

Col. Charles H. Gratiot, of Gratiot, Wis., and Lieut.-Col. Edward H. Gratiot, of Platteville, Wis., who had often heard their father recount the story of his dangerous mission. It was the Prophet who, on this occasion, protected from violence and probably saved the life of Col. Gratiot, who was the honored father of Mrs. Washburne. In this fact so interesting to me, I am sure all the people of Whiteside County will readily see another reason for my interest in the Prophet."

But Col. Gratiot became better known to the public through his successful efforts in rescuing two young girls from a horrible captivity. The most shocking event during all the Black Hawk War, and one which bathed in tears every mother in the Northwest, was the cold-blooded murder of the Hall family on Indian Creek, in what is now La Salle County, Illinois. A party of Sac and Fox and Potawatomie Indians suddenly appeared at the peaceful residence of Mr. Hall, May 21,¹ 1832; without warning, they first killed a neighbor who was at the house, and then inhumanly murdered and mutilated Mr. and Mrs. Hall, and all the family then at home, except two young girls, who were taken prisoners, and carried off by the Indians. This event everywhere awakened a sense of horror, and the probable fate of these two young girls wrung all hearts with anguish. They were dragged through the country by the Indians, enduring every privation, undergoing the most terrible hardships in going from Indian Creek to the Blue Mounds in Wisconsin. The knowledge of the affair coming to Gen. Dodge, he at once saw that the only way to rescue these unfortunate young girls was through the Winnebagoes, influenced thereto by their agent, Col. Gratiot. The Colonel immediately addressed himself to some of the most prominent chiefs of the Winnebagoes, for the purpose of obtaining their good offices, in effecting the release of the two young prisoners. They could not refuse the request of their "father," Col. Gratiot; and armed with full authority and

¹ Wakefield's *History of the Black Hawk War* says, "about the 20th of May;" but the narrative of the Hall girls fixes the date as the 21st of that month.