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† Famous American Indians †

TECUMSEH

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Tecumseh was one of three brothers born on the same day and was regarded even in babyhood with uncommon interest. Being very superstitious, the Indians believed that the three little boys would become extraordinary men. Two of them, Tecumseh and Laulewasehaw, fulfilled their expectations.

Tecumseh's childhood was far from being happy. He learned the wild excitement which accompanies war. He was called upon to take part in the rejoicing that followed an Indian victory, again to join in the wailing of the women when the dead warriors were brought from the battlefield. His experiences of war were not limited to celebrating and mourning; he learned that when the braves were on the warpath he and all other children should stay near the village, as the enemy did not spare them when victorious.

In 1774 in a war with the Virginians Tecumseh's father was killed. The eldest son, Cheeseecan, was then the head of the family. He provided the family with food and clothing. Tecumseh was his favorite and he strove to teach him all that was needed to make him a brave warrior and a good man.

During the Revolutionary war, while Tecumseh was in his early boyhood, the Indians took part with the British. They had a bitter hatred for the colonists who had taken their lands and so fought against them. In 1780 Gen. Clark came with an army and was fighting his way to the west. They burned houses, cut down corn and blew up the forts. Indians ran to the woods and swamps to hide. Women and children were made prisoners. Tecumseh and his brother were among those who escaped.

In 1786 he and his brothers went out with a band of warriors to drive back Capt. Logan. He had never imagined anything so terrifying until he faced a cavalry charge. His only thought was to save himself, so he threw down his gun and ran. After recovering from his fright he felt ashamed of his conduct. He was eager for another opportunity to test his courage. Soon after he was among a party of Indians who attacked some flatboats on the Ohio river. The boats were taken and all the men killed but one, who was made a prisoner. This was made an important occasion in Tecumseh's life. He acted with such bravery that the old warriors were astonished.

The memory was not pleasant to Tecumseh. It was followed by the burning of the one prisoner. Burning prisoners was not rare among the Shawnees.

Tecumseh grew sick with horror at the sight. He was not terrified for himself, but for another, and he was not ashamed of his feelings.

Boy as he was, he stood before the Indians and told them what he thought of their cruelty. He spoke with such power that he made all who heard him feel as he did about it. They all agreed never again to take part in so inhuman a practice.

On this night Tecumseh proved his valor; he showed mercy, he influenced warriors by his words. He regained his self-respect and conquered fear.

Soon he started with his brother Cheeseecan on a journey across Indiana and Illinois. The brothers were accompanied by a band of Kickapoo Indians.

The party tramped through the country, courting hardships and adventures, getting acquainted with the wilderness, hunting buffalo, visiting with friendly tribes, learning languages and breaking bread with strangers. When they found tribes at war they joined one side and it was in one of these that Cheeseecan was slain. Tecumseh became a leader.

After an absence of about three years Tecumseh returned to Ohio. His friends and neighbors were greatly excited over a victory they had just won over the United States troops under General Harmer.

The Indians suffered greatly because of the war they carried on against the whites. They were ready in 1792 to accept the peace terms offered by the government. They promised to give up all prisoners, to protect travelers and traders, and to recognize no "father" but the President. In return the government pledged itself to help the Indians in every way.

Tecumseh would not attend the council. He knew they needed peace, but was unwilling to pay the price the white man asked.

Tecumseh did what he could to unite his people and prepare them for the next attempt of the "pale-faces" to take their lands. His followers made him their chief.

The new chief was not an unworthy successor to the great Pontiac. Tecumseh once said, "My tribe is nothing to me; my race is everything." Able and brave men, whether red or white, he respected and admired. He was honest in his dealings with friend or enemy.

Treaties were made by Gov. Harrison by which some of the tribe was to go to Indian Territory lands taken by the government. The Indian spirit was aroused in Tecumseh and his brother, Laulewasehaw. Laulewasehaw said that "since no tribe or chief owned the lands no single chief or tribe could

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