

# The Black Hawk War



History is filled with events little thought about or even remembered today. Yet every pebble thrown into the pool of time causes ripples. The Black Hawk War of 1832 may have lasted only a little over 4 months but it did cause ramifications felt for many years after.

It began when Black Hawk, a Sauk leader, led a group of Indians (known as the British Band) from Iowa Indian Territory, across the Mississippi River, into the state of Illinois. Perhaps he was hoping to reclaim land sold to the U.S. in the disputed 1804 Treaty of St Louis.

The U.S., expecting hostile action, mobilized a frontier militia (which included James Adams, the 4th great-granduncle of my niece's husband.) They opened fire on a delegation from the Native Americans on May 14, 1832. While Black Hawk was initially successful in engaging the U.S. forces before leading his followers into a secure area in what is now Wisconsin, the British Band were tracked down in August of that year and defeated. Black Hawk surrendered and was imprisoned for a year.

This small "war" served as impetus to the U.S. policy of Indian removal, pressuring Native American tribes to sell their lands and move west of the Mississippi. It also gave a 23 year old Abraham Lincoln his only military service – as

captain within the volunteer militia. He saw no actual combat and mustered out shortly after the skirmish ended.

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