
Friends of the Pecatonica River Foundation

December 19, 2013

History

Pecatonica River in the Black Hawk War

During the course of the Black Hawk not all of the Indian attacks were as a result of the Sauk Indians. Many other groups took advantage of the conflict, to extract revenge on settlers and other Native Americans. The conflict brought three groups into the conflict. Native Americans, Ho-Chunks, Sauks, Meskwakis, Kickapoos, and Potawatomis, that joined under Black Hawk and become known as the "British Band." They fought against other Native Americans, the U. S. Army and State Militia from Illinois. The troops from the U. S. Army were disciplined and led by trained officers. The Illinois Militia elected their officers and was not as disciplined. The rout known as Stillman's Run is an example of the problems within the Illinois Militia. The Sauk, usually well led, had to fight Native American groups, such as the Winnebago and Sioux. Duplicity among the Native American leaders was in part to avoid conflict with the government and in part politics. The presence of women, children, and the elderly indicated that the band was not a war party when it entered Illinois. The war killed seventy-seven settlers, militiamen and regular soldiers, plus 450 to 600 Native Americans.

In Illinois the war raged through Ogle, Stephenson, and Jo Daviess County. In Wisconsin the war went as far north as Fort Blue Mounds where Ho-Chung supporters of Black Hawk killed two settlers and an attack by Sauk from Black Hawk's band. The conflict included the "Battle of Horse Shoe Bend" along the Pecatonica River and near the present site of Woodford in Lafayette County, Wisconsin. The fight only lasted a few minutes, but at the end the militia had proven their ability, to act bravely, as a disciplined unit, and an ability to obey orders. At the end, seventeen Kickapoo were dead and future Wisconsin governor Henry Dodge's already large reputation, enhanced.

The site is now Black Hawk Memorial Park, north of Woodford Wisconsin and maintained by the Lafayette County Sportsmen Alliance, Yellowstone Flint and Cap Club, and a support group, the "Friends of Woodford Park. Black Hawk Memorial Park is maintained **solely from revenue from camping fees and donations**. For more information: The Black Hawk War by Frank E. Stevens from Heritage Books, Inc., the source for the map and from Wiki, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Hawk_War

