



The legacy of Tecumseh and Brock

Tecumseh & Brock: The War of 1812

By James Laxer

As someone whose family is connected to the Lincoln & Welland Militia, whose coat of arms proudly bears Sir Isaac Brock's insignia, and who is a proud graduate of Brock University, I read with interest the book Brock & Tecumseh.

I had high expectations for this book which makes much of the respect that these two great leaders had for each other, but their brief collaboration is thin material for a full length book.

General Brock and Tecumseh joined to defeat the Americans at seminal battles that formed the nation we now call Canada.

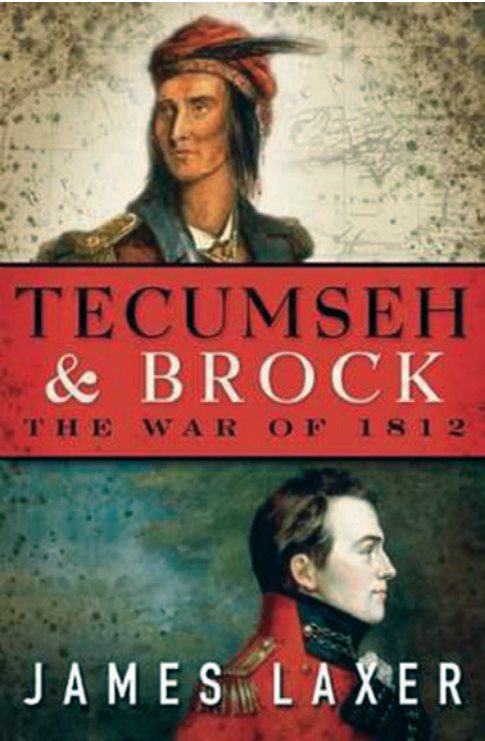
What is interesting is that both these men were brave warriors, who led their troops from the front.

Both were superb tacticians on the battlefield, and Brock was a great strategic leader among weak British leadership.

Tecumseh had his own problems among native leaders in trying to build a joint defense to prevent American westward expansion and was hampered by natives who were bought off, bribed, attacked, intermarried, or had tribal allegiances and grievances that prevented a joint defense against American ambitions to own the North American continent.

Even the great Thomas Jefferson remarked that taking Canada from the British was merely a matter of marching so weak were the allegiances among British settlers, native tribes, and marooned French and British governors who longed for Europe and felt they were defending the indefensible.

When Brock arrived that all changed as he found a kindred spirit in Tecumseh.



They both had other plans, and were truly visionaries who saw a grand alliance to serve their mutual interests.

Brock presented himself formally in full regalia to Tecumseh as a matter of respect, and Tecumseh reciprocated by dressing himself in full ceremonial dress; they exchanged gifts and ideas, and jointly planned their battles using the strengths of the respective armies against the Americans.

Brock also strengthened the British presence on the Great Lakes, punished deserters, armed the native people, and went before legislature to help strengthen the government for what was to come.

Tecumseh traveled all over the southwest

trying to build alliances among competing tribes and tried to convince factions that the westward invasion of America required action. His war began long before Brock arrived.

Formerly, Tecumseh had little regard for the British fighting man, but when he met Isaac Brock for the first time, he recognized a fellow warrior.

The tall, robust Isaac Brock was no effete infantryman but a true leader like himself, and after one midnight meeting was said to have remarked, "Now they have brought me a man!"

Although they planned together and cooperated, what is generally revealing is that the two warriors only fought together once, but scored an enormous victory in the Battle of Detroit which showed a keen understanding of psychology in battle.

Heavily outnumbered in the siege of Fort Detroit and aware of the fear that the Americans had of Indians, Brock had Tecumseh parade his few hundred men before the fort and then slip back and reveal themselves anew noisily, while British infantrymen assembled for a formal battle and began the siege.

Brock sent a note to the American Brigadier-General William Hull commander letting it be known that he wasn't sure if he could control his native allies and through this deception, they intimidated the Americans into surrendering the fort.

Casualties were seven wounded and only two killed. The War of 1812 definitely built the nation we call Canada through two men who did not think of themselves as Canadian, but it also built a sense of national purpose for America, which continued its westward expansion across the continent despite losing to the British.

The humiliating defeats of the Americans

in a far-flung colony did not cost the British who were fighting Napoleon in Europe in a much more central war, and they sold out the natives at the Treaty of Ghent, securing their rights, and leaving the great dream of a native nation to die with the great Shawnee chief Tecumseh.

An argument can be made and is hinted at in the book that had Brock and Tecumseh survived the war, a wholly different Canada would have emerged, and a different future for native peoples.

However, the book does not deliver on this promise, and while Laxer displays sympathy for native history, he does not pursue this interesting line.

When Brock was killed by an American sniper at Queenston Heights, his death was reported by newspaper's as a "public calamity", he was knighted as a token of esteemed and recognition, other British and local leaders rallied to revenge the General.

Tecumseh's death had much greater consequences for the native confederacy as there was no succession among the warring tribes, and without the towering figure of this warrior, cooperation among tribes disintegrated, and the Americans continued their genocide across the continent.

The title of this book shows a linkage between two great men who can be said to have forged Canada in the crucible of war, they died on what is now Canadian soil, but they dreamed different dreams.

They held each other personally in high regard, both died in their forties in battle, and neither knew

The enormous legacy they left behind. Tecumseh & Brock: The War of 1812 by James Laxer can be found at the Prince George Public Library.

— Reviewed by Chief Librarian Allan Wilson.

The last great frontier



Relativity

TODD WHITCOMBE

One of the more interesting books that I read over the Christmas break is called Incognito: The secret lives of the brain by David Eagleman.

And yes, the lives in the title is plural because it is Dr. Eagleman's contention that we are more than we seem to be.

Indeed, if I can sum up his book in a single thesis statement (which is highly unfair as it is a complex and interesting book) it would be that our consciousness is an observer watching the conflicting battles between the myriad of actors operating within our sub-consciousness.

Dr. Eagleman brings his considerable knowledge of neuroscience and psychology to bear on the question of what constitutes our inner self.

What is thought? And why do we bother with it?

His book would have been even better if he could have actually provided an answer to those questions. Unfortunately, and as he rightly points out, we are still too early in the game to fully understand why we understand and think and feel and do all of the other things that are minds and brains seem to make happen.

But early on in the book, he does make the case that dethroning past views of the mind and brain with a more modern synthesis is not a bad thing.

Indeed, science has on many occasions forced a major re-think of our world view and, in so doing, advanced our overall understanding of the universe.

Take, for example, the work of Galileo Galilei.

He observed the night time sky with wonder as most of us do.

But early in 1610, he went a step further and utilized a new technological marvel to study stars.

The telescope was a boon to

astronomers. Galileo's was a simple instrument that could achieve a 20-fold increase in magnification – just good enough that when he observed Jupiter, he was able to discern three fixed stars in a straight line across the middle of the planet.

It was a formation that caught his eye and attention. What were these stars?

When he returned to his observations the next night, he noted that the stars had moved relative to Jupiter.

And, indeed, as he watched on succeeding nights, the points of light continued to move in a fashion that suggested that they orbited the planet.

This was an Earth-shattering event. Or maybe a better way to put it is that it was a celestial sphere shattering event.

Up to that point, the popular consensus was that all of the stars in the sky circled the Earth on rigid celestial spheres.

The Earth was the centre of everything. But these points of light showed Galileo that other objects in the night time sky – such as Jupiter – were at the centre of their own mini-solar system.

These lights were moons orbiting another planet.

And with that, the notion that the Earth was the center of the universe was dislodged from the astronomical sciences for all time.

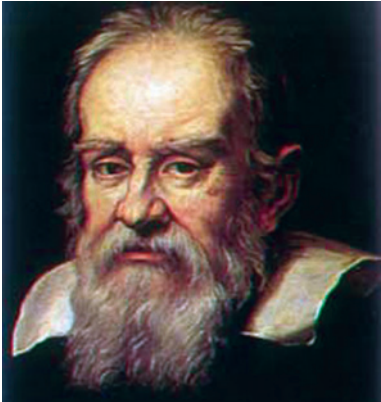
Of course, other astronomers had to verify Galileo's work.

Bigger and better telescopes eventually allowed astronomers to view other planets and their moons.

Our world view was changed forever.

As Johann Wolfgang von Goethe observed some two hundred years later:

"Of all the discoveries and opinions, none may have exerted a greater effect on the human spirit... The world had scarcely become as round and complete in itself when it was asked to waive the tremendous privilege of being the centre of the universe. Never, perhaps, was a greater demand made



GALILEO

of mankind – for by this admission so many things vanished in mist and smoke!"

Of course, embracing the new world view – that we are not the center of the universe – was not something that the establishment was comfortable with.

Galileo was imprisoned and eventually forced to recant his theory. But, as the story goes, he is said to have muttered as he walked off the witness stand: "It still moves."

In any case, shifting our world view to a Sun-centered solar system opened up a whole vista of possibilities.

It led to our present understanding of our galaxy and the billions and billions of galaxies beyond.

It has given rise to the Big Bang Theory and our search for dark matter and energy.

It was, as Thomas Kuhn would put it, a paradigm shift.

Many other aspects of modern science have arisen out of similar if not quite as groundbreaking paradigm shifts.

Geological time, evolution, atomic structure, quantum mechanics – all have forced science into rethinking the way that we view the universe and perhaps more importantly, our place in it.

One could make – and, indeed, Dr. Eagleman does make – the case that the last bastion of the unexplored lies within.

Understanding how and why we think will finally allow for a complete picture of human existence.

Exploring our selves is the last great frontier.

Employees want to feel heard in the workplace

As the race for talented employees becomes a global Olympic event, and businesses compete for qualified staff, human resources become your most important assets.

If you dare to shift your focus, even temporarily, away from the needs of your staff, you may quickly be left with vacant positions and consequential downturns in productivity.

Add to this tenuous situation the fact that employees from a variety of generations often require different things from their employer and suddenly the waters seem uncharitable.

Luckily, human beings seem to have core requirements that, when satisfied in the workplace, lead to retention and happy staff. The first core desire that most employees have is to know that their supervisor listens to what they have to say.

Making time to listen with intention and acknowledge staff is a gift that every good boss can give their employees.

Don't wait for an annual performance review to learn what motivates and excites your employees. It is better to schedule regular occasions to sit down and open your mind to what brilliant ideas your staff have from their boots on the ground perspective.

There are often two reasons that employees resign their positions: push factors that rub them the wrong way from within the organization and 'pull factors' offered by competitors and other businesses that entice them to vacate their positions.

Holding regular check-in sessions with employees will help management discover the push factors or rubs that may be demotivating their employees, before they begin considering other employment options.

Another core desire most individuals have is to share a positive working relationship with one's



Business In The Black

JENNIFER BRANDLE-MCCALL

manager.

The old adage that you join a company but quit a manager holds a lot of truth in many cases and it is therefore important to develop a strong bond of trust and respect between managers and their staff.

Finding a good fit is often more challenging for small businesses where there is less room to shift employees around between departments when they don't get along with their supervisor.

Thorough hiring practices will help ensure that your recruits match both the culture of your organization and the people within it.

The third core factor encouraging staff retention is for employees to feel challenged at work.

Ensuring that you have an understanding of each employee's strengths is much more important than identifying their weaknesses. Once strengths are noted, it is crucial that employees are transferred into positions where they can play on their strengths while feeling supported by their team members who have strengths in complimentary areas to them.

That is where building a balanced team, with all core strengths covered, is vital to the success of your organization.

In the current hot labour marketplace, keep in mind that an increase in salary is rarely the prime incentive to leave one's job for another company.

Retention has more to do with employees feeling challenged at work, supervised by people they respect and trust, and believing that their opinions and ideas matter to management.

Until next time, stay in the black and keep coming back.

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