



1553

United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Wisconsin Heights Battlefield  
other names/site number 47Da1161

2. Location

street & number 0.4 mi SE of County Trunk Highway Y and State Trunk Highway 78 intersection N/A not for publication  
city or town Vicinity of Sauk City N/A vicinity  
state Wisconsin code WI county Dane code 025 zip code 53583

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally statewide locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Alicia J. Carr*  
Signature of certifying official/Title

December 5, 2001  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Wisconsin Heights Battlefield  
Name of Property

Dane County  
County and State

Wisconsin

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain:)

*Bob Boland*

*1/30/02*

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as  
as apply)

private  
 public-local  
 public-State  
 public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

building(s)  
 district  
 structure  
 site  
 object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources  
in the count)

contributing	noncontributing
	4 buildings
1	3 sites
	structures
	2 objects
1	9 total

**Name of related multiple property listing:**  
(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property  
listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources  
is previously listed in the National Register**

0

#### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)  
DEFENSE/Battle site

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)  
RECREATION & CULTURE/outdoor recreation

#### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)  
N/A

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other

#### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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WI

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

MILITARY

ETHNIC HERITAGE/Native American

ARCHEOLOGY/Historic-Aboriginal

ARCHEOLOGY/Historic-Non-Aboriginal

### Period of Significance

1832

### Significant Dates

1832

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Black Hawk

### Cultural Affiliation

Native American (Sac and Fox)

Euro-American

### Architect/Builder

N/A

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

## 10. Geographical Data

Acree of Property 70 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	279000	4791640	3	16	279500	4791580
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	16	279470	4791500	4	16	279720	4791580
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Laura Abing, Kevin Abing of HRL; Jeanne Ward of IMAC (data for Section 7)		
organization	Heritage Research, LTD	date	2/1998
street & number	N89 W16785 Appleton Ave	telephone	
city or town	Menomonee Falls	state	WI
		zip code	53051

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

<b>name/title</b>					
<b>organization</b>	Department of Natural Resources			<b>date</b>	
<b>street&amp;number</b>	101 S. Webster, LF/4			<b>telephone</b>	
<b>city or town</b>	Madison	<b>state</b>	WI	<b>zip code</b>	53703
<b>name/title</b>	James and Patricia Ziegler				
<b>organization</b>				<b>date</b>	
<b>street&amp;number</b>	7067 Taylor Road			<b>telephone</b>	
<b>city or town</b>	Sauk City	<b>state</b>	WI	<b>zip code</b>	53583
<b>name/title</b>	John Keefe & Sandra Hayes				
<b>organization</b>				<b>date</b>	
<b>street&amp;number</b>	9439 CTH Y			<b>telephone</b>	
<b>city or town</b>	Sauk City	<b>state</b>	WI	<b>zip code</b>	53583
<b>name/title</b>	Richard & Marilyn McFarlane				
<b>organization</b>				<b>date</b>	
<b>street&amp;number</b>	7130 STH 78			<b>telephone</b>	
<b>city or town</b>	Sauk City	<b>state</b>	WI	<b>zip code</b>	53583
<b>name/title</b>	Stephen and Ellen Schneider				
<b>organization</b>				<b>date</b>	
<b>street&amp;number</b>	9431 CTH Y			<b>telephone</b>	
<b>city or town</b>	Sauk City	<b>state</b>	WI	<b>zip code</b>	53583
<b>name/title</b>	Otto and Jane Cordero				
<b>organization</b>				<b>date</b>	
<b>street&amp;number</b>	7140 STH 78			<b>telephone</b>	
<b>city or town</b>	Sauk City	<b>state</b>	WI	<b>zip code</b>	53583
<b>name/title</b>	Larry and Carol Pakyz				
<b>organization</b>				<b>date</b>	
<b>street&amp;number</b>	9435 CTH Y			<b>telephone</b>	
<b>city or town</b>	Sauk City	<b>state</b>	WI	<b>zip code</b>	53583

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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### Physical Description

The Battle of Wisconsin Heights--a significant engagement during the American-Indian conflict known as the Black Hawk War of 1832--took place approximately one mile east of the Wisconsin River in northwestern Dane County. The property is located on the border of the geological region known as the Driftless Area. The general battlefield site is composed of steep bluffs associated with the Wisconsin River and terrace knolls of outwash sand and gravel located on the northern portion of the property.<sup>1</sup> Most of the property is currently owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). There are two rather steep-sided ridges to the north and south of a drainage, which flows west toward the river. The elevation of the bottomland surrounding the drainage is between 760 and 780 feet above mean sea level (amsl). The elevation of the northern ridge is between 800 and 840 feet amsl, while that of the southern ridge--which features a prominent knoll--is 800 to 880 feet amsl. STH 78 borders the property on the west; the north, east and south lines are defined by recent housing, a farm and privately owned woodlands, respectively.

Historical sources pinpoint the specific location of the battlefield as T9N, R6E, Section 24, SE 1/4 NE 1/4 (see Section 8, page 11 of this report for details). Based on maps of the battle and the existing terrain, the association is very likely. When the fight occurred on 21 July 1832, the site was part of an oak savanna, which consisted of sparse trees, tall grass and wooded wetlands present in the bottomland and extending west to the river. General James Henry, one of the American leaders at the battle, described the vegetation, stating how the enemy "took refuge in the swamps, thick woods and high grass in the bottom of Ouisconsin."<sup>2</sup> As for the terrain, natural features of the site which figured prominently in the battle included the two aforementioned opposing ridges (or heights), the tall knoll and the bottomland. In brief, the American forces probably first confronted the Sac on a height at the northeastern edge of the property. The accounts and maps are not conclusive. Exhibit 4a is a copy of a map of the battlefield, the original reportedly done by a Private Clark. According to National Archives staff, the Clark map is of uncertain origin but is typical of that era. Exhibit 4b appears to be another version of this same map. Eventually the troops undertook a bayonet charge down the slightly less steep western portion of this height, and drove the Sac into the ravine. Black Hawk's warriors

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<sup>1</sup>"Trail Survey at Black Hawk Ridge," Report prepared by Cynthia Stiles for WIDNR, 1992, no pp.

<sup>2</sup>James Henry cited in Ellen M. Whitney, comp. and ed., *The Black Hawk War, 1831-1832*, in *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, vol. 37 (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1975), no pp. noted.

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aligned themselves along a ridge, south of which Black Hawk oversaw the fight from a tall knoll. This commanding position provided an unparalleled view of the entire battlefield. The gentler slopes north and east of the northern ridge served as an encampment for the Americans subsequent to the brief but intense battle. The encampment lasted for over one day, during which time the singular American casualty in the battle was buried on the site. No surface evidence of any of these activities exists at present.

Relatively few changes are apparent at the site since the battle occurred. Within the recent past, the DNR portion of the property was part of a campground and hiking and horse trails are still evident and in use. The northern portion of the property, now in private lots, includes four homes, and the extreme eastern edge of the battlefield is now an agricultural field. Looking farther back in time, the land had been associated with a farm during the late nineteenth century; but, given the uneven terrain, it is unlikely the land was ever plowed. Perhaps because the area was never worked agriculturally, the ridges do not appear to be heavily eroded. Some colluvial wash is evident in the bottomland, however, and it is possible that battle-related artifacts from the sloped sides of the ridges might have washed into this area (see Archaeology for full discussion of artifacts). The most obvious physical change is that the site had become overgrown. In the late 1990s, the DNR began efforts to restore the property to its former appearance, clearing substantial woods and brush from the battle area and planting grass to stop potential erosion. Trees of any age have been left standing, and the area is beginning to resemble the oak savanna of the past.

### **Archaeology**

#### Methodology and Findings:

Archival records, combined with comparisons between historic descriptions and the current physical setting of the site, suggest the area defined within this nomination was indeed the location for the Battle of Wisconsin Heights. But DNR's efforts in the area literally cleared the way for archaeological investigations to confirm that the battle occurred at this site. Several survey techniques were utilized during October and November 1997, including pedestrian reconnaissance, a gradiometer (magnetics) survey, limited use of ground penetrating radar and an extensive survey with metal detectors. Areas canvassed during the investigations are illustrated in Exhibit 9. In addition, data from previous archaeological investigations by DNR archaeologist Cynthia Stiles were reviewed. Areas covered through the course of the latter are depicted in Exhibit 10. Stiles also did limited metal detecting on the private lands in the northeastern area of the nominated property but found only nondiagnostic metal.

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Despite clearance of large portions of the site, pedestrian reconnaissance failed to reveal any cultural materials visible on the ground surface. Several anomalies were noted during the sweep with the gradiometer; however, these were not vestiges of a battle. For example, two large fragments of metal, a can and a farm machinery part were recovered in the bottomland, and along the northern ridge, several anomalies were determined to be rocks with strong magnetic qualities. An area roughly ten by twenty meters was also surveyed using the ground penetrating radar (see Exhibit 9). This particular area was chosen based on input from DNR personnel and members of the Sauk County Historical Society, who identified the spot as a likely site for the burial of Thomas Jefferson Short, the only American casualty of the engagement. One anomaly was noted during this survey. A shovel test unit was excavated at that point to a depth of approximately 1.2 meters; however, no cultural materials, potential pits or other indications of a grave were identified.

The metal detector survey was the most productive of the various survey techniques employed. Resulting from this effort, as well as from previous metal detecting surveys conducted by DNR archaeologist Stiles, large quantities of metal debris were discovered along the north and south ridges the bottom area and the probable encampment area to the east. In general, the artifacts recovered consist of modern bullet and shotgun shell casings, farm machinery parts, nails and poptops. Nevertheless, a small number of older artifacts were retrieved. Dr. Steve Osman, a military historian from the Minnesota Historical Society at Fort Snelling, identified these as four lead balls, two cartridge case buckles and a fastener for a leather bag; he indicated that five of these artifacts were likely related to the period of the Black Hawk War. Two of the lead balls may postdate the battle. The two balls that are most likely related to the war are both spent and measure approximately 0.75 inches and 0.56 inches. The locations from which all seven older artifacts were recovered are shown in Exhibit 9. This exhibit reveals several identifiable activity areas based upon the recovery of the artifacts. Two lead balls, including one most likely related to the war, were recovered in what is now an agricultural field at the eastern edge of the property. The south ridge concealed one of the buckles, and the gentle slope down from the north ridge was the site of the fastener. Cynthia Stiles' earlier surveys unearthed the remaining three artifacts, specifically, two lead balls (one likely related to the war) and an iron buckle. These were recovered from the extreme western portion of the battlefield. While this handful of military-related artifacts do not constitute overwhelming evidence of the Battle of Wisconsin Heights, it has been suggested that neither the militia nor Black Hawk's warriors were likely very well equipped.<sup>3</sup> Regardless of this point, no archaeological evidence whatsoever

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<sup>3</sup>See "Archaeological Investigations of the Wisconsin Heights Battlefield Site 47DA57, Dane County, Wisconsin," Reports of Investigations No. 493, prepared by Jeanne Ward and John McCarthy of IMA Consulting, Inc., for WIDNR, February 1998, 12.

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has been recovered during archaeological investigations throughout other known battlefields related to the Black Hawk War era.'

Within the boundaries of the battlefield, there are four noncontributing residential buildings, three small noncontributing prehistoric archaeological sites, 47Da1038, 47Da1119, and 47Da1120 (see USGS topo), and two noncontributing objects, both historic markers commemorating the battle. The three small archaeological sites are all campsites. 47Da1038 contains Late Archaic to Late Woodland components; the other two sites have not produced diagnostic artifacts. The presence of the residential structures does not detract significantly from the property's historic integrity.

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'Robert Birmingham, State Archaeologist, Information from personal communication with IMAC, cited in "Archaeological Investigations," 11.

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**Statement of significance**

The site of the Battle of Wisconsin Heights in northwestern Dane County, Wisconsin is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the national level on the basis of Criteria A, B and D. Regarding A, the battlefield is eligible because of its association with both the Battle of Wisconsin Heights in particular and the Black Hawk War of 1832 in general. Specifically, as one of the major actions of the four-month-long war, the Battle of Wisconsin Heights is significant in its own right as it was effectively an Indian victory against much larger U.S. military forces. This success must have seemed monumental to the Sac and Fox Indians involved; at the time, it enabled them to continue a desperate retreat to their reservation west of the Mississippi River. Furthermore, the battle is significant in the wider context of a war that ultimately opened a portion of the Upper Mississippi Valley to American settlement and development. The property is also eligible under Criterion B since the battle that occurred at the site may be considered a defining moment in the career of Black Hawk, the leader of the Sac and Fox. Jefferson Davis, future president of the Confederacy, defined Black Hawk's management and bravery as one of the most remarkable achievements in military history. Although American military figures General James Henry and Colonel Henry Dodge played prominent roles in the battle, it is arguable that other events and achievements represented by different resources better illustrate these men's respective historical significance as individuals. Lastly, the battlefield is eligible under Criterion D, for its potential to yield information important in history. Specifically, more extensive archaeological investigations hold the potential to uncover additional artifacts and features that could provide significant data on Sac and Fox and troop activities during this key battle.

**Introduction**

The Battle of Wisconsin Heights. The mention of this struggle certainly does not stir the nation's collective memory as does Gettysburg, the Little Big Horn or Iwo Jima. Indeed, most Americans would be hard pressed to identify the war in which the battle occurred. Nevertheless, this relegation to the historical dustbin does not lessen the desperation with which both sides fought--one from a sense of sheer survival and the other to remove a perceived obstacle to the country's inexorable march of progress. Nor does it diminish the impact the battle and the entire war had on the settlement of south-central Wisconsin and northern Illinois.

The Battle of Wisconsin Heights occurred on 21 July 1832, two weeks before the end of the larger conflict known as the Black Hawk War. The war began in April 1832 when Black Hawk, a Sac Indian warrior, led a band of more than one thousand Sac and Fox Indians across the Mississippi River, leaving their reservation in present-day Iowa. Their objective was to reclaim their long-established village of Saukenauk in northern Illinois (see Exhibit 8). This was in violation of a land cession, which Sac and Fox chiefs concluded with the U.S. government in 1804--and which Black Hawk refused to

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recognize. Black Hawk's attempt to resettle the former Indian village triggered a cat-and-mouse chase, sparking fear among white settlers in the region. For four months, large numbers of U.S. regular troops and volunteers from Illinois and Michigan Territory--all under the overarching command of General Henry Atkinson--pursued Black Hawk and his followers throughout northern Illinois and what was to become the southern third of Wisconsin. At the time, Wisconsin was part of Michigan Territory. The Battle of Wisconsin Heights took place about 1.5 miles east of modern-day Sauk City. It was at this location that U.S. forces finally caught up with Black Hawk's band. Starved, fatigued and hopeless over reclaiming their homeland, the group was ultimately attempting to retreat across the Mississippi River to its Iowa reservation. But crossing the Wisconsin River was the Indians' immediate challenge at Wisconsin Heights. While the ragged band of women, children and elderly hastily stripped bark to construct rude canoes and ford the river, Black Hawk and his available warriors staved off the larger U.S. forces under the immediate leadership of General James Henry and Colonel Henry Dodge. The Indians accomplished their objective at Wisconsin Heights, only to be defeated before crossing the Mississippi at the Battle of Bad Axe on 2 August, thus ending the Black Hawk War.

This thumbnail sketch of the Battle of Wisconsin Heights provides an introduction to the conflict; however, it does not do justice to the sense of urgency both sides must have felt during the fight. Nor does it capture the personalities of the leaders involved. And yet, these are only some of the crucial elements behind a deeper understanding of the battle and an appreciation of its historical significance, both as a singular campaign and as part of the Black Hawk War. The Battle of Wisconsin Heights had a direct bearing not only on Wisconsin's history, but that of the Upper Mississippi Valley.

The following historical account of the Battle of Wisconsin Heights is generally a chronological treatment of the conflict, arranged in five sections: (1) a brief overview of the causes and early course of the war; (2) an account of 20 July: preamble to the battle; (3) a summary of 21 July: the day of the battle; (4) a description of the immediate aftermath of the battle; and (5) a synopsis of events surrounding the end of the war, and a statement on the significance of the Battle of Wisconsin Heights. In addition to photographs and two archaeological exhibits, maps of the war trail enroute to the battle are provided as supplemental exhibits (Exhibits 1-2); historic maps of the battlefield as well as a chart illustrating the Americans' order of battle are included in Exhibits 3-5; and miscellaneous maps as well as artistic renderings related to the war constitute Exhibits 6-8. Most of the five sections below include a series of specific issues that are highlighted and discussed individually. To address these issues, it is duly noted that there are many eyewitness accounts regarding the battle in particular as well as the war in general.

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These documented narratives often reflect inconsistencies.<sup>5</sup> This fact of historical interpretation has been considered as the following offers rational suggestions and conclusions in cases where historical evidence may be contradictory or lacking.

### Historical Background

#### Brief Overview of the Causes and Early Course of the War:

A French attack in the early eighteenth century not only drove the Sac and Fox Indians from the Green Bay region, but also forged a strong alliance between the two tribes. Uprooted, they eventually migrated to northwestern Illinois and southwestern Wisconsin. Fox villages were scattered along the Mississippi as far north as Prairie du Chien, while the main Sac village, Saukenauk, was situated in Illinois above the mouth of the Rock River. The area's natural resources provided for all of the Indians' needs. The rivers and streams teemed with fish. Women cultivated the fertile soil, producing surplus corn that they sold to white traders. And Sac and Fox warriors, aside from defending their coveted territory from enemy tribes, trapped furs and hunted wild game.<sup>6</sup>

By the early nineteenth century, the steady encroachment of American settlers threatened the Sac and Fox. Inevitably, scattered clashes between whites and Indians ensued. In 1804, William Henry Harrison, Governor of the Indiana Territory, took advantage of one of these encounters and pressured a delegation of Sac and Fox chiefs into ceding all of their land east of the Mississippi River, a total of fifty million acres. The Indians could remain on this land until the federal government surveyed and sold it to white settlers. Many members of the two tribes bitterly opposed the treaty, claiming that the delegation exceeded its authority and may not have been sober during the negotiations. The most vocal opponent of the 1804 treaty was Ma-ka-

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<sup>5</sup>Note that many of the eyewitness accounts are included in various compilation works. It is not surprising, therefore, that there is some overlap among the secondary sources consulted for this document. The primary compilations cited include Whitney's *Black Hawk War* and Thayer's *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*. In addition, copies of National Archives documents in Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, are referenced. See Bibliography for complete citations.

<sup>6</sup>William T. Hagan, *The Sac and Fox Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), 5-6, 9-10; Cecil Eby, "That Disgraceful Affair," *the Black Hawk War* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1973), 38-39.

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tai-me-she-kia-kiak, more commonly known as Black Hawk. This Sac warrior was born in 1767 at Saukenauk. At the age of fifteen, he wounded an enemy and won the right to paint, wear feathers and be called a brave. Thereafter, he became one of the Sac's primary warriors, leading or participating in many war parties. He was not a physically imposing figure; he was of medium, but muscular, build. His piercing, dark eyes and Roman nose, however, were not without effect. The loss of this fiery warrior's village and homeland through the 1804 treaty ignited his deep-seeded hatred of Americans. Indeed, Black Hawk claimed this treaty was the "origin of all our difficulties."

Black Hawk's enmity for the Americans only increased over time. When the War of 1812 commenced, he fought with the British against the U.S. The American victory in that conflict paved the way for a flood of white settlers into the Illinois Country. By 1823, many squatters were illegally cultivating land near Saukenauk. The Sacs' situation further deteriorated in 1827; Illinois Governor Ninian Edwards, on behalf of his pioneer constituency, petitioned to have the War Department remove the Indians across the Mississippi River. The federal government's pressure on the Sacs and other Illinois tribes intensified over the next several years. The majority of the Sacs, including an up-and-coming leader named Keokuk, adhered to the government's wishes. Black Hawk and his so-called British Band, however, continued to return to Saukenauk after the annual winter hunt, only to find squatters occupying some of their lodges. The situation became so tense in the spring of 1831, that Governor John Reynolds called out the militia to expel the Sacs from Saukenauk. Unprepared for a fight, Black Hawk re-crossed the Mississippi. In June 1831, government officials dictated a treaty to the Sacs, whereby the Indians agreed to submit to Keokuk's authority and promised never to return to Illinois without permission. A despondent Black Hawk was resigned to live out his life away from his native village. But his spirits lifted late in the fall. Neapope, Black Hawk's principal lieutenant, returned from a trip to Canada and to the village of the Winnebago Prophet on the Rock River. Neapope related to the aging warrior that the British promised ammunition and supplies, while the Prophet offered the assistance of several tribes in the event Black Hawk attempted to reclaim his home. Black Hawk's hatred for the Americans was so intense that he seized upon

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<sup>7</sup>Hagan, *Sac and Fox Indians*, 8, 16-25; William F. Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail* (Sheboygan, WI: Zimmermann Press, 1984), 33-35; Donald Jackson, ed., *Ma-Ka-Tai-Me-She-Kai-Kiak-- Black Hawk: An Autobiography* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1955), 47, 52-62.

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this quixotic scheme.<sup>8</sup>

In April 1832, Black Hawk and his supporters crossed the Mississippi and began their fateful trek up the Rock River toward the Winnebago Prophet's village in northern Illinois. There were roughly twelve hundred men, women and children in the group, including about five hundred warriors. News of the band and its action triggered panic among white settlers scattered from the lead region around Galena all the way to Chicago. Immediately, Illinois Governor John Reynolds put out a call for militia. A combined force of U.S. Army Regulars and volunteers, under the command of General Henry Atkinson, took up the pursuit. Alarmed by the American response and doubtful of promised aid from Indian and British allies, Black Hawk resolved to surrender and return across the Mississippi. On 14 May, he sent three braves with a white flag to Brigadier General Isaiah Stillman's camp south of the Kishwaukee River in northern Illinois. Drunken members of this unit, which was known as the First Army, Illinois Militia, ignored the flag of truce and captured the emissaries; this action ignited a wider skirmish. Black Hawk's forces routed the militia in the Battle of Stillman's Run.

This engagement was a point of no return; clearly, a peaceful resolution was no longer possible. The stinging defeat further aroused the Americans, resulting in the call for two thousand additional volunteers.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the Americans sought assistance from neighboring tribes, who, for a variety of reasons, would be willing to attack the Sac and Fox.<sup>10</sup> As for Black Hawk, he sought revenge against the treacherous

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<sup>8</sup>Hagan, *Sac and Fox Indians*, 26-140; Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 37-43.

<sup>9</sup>Eby, "That Disgraceful Affair," 91-138; Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 39-40, 60-64.

<sup>10</sup>Many tribes throughout the region were divided in terms of loyalty. Some sided with the Americans, seeking favor and presents from a people whose growing presence and governmental power could not be ignored; yet, many Ho-Chunk in particular experienced "a strong feeling of friendliness toward the Sacs." These conditions resulted in various levels of Indian assistance toward both sides in the Black Hawk War. For example, unspecified numbers of Potawatomis and Ho-Chunk served the Americans as scouts, messengers and even as soldiers during the war; in addition to twelve lodges of Kickapoos, Black Hawk managed to obtain the aid of approximately fifty Potawatomis and fifty Ho-Chunk at different points during the conflict. (Note that the Americans also obtained help from the Santee Sioux and Menominee tribes, both

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Americans. His first priority was to insure the safety of his band. He did so by moving up the Rock River, north of the Illinois border, and encamped in the swampy region around Lake Koshkonong. Over the next month, he and his warriors staged several raids against white settlements throughout northern Illinois and southwestern Wisconsin.<sup>11</sup> The elusive Black Hawk frustrated the Americans. On 15 June, an impatient President Andrew Jackson sent General Winfield Scott to replace the seemingly ineffective Atkinson. In the hope of redeeming himself, Atkinson and up to four thousand troops set out to locate the Indian camp. On 28 June, the Americans pressed into the uncharted territory of south central Wisconsin. They reached the marsh around Lake Koshkonong one week later and began a search for the Sac and Fox camp, but to no avail. Black Hawk, aware of the troop's movements, led his band farther up the Rock River. Bogged down in the Koshkonong swamps, the Americans' supplies steadily dwindled. To restock, Atkinson dispatched three brigades under Colonel Henry Dodge, General James Henry and General Milton Alexander on 10 July to Fort Winnebago, some fifty miles to the northwest. In the meantime, Atkinson's men constructed Fort Koshkonong (present-day Fort Atkinson). At Fort Winnebago, Pierre Paquette, a fur trader of Ho-Chunk-French descent, informed Dodge, Henry and Alexander that Black Hawk's latest camp was reportedly near Cranberry Lake (also known as Horicon Lake, near modern-day Hustisford).<sup>12</sup> Paquette's information came at a fortuitous time for

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of which were foes of the Sac.) See Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., "Narrative of Spoon Decorah," in *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* (Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin[?], 1895), 13:453; Patrick Jung, "Forge, Destroy, and Preserve the Bonds of Empire: Euro-Americans, Native Americans, and Metis on the Wisconsin Frontier, 1634-1856" (Ph.D. dissertation, Marquette University, 1997), 454-68; Minutes of an Examination of Prisoners, in Ellen M. Whitney, comp. and ed., *The Black Hawk War, 1831-1832*, in *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, vol. 37 (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1975), 1028.

<sup>11</sup>W.A. Titus, "Historic Spots in Wisconsin: The Battle of Wisconsin Heights," in *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 4 (1920-1921):56; Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 64-88; Jackson, *An Autobiography*, 140-51; Eby, "That Disgraceful Affair," 139-96.

<sup>12</sup>Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 93-105; Hagan, *Sac and Fox Indians*, 168-69, 171-73; Henry Dodge to Henry Atkinson, 18 July 1832, in Whitney, *The Black Hawk War*, 37:820. Some sources do not mention that Black Hawk and his band ventured up the Rock River into Dodge County, implying that they traveled west toward the Four Lakes after abandoning their camp at Koshkonong. See Colonel Ebenezer Childs, "Recollections of Wisconsin Since 1820," in *Report and Collections of the State Historical Society of*

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Henry and Dodge. Their men's morale was low because they were chasing an evasive enemy and because they had just endured a rugged march to Fort Winnebago. Anxious to confront Black Hawk, Henry and Dodge decided to make their way to the alleged campsite. Alexander, who was unwilling to disobey Atkinson's original orders, took his men with the supplies back to the main body of U.S. troops at Koshkonong.<sup>13</sup>

As Henry and Dodge began their pursuit, Black Hawk's band was not faring well. Promises of assistance from Ho-Chunk allies and the British were not fulfilled. Moreover, the necessary retreat from Lake Koshkonong, coupled with the fact that the band had to be constantly on the move, denied it a steady food supply. From this point on, starvation and fatigue plagued the Sac and Fox.

Unaware of the Indians' declining condition, Henry and Dodge left Fort Winnebago around 15 July with Paquette and between six to twelve Ho-Chunk scouts. Henry's force totaled approximately 450 men, while Dodge's volunteers numbered about 150. Having reached the rapids of the Rock River on 18 July, Henry and Dodge sent an Indian guide and two militiamen to report to Atkinson about Black Hawk's rumored location. Ten to twelve miles enroute, the messengers discovered a trail to the southwest that could only have been made by Black Hawk and his band. The starving condition of the Indians was apparent. The messengers noted that, for sustenance, the Indians stripped bark from many oak trees and dug holes in search of wild potatoes. The envoys immediately returned to Henry and Dodge and relayed information about the fresh trail. At last, it seemed as if Black Hawk was within the troops' reach. Henry and Dodge ordered the volunteers to jettison any unnecessary supplies to speed up their pursuit. Consequently, five baggage wagons, sutlers' stores and other "valuable articles" were left behind at Hustis Rapids. Despite heavy rains, swamps, thickets and what one soldier described as "twelve miles [of] the worst kind of road," the troops enthusiastically tracked their enemy, crossing the Mud Lake fork of the Rock River (near Lake Mills) around 2:00 p.m. The rain continued, falling throughout the night

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*Wisconsin for the Years 1857 and 1858* 4 (1859):184; Miriam Gurko, *Indian America: The Black Hawk War* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1970), 132-35. Most sources and route maps, however, indicate that the band ventured north of present-day Watertown before turning southwest on its effective retreat.

<sup>13</sup>Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 105, 112-14; Gurko, *Indian America*, 132-34; William T. Hagan, "The Dodge-Henry Controversy," in *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 50 (Winter 1957):381.

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on the eager troops as they camped near Rock Lake, twenty miles east of Madison.<sup>14</sup>

Account of 20 July: Preamble to the Battle:

Events

For the Indians' part, there must have been a growing sense of desperation. Although it is unclear, it seems likely that the reason the band turned to the southwest was because Black Hawk realized his only course of action was to retreat west of the Mississippi. Regardless of what Black Hawk may have been thinking prior to 20 July, the issue certainly had been decided by that date. As the storm from the previous night gave way to a chilly Friday morning, Black Hawk and his weary band were encamped in the swampy region which the Indians called "Tay-cho-pe-rah," or what was more commonly called the Four Lakes (encompassing present-day Madison).<sup>15</sup> Although the marshy wilderness provided a good hiding spot, starvation became more of a factor as

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<sup>14</sup>Crawford Beecher Thayer, comp. and ed., *The Battle of Wisconsin Heights: An Eye-Witness Account of the Black Hawk War of 1832* (s.n.: by the author, 1983), 87-104; Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 112-14, 119-20; John Wakefield, *Wakefield's History of the Black Hawk War: A Reprint of the First Edition* (Jacksonville, IL: Calvin Goudy, 1834; reprint ed., Madison, WI: Roger Hunt, 1976), 106 (includes quoted material); William Salter, *The Life of Henry Dodge From 1782 to 1833* (Burlington, IA: s.n., 1890), 45-46; Joseph I. Lambert, "The Black Hawk War: A Military Analysis," in *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 32 (March-December 1939):460-61; Reuben Gold Thwaites, *The Story of the Black Hawk War* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1892), 36; idem, ed., "Narrative of Spoon Decorah" 13:453; Henry Dodge to Henry Atkinson, 19 July 1832, in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37: 825-26.

<sup>15</sup>Referred to respectively as the first, second, third and fourth lake, the "Four Lakes" consist of lakes Kegonsa (the southernmost), Waubesa, Monona and Mendota (northernmost). Sources are not clear regarding how long Black Hawk and his band had been encamped there. Some accounts seem to imply that the Indians had been in the area since Henry and Dodge first reached Fort Winnebago. See Gurko, *Indian America*, 133. Other accounts seem to suggest that the Americans were on the Indians' heels as the band made its way through the Four Lakes. See, Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 107-110. Based upon Black Hawk's autobiography, it appears as if the Indians had been at Four Lakes long enough to realize it was a good hiding spot but a bad hunting ground. See Jackson, *An Autobiography*, 153.

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the swamp afforded poor hunting and fishing. Furthermore, its remote location removed the prospect of raiding white settlements for needed supplies. Black Hawk was aware that the troops were in pursuit and that many former Ho-Chunk, Potawatomi and Kickapoo allies were deserting his band. Thus, he decided to flee the Four Lakes, as he was fully committed to help his followers across the Mississippi "that they might return to the Sac nation again."<sup>16</sup> At daybreak on 20 July, General Atkinson had received letters from Henry and Dodge informing him of the enemy's new trail; following this route toward the marshy wilderness, Henry and Dodge led their men on a forced march, during which troops captured a Ho-Chunk. The Indian reported that Black Hawk and his band were a mere two miles ahead. The Americans released the prisoner; John Wakefield, Surgeon's Mate of Henry's Spy Battalion, later claimed that this Indian likely went directly to Black Hawk and informed him of the troops' presence. Regardless, Henry and Dodge trusted the Indian's report and believed they would soon encounter the enemy; thus, they stopped to arrange their order of battle. Dodge's mounted squadron, along with Major William Ewing's Spy Battalion, took the lead. The Americans moved quickly, hoping to overtake Black Hawk before evening.<sup>17</sup>

This sense of urgency was predicated upon Paquette's description of the Four Lakes and how difficult it would be to pass through in general, let alone at night. The fur trader was very familiar with the locale, and, according to Wakefield, Paquette told General Henry that this wilderness was an Indian stronghold. Given the narrow isthmus between the third and fourth lakes (Monona and Mendota), an army would have to march "close to the margin of the lake for some distance, as the underwood stood so thick, one man could not see another ten steps." Thus, when advance troops spied a group of Indians fleeing into the woods near Lake Monona late on 20 July, conditions dictated that the Americans camp for the night rather than pursue. Although the terrain hindered troop movements, its beauty did not go unnoticed. John Wakefield considered the four lakes to be the most beautiful he had ever seen, and, if they were "anywhere

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<sup>16</sup>Jackson, *An Autobiography*, 153-54 (includes quoted material); Reuben Gold Thwaites, *How George Rogers Clark Won the Northwest and Other Essays in Western History* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1903), 175; Hagan, *Sac and Fox Indians*, 175; James Butler, "Tay-Cho-Pe-Rah: The Four Lakes Country: First White Foot-Prints There," in *Report and Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin for the Years 1883, 1884 and 1885* 10 (1888):64.

<sup>17</sup>Henry Atkinson to Winfield Scott, 21 July 1832, in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37: 839; Wakefield, *Wakefield's History*, 107-8.

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else, except in the country they are, they would be considered among the wonders of the world."<sup>18</sup> It seems likely that Wakefield was not alone in his opinion. Reports such as his may have spurred white settlement of the area after the war. In any event, as soldiers bedded down on the evening of 20 July, their thoughts undoubtedly focused upon the imminent confrontation rather than the natural beauty of their wilderness camp.

#### Campsites and Indian Ambush

Most sources indicate that the Americans camped approximately one-quarter mile north of the northeastern point of Lake Monona; it was roughly one mile northeast of the Catfish (Yahara) River, which extends through all four lakes. One source further specifies that this was the campsite of fourteen advance scouts, who were located seven miles ahead of the main troop camp situated ten miles east of present-day Madison.<sup>19</sup> Whether or not the campsite near Lake Monona consisted of the full American contingent, Black Hawk was evidently aware of the enemy's proximity and expected a night attack; therefore, he made preparations for an ambush. There are conflicting accounts regarding the site of the ambush. One source notes that Black Hawk was "strongly ambushed" seven to eight miles away from the American camp at Monona. The specific location was likely in the Sakrison grove, west of Lake Mendota. This was at the present-day Village of Pheasant Branch near Middleton. A number of sources, however, indicate that the grove may have been the *campsite*--not an ambush site--for many in the band. Meanwhile, it has been recorded that as many as half of the Indian contingent had dug in, constructing a log/brush breastwork on the eastern fringes of Madison. This group may have constituted a rear guard, which American scouts reported was positioned within a mile of the Americans near the Catfish River. Two stepped banks and a ravine with a small creek provided natural defenses, making this a formidable site for an ambush. But when the Americans camped short of this spot, no

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<sup>18</sup>Wakefield, *Wakefield's History*, 108-110; Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 119-20; Salter, *Life of Henry Dodge*, 46-47.

<sup>19</sup>William Hagan, *Black Hawk's Route Through Wisconsin* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1949), 27; Peter Parkinson, Jr., "Notes on the Black Hawk War," in *Report and Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin for the Years 1883, 1884 and 1885* 10 (1888):210; Butler, "Tay-Cho-Pe-Rah," 77; C.B. Chapman, "Early Events in the Four Lake Country," in *Report and Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin for the Years 1857 and 1858* 4 (1859):345; Thwaites, *Story of the Black Hawk War*, 38; Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 109.

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attack ensued. The Indians at this site reportedly left around midnight and likely rejoined the rest of the band at Pheasant Branch until daybreak.<sup>20</sup>

A Summary of 21 July: The Day of the Battle:

Immediate Events Leading to Battle

Rain fell the morning of 21 July as Black Hawk and his band broke camp at the Four Lakes and retreated northwest toward the Wisconsin River. Five Ho-Chunk guides led the starving, spent Indians on the nearly twenty-mile trek. Upwards of twenty braves served as a rear guard. Among them was Neapope, Black Hawk's second in command. To hasten the band's escape, many Indians discarded personal belongings along the trail. Some members of the group--mainly older men--could not keep up with the pace and fell prey to the advancing U.S. troops.<sup>21</sup>

That Saturday morning, the Americans followed the trail between Lakes Monona and Mendota, finding evidence of the Indians' ambush site from the previous night. They marched across the high ground to the site of the present capitol and began traveling northwest. At various points along the route, troops reportedly encountered as many as half a dozen stragglers from the band, who were summarily shot and scalped. Fifteen miles into the march, troops killed three Indians who were apparently part of the rear guard. One of these Indians managed to wound a member of Dodge's squadron; nevertheless, these actual encounters with the enemy, coupled with the discovery of the steadily strewn articles of the desperate band, bolstered morale among the

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<sup>20</sup>It is uncertain how long Black Hawk and his band remained at Pheasant Branch. Some accounts mention that the Indians decamped during the night to recommence their retreat. See Salter, *Life of Henry Dodge*, 46-47; Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 119-20. This may have been a reference to the rear guard of Indians who left the ambush site near the Catfish River. This is reasonable to assume, given that another source specifies that Black Hawk and his band "camped over night" at Pheasant Branch. See A.O. Barton Papers, Wis. Mss., State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, WI, Box 12, folder entitled "Notes and Materials Relating to the Black Hawk War." Other sources relating to above paragraph: Thwaites, *Essays in Western History*, 176-77 (includes quoted material); Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 114-15, 262, 267; Butler, "Tay-Cho-Pe-Rah," 77.

<sup>21</sup>Wakefield, *Wakefield's History*, 110; Jackson, *An Autobiography*, 154-55; Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 120-22.

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Americans. The troops quickened their pace, hoping to overtake the Indians before reaching the Wisconsin River. Their enthusiasm placed a great strain on their horses, causing over forty of the animals to give out during the forced march. Undaunted by these losses, the relentless troops continued on foot.<sup>22</sup>

The weather was also relentless. The rainy morning gave way to a rainy afternoon as the Americans' pursuit was periodically hindered by actions of the rear guard. Beginning around 3:00, the guard staged several feints, each time compelling the troops to form their order of battle. The Americans were uncertain whether or not this was the main body of the Indians; however, advance scouts eventually discovered that these maneuvers were only delaying tactics, designed to fend off the troops while the main body of Sacs feverishly prepared to ford the river. In the meantime, scouts under the direction of Captain Joseph Dickson encountered three warriors, pursuing them to within one mile of the main body of Indians located along the river. In the process, Dickson and his men confronted a larger contingent of the Sac rear guard, which drove the Americans back toward Dodge's and Ewing's advance units. The Battle of Wisconsin Heights was on.<sup>23</sup> The precise location of the battlefield was reported on the eastern edge of the SE ¼ of the NE ¼, section 24, T9N, R6E, approximately one mile east of the river (see Exhibit 3). Historically, the site encompassed an uneven plain with low ridges along the western and southern fringes. Below these heights was a ravine extending generally from east to west. To the south of the ravine was "a succession of lofty peaks." The initial skirmish occurred when the Sacs chased Dickson's company up the bluffs along the plain's western edge, only to meet with Dodge and Ewing's men at the top of a ridge. The Sacs charged the Americans and came within thirty yards of the troops, but a volley of musket fire repulsed the warriors.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Wakefield, *Wakefield's History*, 109-110; Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 120-22; Thomas Ford, *A History of Illinois* (Chicago: S.C. Griggs & Co., 1854), 142-43; Thwaites, *Story of the Black Hawk War*, 38-39; Parkinson, "Notes," 208.

<sup>23</sup>Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 129, 131-33; Wakefield, *Wakefield's History*, 110; Lloyd H. Efflandt, *The Black Hawk War, Why?* (Rock Island, IL: Rock Island Arsenal Historical Society, 1986), 12-13.

<sup>24</sup>Hagan, *Sac and Fox Indians*, 179; James Henry to Henry Atkinson, 23 July 1832, in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37:858; Salter, *Life of Henry Dodge*, 47; Wakefield, *Wakefield's History*, 111; Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 123; Thayer, *Black Hawk War*, 136.

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The Indian Leader at the Battle of Wisconsin Heights  
Whether he heard the gunfire or received word from a scout, Black Hawk undoubtedly realized that a battle was imminent. Although he later admitted that the site was not ground of his own choosing, the Sacs were "compelled to fight, or sacrifice [their] wives and children to the fury of the whites." To allow time for the majority of the band to construct crude canoes from mats, skins and tree bark, Black Hawk and a group of his ablest warriors reinforced the rear guard, which presumably remained under Neapope's command (see Voice in the Night section). This brought the total Sac force to between forty and fifty warriors. It is likely that Black Hawk's men initially occupied the ridge north of the ravine, while Black Hawk himself directed the effort from the highest peak to the rear of his men.<sup>25</sup> The identity of the Indian leader at Wisconsin Heights has been confused in historical records. According to John Wakefield, he and fellow troops believed Neapope was commanding the effort while mounted on a white pony positioned atop a "mountain" to the rear of his men. Wakefield described how Neapope "had one of the best voices for command I ever heard. He kept up a constant yell, until his men began to retreat, when he was heard no more." In contrast, the wife of a Fox brave recounted after the war that Black Hawk's son (name not provided) had directed the warriors at Wisconsin Heights.<sup>26</sup>

But many historical sources clearly denote Black Hawk commanded the Indians in battle. Black Hawk himself offered the most compelling evidence after the war. He related that, "I was mounted on a fine horse, and was pleased to see my warriors so brave, I addressed them in a loud voice, telling them to stand their ground and never yield to the enemy." He continued, "At this time I was on the rise of a hill, where I wished to form my warriors, that we might have some advantage over the whites." Most other historical accounts echo how the sixty-five-year-old Black Hawk personally conducted the battle on behalf of the Indians; he was seated on a white pony atop a "neighboring knoll," (See Exhibits 4a,b) and directed "his men with stentorian voice."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Jackson, *An Autobiography*, 155 (includes quote); Thwaites, *Story of the Black Hawk War*, 39; Titus, "Historic Spots," 57-59; Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 134; Hagan, *Black Hawk's Route*, 29.

<sup>26</sup>Wakefield, *Wakefield's History*, 112; William Clark to Lewis Clark, 13 August 1832, in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37: 994, n.

<sup>27</sup>Black Hawk cited in Jackson, *An Autobiography*, 155 and in Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 145, 256; Thwaites, *Story of the Black Hawk War*, 40; Thwaites,

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Details of the Battle

The initial skirmish between Dodge, Ewing and the Indians who pursued Captain Dickson took place around 5:00 p.m. Sometime thereafter, General Henry arrived with his men and took up positions to the left and right of Dodge's and Ewing's contingents, in time to ward off flanking movements by the Indians. Specifically, Colonel Gabriel Jones was stationed to Dodge's left and Colonel James Collins occupied the area to Jones' left. Henry then sent Colonel Jacob Fry's regiment to the far right. (See Exhibit 5 for order of battle chart.) Henry described the brigade as occupying an uneven plain, a description that would fit the northeastern corner of the property defined within this nomination. Most of the American troops fought on foot. Horses were left behind at a point near a rear guard, where every fourth man was assigned to watch seven horses. In his report of the battle to Atkinson, Dodge reported that the Indians occupied a height that enabled them to kill one of Henry's men and wound one of his own. He then reported that his troops subsequently dislodged the Indians from their position and drove them down from "the height into the high grass of the swamp"<sup>28</sup>. This suggests that the Sac had occupied the ridge on the north side of the ravine. Some of the Sacs remained in the tall grass in the ravine, while others took up positions in the timbered knolls constituting the heights to the south of the ravine. For the next half-hour, an exchange of intense fire ensued, in which the Indians seemed to have the upper hand. The Sacs in the ravine were able to conceal their positions in the high grass. According to combatant Addison Philleo, editor of the *Galena Galenian*, "the heads of the Indians above the grass resembled stumps in a newly cleared forest." The Indians on the heights were far enough away to prevent heavy losses. Although there are no concrete figures regarding Indian casualties during this volley, it is known that the Americans suffered one dead and several wounded; Jones, one of the few mounted soldiers, had a close call when his horse was shot from under him.<sup>29</sup> At this point, General Henry ordered Jones, Collins and their

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*Essays in Western History*, 180; Chapman, "Early Events in Four Lake Country," 346.

<sup>28</sup>Henry Dodge cited in Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 182.

<sup>29</sup>Wakefield, *Wakefield's History*, 111-12; Joseph M. Street to William Clark, 24 July 1832, in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37: 871; Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 139-44, 156; Salter, *Life of Henry Dodge*, 47; "Seat of War," (Galena, IL) *Galenian*, 1 August 1832, 3; Thwaites, *Story of the Black Hawk War*, 36, 40; idem, *Essays in Western History*, 173; James D. Henry to Henry Atkinson, 23 July 1832, in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37: 858-60; Henry Dodge to Henry Atkinson, 22 July 1832, in *ibid.* 37: 842-43.

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forces to storm the heights from the left. The objective was to drive the enemy from the desirable vantage point the bluffs offered. Upon the request of Dodge and Ewing, Henry ordered them and their forces to fix bayonets and drive the Indians from the grassy ravine.

In the meantime, Fry and his regiment protected Dodge's and Ewing's right in order to prevent the Indians from flanking. According to Henry's account, his men responded "with the greatest promptitude...In a few minutes, the battle became general..." By all accounts, the charge successfully dislodged the Indians from their positions, ultimately forcing them to retreat toward the Wisconsin River bottom. Both sides maintained a line of fire until sunset (around 7:00). The retreat resulted in what Wakefield described as "a good number" of Indians killed and Black Hawk's horse sustaining serious wounds. Despite gaining the advantage, Henry realized it was unwise to continue the battle in darkness, especially since the Indians retreated into a swampy area preceding a fringe of heavy timber along the river bank; furthermore, the persistent rain and a pursuit into high, wet brush would likely prevent the Americans' flintlock guns from firing. Consequently, Henry withdrew the troops, who camped on the same high ground where the battle had begun. Under the cover of night, Black Hawk and his surviving warriors escaped across the Wisconsin, joining the men, women and children who had started to cross during the fight. The Battle of Wisconsin Heights was over. Most of the American troops regarded it as a successful route of the enemy; nevertheless, it had been a significant victory for the Indians: Black Hawk and no more than fifty braves had effectively checked nearly eight hundred American forces in a battle lasting approximately two hours.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Note that there are discrepancies regarding the duration of the battle and the number of Americans involved. Concerning the former, one account suggests the battle began as early as 4:00 and lasted till 7:00, while another merely indicates the battle ensued for more than one hour. Most sources, however, seem to describe the battle beginning around 4:30 to 5:00 and ending near 7:00. As for the number of American forces, sources suggest anywhere from 750 to 900 men. Sources for the preceding as well as the remainder of the above paragraph include Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, Preface, xxxii; 151-55; Joseph M. Street to William Clark, 24 July 1832, in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37: 871; William Clark to Lewis Cass, 1 August 1832, in *ibid.*, 37: 909; "Saturday, July 21," in Ellen Whitney *Black Hawk War Notes*, Box 3, available at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, IL; Ford, *History of Illinois*, 144; James Henry to Henry Atkinson, 23 July 1832, in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37: 858-59; Henry Dodge to Henry Atkinson, 22 July 1832, in *ibid.*, 37: 842-43; Eby, "That Disgraceful Affair," 236-37; Black Hawk, *Autobiography of Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak or Black Hawk*, edited by J.B. Patterson (Oquawka [?], IL: s.n., 1882), 107;

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General Henry's Initial Delay

The above represents a summary account of the major events occurring at the Battle of Wisconsin Heights. Details have been provided as historical accounts allow. One issue, however, has been reserved for special treatment as it has subsequently evolved into somewhat of a historical debate regarding who deserves credit for leading the Americans at the battle. Specifically, why was Henry delayed in assisting at Wisconsin Heights and how long did it take him and his men to reinforce Dodge's and Ewing's troops? The first part of this question is perhaps easier to address than the second. Henry arrived later than Dodge and Ewing simply because of the predetermined order of battle. Several sources remark how Ewing was to assume the lead with his spy battalion, but that Dodge, unhappy with Ewing's slow pace, overtook him. Captain Daniel Parkinson, one of Dodge's men, later denied this, indicating that Dodge had consistently been in the lead throughout the pursuit from the Four Lakes Country. In any case, Henry and his forces brought up the rear and this explains why they arrived after the initial skirmish had begun. The length of Henry's delay, however, is arguable. Dodge's Aide de Camp, Lieutenant Charles Bracken, later described how Dodge's and Ewing's forces had to repel the Indians for "fully an hour before Henry arrived." Bracken made this statement in 1856, by which time partisans of Henry and Dodge had already been disputing whom history should regard as the American hero at Wisconsin Heights. A rivalry of sorts ensued. It is perhaps epitomized by Addison Philleo, both a member of Dodge's forces and editor of the *Galenian*. In newspaper accounts, Philleo embellished Dodge's role at the battle and throughout the war by referring to the Colonel as General. Given the role of partisanship, it is possible that Bracken exaggerated the length of Henry's delay. Although no accounts describe the exact distance between the advance units and Henry, it is questionable that it took Henry as much as a full hour to reach the battle. First, all of the troops had been proceeding at a forced march. Even if the advance guard had gotten far ahead of Henry, the former had to dismount on several occasions to deal with the various feints the Indians staged enroute to the ultimate battle site. This undoubtedly would have lessened the gap between Dodge/Ewing and Henry. Perhaps more compelling is the fact that one of Dodge's own men absolved Henry. Captain Parkinson recalled, "Gen. Henry's entire command kept close in our rear and were there when the engagement commenced,

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Wakefield, *Wakefield's History*, 112; Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 123; Thwaites, *Story of the Black Hawk War*, 36, 40; idem, *Essays in Western History*, 173, 178-79; Lambert, "Black Hawk War: A Military Analysis," 462-64; Cyrenus Cole, *I Am a Man: The Indian Black Hawk* (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1938), 201.

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and were in line of battle, in ten minutes at most after the first firing." In light of these considerations, it seems plausible that Henry certainly arrived in less than an hour.<sup>31</sup>

A Description of the Immediate Aftermath of the Battle:

Casualties

The exact number of Indian casualties suffered at Wisconsin Heights is as uncertain as the length of Henry's delay. Estimates range from as few as six killed to upwards of one hundred; the variations tend to be drawn along battle lines. That is, Black Hawk recounted, "I defended and accomplished my passage over the Wisconsin, with a loss of only six men." After the war, two Sac chiefs testified as prisoners that the Americans killed five Indians during the battle. Both estimates likely account for only the casualties suffered during the battle. The Sac prisoners added that many other Indians died from wounds from the battle. But exactly how many? A Sac woman who escaped across the Wisconsin said that sixty-eight Indians were killed as a result of either the fight or the river crossing.<sup>32</sup> From the more heavily documented American perspective, many estimates echo the Sac woman's account. In a post-war report to General Scott, General Atkinson related the number of Indian dead as sixty-eight. Wakefield, a participant in the battle, built upon this figure. He stated that "we have learned since the battle that we killed sixty-eight of the enemy, and wounded a considerable number; twenty-five of whom...died soon after the battle." A newspaper article from September 1832 generally corroborated Wakefield's account, indicating the Indian loss was "between 80 and 100 killed, and many more wounded." These numbers--provided well after the battle--may be a bit inflated; however, they are probably not too far from the mark when considered with initial estimates Henry and Dodge offered immediately after the fight. Henry wrote to Atkinson on 23 July that "the number of

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<sup>31</sup>Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 108, 126-27, 139-40 (including Parkinson quote), 236-37, 245-46; Charles Bracken, "Further Strictures on Governor Ford's History of the Black Hawk War," in *Wisconsin Historical Collections* 2 (1856):408-9; Ford, *History of Illinois*, 147.

<sup>32</sup>Black Hawk, *Autobiography*, 107 (including quote); Robert Anderson: Memoranda, 27 August 1832, in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37: 1057; Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 159; Jackson, *An Autobiography*, 155, n. 108; Roger L. Nichols, *Black Hawk and the Warrior's Path*, American Biographical History Series (Arlington Heights, IL: H. Davidson, 1992), 131; "Saturday, July 21," in Whitney *Black Hawk War Notes*, Box 3.

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the enemy killed and wounded is unknown, as the dead are scattered over a large tract of country covered with thick woods and high grass. Between thirty and forty have been found, and others are continually being discovered by our scouts." Henry added "from appearances, the wounded, and many of the dead were removed during [the] night succeeding the battle." (Without providing figures, one account specifies how some of the wounded were removed to Ho-Chunk villages on the Four Lakes as well as to villages on the "Bar-ri-bault" [Baraboo] River near the Wisconsin portage.) Dodge largely paralleled Henry's fatality count, although the colonel provided more details regarding the aftermath of the battle. In his report to Atkinson dated 22 July, Dodge described how "the Winnebagoes [guide for the Americans] scalped eleven Indians killed by the whites, and the whites took thirteen scalps last night--eight were found today and three were killed in the chase. The enemy were seen to carry a number from the field during the action, so that the numbers killed cannot fall short of forty."<sup>33</sup>

There is a much clearer record regarding American casualties at Wisconsin Heights, Black Hawk's perspective notwithstanding. The Sac leader admitted that "the loss of the enemy could not be ascertained by our party," but he believed "that it was much greater, in proportion, than mine." U.S. casualty records and reports from Henry and Dodge proved Black Hawk wrong. The number of wounded has been recorded from seven to nine, yet it appears as if eight was the actual count, including one man injured during the march to Wisconsin Heights. Although not certain, records suggest the latter was Private Robert McGee, who served under Dodge's immediate command. Dodge's units suffered three other wounded, including privates Isam Hardin and Enoch Neaville and Second Lieutenant John McNair (shot in the thigh). The four remaining wounded represented Henry's brigade. All were privates and are identified as Armstead Jones, Meredith S. McMillen, James Thompson and Joseph Wells (see Exhibit 5 for precise company affiliation). Tents provided makeshift litters to transport the wounded to Fort Blue Mound in the aftermath of the battle. None of the wounds was regarded as

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<sup>33</sup>Henry Atkinson to Major General Winfield Scott, 5 August 1832, in Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s-1917, National Archives, Washington, DC (also cited in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37: 93-94); Wakefield, *Wakefield's History*, 113; "The Late Indian Campaign," *Sangamo* (Springfield, IL) *Journal*, 1 September 1832, 2; James Henry to Henry Atkinson, 23 July 1832, in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37: 860; Samuel Stambaugh to George Boyd, 28 August 1832, in *ibid.*, 37: 1075; Henry Dodge to Henry Atkinson, 22 July 1832, in *ibid.*, 37: 843; Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 159, 179.

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fatal.<sup>34</sup>

Thomas Jefferson Short

In addition to eight wounded, one of Henry's men was killed. His name was Thomas Jefferson Short, a private in Captain Josiah Briggs' company. This unit hailed from Randolph County, Illinois, and was part of Colonel Jones' third regiment. Little has been written surrounding the details of Short's death, other than that he reportedly "had just shot down an Indian, when he received the mortal wound himself." Similarly, there is not much known about his burial. According to Wakefield, "We buried the brave young man...with the honors of war...He had a brother and a brother-in-law in the same [regiment], who witnessed his consignment to his mother earth." But the site of Short's grave is not readily apparent from historical records. The only vague reference found describes the recollections of A.L. Taylor, a man who grew up during the mid-nineteenth century on a farm adjacent to the battlefield site. When Taylor was a child, an ex-soldier from the battle showed him Short's grave. But when historians interested in pinpointing the battlefield site visited Taylor in 1920, he only recalled that Short was killed on the height; while Taylor could locate the ridge, he did not know the exact location of the grave.<sup>35</sup> (See archaeological findings in Section 7 of this report with regard to recent efforts to find the grave.)

Indian Guide Dismissal

For the American troops, the end of the battle meant it was time to tend to the dead and wounded; for the Indian guides who helped the troops pursue Black Hawk and his

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<sup>34</sup>Black Hawk, *Autobiography*, 108; Henry Dodge to Henry Atkinson, 22 July 1832, in Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s-1917, National Archives, Washington, DC (also cited in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37: 843-44 [including n. 8]); Henry Atkinson to Winfield Scott, 25 July 1832, Report of General Henry and Colonel Dodge's Action of 21 July, in RG 94; William B. Archer to Jacob Harlan, 25 July 1832, in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37: 873; James Henry to Henry Atkinson, 23 July 1832, in *ibid.*, 37: 860; Jackson, *An Autobiography*, 156, n. 108; Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 124; Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 135, 173, 179, 197; Wakefield, *Wakefield's History*, 113-14.

<sup>35</sup>Note that the source regarding Taylor does not attempt to describe the location of the ridge. See Titus, "Historic Spots," 58-60. Other sources for the above include Wakefield, *Wakefield's History*, 113-14; Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 173.

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band, it meant the end of their services. Pierre Paquette and from six to twelve Ho-Chunk guides had accompanied Henry and Dodge from Fort Winnebago to Wisconsin Heights. Among the Indians identified were Nahheesanconka, Notsookega, Ahmegunka, Tahnichseeka, Pawnee and White Crow. After piloting the Americans, a few of these fought alongside Paquette and the troops at Wisconsin Heights; yet, Lieutenant Bracken acknowledged how most of the Indian guides "hid in sink holes or sheltered behind trees." According to witnesses including Bracken and Captain Parkinson, Paquette and all of the Indians left once the action ended. John T. De La Ronde, a member of Paquette's Indian scouts, more fully described how "Pierre Pauquette [sic] the interpreter, having received orders that we, the Indian party, should return to the Portage [Fort Winnebago], we started off in the night, and arrived there in the morning." Although one account indicates the guides did not leave until the morning after the battle, a more curious matter involves the order sending them back to the fort. Official records, including Henry's reports and orders, do not mention such an order, let alone *who* gave it or *why* it was issued, especially since Black Hawk was not yet captured. Even though De La Ronde's narrative clearly states Paquette received orders to leave with the party, it is plausible that the scouts returned to the fort of their own volition. Given the delicate nature of Indian loyalties in the war (see note #10 in this document), it was not uncommon for some Indian allies to leave throughout the course of the conflict, if they no longer found it personally advantageous to assist. For example, Black Hawk lost many of his Potawatomi and Ho-Chunk allies, who only helped long enough "to settle old scores with white settlers and miners in their respective localities."<sup>36</sup>

The Voice in the Night

The Ho-Chunks' departure would have a tremendous impact on the outcome of the Black

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<sup>36</sup>Lambert, "Black Hawk War: A Military Analysis," 460; Thwaites, *Story of the Black Hawk War*, 36; idem, "Narrative of Spoon Decorah," 453; Bracken, "Further Strictures on Ford's History," 408-10; Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 161, 247; John T. De La Ronde, "Personal Narrative," in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 7 (1876):350; "The Black Hawk War," in *Collections and Researches Made by the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society* 31 (1902):341; Jung, "Forge, Destroy, and Preserve the Bonds of Empire," 468 (includes quote not ascribed); Parkinson, "Notes," 207. Records from the Fort Winnebago Agency were searched but did not reveal any information pertaining to the Indian guide dismissal. See, Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, 1824-1881, National Archives Microcopy M234, Reel 931.

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Hawk War. In an August 1832 newspaper article, an unidentified soldier offered one of the most vivid descriptions of an extraordinary event that occurred while the Americans were encamped on the battlefield site during the pre-dawn hours of either 22 or 23 July (sources are divided). He related how our troops after the battle of Wisconsin, lay upon their arms with the full expectation that they were momentarily in danger of attack. When all had become still, in the dead of night, the ear of almost every soldier caught what appeared to be an almost unearthly sound. A native had advanced within hearing distance of our army, and had placed himself upon an eminence, where he uttered loud distinct and strange ejaculations, which echoed through the camp and woods until the sound died away in the distance. The voice roused every soldier--who anticipated an immediate attack; and a bloody combat. When the Indian appeared to have satisfied himself that he was heard he then commenced distinctly, the articulation of words, and sentences. In a few moments the voice ceased.<sup>37</sup>

Who was this lone orator? Witnesses have provided so many different responses that there seems to be no real agreement in secondary literature. Most accounts concur that the speaker occupied the heights, in the general direction of the mound from which Black Hawk had led his warriors in the recent battle; however, at least five individuals have been identified as "the voice in the night." Some soldiers' accounts clearly state that the Prophet--Black Hawk's Ho-Chunk ally--was the orator. Another possibility is Kinnekonesaut, the fourth-ranked warrior in Black Hawk's band. His name traditionally meant "he that strikes first"; when he became a prisoner after the war, his name was noted as "the man with the loud voice." And yet, one historian explains that the voice belonged to Neosho, an Indian Black Hawk sent out because he had a voice like a trumpet. Still other sources claim it was Black Hawk who cried out that night. The Sac leader himself reportedly described that he yelled out from a tree near the American camp. All of these notwithstanding, the majority of historical accounts name Neapope.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>*Sangamo* (Springfield, IL) *Journal*, 25 August 1832, (also cited in "Saturday, July 21," Whitney Black Hawk War Notes, Box 3 and in Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 189).

<sup>38</sup>Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 189-91, 194-96; Wakefield, *Wakefield's History*, 115; Thwaites, *Story of the Black Hawk War*, 41; Milo Milton Quaife, ed., *The Early Day of Rock Island and Davenport. The Narratives of J.W. Spencer and J.M.D. Burrows*, The Lakeside Classics (Chicago: The Lakeside Press, R.R. Donnelley & Sons, Co., 1942), 72; *Sangamo* (Springfield, IL) *Journal*, 25 August 1832; Cole, *I Am a Man*, 203-4.

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Many sources identify this warrior, who was the second in command.<sup>39</sup> But inconsistencies involving Neapope's whereabouts on 21 July not only raise doubts about his being "the voice in the night," but also question his role in the Battle of Wisconsin Heights. Some sources explain how Neapope had gone out on a necessary hunting expedition the morning of 21 July and missed the battle. Neapope's own testimony as a prisoner of war in August 1832 confirms he went hunting that morning; nevertheless, it is unclear whether or not he returned in time to lead the rear guard in the battle. For example, his interpreted testimony reads, "Before he [Neapope] left the Sacs near Wisconsin they had lost nearly forty warriors killed." This may be a reference to overall losses before the battle or it may reflect the number of fatalities Henry and Dodge inflicted at the battle. Black Hawk's autobiography may be of help at this point. It seems to allow that Neapope was part of the rear guard, but that he was cut off from participating in the battle itself and was missing after the contest. Neapope's testimony confirms the latter, defining how, in the aftermath of the battle, Neapope was cut off from the Sac band and escaped to a Ho-Chunk village on the Rock River. Again, it is not evident whether or not he had fought.<sup>40</sup> The proceeding illustrates how complicated it is to identify with certainty "the voice in the night." Grappling with this issue is important, but it is the speaker's message that is most significant. Most sources agree the voice cried for a surrender, but one account contends that the voice was intended to disturb the sleeping troops, making them unfit to resume the battle in the morning. A cry for surrender is most plausible. Although the band had escaped, the starving condition of those who survived to that point was desperate. The speaker allegedly implored the Americans to allow the band to retreat peacefully across the Mississippi. The message was spoken in Ho-Chunk. The speaker was apparently aware that Paquette had been among the Americans and would be able to interpret the plea. What he did not know was that Paquette and the Ho-Chunk guides had already left the troops. Thus, the band's second attempt to surrender was not understood. With the troops poised for battle, Ewing and

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<sup>39</sup>Thwaites, *Story of the Black Hawk War*, 41; Gurko, *Indian America*, 138; Lambert, "Black Hawk War: A Military Analysis," 465; Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 124; Quaife, *The Early Day*, 72; Nichols, *Black Hawk and the Warrior's Path*, 131.

<sup>40</sup>"Saturday, 21 July," in Whitney Black Hawk War Notes, Box 3; Minutes of an Examination of Prisoners, 20 August 1832, in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37: 1034-35; Winfield Scott to Lewis Cass, 19 August 1832, in *ibid.*, 37: 1025; Jackson, *An Autobiography*, 157.

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some scouts investigated the area from which the voice apparently came, but found only fresh horse tracks. Tragically, the war would continue.<sup>41</sup>

Pursuit Delay

There was a considerable delay before the Americans resumed their pursuit of Black Hawk and his band. On the morning of 22 July, the forces discovered that the Indians had escaped across the Wisconsin during the night. The Americans did not immediately attempt to cross the river because of supply shortages. Henry and Dodge lacked "boats, canoes, or the means of constru[c]ting rafts to cross." Wakefield, however, summed up the more significant situation: "We were now out of provisions, and were obliged to abandon further pursuit, and go to the Blue Mounds to procure a supply. Accordingly on the 23d, we got in motion again; not in pursuit of the enemy, but for bread and meat, to satisfy our appetites--as we were now out of every thing to eat." Thus, although the clear weather that greeted the troops on 22 July was ideal for resuming the chase, they spent the day on the battlefield campsite. Activities included burying Short, preparing litters for the wounded, drying out rain-soaked clothing, celebrating what most soldiers perceived as a victory and resting. The rest was well deserved since the troops had been on forced marches for the past three days, the last of which covered forty miles in inclement weather through rough terrain.<sup>42</sup>

The decision to obtain supplies from the settlers' fort at Blue Mounds, located approximately twenty miles south of the battlefield, was perhaps not as clear-cut as the above portrays. In a letter dated 22 July, Dodge informed a Captain Gustav Loomis

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<sup>41</sup>A soldier from Ewing's group stated that he understood the message and interpreted it for Henry, who ignored it and formed the troops for battle. This account is suspect; it is possible that the soldier--a member of the advance unit which waited for Henry and his forces to help at Wisconsin Heights--was attempting to cast Henry in a bad light. See Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 191. Other sources for the above paragraph include Cole, *I Am a Man*, 204; Thwaites, *Story of the Black Hawk War*, 41; Gurko, *Indian America*, 137-38; Meriwether L. Clark to William Clark, 25 July 1832, in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37: 878, n. 4; "Saturday, July 21," in Whitney *Black Hawk War Notes*, Box 3; Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 124; Wakefield, *Wakefield's History*, 115-16.

<sup>42</sup>Thwaites, *Story of the Black Hawk War*, 42; Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 156, 172, 196; Wakefield, *Wakefield's History*, 114, 117-18; Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 124; Nichols, *Black Hawk and the Warrior's Path*, 130.

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that he intended to cross the Wisconsin as soon as 23 July. Yet, Henry and Dodge led their men to the fort on the 23rd. Perhaps Dodge calculated that there would be enough time to go to Blue Mounds on the 23rd and to cross the river. Or, it is possible that General Atkinson's plans were a factor. From the time Henry and Dodge had left Atkinson at Koshkonong, the two commanders kept the general apprised of their pursuit of the enemy by means of couriers. When Atkinson received word of the Battle of Wisconsin Heights, he and the main force reportedly were already enroute to the north, trying to meet up with Dodge and Henry before they encountered the Indians. Although he missed the fight, the general was pleased to hear about the battle and urged Henry and Dodge to forge ahead, suggesting that they should first go to Blue Mounds, if supplies were short. Atkinson himself would be able to meet them at the fort. Dodge and Henry arrived at Blue Mounds on the 23rd and apparently waited for Atkinson, who did not arrive until the 24th. On that date, the American forces were reunited for the first time in over a week. Because of discharges or desertions among volunteers, however, the forces had been cut from over four thousand to over thirteen hundred regulars and volunteers.<sup>43</sup> The following day, the combined troops were scheduled to set out after Black Hawk. He and his followers had at least a full three-day head start. But the band was not intact. While escaping Wisconsin Heights, some of the group followed the original plan: they crossed the Wisconsin in order to resume an overland route to the Mississippi at a point above Prairie du Chien. But as many as one hundred others--likely too weary for walking--attempted to float downriver on their crude rafts toward the Mississippi. Dodge prepared for the latter possibility and alerted Captain Loomis at Fort Crawford, located above the mouth of the Wisconsin. Consequently, on 29 July, a detachment under Lieutenant Joseph Ritner positioned themselves on an island in the river in time to intercept the floating refugees. The Indians were easy prey. Reports indicate that fifteen Indian men were killed outright and over two dozen Indians (mostly women and children) were taken prisoner. Still others drowned, while a number who tried to escape in adjacent woods were killed by Ho-Chunk and Menominee Indians cooperating with the Americans.<sup>44</sup> Prior

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<sup>43</sup>Henry Dodge to Gustavus Loomis, 22 July 1832, in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37: 845; Salter, *Life of Henry Dodge*, 47-48; Wakefield, *Wakefield's History*, 117-18; Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 130; Hagan, *Black Hawk's Route*, 29; Cole, *I Am a Man*, 210-11.

<sup>44</sup>Henry Atkinson to Winfield Scott, 25 July 1832, in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37: 874-75; Joseph Street to Henry Atkinson, 3 August 1832, in *ibid.*, 37: 925; Henry Dodge to Gustavus Loomis, in *ibid.*, 37: 845; Salter, *Life of Henry Dodge*, 47-48; Nichols, *Black Hawk and the Warrior's Path*, 131-32; Jackson, *An Autobiography*, 156-57 (also see

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to this tragic encounter, Atkinson and his more than thirteen hundred troops began to cross the Wisconsin at Helena on 27 July. Helena was a point on the river situated sixteen miles from Fort Blue Mounds and below the spot where Black Hawk crossed. A force of Illinois volunteers under Brigadier General Alexander Posey constructed rafts to facilitate the crossing. Prior to fording the river, the Americans surmised that Black Hawk likely was attempting to cross the Mississippi from a point at least twenty miles above Prairie du Chien. But aside from this indication found in correspondence from Dodge, a source dealing explicitly with Black Hawk's route acknowledges that there is scant reliable information defining the trail of the band or the Americans west of the Wisconsin River.<sup>45</sup> Surveyors' notes made after the war are not helpful. Participants' accounts are difficult to follow because the terrain was completely unknown to the troops trying to describe it; moreover, descriptions are vague because the forced pace of the pursuit did not allow much time for writing. For example, Atkinson merely recorded that "the trail of the enemy leads up the country between this river [the Wisconsin] and the Mississippi. He [Black Hawk] intends making his way to the Chippaways, or crossing the Mississippi--probably the latter." Black Hawk's remarks were shorter, stating that the overland route was "a rugged country."<sup>46</sup> Perhaps Henry Smith has provided the most lengthy, though inconclusive, account of the trail opposite Wisconsin Heights. In a narrative written a year after the war, this member of Atkinson's brigade recalled how the troops came upon the Indian trail within two hours of crossing the river. The site was probably near Section 5, T8N-R4E.<sup>47</sup> According to Smith,

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n. 111); Henry Atkinson to Major General Macomb, 5 August 1832, RG 94; Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 124, 151-52; *Narrative of the Capture and Providential Escape of Misses Frances and Almira Hall* (n.p., n.d.), 23-24.

<sup>45</sup>Detailed, albeit conjectural, descriptions of the Indians' path are provided in Hagan, *Black Hawk's Route*, 30-32. Also see Exhibit 6 for estimated routes to the Mississippi River.

<sup>46</sup>Cole, *I Am a Man*, 211; Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 130; Henry Dodge to Gustavus Loomis, 22 July 1832, in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37: 845; Henry Dodge to Henry Atkinson, 24 July 1832, in *ibid.*, 37: 863-64; Henry Atkinson to Winfield Scott, 27 July 1832, in *ibid.*, 37: 891; Jackson, *An Autobiography*, 157; Hagan, *Black Hawk's Route*, 29.

<sup>47</sup>Hagan, *Black Hawk's Route*, 30.

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Their [the Indians'] trail gave evidence that their numbers must be considerable. Their order of march was in three parallel columns. Over the dry prairie, the route of each column was worn from two to six inches in the earth; and where the ground was such as for a moment to interrupt their regular order of march, their trail appeared like an ordinary road which had been traveled for years, wanting only the tracks of wheels. From this time until we reached the Mississippi, we continued without deviation to follow the trail of the enemy, having no other guide; and it led, doubtless with a view of baffling the army, over such a country as, I venture to say, has seldom been marched over: at one moment, ascending hills, which appeared almost perpendicular; through the thickest forest; then plunging through morasses; fording to our necks, creeks and rivers; passing defiles, where a hundred resolute men might repulse thousands, whatever their courage or capacity; next clambering up and down mountains perfectly bald, without so much as a bush to sustain a man.<sup>48</sup>

A Synopsis of Events Surrounding the End of the War

Because of the rugged country Smith depicted, it took ten days for Black Hawk and his straggling band to reach the Mississippi. Many members had died enroute from starvation; their emaciated bodies left along the trail informed the Americans of the rapidly deteriorating condition of the Indians. On 1 August, Black Hawk recognized the steamboat *Warrior* on the Mississippi near the mouth of the Bad Axe River. The vessel was returning from a trip to Sioux Country during which its crew enlisted the aid of the Sac's perennial foe, should the Sioux discover the retreating band. Black Hawk was unaware of this mission but familiar with the boat's captain, Joseph Throckmorton. The Sac leader decided to surrender to Throckmorton and seek passage for the women and children in the band. This third attempt at a peaceful conclusion of the war also failed; although the circumstances are not clear, the crew aboard the boat began firing at the Indians. Upwards of twenty-three braves were killed. The *Warrior*, low on fuel, left the scene whereupon Black Hawk held a council. He felt that merely crossing the Mississippi and returning to Iowa would not guarantee the band's safety; therefore, he suggested traveling north to Chippewa Country. Some of

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<sup>48</sup>Henry Smith, *The Expedition Against the Sauk and Fox Indians, 1832* (n.p.: Military and Naval Magazine of the United States, August 1833; reprint ed., New York: s.n., 1914), 15.

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the band agreed to follow him and the Prophet; others waited till dawn to cross the Mississippi. The consequences were disastrous. General Atkinson's troops caught up with the Indians on 2 August, and a two-hour massacre ensued. With the aid of the freshly refueled *Warrior*, the Americans killed anywhere from sixty to 150 Indians. As many as two hundred in the band escaped across the river; however, roughly one hundred eager Sioux pursued them. The Sacs' inveterate enemy killed all but a couple dozen women and children, who were taken prisoner. American casualties amounted to approximately six killed and nineteen wounded. The Battle of Bad Axe marked the end of the Black Hawk War.<sup>49</sup>

Black Hawk, enroute to the north, received word of the fateful battle. By his account, he and a small contingent of his followers traveled to a Ho-Chunk village at Prairie La Crosse, asking the Ho-Chunk chief to arrange a meeting with the Americans so he could surrender. The chief agreed and escorted Black Hawk to the Ho-Chunk agent at Fort Crawford in Prairie du Chien. Another source indicates that Ho-Chunk captured Black Hawk and his remaining followers and delivered them to the fort by 27 August. Regardless, Black Hawk became a prisoner and was taken to Jefferson Barracks in Missouri. He and five others from his group (including the Prophet and Neapope, who was captured separately) had to answer to President Jackson on 25 April 1833. All of these prisoners were eventually released, but not without punishment. At the tribal level, the Sac and Fox were forced to cede all claims to six million acres in the Upper Mississippi Valley, for which the federal government would pay \$600,000 over thirty years and provide a four hundred-square mile reservation in present-day Iowa. On an individual level, the proud Black Hawk was forced to accept President Jackson's appointment of Keokuk--Black Hawk's personal rival--as the recognized Sac chief. The former leader of the ill-fated band lived his remaining years peacefully on the Iowa River. He went to his death in 1838, defending his action that triggered the Black Hawk War: "Rock River was beautiful country. I loved my towns, my cornfields, and the home of my people. I fought for them."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 131-33, 139-48; Jackson, *An Autobiography*, 158-63 (also see n. 118); Henry Atkinson to Winfield Scott, 5 August 1832, RG 94; Henry Atkinson to Alexander Macomb, 5 August 1832, in *ibid*.

<sup>50</sup>Jackson, *An Autobiography*, 160-71; Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 155, 158, 162-63; William Fletcher Thompson, gen. ed., *The History of Wisconsin*, vol. 1, *From Exploration to Statehood*, by Alice E. Smith (Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1985), 140; Treaty with the Sauk and Fox, 21 September 1832, in Whitney, *Black Hawk War*, 37: 1182-83.

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Conclusion: The Black Hawk War was a four month-long conflict costing the federal government nearly \$3 million. The human cost was more tragic: the Indian band was reduced from twelve hundred to 150 people, while two hundred Americans--most of who were settlers--were killed. These were the immediate consequences of the war. In retrospect, the larger historical significance of the conflict is discernible. From the American perspective, the Black Hawk War ultimately opened a valuable portion of the Upper Mississippi Valley to settlement and development. One source describes how the enormous land cession resulting from the Treaty of 1832 was "partly an indemnity for the expense incurred [in the war], and partly to secure the future safety and tranquility of the invaded frontier." Two subsequent treaties effectively completed the latter objective of the Treaty of 1832 with regard to removing other tribes. The Menominees--who had relinquished much of their Wisconsin holdings through treaties in 1825, 1827 and 1832--ceded four million acres in the Fox River Valley after ratification of the Treaty of the Cedars in February 1837. Later that year, the Ho-Chunks--who also lost Wisconsin land through earlier treaties--were pressured to cede all of their remaining Wisconsin territory to the federal government. Population statistics clearly illustrate how Wisconsin developed because of Indian removal--a process facilitated to a great extent by the outcome of the Black Hawk War. For example, white settlement grew from only 3,245 in 1830 to 11,683 in 1836. Approximately one-half of these inhabitants settled in the mining region of Iowa County, an area that had staged many actions related to the Black Hawk War. This spurt in settlement amounted to a 247.7 percent increase--the second largest in Wisconsin's history. The greatest was an 886.9 percent increase between 1840 and 1850, which undoubtedly still reflected the impact of Indian removal fueled by the repercussions of the Black Hawk War.

As for the Indian perspective, the most immediate result of the war meant the permanent removal of the Sac west of the Mississippi. But the saga of being uprooted continued--as it would for other tribes. The Sac were resettled at least twice over the next four decades, relocating in Oklahoma by 1869. Based upon the proceeding, the magnitude of the vastly different consequences regarding the Indians and Americans involved in the Black Hawk War cannot be overstated in their impact on the two cultures. By virtue of being the site of one of the major confrontations in this highly consequential war, the Wisconsin Heights Battlefield is clearly significant and eligible for the National Register under Criterion A. Furthermore, the battle is important in its own right, as it was effectively an Indian victory against much larger U.S. forces. This fact--which reflects Black Hawk's achievement and the site's additional significance under Criterion B--should be recognized as Americans in the

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

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twentieth century strive to respect all cultures that have historically shaped the history of the U.S. Future Confederate President Jefferson Davis perhaps best summarized this singular significant fact, commenting: "A feat of more consummate management and bravery, in the face of an enemy of greatly superior numbers. I have never read of anything that could be compared with it. Had it been performed by white men, it would have been immortalized as one of the most splendid achievements in military history."<sup>51</sup> Finally, the battlefield is eligible for the Register under Criterion D. The site has the potential to yield important information to enhance our understanding of this battle and the Native American and Euro-American cultures that clashed upon this field well over 150 years ago.

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<sup>51</sup>Jefferson Davis cited in Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 126.

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6	16	279620	4791100	8	16	278910	4791380
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	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundary line of the Battle of Wisconsin Heights Battlefield is indicated on the accompanying USGS topographic map. The boundary is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points: 1) 16 279000 4791640, 2) 16 279470 4791500, 3) 16 279500 4791580, 4) 16 279720 4791580, 5) 16 279720 4791400, 6) 16 279620 4791100, 7) 16 279240 4791100 and 8) 16 278910 4791380.

**VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary was drawn to encompass the core area of hostile action (the uneven plain, heights, and ravine) as described in eyewitness accounts, the location of the battleground as recorded by the original land surveyor, and the locations of artifacts associated with the battle. Specifically, the northern boundary encompasses the northern ridge and the "L-shaped" height depicted on Exhibits 4a & b. The east boundary was drawn to encompass the field where two of the artifacts were recovered. The southern boundary was drawn to encompass the knoll and high ground to the south of the ravine occupied by the Sac and Fox. The west boundary also encompasses this higher ground. To the west, the land drops considerably in elevation; this was the retreat route to the Wisconsin River but there was no pursuit by American troops.

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PHOTOGRAPH 1

Looking south to the knoll that was probably occupied by Black Hawk during the battle.

PHOTOGRAPH 2

Looking west down ravine, towards the Wisconsin River.

PHOTOGRAPH 3

Looking east toward field where two lead balls were recovered.

PHOTOGRAPH 4

On top of "L-shaped" ridge, looking west.

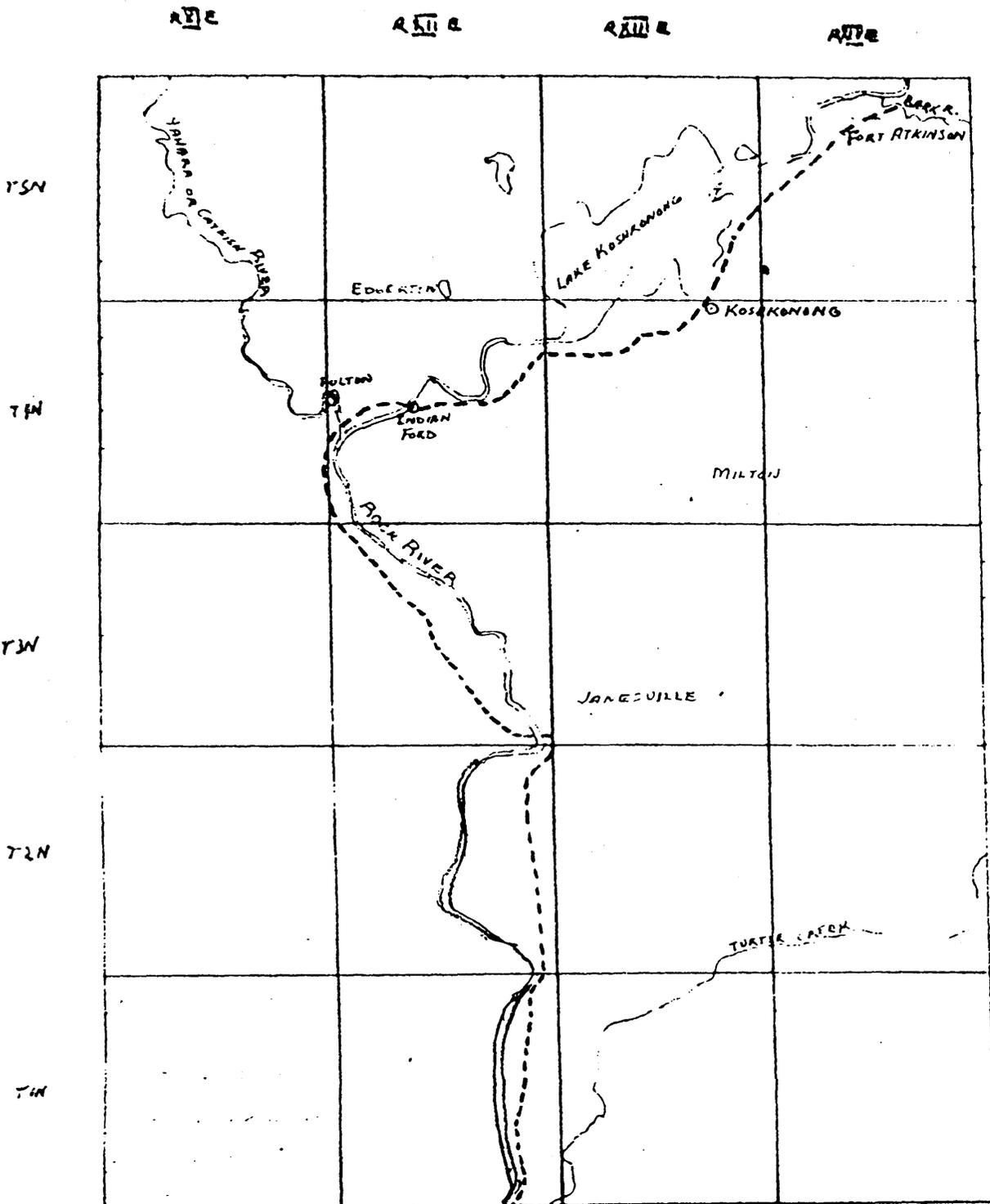
All photographs were taken by Diane Holliday on August 14, 2001. Negatives are on file at the Office of the State Archaeologist, Division of Historic Preservation, Wisconsin Historical Society, 816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706.

# EXHIBIT 1: Black Hawk's Route through Wisconsin (to Wisconsin Heights)

Plate 1 (of 3)

Source: William T. Hagan, "Route of Black Hawk through Wisconsin," map, n.p., n.d., *Miss. Maps*, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.

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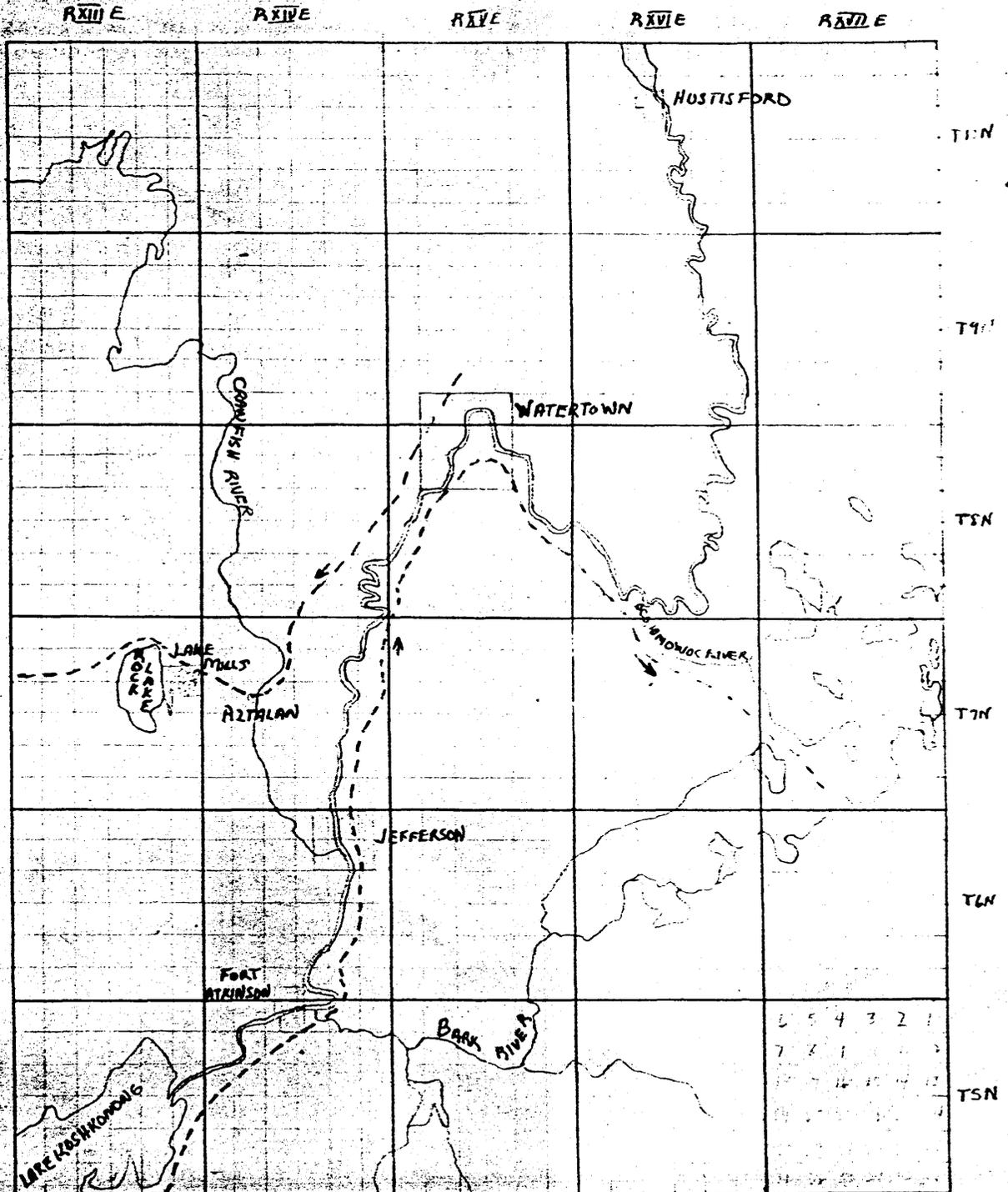


# EXHIBIT 1: Black Hawk's Route through Wisconsin (cont.)

Plate 2 (of 3)

Source: Hagan, "Route of Black Hawk."

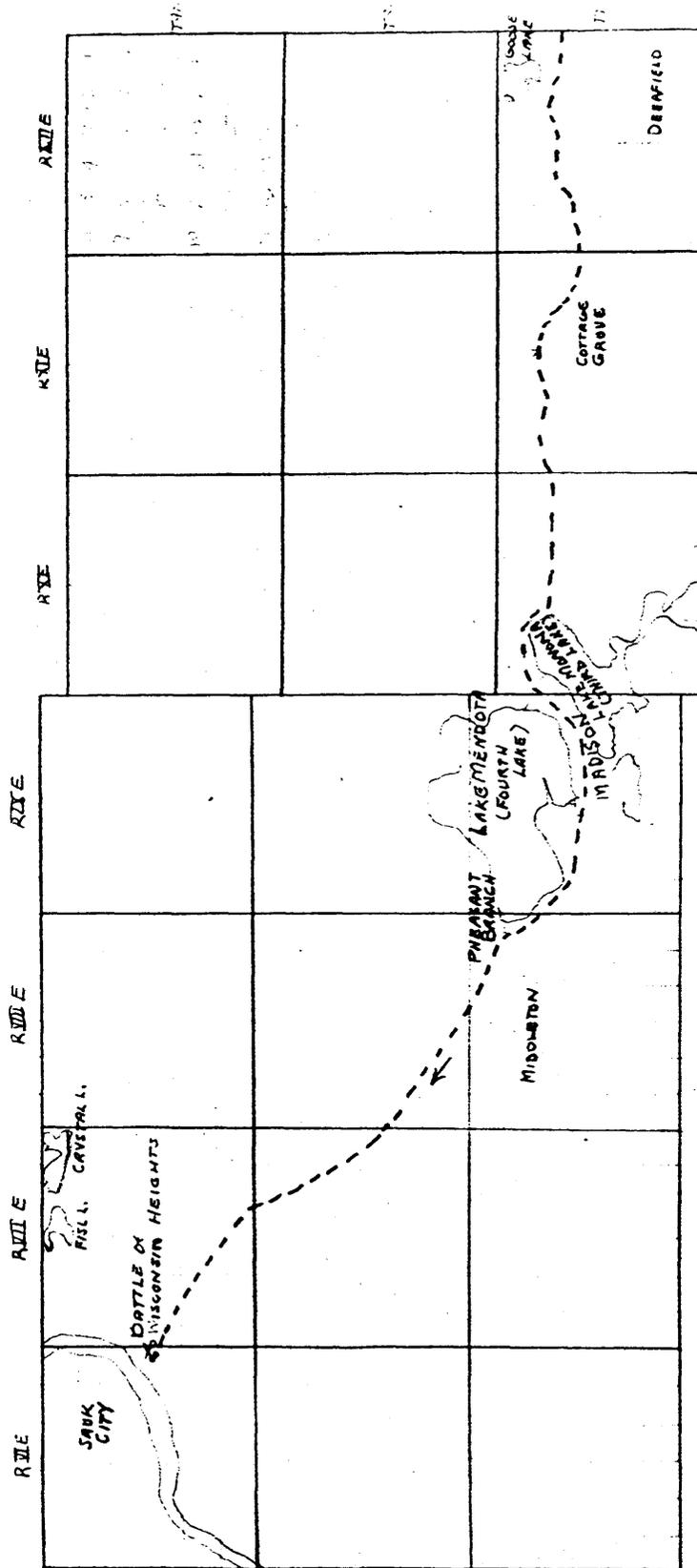
Plate 2



# EXHIBIT 1: Black Hawk's Route through Wisconsin (cont.)

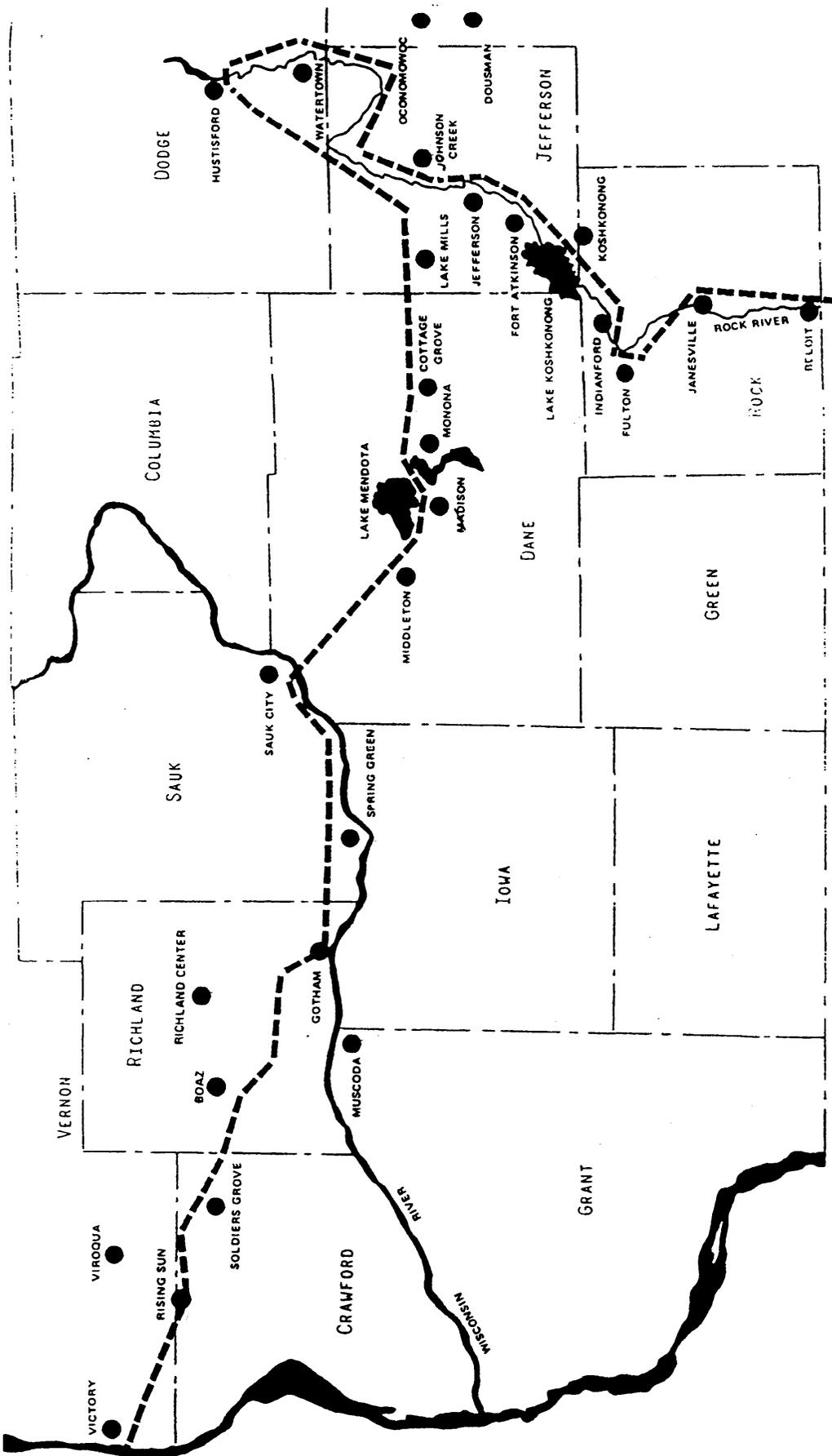
Plate 3 (of 3)

Source: Hagan, "Route of Black Hawk."



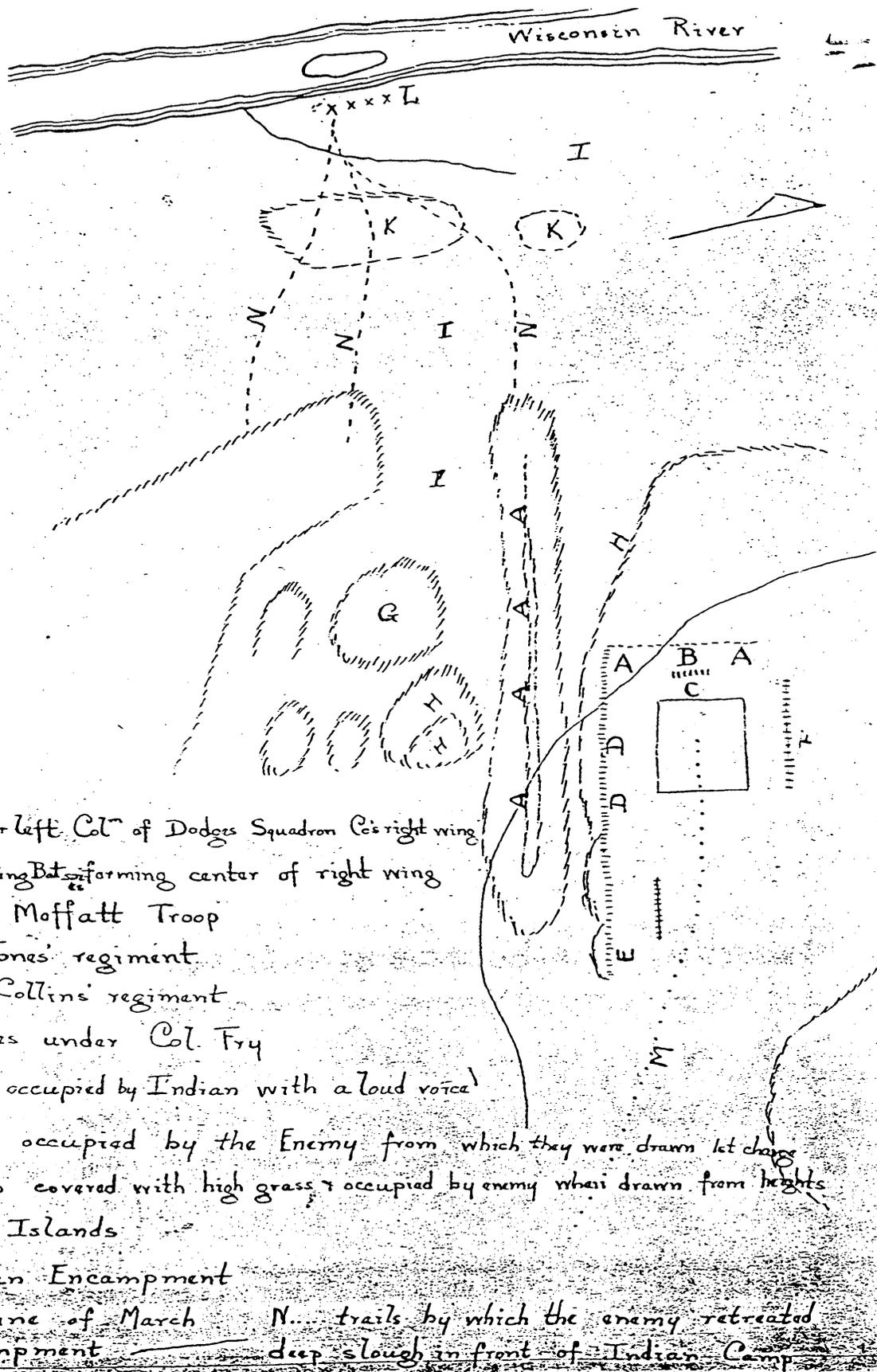
# EXHIBIT 2: Black Hawk's Route through Wisconsin (overview)

Source: Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*



BLACK HAWK'S RETREAT THROUGH WISCONSIN JULY 1 - AUGUST 2, 1832



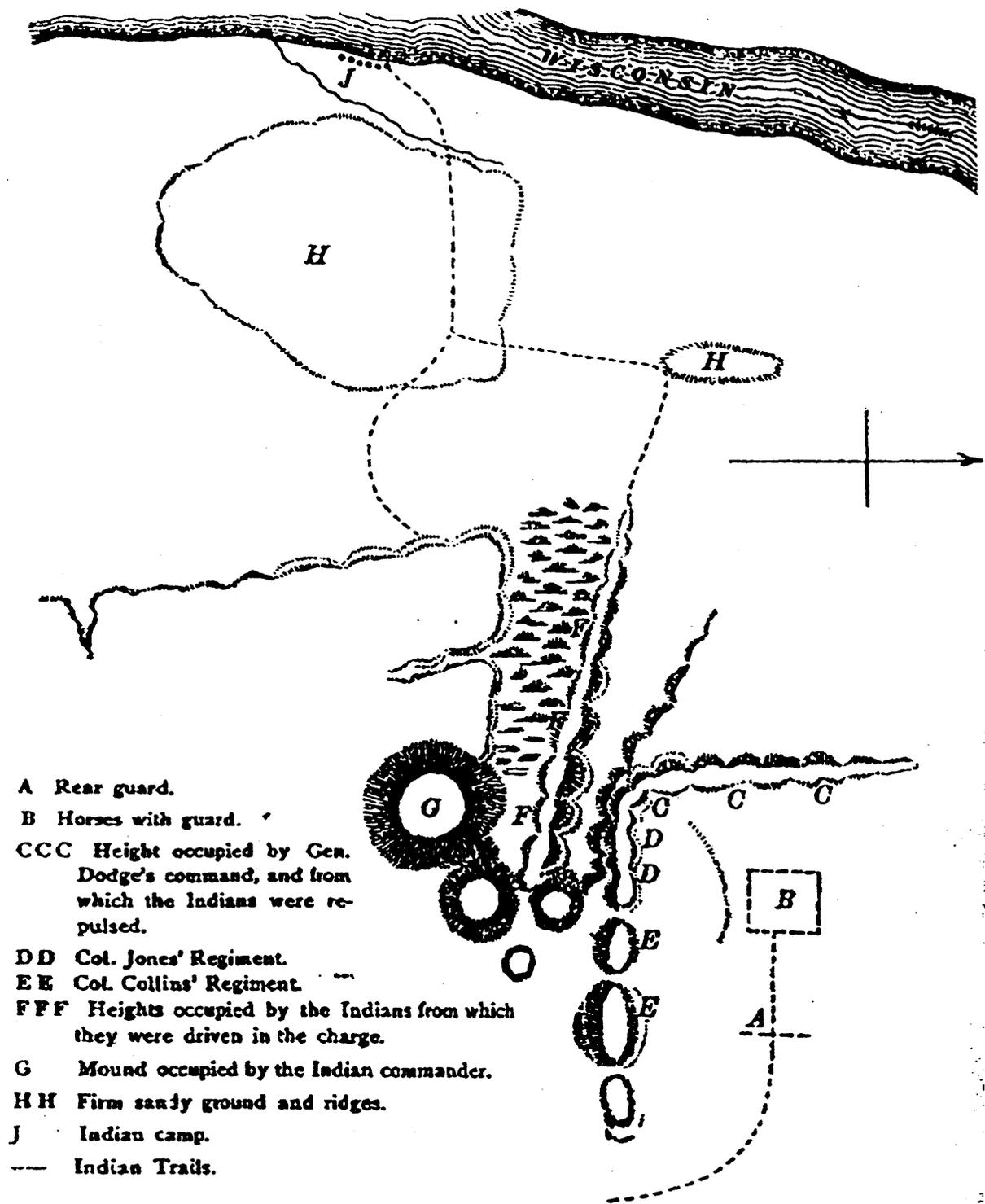


- AA Right + left Col of Dodges Squadron Co's right wing
- B Col. Ewing's Battalion forming center of right wing
- C Capt. Moffatt Troop
- D Col. Jones' regiment
- E Col. Collins' regiment
- F Reserves under Col. Fry
- G Mound occupied by Indian with a loud voice
- H Height occupied by the Enemy from which they were drawn let charge
- I Swamp covered with high grass & occupied by enemy when drawn from heights
- K Sand Islands
- L Indian Encampment
- M --- line of March      N... trails by which the enemy retreated
- Encampment      deep slough in front of Indian Camp

**EXHIBIT 4a: Details of Battlefield**

(Copied by Margaret Macauley (ca 1940?), from photostat of a Private Clark's map, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives.)

**EXHIBIT 4b: Details of  
Battlefield**  
(from Salter, Life of Henry Dodge, 1890).



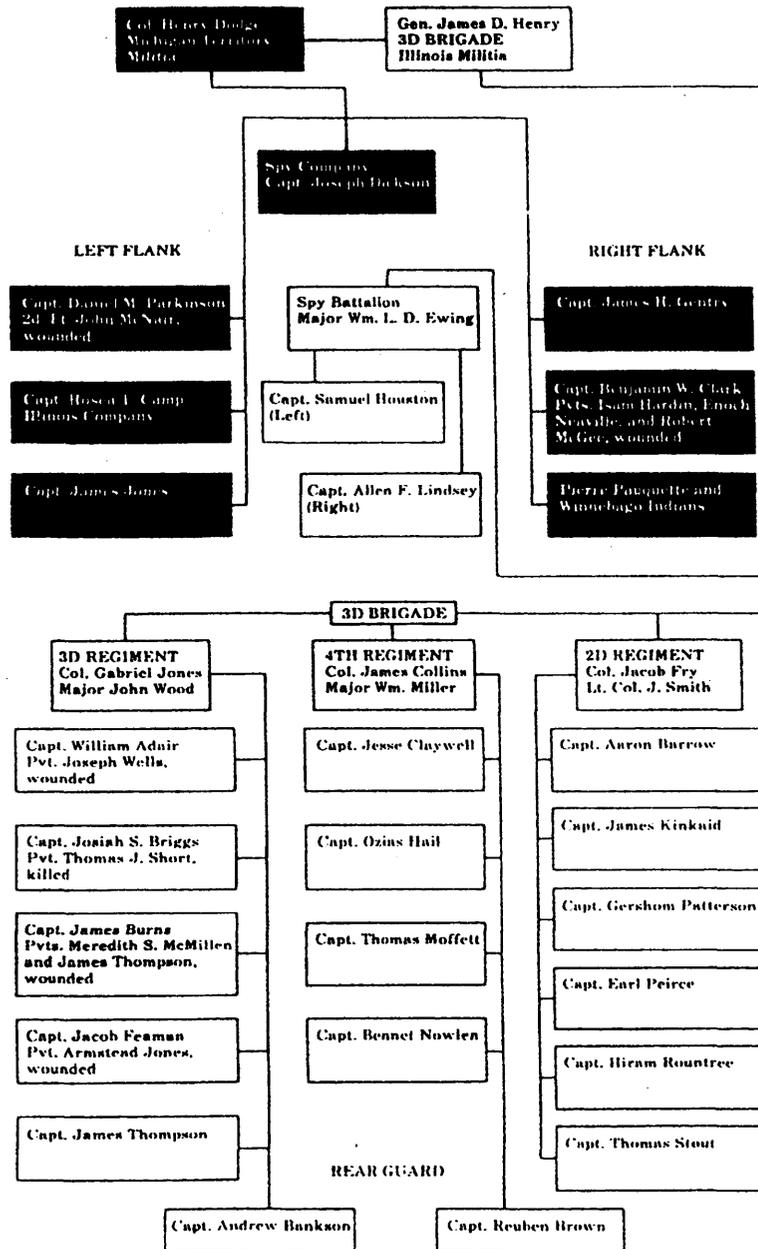
- A Rear guard.
- B Horses with guard.
- CCC Height occupied by Gen. Dodge's command, and from which the Indians were repulsed.
- DD Col. Jones' Regiment.
- EE Col. Collins' Regiment.
- FFF Heights occupied by the Indians from which they were driven in the charge.
- G Mound occupied by the Indian commander.
- HH Firm sandy ground and ridges.
- J Indian camp.
- Indian Trails.

Map 12  
Battle of Wisconsin Heights, July 21, 1832

# EXHIBIT 5: Order of Battle

Source: Thayer, *Battle of Wisconsin Heights*, 135.

## Wisconsin Heights Order of Battle



# EXHIBIT 6: Black Hawk's Route through Wisconsin (to Bad Axe)

Plate 1 (of 2)

Source: Hagan, "Route of Black Hawk."

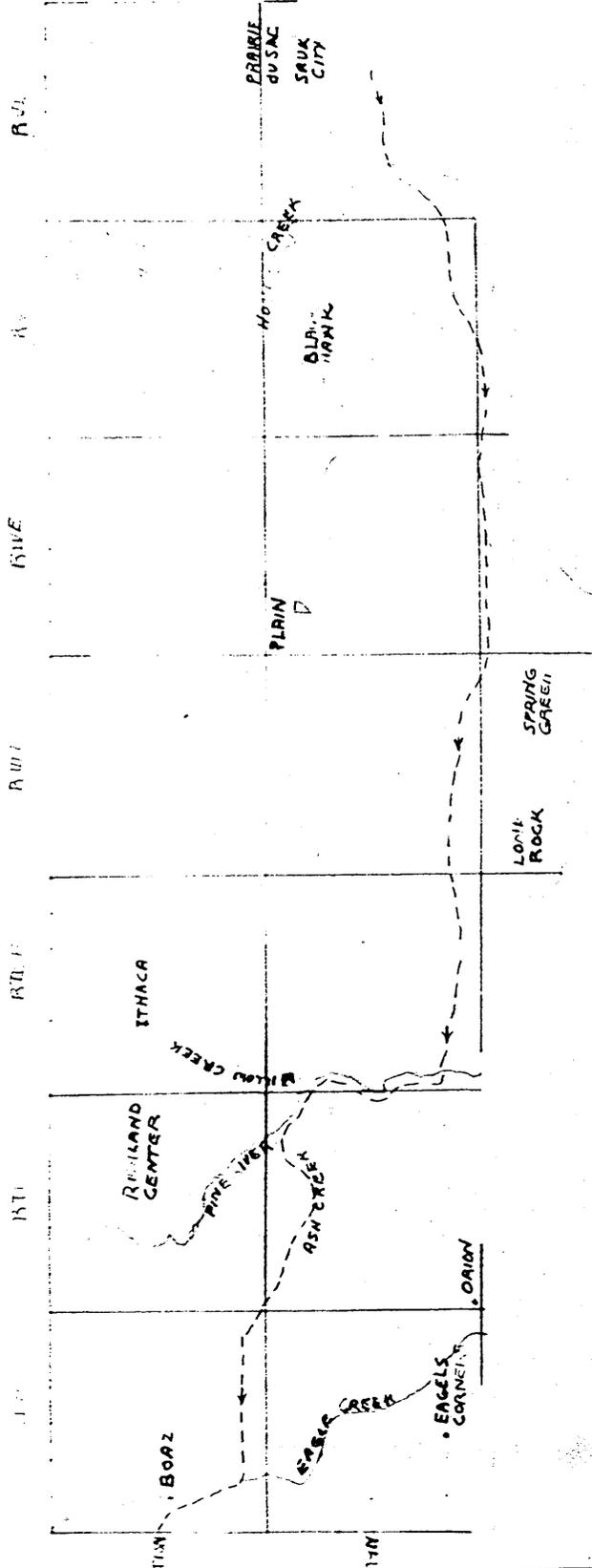
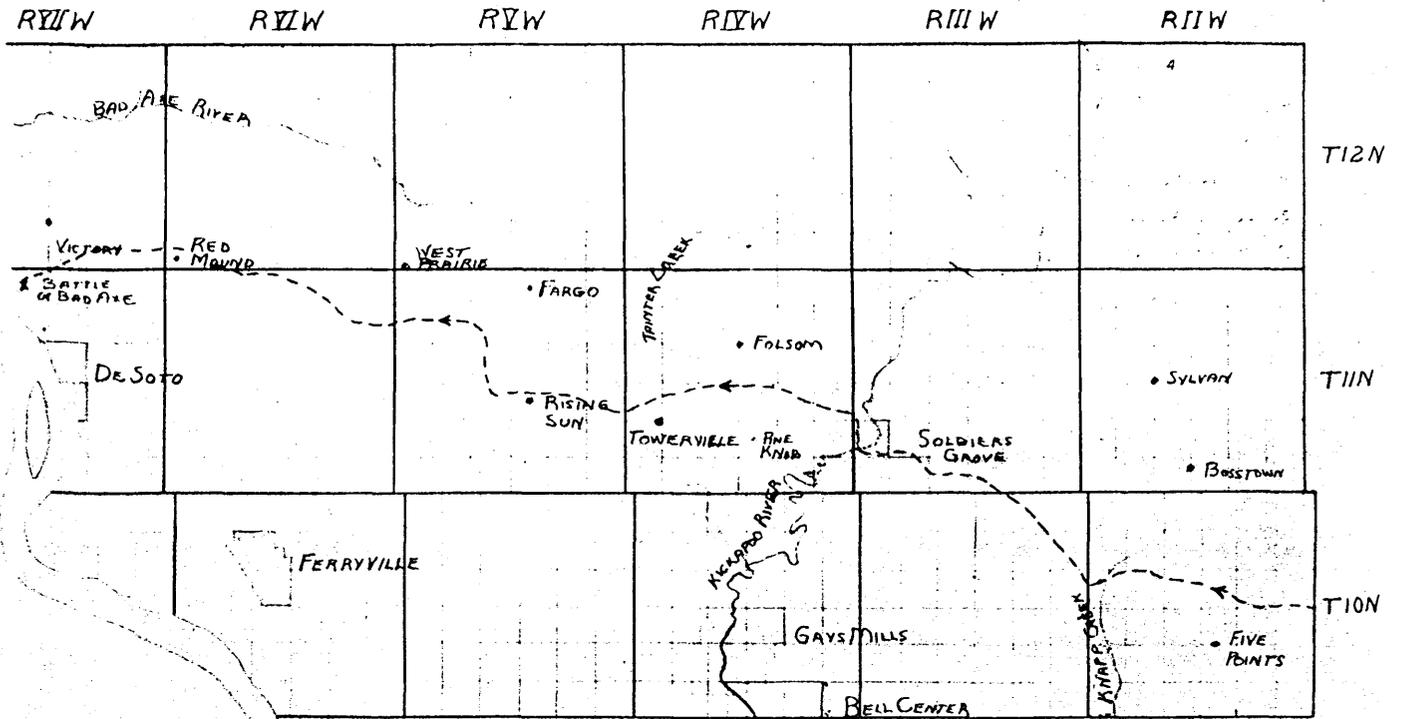


Plate 1

**EXHIBIT 6: Black Hawk's Route through Wisconsin (to Bad Axe—cont.)**  
**Plate 2 (of 2)**  
 Source: Hagan, "Route of Black Hawk."





# EXHIBIT 8: Map of Black Hawk's Village (Saukenauk)

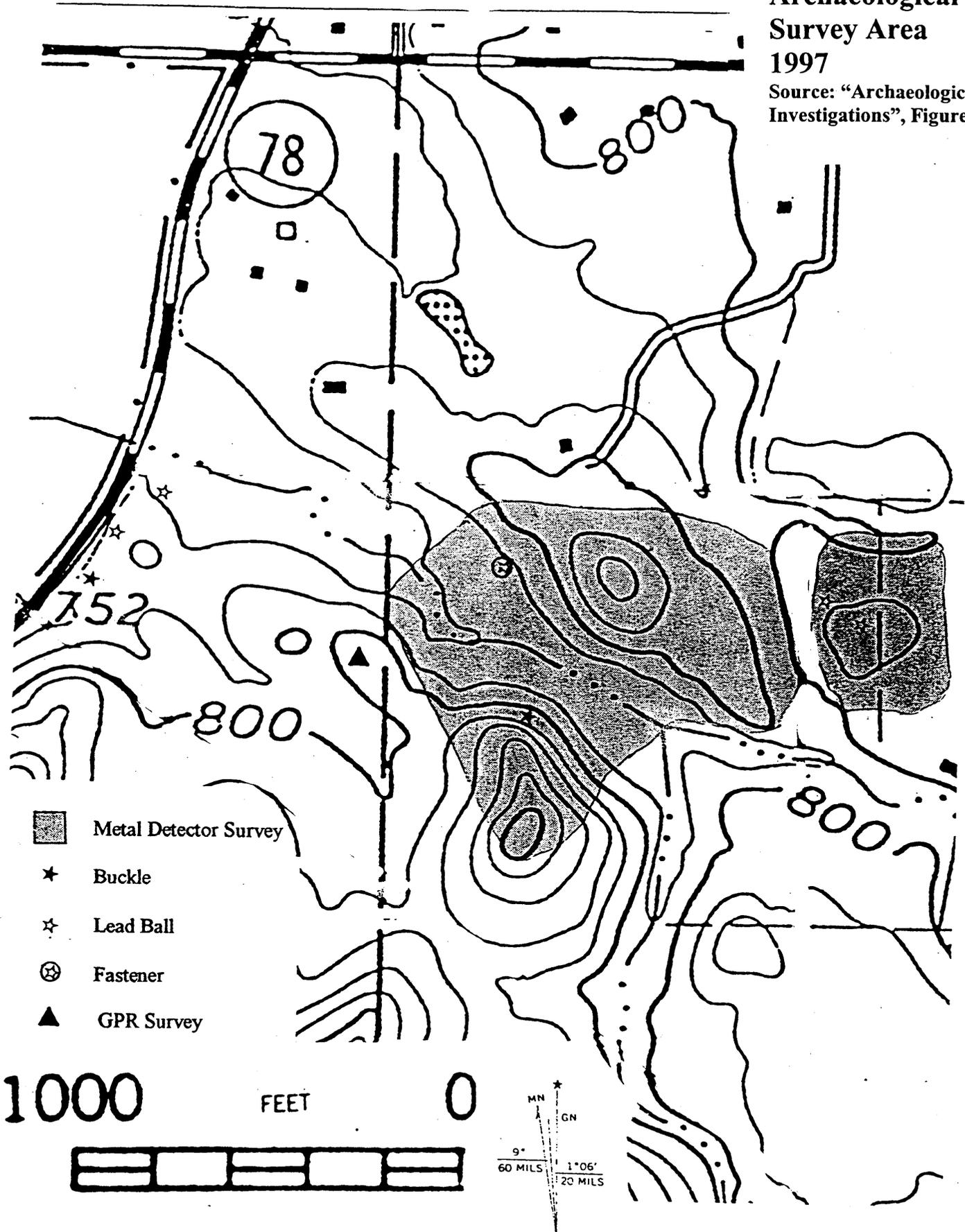
Source: Stark, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*, 27.



*Black Hawk's village at Rock Island.*

**Exhibit 9**  
**Archaeological**  
**Survey Area**  
**1997**

Source: "Archaeological  
Investigations", Figures.



Map Illustrating IMAC's Archaeological Investigations.

