

on the upper Mississippi; and limited transportation facilities, and the bad weather incident to a backward spring, greatly hampered the work of collecting troops, stores, boats, and camp equipage. General Atkinson, however, was energetic and possessed of much executive ability, and overcame these difficulties as rapidly as possible. He had military skill, courage, perseverance, and knowledge of Indian character, and during his preparations for the campaign took pains personally to assure himself of the peaceful attitude of those Sacs and Foxes not members of the British band. He also sent two sets of messengers to Black Hawk, ordering him to withdraw at once to the west bank of the river, on the peril of being driven there by force of arms. To both messages, the Sac leader, now blindly trusting in the prophet, sent defiant answers.¹

Meanwhile volunteers had been easily recruited amid the general excitement, and rendezvoused at Beardstown. They were organized into four regiments, under the commands respectively of Colonels John Thomas, Jacob Fry, Abraham B. Dewitt, and Samuel M. Thompson; a spy (or scout) battalion under Major James D. Henry; and two "odd battalions" under Majors Thomas James and Thomas Long.² The entire force, some sixteen hundred strong—all

¹ "Another express came from the White Beaver [Atkinson], threatening to pursue us and drive us back, if we did not return peaceably. This message roused the spirit of my band, and all were determined to remain with me and contest the ground with the war chief, should he come and attempt to drive us. We therefore directed the express to say to the war chief, 'If he wished to fight us, he might come on!' We were determined never to be driven, and equally so, not to make the first attack, our object being to act only on the defensive."—*Autobiography*, p. 114.

Wakefield, pp. 10-12, gives an interesting and graphic report of a visit to Black Hawk's camp at the prophet's town, made April 25-27, by Henry Gratiot, Indian agent for the Rock-river band of Winnebagoes. Gratiot bore one of the messages from Atkinson, which Black Hawk declined to receive. See *Wis. Hist. Coll.*, ii., p. 336; x., pp. 235, 493, for details of this mission, and sketch of Gratiot.

² See roster in *Armstrong*, appendix. Abraham Lincoln, afterwards president of the United States, was captain of a company in the Fourth (Thompson's) regiment. *Wakefield*, the historian, served in Henry's spy