

Fox, a member of Adoniram Lodge and an officer in the local Amherstburg Militia, told his son stories of the War of 1812. Captain Fox recalled that Tecumseh “frequently met with the Brethren and sat in old Adoniram Lodge, and that the old chief had a great deal of reverence for Masonic work.”

Tecumseh’s pipe tomahawk survives in excellent condition in the collection of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington. On one side an engraved inscription reads “Presented to Chief Tecumseh by Colonel Procter, 41st Regiment, 1812.” On the other side, are engraved 4 significant Masonic symbols, which you will no doubt recognize. They include, the dove - the messenger, the sun - the glory of the Lord, the moon - to rule the night, and the 7 stars that gleam in the Heavens. In fact many of the pipe tomahawks surviving in museum collections today bear these same 4 Masonic engravings.

1812 Campaign:

On June 18, 1812, President Madison of the United States signed the declaration of war against His Britannic Majesty George III and the British Empire. The regular forces of the British Army and Navy were placed on alert, while the local Upper Canadian Militia Regiments were mobilized for action. Officers of the Indian Department recruited and assembled warriors.

Given the small number of regular British soldiers in Upper Canada, the contribution of the Militia and Indian Department would prove to be essential. While most accounts talk about the Americans fighting the British, it is important to keep in mind that when one reads “the British” it actually means the regular British army, local forces of the Canadian Militia and the warriors of the Indian Department. As we have seen, a large proportion of all of these men were Masons.

It is not possible to cover all the military actions of the War in this paper, so we will consider only those with specific Masonic connections.

Detroit:

The first invasion of Upper Canada occurred on the Detroit, near modern day Windsor. The American General Hull believed that the conquest of this part of Upper Canada would be a “mere matter of marching.” Accordingly, Hull crossed the Detroit River on July 12 into Canada, fully expecting that the local population would either surrender or join with the American Army. He also planned to capture Fort Malden from the British.

At Adoniram Lodge in Amherstburg, a meeting was being held just as Hull’s forces were crossing over into Canada. Captain Fox, a member of the Lodge and an officer in the local Amherstburg Militia, was being Passed to the Second Degree, when the news of the invasion was delivered by a Brother to the Tyler. Captain Fox later recalled.

“The Master finished up in less than 5 minutes and the 20 Brethren in the room cleared out, the Lodge being called off.”