

Notes on the Black Hawk War

By Peter Parkinson, Jr.

In the spring of 1832, Col. Henry Gratiot went on a mission to the Sauk and Fox Indians, at their encampment on Rock River, some twenty or thirty miles below Dixon, to endeavor to learn the intentions of the Indians, and they detained him a prisoner some three days. This was prior to Stillman's defeat. My father, D. M. Parkinson, was sent by the people, early in May, an express to John Dixon, on Rock River, to ask his opinion whether the Sauks and Foxes were for peace or war. The date of the council with the Winnebagoes at the head of Fourth Lake is given in Gen. Smith's *History* as May 25th. I am quite confident this is correct. It certainly cannot be much out of the way. I remember well it was but a few days after Stillman's defeat at Kishwaukee which happened on the 14th of that month, that Col. Dodge was at Dixon when Stillman's affair occurred, when he immediately hastened home; and in a few days proceeded to the Four Lakes, and held this conference with the Winnebagoes. The reference in Dodge's address to the Indians to eleven whites having been killed in a fight, must refer to the Kishwaukee affair; but the reference to the whites having killed eleven of the Sauks and Foxes, I do not understand.¹

¹ Eleven was the number of Stillman's men killed, as stated by Gov. Reynolds, in his *Life and Times*, who gives the number of Indians slain in that affair as eight, which, very likely, was reported as eleven at the time. Dodge in his address to the Indians at the conference of the Four Lakes, mentioned that on the advance of the main army, the Indians retreated. Smith, in his *Indian Campaign of 1832*, Wakefield and Reynolds state that a strong party visited the battle-grounds the following day. So Dodge's talk had sole reference to this affair, though he did not specifically name it, which was the only one then known to him where lives were lost; and this fact goes to confirm the correctness of the date, May 25th, as the one of the Four Lake conference. L. C. D.