

Isaac Ferriss UE in War of 1812, by Ruth Nicholson, Hamilton Branch

My 3rd great-grandfather Isaac Ferriss UE served in 3 battles during the War of 1812-14. He served at the Battle of Detroit, the Battle of the Maumee and the Battle of Raisin River - all in the Michigan and Ohio areas. His father, Joseph Ferriss UEL is my 4th great-grandfather and the United Empire Loyalist who left his life behind in the Pennsylvania area to become a first refugee, due to the American Revolutionary War, in the New Settlement (N. shore Lake Erie). He was granted Lot 22, second concession Colchester, New Settlement in 1792.

Joseph's son, Isaac was in the militia and he was given an MGS (Military General Service) medal for his service at the Battle of Detroit. August 16, 1812. The War Office awarded medals for three actions only: Battle of Detroit, Battle of Chateauguay and Battle at Chrysler's Farm in 1848. The MGS Medal was authorized by General Order June 1, 1847 and was issued in 1848, 32 years after the event, to each surviving officer and soldier present in any battle commemorated.



Tecumseh Woodcarving at Windsor
Woodcarvers' Museum

On the Day of the American Proclamation of War June 19, 1812 the great Shawnee Chief, Tecumseh offered his services to Colonel Matthew Elliott, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, hoping to receive justice from the Americans who had defeated the Shawnees at Tippecanoe under General William Harrison (Nov 8, 1811). Tippecanoe was the homeland of Tecumseh and his brother the Prophet, who was in charge, while Tecumseh was out and about trying to form a Western Indian Confederacy. Tecumseh and about 25 Menominee Indians, 46 Mohawk and the majority were Wyandottes to make a total of 600 Natives at the Battle of Detroit. These Natives, along with 300 regulars and 400 militia achieved the bloodless surrender of Detroit.

Isaac Ferris was in the 1st Essex Militia, under Col. Matthew Elliott who took part in the Battle of Detroit. It is written in the local newspaper, The Amherstburg Echo, in 1934 that Isaac was one of two young 17 year old men who volunteered to swim across the Detroit River and spy on Fort Detroit and General William Hull.

I will attach the wonderful article and a picture of an MGS medal (that was at a recent Amherstburg Ontario Genealogical Society meeting). This medal is from the Battle of Chrysler's Farm but it is identical to the one that Isaac Ferriss UE would have received save for the bar that would have said Battle of Detroit and his name would have been inscribed around the edge.

My family from Harrow, Amherstburg and Waterdown, Ontario and Lethbridge, Alberta are very proud of their heritage to the United Empire Loyalists and the War of 1812.

ECHO NEWS MORGUE

Isaac Ferriss, Pioneer & Soldier

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→ **THERE'S A WEALTH** of historical stories around Essex County if they can only be brought to light. Here's one that turned up by mere accident at a farewell dinner given for Thomas H. Ferriss one day last week at the home of his son, F. H. Ferriss, Harrow business man. A number of old friends gathered around the festive board, including Captain C. H. Bassett and Thomas L. Wright. During the reminiscences that flowed, Mr. Wright mentioned the fact that Mr. Ferriss' father, Isaac Ferriss, of blessed memory, was a very strong and brave man, who feared neither man nor beast. One time he was hunting in the then wilds of Colchester South with Mr. Wright's father, when a bear came down a tree where it had been resting in a crotch of a limb, and made for them with great ferocity, but Mr. Ferriss calmly seized his axe and when the bear neared him, he brought his axe down on its head, almost severing it and putting bruin out of business. Mr. Ferriss was a soldier during the war of 1812, a member of the troop at Fort Malden commanded by General Sir Isaac Brock. One night General Brock told his soldiers that there were some spies on Bois Blanc and asked for volunteers to swim the river in the dark and surround them. Mr. Ferriss along with one other volunteered to undertake the task and did it so well at the risk of their lives by drowning and by rifle fire, that they both received beautifully engraved medals from Queen Victoria when she came to the throne. His medal is still a treasured possession of the Ferriss family at Harrow.—A.M.W.