

Capture of Black Hawk

By David McBride

At the close of the memorable Black Hawk war, in the summer of 1832, when that noble brave of the Sacs was finally over-powered, and the most of his band, men, women and children were killed or taken prisoners on the Bad Axe—when naught but ignoble submission or hasty flight was left for the hitherto successful chieftain of a once powerful tribe, who had for many years held unbounded sway over the entire territory of Wisconsin, from his favorite home on Rock Island to Lake Superior, and at whose war whoop a thousand stalwart warriors rushed to the battle field—to submit then to his enemies, to those who had wronged him of his heritage, who had driven him, his family and his people from their loved homes, from their hunting grounds and from the graves of their fathers, was an act too degrading, too humiliating for the proud and haughty Black Sparrow Hawk,* and therefore instant flight became his only alternative. He became satisfied the battle was lost, and hastily retreated to a surrounding height, overlooking the sanguinary battle ground, accompanied by his faithful adjunct the Prophet, and for an instant turned to view the scene of his disastrous defeat, his haughty bosom filled with mingled feelings of disappointment and despair, gave vent to a loud long yell of revenge on the destroyer of his family and people, then hastily fled to seek a temporary refuge among his *pseudo* friends, the Winnebagoes, of the Lemonweir valley.

*The interpretation of his Indian name, attached to the treaty of 1816, is given as Black Sparrow Hawk. L. C. D.