

FERRISS, Isaac, son of Joseph Ferriss UEL - Family story

Isaac Ferriss (1795-1881) - My 3rd-Gr-Grandfather on my maternal (Alta Ferriss Hutchins) side. **War of 1812 Veteran**. Isaac Ferriss, 17-year-old son of Joseph, was part of the generation that fought to keep our lands for the British and ultimately for Canada. He was the second generation in the Loyalists' new homeland. It is well documented in the local newspaper that

Isaac was a very brave and strong 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. Isaac 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 in Harrow. (*Amherstburg Echo*, Sept. 2, 1934)

Queen Victoria actually approved the offering of **Military General Service Medals** to those surviving claimants who were involved in one of the three most notable battles that were considered great victories for the British: Battle of Fort Detroit, Battle of Chrysler Farms and Battle of Chateauguay, in **1847**. Isaac was 52 years old now and one of the youngest survivors at this time. He also lived long enough to collect **compensation from the Canadian government in 1875** to any surviving veterans of the War of 1812. The government earmarked \$50 000 to be paid out in \$20 amounts to the veterans. Isaac was now 80 years old. In today's terms, this amount would convert to about \$400 today. This is not a great amount of money but nevertheless welcome when there were no government pensions for the general public.

Isaac also took part in the Battle of Raisin River and the Battle of the Maumee, both considered massacres by the Americans since the British had difficulty reigning in their Native supporters, who didn't want to take any prisoners, as that would mean feeding and supporting them.

The General Service medal given to Isaac Ferriss is in the hands of an Amherstburg branch of the family. I was sent a photograph of the front and the back of the medal and the viewer can see the surname "Ferris" engraved on the edge of the medal.

By Ruth Nicholson, UE