

Black Hawk's Autobiography Vindicated

Early in February, 1855, J. B. Patterson, the editor and amanuensis of Black Hawk, in the preparation of the old Sauk Chief's narrative, published in the *Oquawka Spectator*, the following vindication of the correctness of that work—and whatever relates to Black Hawk, will possess an enduring interest to the people of Wisconsin; and, in this instance, authenticates an important source of information relative to the Black Hawk war, with which our early Wisconsin history is so closely identified:

In Governor Ford's History of Illinois occurs the following passage:

"It may be well here to mention, that some historians of the Black Hawk war have taken much of the matter for their histories from a life of Black Hawk written at Rock Island in 1833 or 1834, purporting to have been his own statement written down on the spot. This work has misled many. Black Hawk knew but little, if anything about it. In point of fact it was got up from the statements of Mr. Antoine Le Clair and Col. Davenport, and was written by a printer, and was never intended for anything but a catch-penny publication. Mr. Le Clair was a half-breed Indian interpreter, and Col. Davenport, an old Indian trader, whose sympathies were strongly enlisted in favor of the Indians, and whose interest it was to retain the Indians in the country for the purpose of trade. Hence the gross perversion of facts in that book, attributing this war to the border white people, when in point of fact these border white people had bought and paid for the land on which they lived from the Government, which had a title to it by three different treaties. They were quietly