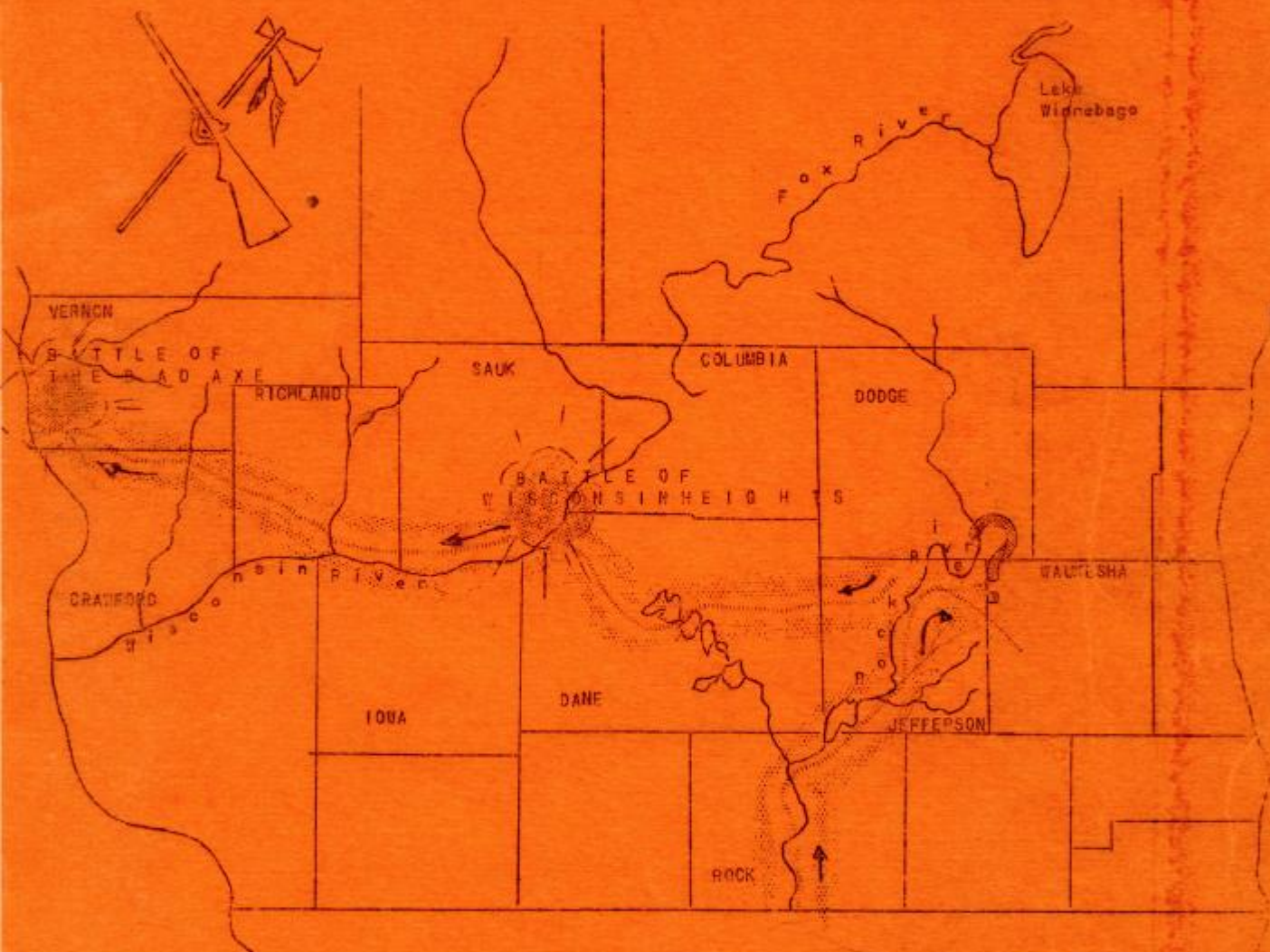


BLACK HAWK'S ROUTE THROUGH WISCONSIN

By WILLIAM THOMAS HAGAN



THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN
Madison

BLACK HAWK'S ROUTE THROUGH WISCONSIN

REPORT OF AN INVESTIGATION MADE BY AUTHORITY
OF THE LEGISLATURE OF WISCONSIN

By William Thomas Hagan

1949

THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN

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State Historical Society

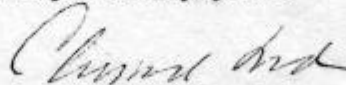
Madison, Wisconsin

April 10, 1949

To the Members of the 1949 Wisconsin Legislature:

I submit herewith the report requested by the 1945 Legislature (Chapter 478, Laws of 1945) on the route through Wisconsin followed by Black Hawk's forces during the Black Hawk War of 1832. This report was prepared by William Thomas Hagan, one-time assistant in the Department of History at the University of Wisconsin. The accompanying map was prepared by the Highway Department from data supplied by Mr. Hagan.

Respectfully yours



Clifford L. Lord
Director

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H/41
Part I. EVENTS LEADING TO THE BLACK HAWK WAR

When on November 3, 1804, William Henry Harrison, then governor of the Territory of Indiana, signed a treaty with representatives of the Sauk and Fox Indians at St. Louis,¹ he planted seeds of dissension which twenty-eight years later were reaped in the Black Hawk War. The negotiations preceding the signing of that treaty have not survived in their entirety, but the available evidence indicates that the five Sauk and Fox signators were probably without authority to cede the huge area they did, which included the site of the principal Sauk village, Saukenuk, near the mouth of the Rock River in northwestern Illinois. They were present in St. Louis to negotiate a treaty with the United States that would place the Sauk and Foxes on an equal footing with their inveterate enemies, the Osage. Since the only concern of the Sauk and Foxes was to secure protection from this nation with which they were at war,² it is hardly likely that the tribal councils authorized any such cession as was made, and the subsequent denunciations of the signators would bear this out. However that may be, Governor Harrison did prevail upon the Sauk and Foxes at St. Louis to sign a treaty conveying to the United States, in return for some two thousand dollars worth of trade goods and a tribal annuity of a thousand dollars, the title to approximately fifty million acres of land in what is now northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin.

The treaty contained a clause that was to lull the Sauk and Foxes into a

¹The text of the treaty is given in American State Papers: Indian Affairs (Washington, 1832-1861), 1:693-694.

²James Bruff to James Wilkinson, November 5, 1804, in Clarence E. Carter, ed., The Territorial Papers of the United States, 13:76-80 (Washington, 1934).

false sense of security. Article 7 granted them permission to remain on their lands until the government should dispose of it to actual settlers, and for almost twenty years the Indians enjoyed undisputed possession of the land that bore their lodges and cornfields. From the mid-1820's on, however, white squatters encroached more and more upon the Indian clearings around Saukenuk.

The activities of the squatters naturally aroused resentment among the Sauk and Foxes, a faction of whom refused to recognize the validity of the treaty of 1804 on the grounds that the Indians who had affixed their marks to the document had no authority to act in the name of the tribes. The average Indian did not comprehend how such a negotiation could be considered binding upon all members of the tribe. Under the Indian system of communal ownership it was impossible for a few members to alienate land belonging to the nation as a whole. Intensifying the ultimate insurgency of the Sauk and Foxes was the fact that for two decades they had continued to enjoy the use of their lands. They tended to forget that it was through the generosity of the United States that they were occupying it, despite the fact that they had reaffirmed the treaty of 1804 in connection with the negotiations that concluded the War of 1812. Finally, the sole surviving Indian signator of the treaty of 1804 denied all knowledge of the sale of the land upon which the village of Saukenuk was located.³

By spring of 1829 the situation had become tense. The settlers were bombarding the governor of Illinois with protests against the "depredations of these irritated and bloodthirsty savages" and demanding their eviction.⁴ The

³ Thomas Forsyth to William Clark, May 17, 1829, in Indian Office Files, National Archives.

⁴ Petition submitted to Governor Ninian Edwards, dated May 10, 1829, in the Black Hawk Papers, Illinois Historical Society.

Indians in turn were carrying to their agent at Rock Island their complaints against the encroaching whites. The governor, in no position to ignore the demands of potential voters, pressed the federal government to remove the Sauk and Foxes -- in line with its general removal policy -- to areas west of the Mississippi River. In the White House at the time was Andrew Jackson, ill disposed to grant favors to any Indians -- much less to Indians with British sympathies -- at the expense of frontier Americans.

As a showdown approached, the cleavage within the tribes widened. One faction, sensing the inevitable and recognizing the superior strength of the Americans, was prepared to abandon the ancestral home and settle beyond the Mississippi. For leadership this faction looked to Keokuk, a principal war chief of the Sauk whose mother had been half French. Keokuk had risen to a position of great influence among his fellow tribesmen, and was highly regarded by the whites also. Thomas Forsyth, Indian agent at Rock Island from 1819 to 1830, regarded him as the most competent of the Sauk leaders and as a personal friend.⁵

Under the loose governmental system of the Sauk and Foxes, Keokuk's chief rival for influence was Black Hawk, an elderly Sauk brave nearing seventy. Black Hawk was an old enemy of the Americans. Not only had he allied himself with the British in the War of 1812, as had most of the other Sauk and Foxes, but he had continued, unlike Keokuk, to maintain his connections with his old allies. Annually he conducted parties of Indians to visit the British frontier posts. Those who were hostile to the Americans and opposed the treaty of 1804 regarded him as their leader. This faction, because of its pro-British attitude, was often called the "British Band" by the Americans.

In the spring of 1830 both Keokuk and Black Hawk returned to the village on Rock River. Keokuk's return, however, was presumed to be temporary, inasmuch as his band was establishing a new village on the Iowa River. The summer passed and the time came to depart for the winter hunt with no more serious display of hostility than vocal recriminations.

In the spring of 1831, after the Sauk and Foxes had completed their winter hunt, Keokuk led his band to their new home on the Iowa River. The British Band under Black Hawk, however, returned once more to the Rock River. Declaring this to be an invasion of the state of Illinois, in which lay the lower reaches of the Rock, Governor John Reynolds called out the militia to expel the Indians. General Edmund P. Gaines, in command of the Western Department of the United States Army, brought a few companies of regulars up the Mississippi from Jefferson Barracks (St. Louis) and took charge of the operation.

Unprepared for combat, Black Hawk capitulated. He and other members of the British Band signed terms of surrender by which they promised to cross the Mississippi and never return except by permission of the president of the United States or the governor of Illinois.⁶ They agreed also to cease all communication with Canada and to accept Keokuk as their leader. As compensation for the loss of the foodstuffs they had expected to raise on the Rock River that summer, they were given supplies of corn.

Apparently overt hostilities had been prevented, and without bloodshed. The militiamen returned to their homes, unduly complacent regarding their military prowess and the pusillanimity of the British Band. Around Saukenuk the

⁶ Terms of the British Band Surrender, dated June 30, 1831, in Indian Office Files.

whites relaxed. Once more they felt secure in their homes among the fields which the Sauk and Foxes had wrested from earlier enemies by force of arms and which their squaws had brought under cultivation.

But they underestimated Black Hawk. [The next spring, on April 6, 1832, he again led his band, estimated at four hundred warriors and twelve hundred women, children, and old men, across the Mississippi and up the Rock.] Why he risked this return to "my towns, my cornfields, and the homes of my people" in the face of certain opposition is not clear, but it seems probable that he was influenced chiefly by intra-tribal rivalries and vague hopes of an alliance with disgruntled Winnebago, Kickapoo, and Potawatomi in the neighborhood. Black Hawk's chief lieutenant, for example, later testified that it was at the express invitation of a certain Winnebago known as the Prophet that the Sauk and Foxes had returned to the Rock.⁷ This unsavory character, who was of mixed Sauk and Winnebago lineage, presided over a village on the Rock River above Saukenuk, which was the haven of malcontents and undesirables from all the neighboring tribes.⁸ It had a bad reputation among whites and Indians alike. In 1831 General Joseph M. Street, Winnebago agent at Prairie du Chien and a competent observer, suggested that in the interest of peace on the frontier the Prophet's village should be burned and the crops of the inhabitants destroyed.⁹ Perhaps it might have been well had his suggestion been followed.

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Na-pope's Evidence, August 20, 1832, Mail and Files Division, Letters Received, Adjutant General's Office, National Archives. Hereafter referred to as Adjutant General's Files.

8

Street to William Clark, July 6, 1831, in the Clark Papers, Kansas Historical Society.

9

Street to the Secretary of War, August 26, 1831, in the Black Hawk War Papers, Illinois Historical Society.

In the ensuing war which the Prophet helped to kindle, Black Hawk found himself opposed by General Henry Atkinson, a regular army officer of considerable frontier experience. He had commanded two expeditions to the Yellowstone and was generally regarded as a highly competent officer. The swift and certain measures he had taken to quell the Winnebago in 1827 had earned for him the grudging admiration of the Indians of the Old Northwest, who referred to him as the "White Beaver."

Early in April, 1832, Atkinson in his capacity as commander of the Right Wing of the Western Department of the Army, with headquarters at Jefferson Barracks, had been ordered to proceed up the Mississippi. His mission was to prevent a threatened descent of the Sioux and Menominee upon the Sauk and Foxes, a party of whom had massacred a band of Menominee the previous autumn within sight of Fort Crawford at Prairie du Chien, and to obtain the surrender of the participants in the massacre. As it chanced, the steamboat carrying Atkinson passed up the river just two days after the Indians crossed, and he did not learn of their action until he reached Fort Armstrong on Rock Island.

To augment the force he had brought with him from Jefferson Barracks, Atkinson mustered into federal service the twelve hundred militiamen whom the governor of Illinois had called out when he had learned of the British Band's return to the Rock River. Despite the force at his disposal, however, Atkinson did not at first attempt to drive back the Sauk and Foxes. For several weeks he endeavored to achieve his object by means of messengers and threats of one sort and another.¹⁰ And he might have succeeded had it not been for an unfortunate incident that quashed all his efforts.

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Atkinson to Black Hawk, April 24, 1832, in Black Hawk War Miscellaneous Papers, National Archives.

The aging Black Hawk, heartsick over the failure of the other tribes to lend him the aid he had been led to expect, had resigned himself to negotiation for peaceable removal across the Mississippi. On the evening of May 14 he sent messengers to a battalion of militiamen stationed at Sycamore Creek, about twenty miles northeast of Dixon, Illinois, to acquaint them with his decision. Black Hawk's emissaries were received by the militia, but before they could explain their mission the appearance of another small body of Indians near the camp threw the ill-disciplined militia into confusion. A disorganized pursuit of the newly sighted Indians was undertaken, and in the excitement, for reasons unknown, the emissaries were attacked and one was slain before the others made their escape.

With these shots vanished the last lingering hope for peace. The main body of Sauk and Foxes, convinced that they might as well sell their lives dearly, returned the attack with such ferocious abandon that they drove their adversaries from the field in disorder and inflicted a number of casualties upon them. The whites could not afford to allow hostilities to end on this plane of Indian triumph. Unless retribution were swift and severe, the incident might seriously damage the prestige of the whites, who were reputed by the Indians to hold the Sauk and Foxes in great respect, if not awe.¹¹ Other tribes might be encouraged to go on the warpath. It was disastrous enough that the British Band took heart at its unexpected victory and that many Potawatomi, Winnebago, and Kickapoo who had previously denied Black Hawk their aid now flocked to his camp ready to carry the war to the whites.

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Street to William Clark, October 24, 1831, in the Clark Papers, Kansas Historical Society.

The skirmish at Sycamore Creek was followed by a series of minor engagements as the troops endeavored to locate and bring to battle the main body of the enemy and at the same time defend the frontier from the lightning thrusts of the Indians. The British Band had taken the offensive and had sent out scalping parties which attacked isolated communities throughout the region, burning, looting, and killing.

One of these parties fell upon a small settlement on Indian Creek about midway between Chicago and the mouth of the Rock. Two families which had declined to retreat from their exposed position received the brunt of the blow. Fifteen men, women, and children were massacred on the spot, and two girls, Rachel and Sylvia Hall, were carried into captivity. Spreading like wildfire, the news of Indian Creek, Sycamore Creek, and other Indian raids threw the frontier into a panic. Rude forts were hastily constructed, and from the village of Chicago the local Indian agent issued frantic appeals for troops.¹² A correspondent of the Galena Galenian described the situation in the virtually isolated lead-mining region:

Travel east, west, north, or south, and nothing is seen but waste, destruction, and dilapidation, -- fields partly made, -- hogs, cattle, fowls, etc. running wild, -- houses vacated, and left with all the furniture within them, -- and not an inhabitant within sixty miles.¹³

Shortly after the Indian Creek episode most of the militia asked to be released. They had enlisted on short notice at a time that would normally have been devoted to the planting of crops, and they had expected to serve no longer than three or four weeks. They now considered their enlistments at an end. The

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Th. J. V. Owen to Colonel Houston, May 18, 1832, in the New York Observer, June 2, 1832.

¹³

Galenian (Galena, Illinois), June 6, 1832.

governor, not without an eye to his political future, yielded to their demands and released all but three hundred of the volunteers, who were organized into six companies. These latter and the original detachment of four hundred regulars who had accompanied Atkinson from Jefferson Barracks were all that were now available -- a total of seven hundred. Regarding this force as inadequate for patrolling the frontier and launching offensive operations simultaneously, Atkinson concentrated on defensive measures until additional militiamen ordered out by the governor should arrive.

Among those who volunteered to remain under arms for twenty days until the second militia levy was organized was a lawyer from Sangamon County, Illinois, a candidate for office in the election to be held in August. Though he had commanded a company in the first militia levy, Abraham Lincoln served as a private in the ranks after the reorganization. When the new army reached Lake Koshkonong, the members of his company were discharged, having served out their enlistment.

Before Atkinson was able to assemble this second force, several engagements took place between small bodies of militia and scalping parties of Sauk and Foxes. In only one of these, the Battle of the Pecatonica, did the whites acquit themselves creditably. Here, under the leadership of Colonel Henry Dodge, an energetic and resourceful son of the frontier, twenty-one volunteers from the lead-mining region wiped out a war party of eleven Indians.¹¹⁴ The victory assumed a significance altogether disproportionate to the number of participants in the skirmish. For it demonstrated, after a disheartening series of setbacks, that the frontiersmen, properly led, were the match of the Indians.

¹¹⁴

Dodge to Captain J. Sherman, June 16, 1832, in the William Henry Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

This may have served to hearten Colonel Zachary Taylor, second in command of the regulars, who was destined to win fame as "Old Rough and Ready" in the Mexican War and become twelfth president of the United States. Taylor had confided to Atkinson two weeks earlier that after observing the conduct of the undisciplined militiamen, who were more versed in hoeing than in drilling, he trembled not only for the safety of the frontier but for the reputation of the officers concerned.¹⁵

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Taylor to Atkinson, June 9, 1832, in the Black Hawk War Papers, Illinois Historical Society.

Part II. PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN LOCATING THE TRAIL

By the end of June, General Atkinson, having received and organized the second levy of militia, had resumed pursuit of the British Band. Confident that his force of three thousand militia and four hundred regulars was more than sufficient to bring the campaign to a close in short order, Atkinson pushed rapidly up the left bank of the Rock with the main body of troops while smaller units scoured the country between the Rock and the Mississippi. He foresaw little difficulty in tracking down the British Band, having been informed by the Winnebago, who had ransomed the Hall girls, that the fugitive Indians were in the vicinity of the mouth of the Bark River, which empties into the Rock above Lake Koshkonong.¹⁶

The route taken by Black Hawk in his retreat through Illinois and what is now Wisconsin has never been accurately determined. Many conflicting versions have appeared in the years since the campaign, which can be evaluated only through a careful examination of all the sources available. It is the object of this study to trace, as accurately as extant data permit, the course that Black Hawk followed through Wisconsin. All available material which might shed light on the matter has been consulted.

Research has been done at the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Chicago Historical Society, the Illinois Historical Society, and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. The last-named organization published notices in newspapers throughout the state informing the public of the project and requesting information on the traditions pertaining to the trail. Local historical societies were also interrogated. Finally, the records of the original government surveys of Wisconsin were studied at the State Land Office in Madison.

The best sources of data on the trail are the accounts by participants in the campaign, written during and after the war, and of these The Journal of Albert Sidney Johnston is the most valuable. Johnston, a regular army officer who was later killed while commanding the Confederate forces at Shiloh, served as adjutant on the staff of General Atkinson. By virtue of his position Johnston had access to all information available to the troops, and his brief daily entries represent the most trustworthy account of the campaign.

Among those who later recorded their experiences were Black Hawk, John A. Wakefield, D. M. and Peter Parkinson Jr., Henry Smith, Phillip St. George Cooke, and John Reynolds, governor of Illinois. Of this group of writings the work by Wakefield is the most valuable for the purpose of this study, and that by Black Hawk the least so. The former is a full-length history of the war by a participant who served with the volunteers from the lead mine region of southwestern Wisconsin under Colonel Henry Dodge. Black Hawk's Autobiography contains virtually nothing pertaining to the trail. The Parkinsons served under Dodge; Cooke and Smith served with the regulars; and Reynolds accompanied the troops as far as the site of Fort Atkinson in his capacity of commander-in-chief of the Illinois militia. Each of these supplied details not found elsewhere.

Official correspondence, staff records, and reports produced during the campaign constitute another group of valuable sources. The most complete collections of such records are those in the National Archives and in the Black Hawk War Papers in the possession of the Illinois Historical Society. The latter organization is particularly rich in documents relating to the role of the Illinois militia which made up the great majority of Atkinson's force. At the State Historical Society of Wisconsin are photostatic copies of contemporary records of the Indian Office and other federal agencies.

Atkinson's correspondence and order books, almost all of which are in existence, are the most important items in the official records. In the reports submitted by and to him appears the information pertaining to Black Hawk's movements upon which the commander based his operations. Among the miscellaneous sources consulted are newspaper files, secondary works, map collections, and the traditions regarding the trail that survive in various sections of southern Wisconsin. Information on the traditions has been obtained not only from the communications elicited by the notices published in newspapers, but from supplementary correspondence. Fortunately the map collection of the State Historical Society includes a copy of John Farmer's map of Michigan Territory which was used at Atkinson's headquarters during the campaign. This map enables one to identify geographical references appearing in correspondence which have no application to later maps of the area. The map is, however, highly inaccurate, having been drawn prior to the land surveys.

Most accounts of the war which appeared in contemporary newspapers were reprinted from the Galenian of Galena, Illinois. A file of this paper, the only one which had a correspondent with the troops, was examined at the Chicago Historical Society. In the files of newspapers of Crawford and Vernon counties, Wisconsin, were found Dr. C. V. Porter's articles, which represent virtually the only available information on the location of the trail through these two counties. In the 1880's and 1890's Porter personally interviewed many of the early settlers who had used portions of the trail to reach the sites of their future homes. In 1898 he took Dr. Reuben Gold Thwaites, superintendent of the State Historical Society, on a carriage trip over the trail, as he had himself reconstructed it, from Soldiers Grove to the Mississippi. A portion of this section of the trail appears in the Plat Book of Vernon County, published in 1896 by C. M. Foote & Company.

With so large a body of material to draw upon it might seem a comparatively simple task to trace the route of Black Hawk's band through Wisconsin. But this is not the case, and the location of some portions of the route are still unknown. The greatest handicap is the fact that the section of Wisconsin traversed by Black Hawk and Atkinson was virtually unknown to both the British Band and the troops. South of the Wisconsin River the retreat was made through the country of the Winnebago, who furnished guides for both pursued and pursuer. North of the Wisconsin the whites needed no guides, for the trail lay clearly before them. The fleeing Sauk and Foxes continued to rely upon Winnebago guides, but even they had only a rudimentary knowledge of the terrain, since it was not normally crossed in traveling between the Mississippi and Lake Michigan.

The troops' profound ignorance of the country through which they were passing is reflected in the accounts left by them. Only rarely are points located with sufficient precision to permit one to pinpoint them on a map. Even if the soldier had been more familiar with the country through which he was passing, he might not have troubled to be more specific. After all, if the recipient of his communication knew nothing of the country, there was little reason for describing a point more exactly than in relation to Green Bay, Chicago, or Galena. In the last days of the pursuit the pace of the march discouraged correspondence. Even general references are few and frequently contradictory, calling for a careful weighing of all the evidence.

In the reconstruction of the trail the surveyors' notes have been heavily relied upon. They cannot, however, be used without discrimination. Not only were they made by different men over more than a decade, from 1832 to 1845, but there is no consistency with respect to the recording of trails, Indian villages, forts, battlefields, and other items. Hence we cannot rely upon these notes for a com-

plete record of the trails. Indeed, we know that they were not all recorded. In general the surveyor located a trail only when it helped to identify a township or section line, and usually he made no attempt to indicate by whom and when it had been made, or the extent to which it had been used. There are exceptions, but far fewer than would be desirable for the purposes of this study. Nevertheless it has been assumed, when other data are lacking, that the trails recorded by the surveyors represented the routes that were most feasible in 1832.

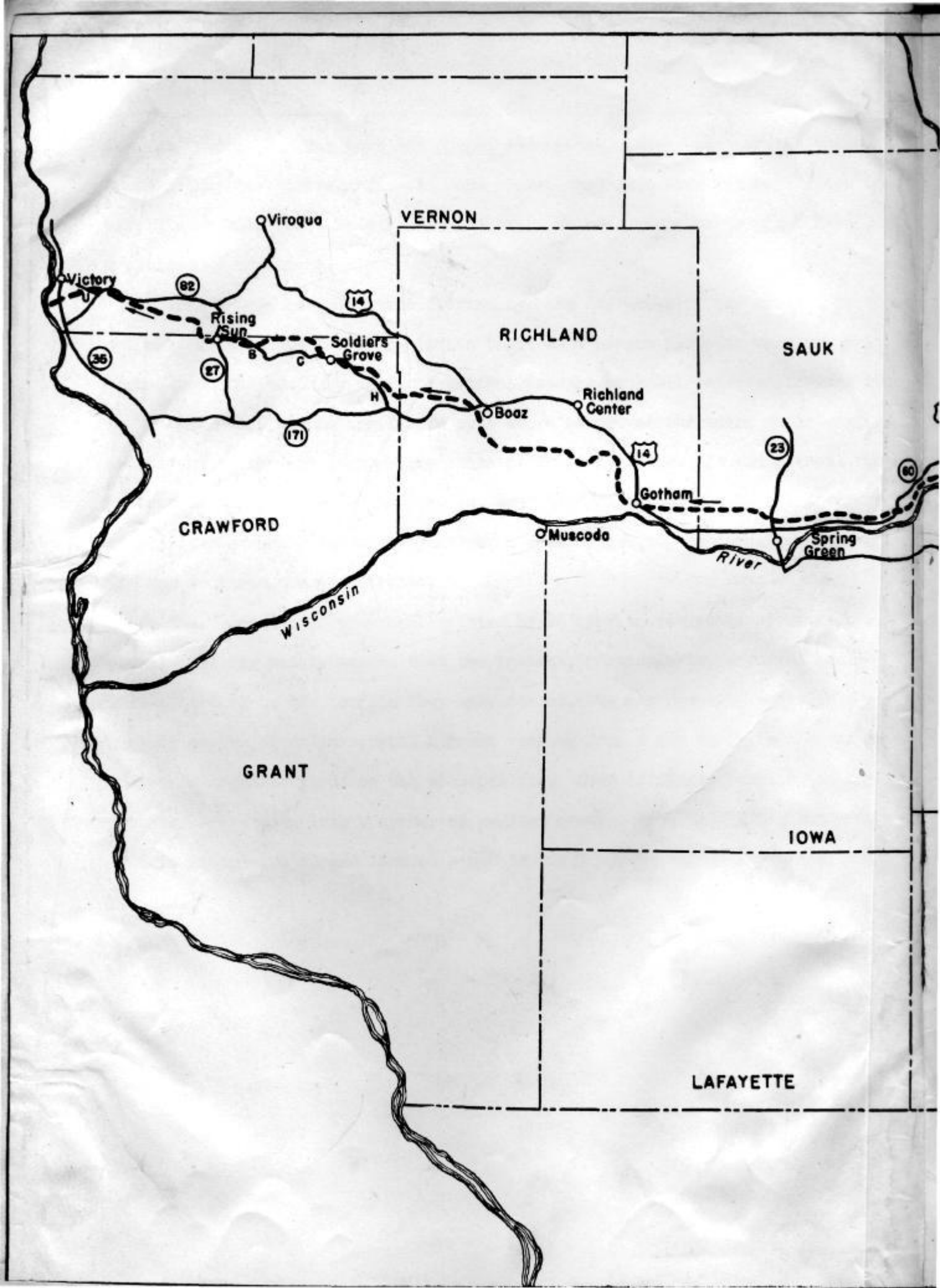
Tradition as to the course taken by Black Hawk abounds in Wisconsin. Few communities along the general route do not boast that some of the participants in the War passed that way. This disposition to link every old trail with Black Hawk has undoubtedly been nourished by the desire of a locality to share in the fame which some members of the army later achieved: Abraham Lincoln, Zachary Taylor, and Jefferson Davis, to name only the most famous. To counteract this tendency one need only remember that the first real settlers did not enter the Rock River valley until four years after the war, and that north of the Wisconsin River the trail ran through an area that was not settled until still later. Certainly it would have been difficult for any settler to determine who had made the trail or trails that crossed his land. Even Atkinson's scouts, who were presumably only a few miles behind Black Hawk, were never fully agreed on what course he had taken.

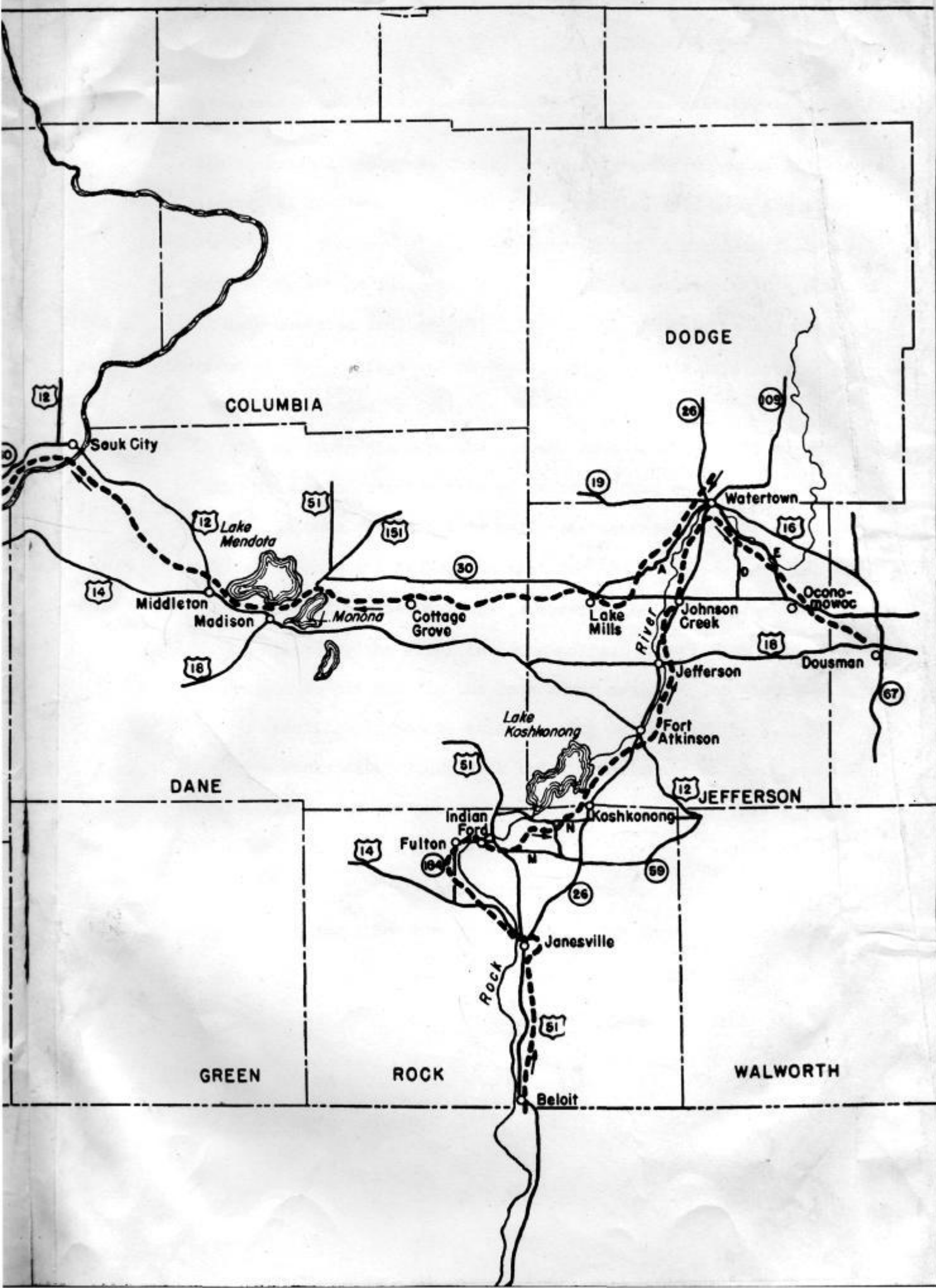
South of the Wisconsin River the situation is further confused by the large number of trails that cross this much-traveled area. Even the discovery of army equipment is far conclusive proof that the main column had passed that way — much less that Black Hawk himself did. Except for a brief period on the Rock, and after the crossing of the Wisconsin, the army operated in as many as four separate columns, each of which made a trail that was to remain visible

for years to come. Nor must one forget the heavily laden wagon trains which brought supplies to the army. In some places they must have cut ruts which too were discernible for a long time. And their drivers and escorts might have lost or abandoned equipment.

This brings us to a basic difficulty, the character of the trail. It was not what is commonly termed an Indian trail -- a narrow footpath worn several inches into the earth by the intermittent passage of small bands of Indians over the years. This was no trail made by a score of braves threading their way around the swamps and through the thickets in single file. It was a trail made by several hundred mounted men, women, and children encumbered by all their worldly possessions, and an army which at some stages of the campaign numbered as many as three thousand troops.

Every account of the trail written by an eyewitness speaks of it in the plural. We may safely assume that the Indians, particularly, adjusted their mode of travel to the terrain they encountered. We may properly envision a column, or series of columns, with a front varying from a few yards in the swamps to several hundred yards on the open prairie. Over difficult terrain the band probably broke down into a number of smaller groups, each making its own way. If this is true, a single line on a map can only approximate the route of the Indians.





Part III. LOCATION OF THE TRAIL THROUGH WISCONSIN

After the skirmish at Sycamore Creek, frequently referred to as Stillman's Run to commemorate the dispatch with which the militia retired from the field, Black Hawk retreated to the head of the Kishwaukee River in northern Illinois. Here he encountered Winnebago Indians who volunteered to guide him to a place of safety. Black Hawk accepted and, according to his own account, he and his followers arrived at their refuge in the Rock River swamp six days later.¹⁷ But he does not describe the route he followed.

Some time during those six days the Indians ascending the left bank of the Rock crossed into Wisconsin over the site of Beloit. That the left rather than the right bank was followed can be fairly well substantiated. Nowhere in the evidence available is there any indication that the Indians crossed to the right bank. Rachel Hall, one of the two sisters to survive the Indian Creek massacre, makes no mention of crossing the river in her memoirs.¹⁸ Black Hawk said that the girls were brought to his camp in the Rock River swamp.¹⁹ The Winnebago who ransomed the girls specifically locate this as being on the left bank.

More than five weeks after Black Hawk led his followers to their swampy retreat, General Atkinson and his troops arrived at the mouth of Turtle Creek at the site of Beloit. Confident of the adequacy of his force and of his ability to locate the British Band, Atkinson exuded optimism. Little did he realize what humiliation was in store for him. On the same day on which he wrote the

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Milo Milton Quaife, ed., Life of Black Hawk (Chicago, 1916), 46-47.

18

Memoirs of Rachel Hall, October 11, 1834, in the Black Hawk War Papers, Illinois Historical Society.

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Quaife, Black Hawk, 152.

commanding general in Washington that he could not "fail to put an end in a short time to the perplexed state of Indian hostilities in this quarter,"²⁰ the secretary of war, Lewis Cass, ordered General Winfield Scott to proceed to the scene of hostilities with nine hundred regulars and relieve Atkinson of command. Only four days earlier President Jackson, unable to appreciate Atkinson's position and impatient for news of the destruction of the British Band, had directed the assistant secretary of war, John Robb, to rebuke Atkinson for his inactivity and failure to report. Robb complied with a stinging letter to the harassed general, which closed with the ominous observation, "Someone is to blame in this matter, but upon whom it is to fall, is at present unknown to the Department."²¹

While this injury to Atkinson's morale was being carried by steamboat, coach, and mounted messenger to the scene of hostilities, Atkinson and his men were making their way up the Rock River. The discovery of a deserted Sauk and Fox encampment a short distance above Turtle Village supported their belief that the Indians had passed that way. John A. Wakefield, who served in the ranks, and Lewis Clark, aide on Atkinson's staff and son of the Indian superintendent at St. Louis, both mention this camp.²² Wakefield says the Hall girls were held prisoners here but does not amplify the statement. The testimony of the girls themselves is of little value for determining the specific sites of camps, for it is frequently conflicting, and when in agreement is so general as to defy exact use.

20

Atkinson to Alexander Macomb, commanding general of the U. S. Army, June 15, 1832, in the Adjutant General's Files.

21

Robb to Atkinson, June 12, 1832, in Letter Books of the Secretary of War, National Archives.

22

Lewis Clark to William Clark, July 6, 1832, in the Adjutant General's Files; John A. Wakefield, History of the War between the United States and the Sac and Fox Nations of Indians (Jacksonville, Illinois, 1834), 42.

When the government surveyors went over this area they recorded several trails, one of which was designated as the route followed by the army. This trail ran almost due north to the site of Janesville after crossing the state border at the southeast corner of Section 35, T1N-R12E and swerving slightly northeast to the north-south section line.²³ In the light of the army's discovery of the camp site used by the Sauk and Foxes near Turtle Village and the confidence of the troops themselves that they were on the trail, it is assumed that this is the route that was taken by the British Band.

By strenuous exertion on the part of the troops, who suffered from lack of water, Atkinson was enabled to pitch his tent on the night of July 2 opposite the mouth of the Catfish (Yahara) River, which drains the Four Lakes. Presumably no more Sauk and Fox camp sites were passed in the twenty-three difficult miles covered that day, since none was mentioned.

Somewhere above Turtle Creek the trail must have been lost, inasmuch as Wakefield remarks that it was found again a few miles south of Lake Koshkonong.²⁴ A short distance farther on, scouts came upon another abandoned Sauk and Fox camp. This was located by Albert Sidney Johnston a mile and a half from the head of Lake Koshkonong,²⁵ but Lewis Clark, in a map sketched for his father, General William Clark, placed it at approximately the site of the village of Koshkonong.²⁶

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The author's original report is accompanied by several detail maps of the trail showing section lines.

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Wakefield, History, 43.

25

The Journal of Albert Sidney Johnston, July 3, 1832, in the Illinois Historical Society.

26

Lewis Clark to William Clark, July 25, 1832, in the Files of the Office of the Secretary of War, National Archives.

Apparently the British Band had remained at this camp for some time; the troops found there the bodies of five Indians who had died of wounds, as well as scalps and other plunder that war parties had brought in.

The probable explanation for the loss of the trail by the troops is that while they had continued to march up the left bank of the Rock, the Indians had crossed to the right bank at the site of Janesville by means of what the surveyors termed a "fine" ford, ascended the river to the junction of the Catfish and Rock, and camped there for a time. Deciding to move farther up the river, they recrossed it at Indian Ford, about two and a half miles southeast of Edgerton, and passed around Lake Koshkonong. Such a trail can be found in the surveyors' notes, and the supposition is strengthened by the report of a trader, Oliver Armel.²⁷

Armel was a half-breed whom Henry Gratiot, sub-agent for the Winnebago, had employed at Colonel Dodge's suggestion to locate the Sauk and Foxes. In company with five Winnebago, Armel scouted the hostiles and reported to Gratiot that he had seen eighty of their tents pitched along the banks of the Catfish for six or seven miles from its mouth in the vicinity of the site of Fulton. This number of tents would represent the major part of the British Band if the absence of war parties and the defection of allies is considered. No evidence is to be found that Atkinson received this report before the arrival of Colonel Dodge, if ever. There is no mention of it in his correspondence, and certainly his operations reveal no knowledge of it.

27

L. F. Stock Transcripts, June 27, 1832, in the library of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. These transcripts are typewritten copies of manuscript notes of a survey of archival materials in Washington, D. C., made by Stock about 1910 for the State Historical Society. The report cited is from the Letterbooks (No. 1, 1832) of George B. Porter, governor of Michigan Territory from August 1, 1831, until July 6, 1834.

The route the Indians took after their hurried departure from their camp near the head of Lake Koshkonong cannot be determined conclusively, but the one indicated on the accompanying maps is based on good evidence. A number of trails led from the encampment, indicating that the Indians had dispersed in small groups. Atkinson halted for two days below the lake trying to discover which route the main body had taken. Becoming apprehensive, he sent detachments up both banks of the Rock. All scouting parties reported that the British Band had left the area,²⁸ but an old Indian who had been captured stated under duress that the fleeing band was still on the left bank of the river.²⁹ This information, and the fact that lurking Indians had fired upon the camp, convinced Atkinson that the Sauk and Foxes were concealed in the swamps between the right bank of the Bark and the Rock, and he so reported to the secretary of war.³⁰

Basing his operations on this assumption, Atkinson wasted several days trying to bypass the head of the Bark River, since it was not practical to ford it with his entire force and equipment. The terrain, principally swamp interspersed with occasional patches of woods, was extremely difficult to traverse, and the troops were being tortured by the swarms of mosquitoes that infested the swamps. On the advice of Indian guides Atkinson abandoned the attempt to turn the river and marched the army back to the Rock. His early air of optimism had now completely vanished and he wrote to Winfield Scott: "the country is so cut up with prairie wood and swamp, that it is extremely difficult to approach

28

Journal of Albert Sidney Johnston, July 3-5, 1832, in the Illinois Historical Society.

29

Wakefield, History, 44.

30

Atkinson to the Secretary of War, July 6, 1832, in the Adjutant General's Files.

them [the British Band]. Indeed many parts of the country for miles, is entirely impassable, even on foot."³¹ Unable to locate the elusive Black Hawk, his militia force dwindling away as the men, tired of the mud, mosquitoes, and short rations, departed for home without the formality of a discharge, Atkinson was harassed by the knowledge that President Jackson considered his campaign a failure and had dispatched General Scott to relieve him of command.

During this period of exasperating and futile marching and counter-marching the army had exhausted its provisions, primarily because of the militia's carelessness and lack of discipline. Atkinson was forced to halt operations and send detachments for supplies. A brigade was sent to Fort Hamilton and the brigades under Generals Alexander and Henry and the squadron under Colonel Dodge were ordered to Fort Winnebago.

While awaiting the return of the troops dispatched for supplies, the regulars were employed in constructing a fort on the site now occupied by the town of Fort Atkinson. In an attempt to locate the British Band, a small party under Captain William Harney, who was later to distinguish himself during the Mexican War at the Battle of Cerro Gordo, was detached by Atkinson to scout the area between the Bark and the Rock. Harney returned with the report that he had followed an Indian trail for more than twenty miles and had passed four encampments which he judged to be those of the Sauk and Foxes.³² A few days later Atkinson directed Major McHenry to take a small party and reconnoiter the same general area. McHenry also reported having found a deserted Sauk and Fox encampment.³³

³¹ Atkinson to Scott, July 9, 1832, in the Adjutant General's Files.

³² Galenian (Galena, Illinois), July 8, 1832.

³³ Lewis Clark to William Clark, July 25, 1832, in the Files of the Office of the Secretary of War.

The only information available regarding the route followed by Harney, McHenry, and the British Band is found on the map, previously mentioned, which Lewis Clark sketched for his father. The map is not drawn to scale, but the lakes and rivers can be identified and the relative positions of three Sauk and Fox camps beyond the Bark can be located. The first appears to have been midway between the mouth of the Bark and the mouth of the Crawfish along the left bank of the Rock. The second is two-thirds of the distance from the mouth of the Crawfish to the Oconomowoc, opposite a ford of the Rock. But so inaccurate is the scale for this section of the map that the camp can be located only in very general terms. The third camp Clark located in present-day Summit township, T7N-R17E, and labeled as the one found deserted by McHenry. Beyond this point, until the trail was chanced upon several miles southwest of the site of Hustisford, nothing is known. The troops penetrated no farther, and the Indians left no record. Nor do the surveyors note any trail that could have been made by the Sauk and Foxes.

In the face of such scant information, the location of this portion of the trail must necessarily be largely conjectural. Clark's map would support a trail that followed the Rock River to the mouth of the Oconomowoc and then ascended that river to the southwest corner of T7N-R17E. It is evident that the Sauk and Foxes moved beyond this point, for their camp was found deserted. But in what direction they moved cannot be ascertained.

Had it not been for a decision of Dodge and Henry at Fort Winnebago, the British Band might have made a clean escape from the swamps and made their way to the west bank of the Mississippi before Atkinson could overtake them. Late on the evening of July 11 Dodge and his squadron arrived at Fort Winnebago, on the portage between the Fox and the Wisconsin. While the bakers were preparing

bread, the energetic colonel interrogated Indians and half-breeds in the vicinity and learned that the Sauk and Foxes were encamped at the rapids of the Rock River on the site of Hustisford. The next evening Henry and Alexander arrived during a violent storm which stampeded their mounts through the camp. At a council of war Dodge suggested that they return by way of the rapids. Henry agreed, but Alexander insisted on retracing his steps as Atkinson had ordered. Later, in explaining his decision to Atkinson, Dodge not only mentioned the report he had received on the location of the Sauk and Foxes, but said, without further comment, that many of his men had refused to return by the route they had come and indicated that if he insisted they would leave the army.³⁴

On the morning of the fifteenth the troops were under way: Alexander's by the route they had come and Dodge's and Henry's marching for the rapids. On reaching their objective, Dodge and Henry were disappointed to find no trace of the British Band. Winnebago at a village in the area now assured them that Black Hawk was twenty miles to the north at Cranberry Lake. Messengers bearing reports to Atkinson were started on their way by the discomfited Dodge and Henry, who now apparently had no good reason to offer for their insubordination.³⁵

Unknown to Dodge and Henry, the British Band was even then making for the Mississippi as rapidly as they could. After proceeding a few miles, the messengers happened upon the trail of the fleeing band, which had passed the spot where the contact had been made only a few hours earlier. Retracing their course as swiftly as their horses would carry them, the members of the express carried

34

Dodge to Atkinson, July 14, 1832, in the Black Hawk War Papers, Illinois Historical Society.

35

Dodge to Atkinson, July 18, 1832, in the Black Hawk War Papers, Illinois Historical Society.

their momentous news to their commanding officers. Dodge and Henry immediately prepared to take up the pursuit and dispatched the glad tidings to Atkinson.³⁶

The general had already been warned by a half-breed just returned from Black Hawk's camp that the British Band had at last decided to attempt to out-flank the army and reach the Mississippi.³⁷ No other course, barring surrender, was open to them. They had succeeded in eluding the troops, but they were on the verge of starvation. The swampy area offered an excellent refuge from the soldiers, but little game and fish. Several old people had already succumbed to a diet made up increasingly of roots, grass, and bark.³⁸

The Indians in traveling from the camp in Summit township to the point where their trail was picked up by the express may have gone as far east as Lake Michigan or as far north as Lake Winnebago, but this is not probable. Perhaps Black Hawk had been at Cranberry Lake, as the Winnebago reported. But there is no evidence for this contention other than the testimony of the Winnebago, who had not always proved entirely trustworthy. No attempt has been made to plot the trail from Summit township to the point where it was picked up by the express. Anyone with a knowledge of the terrain can suggest several logical routes, but they must remain conjectures, since there is absolutely no evidence to support any of them. Nothing appears in the surveyors' notes, the troops did not know, and Black Hawk did not say.

Nor is it possible to locate exactly the point at which the contact was

36

Dodge to Atkinson, July 19, 1832, and Henry to Atkinson, July 19, 1832, in the Black Hawk War Papers, Illinois Historical Society.

37

Atkinson to Scott, July 27, 1832, in the Adjutant General's Files.

38

Quaife, Black Hawk, 153.

re-established by the messengers of Dodge and Henry. Henry, in writing to Atkinson the following day, stated that an express "after traveling ten or twelve miles discovered large trails making southwest."³⁹ Dodge, reporting at the same time, places the point of contact at about twelve miles from Hustisford and states that two trails were found, but he does not comment on the direction of either.⁴⁰ From this may be surmised that the contact was made in the southwestern part of T9N-R15E, possibly within the boundaries of present-day Watertown.

The troops of Dodge and Henry followed the retreating Indians as rapidly as the terrain would permit. They abandoned wagons and heavy equipment in order to accelerate their pace of pursuit, and not even a heavy rain the first night dampened their spirits. At last, after weeks of exasperating search, the soldiers knew they were close behind the fleeing band. The possessions of the Indians which strewed the trail and the occasional straggler awaiting death attested the proximity of their quarry.

No indication of their route to the Four Lakes was recorded by the troops. The trail which appears on the map is based on the surveyors' notes and the report of an old and much-used trail running from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi.⁴¹ Though this region was definitely not Sauk country, the surveyors in 1834 described as the "Sauk Trail" a trail which crossed the line between Section 18,

39

Henry to Atkinson, July 19, 1832, in the Black Hawk War Papers, Illinois Historical Society.

40

Dodge to Atkinson, July 19, 1832, in the Black Hawk War Papers, Illinois Historical Society.

41

Wisconsin Archaeologist, 5:111 (September, 1926); see also the unpublished Wisconsin Archeological Atlas, compiled during the years 1929-1944 under the direction of Charles E. Brown, in the possession of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. The base maps upon which Mr. Brown recorded his archeological data are those comprising a Plat Book of Wisconsin published by W. W. Hixson & Company (Rockford, Illinois, n. d.).

T8N-R15E and Section 13, T8N-14E. If the Indians did follow this course they would have intersected the old trail to the Mississippi, which crossed the Rock at Aztalan. From there the trail continued northwestward across the site of Lake Mills and around the north shore of Rock Lake and then due west to the Four Lakes, following approximately the former route of State Highway 30, skirting the northern limits of Cottage Grove.

A second theory is that Black Hawk's route lay farther south, approximating the line of the Chicago and North Western Railroad. It seems improbable, however, that the Winnebago guiding Black Hawk would have rejected a trail well known to them in favor of a longer route over an area that comprises some of the marshiest land in Jefferson and Dane counties.

The point at which the British Band entered the present confines of Madison is fairly certain. Peter Parkinson Jr., who served under Dodge, says that on the night of July 20 they camped "about a quarter mile north of the northeast end of Monona . . . and about one mile northeast of the present crossing of the Catfish (or Yahara)." The troops followed the trail between Third and Fourth lakes and crossed the Catfish "at or near where the bridge now spans that stream."⁴² Beyond the Catfish the trail followed the high ground leading to and over the site of the present state capitol and then nearly due west, "leaving the summit of University Hill slightly to the north." An early resident of Wisconsin who passed through the area two months after the campaign described the "trail" as follows:

42

Peter Parkinson Jr., "Notes on the Black Hawk War," in Wisconsin Historical Collections, 10:208 (1888). At the time Parkinson wrote there were three bridges across the Yahara: at West Washington Avenue, at Sherman Avenue, and at Williamson Street. Which one he wished to indicate is not known.

The scattering trails were still distinct. Sometimes they would all converge into one broad and plain track, then again radiate in different directions, continually branching and spreading over the country, dwindling to a mere trace.⁴³

From the western limits of the city of Madison to the site of the village of Pheasant Branch, the course taken by Black Hawk and by Dodge and Henry coincided with an earlier trail around the southwestern shore of Lake Mendota. After crossing Pheasant Branch the Indians headed northwest for the Wisconsin, and their course and that of the pursuing army was noted by the surveyors where it crossed section lines. They also marked the site of the Battle of Wisconsin Heights in the northeast corner of Section 24, T9N-R6E.

As the column of troops approached the Wisconsin, small parties of warriors began to appear on its front and flanks in an attempt to delay its progress. The troops refused to be drawn off by such maneuvers, and about a mile from the river they overtook the main body of Indians. At this point, about a mile and a half east of the site of Sauk City, the Battle of Wisconsin Heights was fought. As the fighting progressed the Sauk and Foxes were driven into the "swamps, thick woods, and high grass in the bottom of the Wisconsin."⁴⁴ It had now become dusk, and Henry and Dodge appreciated the danger of attacking in the dark an adversary occupying such ground. They therefore made no attempt that night to dislodge the Indians from their position. Expecting to renew the attack in the morning, the officers withdrew the troops and they went into camp on the ground where the battle opened.

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Charles Whittlesey, "Recollections of a Tour through Wisconsin in 1832," in Wisconsin Historical Collections, 1:78 (1855).

⁴⁴

Sangamo Journal (Springfield, Illinois), August 3, 1832.

Black Hawk, loth to await attack, took advantage of the lull to cross the river. Rafts made of mats and skins carried the women and children, and those unable to march were placed in hastily improvised canoes made of long strips of elm bark tied together at the ends and headed down the Wisconsin. Many of the frail craft upset and their occupants drowned; others fell prey to Winnebago encountered on the river or to the troops stationed in boats at the mouth of the Wisconsin to intercept them.⁴⁵

Information on the route followed by those members of the British Band who crossed and headed overland to the Mississippi is exceedingly scanty. The surveyors' notes contain nothing that is of any assistance, and contemporary accounts are vague and confusing, for the terrain was totally unknown to the troops and the rapidity of pursuit discouraged correspondence. For this section of the trail it has been necessary to rely upon local tradition to a greater extent than for any other. The trail indicated in the following passages represents all the available data on the subject, but it is certainly not definitive.

The morning after the battle the troops marched down to the river prepared to reopen the engagement, only to find that the Indians had escaped once again. Reluctant to attempt a river crossing without boats, Henry and Dodge remained on the ground for a day and then moved to Blue Mounds for provisions. At this point they were joined by the main force under Atkinson. The general had received the express from Dodge and Henry on the twentieth as he was attempting to move north to a juncture with them, had immediately reversed his course, and had arrived at Blue Mounds on the twenty-fourth. Materials being available there for the construction of rafts, Atkinson now decided to cross the river

⁴⁵

Street to William Clark, August 5, 1832, in the Indian Office Files.

at Old Helena, about two and a half miles southeast of the site of the present Helena.

A week after the Indians had crossed the river the troops, thirteen hundred strong, were assembled on the north bank of the Wisconsin in Section 19, T8N-R4E, ready to resume the chase. About noon of July 28 the column turned up the river and after marching a few miles picked up the trail leading west. The contact was probably made in, or near, Section 5, T8N-R4E, since eyewitnesses recorded that it took place about four miles from the starting point and before they were out of the river bottom.⁴⁶

Aware that the troops and horses would not be equal to a campaign beyond the Mississippi without extended rest, Atkinson pushed the pursuit vigorously in the hope of catching the fugitives before they could cross the river. The thirteen hundred men represented the pick of the army, and the mounts of the militia were the best to be obtained. By dint of great effort the whites covered in a day twice the distance that the Indians did.

Keeping next to the foothills, the Sauk and Foxes proceeded down the Wisconsin, crossed Pine River near its mouth, and then turned north up the valley. How far up the valley they went before heading northwest is impossible to determine. The first natural route west from the Pine River valley is Ash Creek. If the Indians followed this route and then took the west-northwest direction described by Wakefield,⁴⁷ it would have brought them to the vicinity of Soldiers Grove, where it is known they forded the Kickapoo. They would have crossed Eagle

⁴⁶

Phillip St. George Cooke, *Scenes and Adventures in the Army* (Philadelphia, 1857), 172; Wakefield, *History*, 172; *Journal of Albert Sidney Johnston*, July 28, 1832, in the *Illinois Historical Society*.

⁴⁷

Wakefield, *History*, 77.

Creek about two miles south of Boaz, proceeded by way of the creek bottom until they turned west up Core Hollow, veered slightly to the north before reaching Knapp Creek, and then up Plum Run and west from its head to Soldiers Grove.⁴⁸

To the soldiers pursuing them it appeared that the Indians had chosen the most rugged terrain available. Even the light wagon containing medical stores had to be abandoned because it could not be hauled over the series of steep hills and marshy streams.⁴⁹ These conditions offered the regular infantry an opportunity to regain prestige it had lost earlier in the campaign. Unable to find enough to eat, the weakened mounts of the militia could not match the pace of the foot soldiers over the rough ground. One officer described the march of the troops over

such country as, I venture to say, has seldom been marched over--at one minute ascending hills, which appeared almost perpendicular, through the thickest forests; passing defiles, where one hundred resolute men might have defeated ten thousand, whatever might be their courage or capacity; next clambering up and down mountains perfectly bald, without so much as a bush to sustain a man.⁵⁰

To another officer it was "a seemingly endless succession of lofty Hills," which could only be crossed by using hands as well as feet.⁵¹ The troops were not greatly surprised to learn from Indians who inhabited the mountains that the section had not been crossed since the Winnebago had retreated that way in 1827 after attacking Captain Lindsey's keelboats.⁵²

48

The location of this section of the trail is based upon correspondence with S. W. Fogo and study of topographical maps of the region.

49

Wakefield, History, 78.

50

Henry Smith, "Indian Campaign of 1832," in Wisconsin Historical Collections, 10:162 (1888).

51

Cooke, Scenes, 174.

52

Wakefield, History, 78.

If the whites were having difficulty, Black Hawk's people must have been in desperate straits. Burdened with women, children, old people, and a few wounded, all suffering from the effects of the scanty diet of the past three months, the band was struggling desperately to cross the Mississippi before Atkinson should overtake them. Every day the whites passed the remains of horses killed for food and an increasing number of bodies of Indians who had died of starvation or of wounds. These and the camp equipage scattered all along the trail attested that the retreat had become a rout.

Striking the Kickapoo at the site of Soldiers Grove, the Indians crossed the river and followed a course north of Pine Knob and west to Tainter Creek just above Towerville.⁵³ Beyond Towerville they followed the ridge to the site of Rising Sun and beyond it for about two miles, and then turned north into what is now Vernon County. They proceeded across country and encamped on the night of July 31 in Section 11, T11N-R6W. That same evening the troops halted six miles east of the Kickapoo.

The trail of the Indians from their encampment of July 31 led northwest for about a mile and then approximated the present route of State Highway 82 as far as Section 34, T12N-R7W. From there they turned southwest to the site of the battle of August 2. Though they had reached the river a day ahead of their pursuers, they were unable to take advantage of their opportunity. Every canoe for miles along the river had been taken down to Fort Crawford to prevent such a crossing, and to complicate the problem for Black Hawk, the steamboat Warrior appeared.

For this section of the trail see Dr. Porter's articles in the De Soto (Wisconsin) Chronicle, January 22, 29, February 5, 1887. See also Plat Book of Vernon County, Wisconsin, published by C. M. Foote & Company (Minneapolis, 1896).

The Warrior, which had been chartered by the commanding officer at Fort Crawford, was armed with an artillery piece and carried, in addition to the normal crew, a detachment of seventeen regulars under Lieutenant Kingsbury. It had arrived on the scene quite by chance. Lieutenant Kingsbury had been ordered up the Mississippi in the steamboat to warn the Sioux of the expected arrival of the British Band on the Mississippi and to enforce the order that all canoes be brought down to Prairie du Chien. It was on his return, about four o'clock in the afternoon of August 1, that they happened upon the Sauk and Foxes, who had reached the river that day.

Now occurred the tragic misunderstanding which led to the Battle of Bad Axe. Realizing the futility of resistance, Black Hawk attempted to surrender, but the soldiers did not understand and interpreted the white flags displayed by the Indians as part of a delaying action. Kingsbury ordered the troops to open fire, and the British Band replied in kind. After being engaged about two hours and inflicting an unknown number of casualties at the expense of one, Kingsbury had to break off the fight, for the Warrior was running low on fuel and could no longer maintain its position. The fuel had lasted long enough, however, to prevent the crossing of all but a few of the Indians who might have improvised rafts or swimming aids.⁵⁴

Meanwhile Atkinson was gaining rapidly in the chase. On the night of August 1 he bivouacked near the site of the Indian camp of July 31. The troops were up again at two o'clock, and before dawn were on their way once more. In

54

Lieutenant R. Holmes to Atkinson, August 5, 1832, in the Black Hawk War Papers, Illinois Historical Society; Lieutenant Kingsbury to Major Hook, August 8, 1832, in Quartermaster Historical Files, National Archives.

the van were the regulars and Dodge's squadron, the other units having failed to receive their marching orders before turning their horses out to graze.

Contact was first made by scouts within three miles of the camp, but only, as it turned out, with a small group bent on a mere delaying action. The main body of the British Band was found along the river bottoms and on the small islands adjacent to the east bank of the river. Having failed to fortify, the Sauk and Foxes, outnumbered and weak from their scanty diet of the past two and a half months, were soon driven into the water, where many were slain. The troops made little attempt to distinguish the braves from the women, children, and old people, and all suffered severely from the troops on the bank as well as those on the Warrior, which had returned from refueling at Prairie du Chien near the conclusion of the engagement. A few Sauk and Foxes escaped, among them Black Hawk, and nearly fifty were taken prisoners. The rest were slain or drowned. About a hundred and fifty bodies were recovered from the river, but more than that number disappeared forever in its waters.⁵⁵

Bad Axe proved to be the end of the military operations. The British Band, as a fighting force, had been destroyed. For several weeks, however, prisoners continued to be brought in, among them Black Hawk himself, who was delivered at Fort Crawford by Winnebago, in return for the generous reward offered by the Americans.

As was usual in the negotiations following Indian wars, a considerable cession of land was extorted from the defeated. Black Hawk and several other leaders of the British Band were held prisoners for a time. After being conducted on a tour of the eastern states to convince him of the futility of further

resistance, Black Hawk was released to the custody of Keokuk. Thus ended one of the most sordid episodes in the history of our Indian relations. Inept handling of a delicate situation cost the lives of approximately two hundred and fifty whites and at least twice as many Indians, added several million dollars to the tax levy of the state of Illinois and the federal government, and left on the frontier a heritage of hatred and distrust.

W.H.
Harrison
Treaty
1804
Nov. 3.