

found the Winnebago village at which Black Hawk and his band had been quartered, but the enemy had fled. The Winnebagoes insisted that their late visitors were now at Cranberry lake,¹ a half day's march up the river, and the white commanders resolved to proceed thither the following day. They had arrived at the village at noon, and at 2 P. M. Adjutants Merriam of Henry's, and Woodbridge of Dodge's, started south with information of the supposed discovery, to Atkinson's camp, thirty-five miles down the river. Little Thunder, a Winnebago chief, accompanied them as guide. When nearly twenty miles out, and half way between the present sites of Watertown and Jefferson, they suddenly struck a broad, fresh trail trending to the west. Little Thunder became greatly excited, and shouted and gestured vehemently, but the adjutants were unable to understand a word of the Winnebago tongue. When he suddenly turned his horse and dashed back to Henry's camp, they were obliged to hasten after him, as further progress through the tangled thickets and wide morasses without a pilot was inadvisable. Little Thunder had returned to inform his people that the trail of Black Hawk in his flight to the Mississippi had been discovered, and to warn them that further dissembling was useless.²

The news was received with great joy in the camp of the volunteers. Their sinking spirits at once revived, and pursuit on the fresh scent was undertaken the following morning, with an enthusiasm that henceforth had no occasion to lag. All possible encumbrances were left behind, so that progress should be unimpeded. The course lay slightly to the north of west, through the present towns of Lake Mills and Cottage Grove. The Chicago & Northwestern railway between Jefferson Junction and Madison follows very closely Black Hawk's trail from the Rock river to the Four lakes. Deep swamps and sink-holes were met by the army, nearly the entire distance. The men had frequently to dismount and wade in water and mud to their armpits, while a violent thunder storm with phenomenal rainfall, the first night

¹ Afterwards Horicon lake, in Dodge county.

² *Wis. Hist. Coll.*, ii., p. 407.