

### **Tecumseh in Canadian Heroic Poetry:**

According to Brownlie, Tecumseh could not be fully co-opted in the early Canadian narrative of 1812 in the early nineteenth century as being fully British-Canadian, so he instead was treated as a romantic, exotic figure with a record of military glory and a dramatic, tragic end.<sup>257</sup> Tecumseh was portrayed as different from his British allies because he was Indian and

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<sup>257</sup> Robin Jarvis Brownlie. "The Co-optation of Tecumseh: The War of 1812 and Racial Discourses in Upper Canada." *The Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, Vol. 23, no. 1, 40

not white and Protestant. Brownlie explains: “Indeed, they constructed Indianness as inherently incompatible with Britishness, and Tecumseh was not exempted from this primary racial division.”<sup>258</sup> The British and Canadians still used what they could of Tecumseh and his story to tell of how Canada was saved and forged during the War of 1812. This is especially true in early 19<sup>th</sup> century literary sources about Tecumseh, who was portrayed as the perfect romantic tragic hero. Brownlie uses two long poems about Tecumseh that were published in the 1820s to prove her point about the co-opting of Tecumseh in Canadian history and identity. These poems both honor Tecumseh and showed the stark differences between Indigenous people and Canadians in order to legitimize Canadian possession of Canada.<sup>259</sup>

Tecumseh sought in the War of 1812 to use the British in his quest to push the Americans out of Shawnee tribal lands and to protect them from further incursion by white settlers. In the Canadian poems analyzed by Brownlie, however, Tecumseh became a symbol of Canada’s fight against their stronger neighbor, the United States. At the same time, according to Brownlie, because Tecumseh was Indian and not British, the poems used his otherness to talk about other issues like “protesting against the war itself; discursive constructions of race, Indianness, and whiteness; and perhaps an implicit critique of Britain’s policies toward Aboriginal peoples.”<sup>260</sup> Tecumseh fit into the role of romantic tragic hero because he fought for his people, was killed in battle, and after his death his people met the fate he was fighting so hard to avoid from happening.

Both poems about Tecumseh were written while the War of 1812 was still fresh and was a focal point for the start of the process of building up Canadian identity of loyalty and

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<sup>258</sup> Brownlie, 40

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, 41

<sup>260</sup> Brownlie, 41

patriotism. The War of 1812 was also drawing point for Canadian-myth making that would be used to define Canadian identity leading up to and after Confederation in 1867. The poems were both written by British-Canadians and have Tecumseh as their main subject. The first is George Longmore's poem "Tecumthe. A Poetical Tale in Three Cantos." And the second is John Richardson's poem "Tecumseh, or the Warrior of the West."<sup>261</sup> The men were both British army officers, born and raised in Canada, though only Richardson fought in the war of 1812 in Canada and met Tecumseh right before his death in 1813. Longmore fought in Europe but returned to Canada in 1819 and had contact with men who fought in the war in Canada. The poems reinforced the strong sense of loyalty to the Crown and a hatred of Americans that surfaced after the war, for who better to embody that hatred than an Indian chief who spent his life fighting the Americans.<sup>262</sup> Tecumseh is portrayed by both poets as both a great and intelligent military leader, but also tainted by the Indian savagery and vengefulness that was associated with Native Americans by the Europeans of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, Tecumseh's quest is painted not as a crusade to protect his people's lands, but as revenge on the United States for the death of his father and other warriors at the hands of Americans. The poems are anti-American and put full blame on the United States for Tecumseh and the native people's plight that forced them into conflict.<sup>263</sup> However, the poems suggest that the only viable response by the vanquished Indians was not, as Tecumseh had actually intended, to protect their lands from further expansion by either Americans or the British, but only the final act of revenge.

Besides using their poems to build up national pride and Canadian identity, Richardson and Longmore also have different moral objectives shaping their narratives using Tecumseh as

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<sup>261</sup> Brownlie,, 43

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, 44

<sup>263</sup> Brownlie, 44



their symbol. Richardson presents Tecumseh as a warrior, and sought to “rescue the name of a hero from oblivion” and “preserve the memory of one of the noblest and most gallant spirits that ever tenanted the breast of man.”<sup>264</sup> He continued in his poem to place blame on the United States for their invasion of Upper Canada, their treatment of the First Nations, and the mutilation of Tecumseh’s body. He entirely ignored the fact that the British stopped aiding the First Nations in their fight against the American incursion into tribal lands after the War of 1812.

Richardson’s poems allows for Canadians to not feel guilty about their treatment of their First Nations, since the United States treated their native people harsher.

Longmore, in contrast, illustrated Tecumseh as a noble and romantic warrior and used him as a means to express his anti-war views and moral meditations on the virtues of European and Aboriginal cultures.<sup>265</sup> Tecumseh is placed in both poems as separate from other native warriors, who are portrayed as animalistic savages. Tecumseh is portrayed as an honorable and valiant fighter, as Brownie has stated a “Noble Savage.”<sup>266</sup> Longmore portrays Tecumseh as being a shrewd warrior who was able to exert control over the other bloodthirsty savage warriors. For Longmore Tecumseh was almost the perfect ideal man for his bravery and cunning intellect, he was just missing one important quality - a European education. Longmore writes, “One laurel more at valour’s shrine, nature’s stern untutor’d child, where, ‘midst the brave Tecumthe lies,/ who wanted but the polish’d mind/ Civilization’s wand supplies/ To make him mighty midst mankind...”<sup>267</sup> Tecumseh is described by Richardson as being a noble warrior, who is wise in advice and counsel and sought peace for all people and an end to oppression. Both poets speak

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<sup>264</sup> Brownlie, 46

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 47

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 47

<sup>267</sup> Brownlie, 48

highly of Tecumseh's bravery in battle, especially at the Battle of Moraviantown where he was killed.

Though both poets place Tecumseh high on a pedestal, they pair these noble qualities with the negative stereotypes of Indian warriors used by Europeans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This is the portrayal of Indians as animalistic savages who have a thirst for vengeance for the wrongs committed against them by the Americans. This contradicts what most contemporaries who knew Tecumseh wrote and said about the warrior. Most spoke highly of his humane treatment of prisoners, and his physical and intellectual prowess. They saw his hatred of the Americans justified.<sup>268</sup> Out of the two poets, Richardson is the one who gives more negative imagery of Tecumseh. This could be because he was only fifteen when he first met Tecumseh fighting alongside native warriors. He constantly uses imagery of demons, and a bloodthirsty killer driven by a lust for revenge. Brownlie excerpts from his poem:

Early in the poem, he is described as crossing a river and rising 'like a demon of the waters' to carry death among the lawless band, / the ruthless wasters of his native land.' In the next stanza, he is portrayed as 'rag[ing] through the deep phalanx / of deadliest enemies soon bath'd in blood, / whose quivering scalps, half crimson'd in their gore, / The reeking warrior from the spoilers bore.' On the eve of his final battle, the poem's closing scenes, Tecumseh is frightening and demonic, looking 'like some dark towering fiend, with death-black eyes,' leaning on his lance, 'fir'd with much spoil, and drunk with human gore.'<sup>269</sup>

These lines would be omitted from the Canadian release of the poem, according to Brownlie, because it would have upset a memory of the Native leader that had already been instilled in Canadians by the 1840s. This imagery of Tecumseh does not fit with the descriptions of the men who met Tecumseh like Brock or even William Henry Harrison, who clashed with Tecumseh in 1810 over land disputes. Yet Richardson's description is seen in many other

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<sup>268</sup> Brownlie, 51

<sup>269</sup> Brownlie, 50

writings about Native warriors by Europeans, who did not fully understand Native ways of warfare and tactic. The idea of Native warfare that helped Tecumseh and his warriors defeat the Americans was their use of war paint, and the war cries to unnerve the soldiers before the fighting even began. For 15 year old Richardson this would be terrifying and probably stuck with him more than other memories of the native warrior.

There is no mention in either poem of Tecumseh and his alliance with Britain or any mention of Britain's long history of Native Alliance in previous wars in North America. The main motive given for Tecumseh and his allies fighting the British is out of revenge against the native lives taken by the Americans. This negative view of Tecumseh takes away the the importance that he allied with Britain to fight for land and not for revenge. Richardson writes:

Where spread their cabin o'er Ohio's flood,  
 And the dark Wabash' banks their hunters bore,  
 His slaughter'd kindred sleep within the wood,  
 All gash'd with wounds, and sullied with their gore,  
 The foeman's fortress rises o'er their blood:  
 Their bones lie crumbling at his very door;  
 And nought of Indian life or growth remains  
 Along the vastness of those conquer'd plains.<sup>270</sup>

Longmore puts forth another reason why the Natives allied with Great Britain: that they were induced to join the war by gifts from the British. This paints them as greedy and mercenary. Most tribes used the British to get weapons and goods they could not make themselves, but they had their own reasons for joining in the war. Longmore's explanation certainly obscures the real

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<sup>270</sup> Brownlie, 56

reason Tecumseh allied with the British: to achieve his goal of Indian confederacy. Indeed, in a speech given to Proctor before the British retreat and Tecumseh's death, Longmore gives the reason Tecumseh came to Britain's aid of land that he believes is rightfully his:

Twas the great Spirit who bequeath'd  
 These shores unto our valiant sires;  
 And whilst the gasp of life is breath'd,--  
 And Nature's faintest spark inspires,  
 Our Arrows shall maintain the soul  
 From Treason's cheat, or Rapine's spoil,  
 Till, 'midst the dank wild grass, our own  
 Worn limbs, shall whiten bone, by bone.<sup>271</sup>

Richardson's poem neglects to mention the betrayal of the Native allies by Britain after the Seven years' war, The American Revolution, and the War of 1812. After each conflict, Britain had forsaken her Indian allies to maintain good relationships with the French or the United States. Only Longmore mentions Britain's neglect of the First Nations in the previous conflicts of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Longmore quotes a speech by Tecumseh calling out Britain's betrayal. He writes:

Contemn'd by Treachery's foul hand  
 Which rais'd its death-blow o'er our land...  
 Sold by oppression to appease  
 As rank, and restless a disease.  
 And shall the heartless White-man then,  
 Betray us to the foe again?<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Brownlie, 55

<sup>272</sup> Brownlie, 55

In this way Longmore can be seen as calling out Britain for its role in fate of the First Nations after the war of 1812. His readers would know that Tecumseh's question about being betrayed to the "foe again" was answered though he did not live to see its outcome. Britain would indeed sacrifice her allies to keep good relations with the United States.

Both poems, while honoring Tecumseh and placing him among Canada's heroes for helping save Canada, also pointed out why Tecumseh could not be British like General Brock. The poets ensured that his Indianness was known to the reader and is why he can never be fully co-opted by Canada or even the United States because he is Indian. His Indianness is highlighted through the description of Tecumseh and his actions as savage or animalistic. Richardson states:

'Twas then that, like a mighty avalanche,  
 His arm gigantic with his wrath kept pace,  
 And, rear'd on high, like some vast towering branch  
 Of a tall pine, dealt vengeance for a race  
 Whose bleeding wounds the warrior swore to stanch  
 With the deep groans of those he pledg'd to chase  
 Like the fierce monsters of his native wood,  
 Till gorg'd with victims and with human blood.<sup>273</sup>

Tecumseh was written about after 1820 in histories of the war and sometimes in dramatic plays about his life. Benjamin Drake wrote the first biography of Tecumseh in 1841. Drake portrayed Tecumseh as a great warrior and orator. Drake did not portray Tecumseh as a bloodthirsty savage, but more as the noble savage. Proctor wanted to retreat from the American forces but Tecumseh wanted to stay and fight. Drake wrote that Tecumseh was so embittered with

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<sup>273</sup> Brownlie, 50

Proctor that he was contemplated leaving the British and going back to America for many of the Indians abandoned Proctor.<sup>274</sup> Drake placed Tecumseh and his warriors above the British in bravery and combat, especially in the Battle of Moraviantown in which Tecumseh was killed. Drake argued that if Proctor and the British would have fought as bravely as Tecumseh and his Native Warriors the battle would have been won by the British.

As I have discussed already in Chapter 3, Coffin's 1864 book applied to Tecumseh both stereotypes of the bloodthirsty and noble savage. Similar to Drake, Coffin elevates Tecumseh above the British in his fight during the Battle of Moraviantown. Unlike Drake, who showed that Tecumseh did not fully trust the British, Coffin stated that Tecumseh had unwavering loyalty to England. In 1886 Tecumseh's life was written into a dramatic play called *Tecumseh! A Drama* written by Charles Mair. The play starts with Tecumseh during his early fighting with General Harrison at Vincennes in 1810 before the start of the War of 1812. Mair portrayed Tecumseh as similar to the classical Greek tragic heroes, engaged in a doomed quest to save his people. According to Mair, "Oh, I have loved a life, Not for my own, but for my people's cause. Who now will knit them? Who will lead them on? Lost! Lost! Lost! The pale destroyer triumphs! I see my people fly- I hear their shrieks- And non to shield or save!"<sup>275</sup> Even with Mair writing Tecumseh in the elevated tone, he still through his writing of Harrison's character reminded the reader that Tecumseh was an uneducated Indian Savage.<sup>276</sup> Mair ends his play with Harrison mourning Tecumseh's death at the hand of one of his riflemen for his death meant an unknown future for Indians living in America. Harrison states, "Sleep well, Tecumseh, in thy unknown grave, Thou mighty savage, resolute and brave! Thou, master and strong spirit of the woods, unsheltered

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<sup>274</sup> Drake, 190

<sup>275</sup> Charles Mair, *Tecumseh! A Drama*. (London: Hunter Rose & Company, 1886), 177

<sup>276</sup> Mair, 184

traveler in sad solitudes, yearner o'er Wyandot and Cherokee, Couldst tell us now what hath been and shall be!"<sup>277</sup>

Historian's view of Tecumseh did not go through significant change in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1910, the *Britannia History Reader* (BHR), a school textbook, was one of the early texts that mentioned Brock, Tecumseh, Secord, and Salaberry as the four figures to discuss the history of the War of 1812. The BHR placed Tecumseh as a hero who fought and died more bravely than the English or Canadians. The BHR claimed Tecumseh as a Canadian hero, ignoring where Tecumseh was born and what he had fought for.<sup>278</sup> In 1970, Tecumseh's history was turned into another play titled *Tecumseh!* Written by American Allan W. Eckert it is performed every year in Chillicothe Ohio where Tecumseh was born. Eckert wrote that Tecumseh was the greatest Shawnee and the greatest Indian for he was a wise leader, great orator, and a great warrior. Tecumseh even when he is young warrior is portrayed as a greater and wiser warrior and leader than the elder chiefs. The play covered from 1784 in Ohio when Tecumseh was a young man to his death at the age of 44 in 1813. Eckert skips 1812 and Tecumseh's alliance with Brock and instead picks up with Tecumseh and Proctor before the Battle of Moraviantown. Proctor's character as ruthless and hateful of Tecumseh and his warriors. Proctor called Tecumseh and his warriors savages and hotbloods and unable to grasp military strategy.<sup>279</sup> Tecumseh's disdain of proctor is made event in a straightforward and insulting way. According to Tecumseh, "I want you to be a man! I want you to fight, not run. I will run with you no more. You are a woman, not a warrior! You should be wearing petticoats!"<sup>280</sup> Tecumseh in this play is aware of his death and attempts to dissuade the rest of his warriors from fighting for he is foreseeing that the battle will be a defeat because of

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<sup>277</sup> Mair, 180

<sup>278</sup> C.F.L., *Britannia History Reader* (Toronto: The Copp, Clark & Company, Limited, 1910), 64

<sup>279</sup> Allan W. Eckert, *Tecumseh!* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974), 164.

<sup>280</sup> Eckert, 165

Proctor lack of will to fight. Eckert does not recreate the battle but focused on the American desecration of Tecumseh's body of his clothing and of his scalp.<sup>281</sup> This choice paints the American soldiers under the same negative light as the British under Proctor.

### **A Comic Book Hero:**

In 2012, the Harper government tried to co-opt Tecumseh for the Bicentennial of the War of 1812. Histories of Tecumseh since the wars end had attempted to write Tecumseh as a warrior for Britain and later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Canadian hero, but there is the problem of Tecumseh "Indianness". Even when historians would attempt to rebrand Tecumseh as a Canadian hero they would still use the stereotypes of the noble and bloodthirsty savage. The Bicentennial was seen by the Harper government as a chance for to rebrand Canada as a warrior nation that celebrates its military past as part of the history that helps define what it means to be Canadian.<sup>282</sup> This memory focused on celebrating the heroes and soldiers who sacrificed their lives to defend Canada from invaders, like the Americans in 1812. The Bicentennial project was a chance to put the War of 1812, an early example of Canadian military prowess, in the spotlight placing it at the forefront of Canadian collective identity.

As discussed earlier, Tecumseh was the least commemorated of the four heroes featured in the Bicentennial. As is seen from Brownlie's work, this is because he is simply a difficult figure to co-opt as either fully Canadian or as an ally who benefited from his partnership with Canada. One of the ways that Canada tried to co-opt Tecumseh for the Bicentennial was the comic book *Canada 1812: Forged in Fire*. The comic book was funded by the federal

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<sup>281</sup> Eckert, 174

<sup>282</sup> Sean Carleton, Rebranding Canada with Comics: Canada 1812: Forged in Fire and the Continuing Co-optation of Tecumseh.1 <http://activehistory.ca/papers/history-papers-15/>



government and produced by High Fidelity HDTV with a partnership with Parks Canada, Zeroes to Heroes Media, Bell Canada, and the Smithsonian Channel.<sup>283</sup> This was a part of a government initiative by the Department of Canadian Heritage to try and increase visitation to sites related to the War of 1812.<sup>284</sup> The comic was free to download and there was also an interactive cellphone application that could be downloaded as well. The comic book tells the story of six individuals, of whom four are the “heroes” of 1812. The six are, Isaac Brock, Charles de Salaberry, Laura Secord, John Norton, Enos Collins, and Tecumseh.

The chapter on Tecumseh attempted to give a voice to what Tecumseh’s motives and thoughts were during his life and his dealings with whites both British and American. The comic placed the starting point for Tecumseh’s resentment of Americans to the killing of his father during the Battle of Point Pleasant, Ohio in 1774. This event combined with what Tecumseh called “Intimation” of the Native tribes to surrender land is what pushed Tecumseh to want to fight the Americans and to form his Indian confederacy.<sup>285</sup> Tecumseh is portrayed as a great warrior and not as savage and bloodthirsty as the other native warriors fighting alongside him. This is described in the comic where Tecumseh stopped a warrior from scalping an American soldier where in early accounts like Coffin Tecumseh was accused in taking part in the scalping. According to Tecumseh, “I have seen torture, I want no part of it. I ordered my men to stop.”<sup>286</sup> This can be seen as an attempt to try and take Tecumseh out of the century old stereotypes of the noble and bloodthirsty savage because he is above the savage ways of his people.

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<sup>283</sup> Carleton, 1

<sup>284</sup> *Horizontal Initiative Funding outline*. Accessed Jan 24, 2017. [http://pch.gc.ca/DAMAssetPub/DAM-verEval-audEval/STAGING/texte-text/horizontal-Initiatives\\_1383592851603\\_eng.pdf?WT.contentAuthority=18.0](http://pch.gc.ca/DAMAssetPub/DAM-verEval-audEval/STAGING/texte-text/horizontal-Initiatives_1383592851603_eng.pdf?WT.contentAuthority=18.0)

<sup>285</sup> Craig Colby. *Canada 1812: Forged in Fire* (High Fidelity HDTV Media Inc: Canada), 72

<sup>286</sup> Colby, 84

Though Tecumseh is narrating the comic, his dialogue between other characters like Brock and General Harrison is only a line or two. The most dialogue Tecumseh has is with General Proctor. Tecumseh military prowess is placed above Proctor who is blamed for the defeat at Moraviantown. Tecumseh berates Proctor calling him as freighted fat animals with its tail in between its legs.<sup>287</sup> Proctor is even drawn heavier and aloof in his facial expressions compared to Tecumseh who is athletic build and sharp defined facial features. The comic showed that during the battle Tecumseh used guerilla tactics to try and fight the American forced that outnumbered their force while Proctor used a traditional tactic of forming a line and firing. Once the Americans broke through the line Proctor left Tecumseh and his warriors to try and hold off the Americans. It is during this showdown that Tecumseh is killed. The final few narrations by Tecumseh before the death blow illustrated the way they wanted Tecumseh to be remembered. It read, “We are badly outnumbered. But we will not run. We are warriors. Warriors to the end.”<sup>288</sup> The comic is ambiguous on who Tecumseh’s is fighting for whereas other books place Tecumseh’s loyalty with the British and his people second. Because the comic is for the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 it can be inferred that they are stating that Tecumseh was a warrior hero for Canada but it is written in a way that this motive is hidden. Unlike in other histories the comic focused on Tecumseh’s Indian confederacy and fighting for his people not strictly to defend Canada. The end of the chapter on Tecumseh reminded American and Canadian readers that in arguing who won the war we forget that it was the Native Americans and First Nations who lost the war.

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<sup>287</sup> Colby, 89

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, 92

Carleton argues that the portrayal of Tecumseh in *Canada 1812: Forged in Fire* was an attempt at “rebranding” of his story and history to serve the Harper government’s agenda of martial nation-building. Each figure written about in the comic is portrayed as being distinctly Canadian for their roles in fighting the war of 1812.<sup>289</sup> In the case of Tecumseh, the comic continues the myths and ideals that have been prevalent in writings about both Tecumseh and the people of the First Nations since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Carleton’s point in his article is that “the representations of Tecumseh in *Canada 1812* are problematic not only because of their racist underpinnings, but also because they play important roles in forming perceptions of Indigenous peoples that continue to justify Canada’s colonial policies of coercion, displacement, and assimilation.”<sup>290</sup>

According to Carleton, Tecumseh has been a controversial figure who has been incorporated into the annals of Canadian history as the “noble savage” and heroic ally who died defending Canada in the hopes of protecting Shawnee tribal lands. Yet he has also proven a challenging figure to co-opt to the Canadian cause, since he was neither Canadian nor can be said to have shared British/Canadian imperialist goals. This is illustrated in *Canada 1812*, where Tecumseh is pushed into the background and sidelined in importance even though he was Britain’s most important ally in the war. Tecumseh appears twice in the comic book, the first is in the section on Brock and the second time is in his own chapter. In the section on Brock, Tecumseh is not given any agency in the construction of the Indian alliance with Great Britain; it is portrayed as solely Brock’s own idea. Brock’s line in the comic reads, “We impressed the First Nations, It’s time to solidify the alliance.”<sup>291</sup> Tecumseh is given few speaking lines in Brock’s

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<sup>289</sup> Carleton, 2

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, 2

<sup>291</sup> Carleton, 3

section, and when he does speak, his lines are few and do not deal with any of his ideas regarding strategy or long-term ambitions. They are mostly simplistic statements like “we did it” or “My name is Tecumseh,” and never address his real motives for making an alliance with Britain.<sup>292</sup>

The sidelining of Tecumseh is also displayed in his own dedicated section of the comic, where he should presumably have played a far more significant role. This is seen in both spoken dialogue and in the way Tecumseh is drawn in relation to other figures. Carleton argues that this silencing Tecumseh in his own story conveys the idea that the Tecumseh and his warriors were inferior to the British.<sup>293</sup> One example given by Carleton is from the section on the Battle of the Thames, when Tecumseh was killed. Carleton writes, “When Proctor and his men end up retreating in the battle they are not depicted as running away, instead they are represented in forceful poses. In reality, the British soldiers broke rank and ran away against orders. Yet, when Tecumseh is killed, his men are shown actively fleeing the battle. Thus, even in his own story Tecumseh is marginalized and represented in ways that suggest he and his ingenious warriors were generally inferior to the British.”<sup>294</sup> This continues the older Canadian portrayal of Tecumseh’s Indians as ill-disciplined and unreliable in battle.

Carleton also demonstrates that Tecumseh is portrayed in *Canada 1812* as a noble savage who acted out of revenge against the Americans and that this was the main reason for allying with the British. The groundwork is laid for this portrayal at the beginning of Tecumseh’s section in the comic book, in which his father and brother are savagely killed by the Americans, and Tecumseh is shown as angry and demanding revenge. His bloodlust and desire for revenge is

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<sup>292</sup> Carleton, 3

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, 4

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, 5

extended to the other native warriors by the way they are drawn in the comic. This comes out most starkly in Carleton's comparison of the drawings of Brock's and Tecumseh's respective forces. While the British and American soldiers are shown in crisp military uniforms with expressionless looks on their faces, the native warriors are shown with painted faces and bodies with wide eyes and open mouths giving a war cry, suggesting they are enjoying the war and bloodshed.<sup>295</sup>

Tecumseh's segment in *Canada 1812* concludes with his death at the hand of the Americans, and the suggestion, as Carleton argues, that "colonialism while tragic was inevitable." In this way, the comic portrays Americans as the real culprits in such aggressive colonization and seeks to forget Canada's own tragic history with the First Nations.<sup>296</sup> Carleton describes the final two panels of Tecumseh's section. He writes:

The Final two panels of the section inform readers that 'at the end of the War of 1812, both sides claimed victory. The British and the Americans. But for all their grandstanding, there was no doubt who lost it...' The ellipses direct the readers' gaze to an image of a white farmer working the land while a dejected Indigenous man in the corner looks on, symbolizing the displacement of Indigenous people in the US.<sup>297</sup>

The comic shows a dejected Indigenous man in the U.S. because it seeks to draw attention away from the fact that the Canadian treated their First Nations people just as bad as the United States did after the War of 1812. Due to the comic being released for the Canadian Bicentennial the negative treatment of Indigenous people is placed solely on the United States. Though the end panel could also describe Canada and help remind Canadians of their treatment of First Nations.

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<sup>295</sup> Carleton, 5

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, 7

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, 7

Canada still has not come to terms with its treatment of First Nations that continues to be a problem in 2016. For the Bicentennial these issues were largely ignored by the Harper government, which celebrated Tecumseh as a Canadian “hero,” though he himself had no knowledge or loyalty of Canada. The comic book and other celebrations of Tecumseh did not question the discrimination, poverty, unresolved land-claims and other issues facing First Nations in Canada in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Canada 1812* could have challenged the way Tecumseh and his allies have been portrayed in literature but instead they continued the racial stereotypes. The Bicentennial could have been a way of challenging the traditional memory of Tecumseh, but the history and memory are too far ingrained into the minds of historians to be easily changed.

**Conclusion:**

The many efforts to co-opt Tecumseh into Canadian history can be seen as part of the long history of Canadian dispossession and mistreatment of the First Nations people. Similar to the United States handling of native people in the West, the British government moved and destroyed communities of first Nations in the years and decades after the end of the War of 1812. Problems still exist between the government of Canada and the first Nations people. The conditions that First Nations people face in Canada is similar to that of those living in Third World countries. The problems existing on reservations include missing and murdered native women, inadequate schooling, and lack of decent healthcare and loss of native cultures. The First Nations focused their attention trying to get government support for their celebration of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which defined native land holdings and set the precedent for conducting treaties. The same ideas and visions that Tecumseh was fighting for in the war of 1812 has still not been achieved 200 years later. As writer David McLaren states:

We seem to want to forget Tecumseh and his contribution to the formulation of Canada, or at least downplay it. Maybe that's because we know, in our hearts, he did not fight for our sake. Maybe it's because, national conscience, we recall the push for surrenders of a different kind- four land this time. And maybe it's because we recall that only a decade or so after the War, we began building a gulag of residential schools- one of the first in Mount Elgin, not far from where Tecumseh fell.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> David McLaren & Dan Smoke, "Tecumseh is being ignored in Canada's new 1812 propaganda even though he helped make the Settler's dream possible" Accessed Nov. 2016  
<https://flexosaurus.wordpress.com/2012/07/17/tecumseh-is-being-ignored-in-canada-new-1812propaganda-even-though-he-helped-make-the-settlers-dream-possible>.

## **Conclusion:**

The War of 1812 created a legacy and memory in both the United States and Canada in which both claimed to have won the war. The Canadian memory of the war was that the diverse population of British North America came together to fight off the American Invasion. Narratives and celebrations of the war focused on Isaac Brock, Laura Secord, Charles De Salaberry, and Tecumseh, and their sacrifice and defense of Canada. From these early narratives, Tecumseh was portrayed as a Canadian hero who died to protect Canada. These writers gave credit to Tecumseh and his warriors for helping save Canada, though they ignored the reasons why the Native Americans were fighting on the side of the British. By the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Tecumseh was the only Native leader written about and, in most cases, the main focus was on his relationship with Brock. British and Canadian writers began to neglect the large role played by the native allies in winning the war, instead gave credit to the white settler militia. This neglect of First Nations in the literature on 1812 coincided with the removal of First Nations onto reservations.. The Centennial of the War of 1812 was a minor celebration that focused largely on Brock and key battles like Lundy's Lane and Queenston Heights.

The Bicentennial of the War of 1812 was a far larger celebration, but also much more controversial. The Harper government placed the War of 1812 as one of the great foundational moments in the creation of the Canadian nation. There is little doubt that the government sought to push its own, well-defined narrative of the war. The narrative was designed to create a public memory that would send a message of historical unity between all the diverse groups or communities in Canada, even if this was not actually the case either in the past or present.<sup>299</sup> The

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<sup>299</sup> Government of Canada, "Did you know: Some interesting facts about the war of 1812", Accessed Jul, 2016. <http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1442344384984/1442924691345>



bicentennial accordingly made an attempt to be inclusive of many of the major groups then living in Canada. The choice of the “four heroes” or “Faces” of the war illustrated that effort. The message of Canadian unity was important to the government because the people of Canada chronically see themselves divided by their culture and languages. This is especially true between the English- and French-Canadians, but also of the First Nations who have always been let down by the Canadian government. The Harper government also celebrated the bicentennial with a nationalistic narrative of military prowess and national unity. This narrative could be seen on bicentennial websites and in debates in Parliament. In the Parliamentary session of October 25, 2011, the Hon. Carolyn Stewart Olsen spoke of the importance of the war to Canadian identity:

Canada's victory in the War of 1812 helped decide who we are today, what side of the border we live on, and which flag we honor. In forgetting our old fights and conflicts, Canadians came together in a common cause. The peoples in Canada — English, Scottish, Irish settlers, French, Acadians and many diverse First Nations — all came together to fight for our country. Rudyard Kipling once said ‘If history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten.’<sup>300</sup>

The Harper government thus sought to shape the War of 1812 Bicentennial as an all-out celebration Canadian military prowess. The bicentennial became a centerpiece of their efforts to change the focus of Canada’s history from social to military history. The bicentennial would glamorize Canadian victories and sacrifices made in the War of 1812. The bicentennial focused on commemoration of key battles like Queenston, Moraviantown, Chateauguay, and Beaver Dams in which the Canadians were the victors. The government used the war to try and get public support for the Canadian intervention in Afghanistan by creating a new national myth of the Canadian nation being borne of the conflict of 1812.<sup>301</sup> During a speech on September 2012,

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<sup>300</sup> Parliament of Canada, “Debates of the Senate Oct. 25, 2011: War of 1812” Accessed Jul. 2016. [http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/sen/chamber/411/debates/022db\\_2011-10-25-e.htm#8](http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/sen/chamber/411/debates/022db_2011-10-25-e.htm#8)

<sup>301</sup> Frenette, 55

Prime Minister Harper connected the French- Canadian 22e Regiment that fought in Afghanistan to its first taste of combat in the War of 1812 Battle of Chateauguay.<sup>302</sup>

The bicentennial met with a multitude of complaints. One criticism was that the war of 1812 had been a minor conflict that caused more damage and harm than good, and was therefore hardly a cause for celebration. Another complaint was that the cost of celebrating the bicentennial could have been used for more important historical milestones, like the Charter of Rights and Freedoms or Women's Suffrage. Critics also complained that the government used the purse strings to manipulate Canadian history to suit its conservative ideology in an effort to redesign Canadian self-image as that of a martial nation rather than one shaped by its traditional peace-keeping role. The opposition New Democratic Party accused the government of "remaking the Museum of civilization in their image," and pointed to the Bicentennial as evidence of a "conservative bias for celebrating military exploits over, say, exploring social history."<sup>303</sup> Finally, there was criticism of the choice of Tecumseh as one of the four heroes in the defense of Canada. Due to the large amounts of criticisms, the public indifference to the War of 1812, and the refusal of the First Nations to participate it can be argued that the Harper government failed in its Bicentennial Commemoration of the War of 1812.

In the centuries after the wars end in 1815, British and Canadian writers have been trying to co-opt Tecumseh as a Canadian hero. Tecumseh has been portrayed as a great military leader and orator. Writers like Coffin, Longmore and Richardson described Tecumseh and his warriors as fighting better than the British especially at the Battle of Moraviantown in 1813. Canadian writers ignored the fact that Tecumseh was neither Canadian nor had any loyalty to the Crown.

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<sup>302</sup> Sjolander, 158

<sup>303</sup> John Geddes, "How Stephen Harper is rewriting History" *Macleans*. Accessed Jul. 2016 [www.macleans.ca/news/Canada/written-by-the-victors/](http://www.macleans.ca/news/Canada/written-by-the-victors/).

Though his reason for fighting was to protect the lands of his people, Tecumseh's death in 1812 propelled him to the status of mythic hero in Canadian history and a martyr who helped lead the way for the creation of Canada.

Yet, though writers included Tecumseh as a Canadian hero, they still applied to him the same negative 19<sup>th</sup> century stereotypes imposed on all Native warriors. Tecumseh was written as either a bloodthirsty avenger or the noble savage. Canadians simply had a hard time co-opting Tecumseh as a Canadian hero because his Indianness made him stand out from other figures from the war of 1812. Figures like Salaberry and Secord were far easier to turn into Canadian heroes because they were not Native American or First Nation.

During the bicentennial, the Harper government continued the long tradition of co-opting Tecumseh into the Canadian history of the war. In this case, the government sought to use Tecumseh to make the Bicentennial seem inclusive of the diverse people living in Canada. The problem was, first of all, that the government attempted to turn Tecumseh into a Canadian hero who fought to save Canada when in actuality he was either Canadian or fighting to defend the country. Tecumseh was not from one of the tribes living in Canada then or now, but a Shawnee from the Ohio Territory. Despite the claim of many early histories of the war have stated that Tecumseh was a loyal fighter for the king, Tecumseh was allied with, but had no loyalty to, the British. Instead, he was fighting to try to build the Indian Confederacy that would save the land of his people.

The focus on Tecumseh in the commemorations also inadvertently highlighted the many difficult issues facing First Nations in Canada since 1812. The celebration of Tecumseh's sacrifice allows a narrative that evades the subsequent history of the systematic removal, dispossession, and cultural destruction of the First Nations in Canada in the years after his death.

This tragic mistreatment started with forcible re-settlement on reservations and forced treaties that gave away large tracts of land that would create the modern nation of Canada. This led to the Indian Act of 1867 that gave government control over the Indians living on the reserves.

The Bicentennial of the War of 1812 could have been a teachable moment if the inclusion of Tecumseh had been used to illustrate both the failure of his immediate hopes for an independent Indian state and the even more tragic history of the Canadian First Nations in the next two centuries. Unfortunately, the image of Tecumseh was morphed instead into the very traditional representation of a Canadian war hero who had fought heroically to save Canada when in reality he was fighting to prevent the destruction of native independence and their removal from their ancestral lands. The reason why Tecumseh was the least celebrated of the four heroes of 1812 is that to talk about Tecumseh would bring up questions of the Canadian government's treatment of its first Nations since 1812 to the present, and especially the Harper government which ignored the calls for investigation for the missing indigenous women and the poor condition on the reservations. Instead, Tecumseh's memory remained unchanged for the centennial to the Bicentennial the War of 1812, neglecting his own motive for fighting against the Americans on the side of the British. The bicentennial could have discussed at length Tecumseh's pan-Indian confederacy and what that could have entailed for those native nations living in the United States and Canada. But to talk about that the government would have also had to talk about how they neglected and betrayed their native allies at the peace talks in Ghent and how that was the beginning of the end of the Native Nations way of life in the United States and in Canada. That is the history that is a bitter pill to swallow.

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