

Death of Black Hawk

Willard Barrows wrote to the *Davenport Gazette*, in 1859, the following account of the death and burial of the noted Indian Chief, Black Hawk:

The varied accounts of the death and burial of Black Hawk are such as to induce the author to say, that he was not "buried in a sitting posture in the banks of the Des Moines River, where he could see the canoes of his tribe as they passed to the good hunting grounds," as was stated in some accounts at the time of his death. Neither was he buried as Schoolcraft says, (Vol. 6, *History of the Indian Tribes*, p. 454,) "with all the rights of sepulture which are only bestowed upon their most distinguished men," and that "they buried him in his war dress in a sitting posture on an eminence, and covered him with a mound of earth." He sickened and died near Iowaville, the site of his old town, on the Des Moines River, in Wapello county, in this State, on the 3d day of October, 1838, and was buried hard by, like Wapello, another chief of his tribe, after the fashion of the whites. His grave was some 40 rods from the river, at the upper end of the little prairie bottom where he lived. While performing the public surveys of this district in 1843, one of my section lines ran directly across the remains of the old wigwam in which this great warrior closed his earthly career, which I marked upon my map, and from his grave took bearings to suitable land marks; recorded them in my regular field notes, and transmitted them to the Surveyor General. Black Hawk's war club was then standing at the head of his grave, having often been renewed with paint and wampum, after the fashion of his tribe. At a later period it is said that a certain Dr. —, of Warsaw, Ill., disinterred the body and took the bones to Warsaw. Gov. Chambers learning this, required their return to him, when they were placed in the hall of the Historical Society at Burlington, and finally consumed with the rest of the Society's valuable collection.