

After the Battle of Tippecanoe different forces of Indians began to rise up against the whites. They attacked in small groups, seeking revenge, instead of banding together as a single big force. The panic aroused by their attacks united the Americans against all the Indians. The white settlers were convinced that the British and Tecumseh were working together, directing these attacks. Of course Tecumseh wanted to delay the approaching war. He needed time to muster his forces and unite the Indians.

But events moved too fast. Feelings flamed against both English and Indians. An American army under Hull began to march north to Detroit and Governor Harrison prepared for war.

On June 18, 1812 the United States went to war against Great Britain. Both the British and the Americans went to the Indians to get their help. In general the older chiefs supported the Americans. But Tecumseh defied them. Many Indians followed him and supported the British. All over the country Indians rose up against the Americans. The Americans finally defeated the Indians, but only after costly months of hostilities all the way from St. Louis to the Creek country.

Tecumseh had gone to Canada and allied himself with the British. He had an army of Indians numbering between 1000 and 3000 men. Tecumseh was good at strategy and battle plans. His smooth strategy made Hull look silly. Tecumseh and his forces were able to take Fort Detroit. In the fall of 1812 he went south again to see the Creeks. Soon after he returned to the north, part of the Creek Confederacy began a costly war with the American which raged across the South.

Back in Canada in April, 1813, Tecumseh found he had to work with Colonel Henry Procter, a small-minded British officer who did not like Indians. Procter was a poor soldier and weak in making decisions. While he hesitating trying to decide what to do, the Americans gained strength. Gradually the Indians lost faith in Procter. In September Commodore Perry swept the British from Lake Erie and cut off supplies for Procter's army, including Tecumseh's men. Procter began to withdraw from the area. Tecumseh and his Indian army had to follow. Tecumseh became very depressed. He felt that the end was near. On the night of October 4, Tecumseh had a premonition of death. He said he knew they would soon enter an engagement from which he would not return.

The end for Tecumseh came at the Battle of the Thames River, October 5, 1813. Although Procter technically was in command, Tecumseh was the actual leader of both the Indian and British forces and he devised the strategy of battle. The American force was commanded by Harrison, and they outnumbered the Indians and British almost 2 to 1. The battle was bloody and long-drawn out. Finally Procter fled from the battlefield and his troops were cut to pieces. Tecumseh's Indians continued to fight. Late in the day, however he disappeared and was never seen again.

The following day the Americans hunted in vain for his body. Several of his followers said later they carried it away in the darkness and buried it secretly. Some whites wondered for years whether Tecumseh was still alive. This battle on the Thames River scattered the Indians and ended further serious resistance to white settlement in the Northwest Territory.

Tecumseh's dream disappeared with his body. No new Indian leader appeared to unite the tribes. In a few years these Indian groups had to leave the Northwest Territory and settle on reservations west of the Mississippi. Some of these groups had to move again and again as their lands were desired by whites. Today descendants of Tecumseh live near Little Axe in the state of Oklahoma. They can take pride in knowing that one of their people has been recognized as perhaps the greatest of all American Indian leaders. Most white historians consider Tecumseh a majestic and tragic figure. He was scrupulously honest and fair, and he spent most of his life working to advance the cause of the Indian people.