

bank of the Mississippi, and when engaged, to fall back three miles up the river, thus to deceive the whites as to the location of the main band, and gain time for the flight of the latter across the stream, which was progressing slowly with but two canoes now left for the purpose.

Atkinson's men were on the move by two o'clock in the morning of August 2. When within four or five miles of the Sac position, the decoys were encountered. The density of the timber obstructing the view, and the twenty braves being widely separated, it was supposed that Black Hawk's main force had been overtaken. The army accordingly spread itself for the attack, Alexander and Posey forming the right wing, Henry the left, and Dodge and the regulars the center. When the savage decoys retreated up the river, as directed by the chief, the white center and right wing followed quickly, leaving the left wing — with the exception of one of its regiments detailed to cover the rear — without orders. This was clearly an affront to Henry, Atkinson's design doubtless being to crowd him out of what all anticipated would be the closing engagement of the campaign, and what little glory might come of it.

But the fates did not desert the brigadier. Some of Ewing's spies, attached to his command, accidentally discovered that the main trail of the fugitive band was lower down the river than where the decoys were leading the army. Henry, with his entire force, thereupon descended a bluff in the immediate neighborhood, and after a gallant charge on foot through the open wooded plateau between the base of the bluff and the shore, found himself in the midst of the main body of three hundred warriors, which was about the number of the attacking party. A desperate conflict ensued, the bucks being driven from tree to tree at the point of the bayonet, while women and children plunged madly into the river, many of them to immediately drown. The air was rent with savage yells and whoops, with the loud cries of the troopers as they cheered each other on, and with the shrill notes of the bugle directing the details of the attack.

It was fully half an hour after Henry made his descent,