**Establishing the New Nation – Addressing Domestic Conflicts –**

**Map, Video Support and Readings – Little Turtle and Tecumseh**

**Map of Native American lands**



**Little Turtle and the Western Confederacy v. Mad Anthony Wayne – The Northwest Indian War**

**Battle of fallen Timber, the Treaty of Greenville**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpgeiK89h9k>

**Tecumseh (and his brother The Prophet) and the Last Great Indian Confederacy v. William Henry Harrison**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfimBilwZOo>

**Tecumseh – Battle of Fallen Timbers**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiFhoL0qp3I>

**Elegy to Tecumseh – his legacy**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikmpqtYuv28>

**Tecumseh’s Curse**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCGHwBf_b0Q>

**Readings**

"Little Turtle", *Ohio History Central*, October 16, 2006, <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=461>

*"*Tecumseh", *Ohio History Central*, October 16, 2006, <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=461>

[](http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/File:OHS_AL02985.jpg)**Little Turtle**

Little Turtle, also known by his Native American name Michikinikwa, was a war leader of the Miami Indians. He was born around 1752, twenty miles northwest of modern-day Fort Wayne, Indiana. Aside from his participation with and support of the British in the American Revolution, few definite facts are known regarding Little Turtle’s early life.

With the Treaty of Paris (1783), England gave up all claims to the Ohio Country. Settlers rapidly came across the Appalachian Mountains to the Northwest Territory. Little Turtle played a leading role in the efforts of the American Indian confederation that sought to halt the westward expansion of these settlers. The confederation began raiding U.S. settlements.

In 1790 General Josiah Harmar led 1,400 soldiers into Miami and Shawnee lands, by order of President George Washington, in response to these raids. In October, Little Turtle and his followers, including the future Shawnee chief Tecumseh, fought and defeated Harmar’s force in the battle that became known as Harmar's Defeat.

In 1791, General Arthur St. Clair led two thousand U. S. soldiers against the American Indians in western Ohio. Once again, Little Turtle led the Native Americans to victory at a battle known as St. Clair's Defeat. This was one of the worst defeats ever sustained by the American military.

During 1794, Little Turtle led attacks against supply trains belonging to the United States army. These trains were trying to supply the numerous forts that General Anthony Wayne had ordered built. These forts were to serve as staging areas for future campaigns against the Native Americans living in western Ohio. Little Turtle attempted to seize Fort Recovery in 1794, but was unsuccessful. Following this defeat, the American Indian confederation fractured. Little Turtle, realizing the futility of the confederation’s continued military resistance, encouraged his followers to negotiate with the U.S. He understood that the people of the United States far outnumbered the Native Americans and had many more weapons. Other American Indian war leaders, such as Shawnee war chief Blue Jacket, refused to listen, and insisted that General Wayne's approaching army must be fought. Shortly after rejecting Little Turtle's call for peace, the American Indians led by Blue Jacket lost the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794.

In 1795, Native Americans living in western Ohio sent representatives to Fort Greeneville where they met in council with the Americans. After lengthy discussion, they signed the Treaty of Greenville. The Americans Indians present, including Little Turtle, agreed to give all but the northwestern corner of modern-day Ohio to the United States.

Little Turtle refused to take up arms against the United States ever again. He became a celebrity among the people of the United States. He visited many eastern cities and even met George Washington in 1797. He urged his fellow American Indians to keep the peace and also encouraged them to give up consumption of alcohol. During the early 1800s, he played an important role in preventing the Miami Indians from joining Tecumseh's confederation. He died on July 14, 1812, in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

#### [OHS AL00198.jpg](http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/File:OHS_AL00198.jpg)**Tecumseh**

Tecumseh was born in 1768 in Ohio. His father was a minor Shawnee war chief. His mother Methotaske was also Shawnee. Tecumseh came of age during the height of the French and Indian War and would become a warrior like his father. As a teenager he joined the American Indian Confederacy under the leadership of Mohawk Chief Joseph Brant. Brant encouraged tribes to share ownership of their territory and pool their resources and manpower to defend that territory against encroaching settlers. Tecumseh led a group of raiders in these efforts, attacking American boats trying to make their way down the Ohio River. These raids were extremely successful. In 1791 at the Battle of the Wabash, Tecumseh fought under Blue Jacket and Little Turtle and the American Indian Confederacy which was victorious, slaying 952 of the 1,000 American soldiers. The American commander was forced to resign. In 1794 Tecumseh also fought in the Battle of Fallen Timbers. This decisive conflict against General Anthony Wayne and his American forces ended in a brutal defeat for the American Indian Confederacy. A small group of about 250 refused to accept the Treaty of Greenville that Natives led by Little Turtle signed the Americans; the treaty gave up Native claims to lands in southern and eastern Ohio and to key spots of portage across river and other fort locations in the Northwest Territory, though retaining the right to hunt there.

This group of 250 was led by Tecumseh to what would eventually become Prophetstown (also known as Tippecanoe). There Tecumseh and brother Tenskwatawa, known as The Prophet, began to form a new Indian alliance. They began recruiting a large multi-tribal community of followers under a message of resistance to settlers, the American government, and assimilation.

Tecumseh’s brother, the Prophet, Tenskwatawa, believed that the American Indians had to end their reliance on American goods, such as alcohol, iron cookware, and guns. The Indians had angered the Master of Life by becoming dependent on these items. If the American Indians forsook them, the Master of Life would reward his followers by driving the Americans from their land.

While the Prophet led by his spirituality, Tecumseh developed into a fiery speaker. Tecumseh believed that the land did not belong to a single tribe. In reality, no one owned the land except for the Master of Life, the Shawnees' principal god. Tecumseh believed that the only way that American Indians could transfer land to the Americans was if every tribe agreed to it. Tecumseh wanted to force the Americans to deal with all of the tribes in unison. Separately, the individual tribes did not have much power. Together, Tecumseh hoped, they would be a major deterrent to white expansion.

Tecumseh explained his views in a letter to William Henry Harrison in 1810:

. . .the only way to stop this evil [white settlement of the Indians' land], is for all the red men to unite in claiming a common and equal right in the land as it was at first, and should be now - for it never was divided, but belongs to all. . . .Sell a country! Why not sell the air, the clouds and the great sea, as well as the earth? Did not the Great Spirit [Master of Life] make them all for the use of his children?

Tecumseh used his brother's influence to convince the American Indians to put aside their traditional differences and unite together against the whites. Tecumseh had the most success in Ohio, Kentucky, and the Indiana Territory, areas that whites had been attempting to settle since before the French and Indian War. He also visited many tribes west of the Appalachian Mountains and east of the Mississippi River seeking additional support for his confederation. Tecumseh was a firm believer that more people translated into more power. While most tribes listened to Tecumseh's proposal, many rejected his ideas. This was especially true of Indians in modern-day Tennessee, Georgia, and Mississippi. Many of the Prophet's followers embraced white products and customs. They did not want to lose access to these goods.

Unfortunately for the American Indians in the region, Tecumseh's Confederacy failed. Many American Indians refused to relinquish their white ways and end their friendships with the Americans. The American settlers also greatly outnumbered the American Indians and had greater access to firearms and ammunition. As Tecumseh's followers began to converge at Prophetstown, he also could not provide them with adequate food and shelter because to acquire white goods, American Indians engaged in the fur trade with the Americans and this trade had greatly diminished the animal population in Ohio, Kentucky, and the Indiana Territory. The hunting was simply no longer good enough to provide the Indians with enough to eat.

Meanwhile, William Henry Harrison, governor of Indiana Territory was negotiating treaties and utilizing American troops to put pressure on those tribes still in Indiana and especially those allied with Prophetstown. In 1809 Harrison, signed the Treaty of Fort Wayne which allotted him a massive amount of American Indian territory thus increasing Tecumseh’s efforts and amplifying his message.

Tecumseh was away on a recruitment journey when Harrison launched a sneak attack on Prophetstown, which is now known as the Battle of Tippecanoe. The American forces cleared the encampment and then burned it to the ground. It was a severe blow to the confederacy and a harbinger of war to come.

On June 1, 1812 under the advisement of President Madison, Congress declared war on Great Britain. In the Northwest Territory, American Indian tribes found themselves pulled in two separate directions – side with the British or with the Americans. Tecumseh and his confederacy sided with the British.

The British had very few men in Canada. If a major American force was to attack Canada via Detroit the Americans could easily defeat the Canadian militia and few Regular Army men stationed there. To the British, an alliance with the Indians was a huge benefit.

Tecumseh naturally assumed leadership of the Indians that flocked to the British banner. At the outset of the war, about six hundred Indians sided with the British. The Americans, grossly overestimated the number of British Indians, estimated that up to ten thousand Indians were fighting against them.

Tecumseh’s first major role in the war occurred when he ambushed a force that Hull had sent out from Fort Detroit to guard a convoy of supplies. In this ambush, Tecumseh captured the dispatches and personal letters of the commander of Fort Detroit, which was extremely important because with the dispatches, the British commander decided to attack Detroit rather than allow a build-up of American forces. The British learned the conditions of the troops in the city and that Hull was worried about attacking Canada without receiving additional supplies. Believing they could take Detroit though outnumbered, the British called on Tecumseh to assemble the Indians. Tecumseh’s Indians, British Regulars, and militia dressed in cast-off regular’s uniforms, marched toward Detroit. Tecumseh, using a ruse to confuse Hull, marched his Indians in plain sight of Detroit, then into the woods circling through the woods, Tecumseh therefore appeared twice back into view of the city with the same Indians. The American commander, extremely worried about the torture that would befall anyone captured by the Indians, surrendered Detroit without shots being fired. However, the Americans had little to worry about since Tecumseh was in charge of the Indians. Tecumseh had long ago refused to participate in the torturing of prisoners and would not tolerate any Indians that did.

After the Americans were again defeated at the River Raisin, the Americans fell back to the Maumee River and built Fort Meigs. The British and Tecumseh’s Indians put this fort under siege. The Indians were never very good at laying siege and were unhappy the tight control of the Indians by the British. Many of the Indians wanted to go home, they were not about to abandon Tecumseh. When Tecumseh entered Ohio he had with him about 1,500 Indians, while the British had about 1,000 soldiers, almost evenly split between regulars and militia. At the Battle of Fort Meigs, Tecumseh was critical in preventing reinforcement troops from reaching the Americans at the fort. The Americans lost an estimated 600 men either killed or captured. After the battle, when Indians began to massacre the prisoners, Tecumseh, in full view of the British who was watching on with indifference, stopped the massacre. Two months later, tired of the siege, Tecumseh and his Indian troops left the siege.

Tecumseh and his warriors regathered with the British at Fort Malden in Ontario at the end of the summer. Fort Malden was at the end of a very long supply line, one that could be easily interrupted by the Americans if they were to gain control of Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, or the St. Lawrence Seaway. This was a poor position for the British once Oliver Hazard Perry had won the battle of Lake Erie and the Americans controlled the Lake

The commander of the British troops decided they should retreat to Niagara, where the British supply lines were strong. This would draw Americans away from resupply by the lake instead. However as the Americans perused fiercely, Tecumseh convinced him he needed to take a stand before Niagara, but the British commander could not decide where. He changed his mind three times and by the time he finally chose the spot on the Thames River, his men were confused, dispirited, and hungry. The British line broke quickly and fled, leaving Tecumseh outnumbered 3000 to 500. He did not retreat but instead led his men in a charge. Tecumseh was killed. The American Indians lost heart and scattered after Tecumseh died on the battlefield. American soldiers scalped Tecumseh’s body, horrifying American commanding officer William henry Harrison. No one knows where his body is buried.

The American army won a total victory. As soon as the American troops advanced, the British soldiers fled or surrendered. The identity of the person who killed Tecumseh is still vigorously debated.

The Battle of the Thames was an important land battle of the War of 1812 in the American Northwest. Since the early 1800s, Tecumseh had sought to form a confederacy of American Indian tribes to stop Anglo-Americans from seizing American Indian land. Tecumseh's death marked the end of Tecumseh's Confederacy. Over the next three decades, Native Americans in the old Northwest were made to sign treaties, forsaking claims to the land in this region.