

Major Whistler, in command at Fort Howard, had been ordered to proceed up Fox River with any force at his disposal, or which might volunteer to aid him. A company of Oneida and Stockbridge Indians, sixty-two in number, were raised by Ebenezer Childs and Joseph Dickinson, which was mustered into Maj. Whistler's detachment at Little Butte des Morts. This force arrived on the 1st day of September, 1827, on the high bluff, where, during the next year, the erection of Fort Winnebago was commenced. Here, in pursuance of orders from Gen. Atkinson, sent by express announcing the approach of his force and Dodge's volunteers, Major Whistler encamped to await the arrival of the general.

The Winnebagoes were now in a desperate plight. With Col. Snelling in command at Fort Crawford, with a large force of regulars and volunteers, confronted by Major Whistler and his troops, and with Gen. Atkinson following their retreat, aided by Dodge and his mounted volunteers, who drove them out of every hiding place, there seemed to be no alternative for them but to appeal to the lenient mercy of their pursuers.

Soon after the arrival of Major Whistler, it was learned that the Winnebagoes were encamped a little more than a mile distant on the Wisconsin, where Portage City is now located, and were several hundred strong. The Winnebagoes had heard of Gen. Atkinson's approach, and of Dodge's pursuit, before they were known to Major Whistler, and in a few days a great stir was discovered among the Indians, and a party of thirty warriors was observed by the aid of a field glass, to be approaching his command. The Indian party bore three flags. On two—one in front and one in rear—were the American stars and stripes, while the other, in the center, borne by Red Bird, was white. They bore no arms. When they had approached near to the Fox River, they stopped, and singing was heard. Those who were familiar with the air, and who recognized the bearer of the white flag, said: "It is Red Bird singing his death song." When they had reached the margin of the river, Maj. Whistler ordered Capt. Childs, who was officer of the guard, to take the guard to the river, and ascertain what the Winnebagoes wanted. They replied they had come