

frolic, were engaged in preparing their camp, in irregular picnic fashion, when the truce-bearers appeared upon a knoll on the prairie, nearly a mile away. A mob of the troopers rushed out upon the astonished envoys, in helter-skelter form, some with saddles on their horses and some without, and ran the visitors into camp amid a hubbub of yells and imprecations. Black Hawk had sent five other braves to follow the flagmen at a safe distance, and watch developments. This second party was sighted by about twenty of the horsemen, who had been scouring the plain for more Indians, and are said to have been, as were many of Stillman's men at the time, much excited by the too free use of intoxicants. Hot chase was given to the spies, and two of them were killed. The other three galloped back to the council grove and reported to their chief that not only two of their own number, but the three flag-bearers as well, had been cruelly slain. This flagrant disregard of the rules of war caused the blood of the old Sac to boil with righteous indignation. Tearing to shreds the flag of truce which, when the spies broke in upon him, he himself had been preparing to carry to the white camp, he fiercely harangued his thirty-five braves and bade them avenge the blood of their brethren at any risk.

The neutral Pottawattomie visitors at once withdrew from the grove and hastily sped to their villages, while Black Hawk and his party of forty Sacs,<sup>1</sup> securely mounted, sallied forth to meet the enemy. The entire white force, over three hundred strong, was soon seen rushing towards them pell-mell, in a confused mass. The Sacs withdrew behind a fringe of bushes, and their leader hurriedly bade them stand firm. The whites paused on catching a glimpse of the grim array awaiting them; but before they had a chance to turn, the Hawk sounded the war-whoop, and the savages dashed forward and fired. The Sac chief tells us that he thought the charge suicidal when he

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<sup>1</sup> "Black Hawk in his book says he had only forty in all, and judging from all I can discover in the premises, I believe the number of warriors were between fifty and sixty."—Reynolds's *My Own Times*, p. 234.