

no war; he would take his people across the big river in peace.

He knew enough of the white man's customs to send forward five of his men with a white flag of truce to arrange a parley. The advance party of militiamen became panicky when these Indians appeared, and, in spite of the flag of truce, opened fire, killing two of the Sacs. When the Chief learned of this atrocity he ordered his people to retreat while he rode forward with fifty warriors to meet the main column of troops. Black Hawk's little band came upon several hundred soldiers and swooped down on them with vengeance. General Stillman's troops were routed. They threw away their equipment and turned tail. This May 14, 1832 episode is still referred to as "Stillman's Run."

It remains for military students to pinpoint particular campaigns, to work out the march tables, and to determine where so-and-so was at such-and-such time. But here is a quick, overall picture of the so-called Black Hawk War.

The general movement of the Indians was toward the Mississippi, but so many detachments of troops intervened that they were compelled to move on a wide arc northward. Black Hawk decided to swing up to the Four Lakes area (Madison) in Wisconsin. On June 16, while his people force-marched on this line, Black Hawk led a handful of his warriors against the threatening soldiers at Pecatonica and soundly whipped them. The next day he repeated his strategy at Kellog's Grove with the same results.

By this time his people were in sad straits. They were retreating so fast they could not hunt for food. Supplies were exhausted. Old people who could not keep up were left to die along the trail. Soon it was real starvation; just a few roots and berries and then exhaustion and despair.

The goal of these unfortunate people was the Father of Waters. All of life was on the other side. Once across they would be safe. It was a race for survival. When the Sacs reached the Ouisconsin River, Black Hawk again took a handful of his braves and turned to fight a desperate delaying action. He prepared a false trail while his people made their last feeble

dash for safety. Black Hawk's warriors struck with such fury that the well-armed, well-fed soldiers were stopped in their tracks and rolled back. Black Hawk, ready to make the supreme sacrifice to save his people, received word that his tribe had reached the great river and were making the crossing. He had accomplished his mission. The Great Spirit had been kind to him. Or, so he thought at the time.

When the starving, exhausted Indians reached the Mississippi, they seized what few canoes and bateaus they could find. Women made small rafts out of bark for their papooses and, pushing these tiny things ahead of them, began to swim toward Iowa country and safety.

Suddenly, soldiers appeared, and began firing at the Indians still on the shore and those out on the water. A river gunboat rounded a bend and added its formidable fire-power to that of the troops. Cannon and small-arms fire of troops aboard the boat poured into the few Indians still alive. Women and tiny infants sank beneath the muddy surface.

This is called the "Battle of Bad Axe." It was no "battle," it was a shameful massacre! The opposition consisted of women, children, and old men; starving, worn-out people trying only to get away.

When Black Hawk was told what had happened he made his way to a Winnebago village and told them to send word to the Soldier Chief that Black Hawk was coming in to surrender. At the fort, the Winnebagoes tried to make it appear that they had captured Black Hawk, who now held them in disdain.

What happened to Black Hawk? He was first sent down by boat to Prairie du Chien, and the young officer who had him in charge was Lieutenant Jefferson Davis. They became great friends; Jeff Davis treated him courteously and Black Hawk responded. At Prairie du Chien, the commanding officer, General Atkinson, whom Black Hawk had mauled rather roughly during the campaign, proved himself a rather small person. He had Black Hawk put in a miserable cell, anchored by ball and chain. He was kept that way all through the bitter winter. Lieutenant Davis had made the trip down river with the Chief without handcuffs or a locked door because Black Hawk was a Chief, a man of honor. But the Soldier Chief treated him like a criminal.

Eventually, Black Hawk was taken East, and all along the way people turned out to see him. He was treated with respect, even by the curious. For a time, he was kept a prisoner at Fortress Monroe, and then he was taken to Washington to meet President Andrew Jackson. The Indian Chief said, "You are the Great White Father. I am Black Hawk. You are a man, I am a man."

Old Hickory understood such a spirit and soon returned Black Hawk to his people, but without rank or position. Because of his prestige, Black Hawk was forbidden to live in an Indian village where he might be considered a leader. His house had to be isolated. He was a man apart.

Keokuk now was the Chief, and the Sac and Fox tribes saw their lands disappear each time Keokuk put his thumb mark to the white man's treaties. In the meantime, Black Hawk, broken in spirit and in health, came to his end in a lonely cabin. He was placed in his grave wearing the uniform of a General, a present given to him by General Winfield Scott.

The white man's avarice still plagued him, even in death. Some vandals stole his body, expecting to put it on exhibition at a profit. But Black Hawk was spared this final indignity. The building in Burlington where his bones were placed was destroyed by fire and became his funeral pyre.

