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LINCOLN IN THE BLACK HAWK WAR

Social Science 550

Fred F. Seeds

LINCOLN IN THE BLACK HAWK WAR

A Term Report
Presented to
Dr. Coleman
Eastern Illinois State College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
Social Science 550

by
Fred F. Seeds
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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE WAR

I. THE CAUSE OF THE CONFLICT

In looking for information on the cause of the Black Hawk War I found two conflicting ideas. According to Howells trouble had been brewing for some time between the Indians and whites over some disputed land in northwestern Illinois. In one of the minor skirmishes that took place between the two races the Chippeway Indians had fired upon a keel-boat carrying goods to Fort Snelling. By error Black Hawk, who was chief of the Sauk tribe, was blamed for the incident and was placed in jail for one year. Upon being released, he was acquitted by trial, Black Hawk was supposedly seeking revenge and called upon all neighboring tribes to aid him in a war against the white man.¹

In a detailed account, which agrees with other sources that I used, Thwaites pins the beginning of the conflict to a treaty between the United States and the Fox and Sauk tribes signed in 1804 at St. Louis. The negotiator for the white man was William Henry Harrison. In this agreement the Indians, who many believed to be intoxicated at the time, ceded fifty

¹ W. D. Howells, Life of Abraham Lincoln (Springfield, Illinois: Abraham Lincoln Association, 1938), pp. 36-37.

million acres of their land to the United States for an annuity of \$1,000. In general terms this land made up the eastern third of the present State of Missouri, and the territory lying between the Wisconsin River on the north, the Fox River of the Illinois on the east, the Illinois River on the southeast, and the Mississippi on the west.²

It was clause seven of the treaty that seemed to have caused all the trouble. It stated that the Indians would not be forced to leave their ground, but could live and hunt upon it as long as it was government property. All went well until about 1820 when white settlers began to move into the territory. The two races whose life habits were so different could not live together. There seemed to be constant conflict. In 1827 the Winnebago War, which many believed was instigated by Black Hawk, broke out on the frontier. It was promptly squelched by the forces of General Cass, but the trouble was just beginning.

It was the habit of Black Hawk to take his people west of the Mississippi each winter to find more favorable hunting grounds. He returned from such a trip in 1830 only to find his village near Rock Island destroyed with many of their graves plowed up. Even after this outrage Black Hawk managed to

² R. G. Thwaites, How George Rogers Clark Won the Northwest and Other Essays in Western History (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Co., 1903), pp. 116-117.

control his warriors. He went from homestead to homestead requesting that the white man leave their land. The settlers, many of whom were frightened to death of the Indians, sent exaggerated pleas to Governor Reynolds requesting that the Indians be removed. Once again troops were sent to the area and on June 30, 1831 Black Hawk entered into another agreement with Governor Reynolds and General Gaines. This time the Indians agreed to move west of the Mississippi and not to return unless granted permission by the United States.

On April 6, 1832 Black Hawk, who was now sixty-seven years old, broke his word and recrossed the Mississippi. With him were over 350 well-armed braves on horse back, with the women and children in canoes. According to Herndon he was driven by fear of starvation and did not want war. Black Hawk wanted to join with the Winnebagoes and plant corn enough to keep them through the next winter.³ Warned to turn back by General Atkinson of Fort Armstrong Black Hawk refused. Hauberg says hostilities were started by white militiamen who fired upon warriors bearing the white flag of truce.⁴

³ W. H. Herndon, Life of Lincoln (Paul M. Angle, editor, Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1949), pp. 76-77.

⁴ J. H. Hauberg, "The Black Hawk War, 1831-1832," Illinois State Historical Society, Transactions for the Year 1932, (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library Publication No. 39, 1932), p. 117.

Thwaites mentions other minor incidents which also contributed to strife between the two races. War with the Indians was a popular idea at this time in Illinois. Many lawless men had followed the settlers from the east seeking adventure. As an election year was coming up many political aspirants saw it as a good chance to gain fame. It also meant action for the loafers and revenge for those who had suffered loss, either in person or property to the Indians.⁵

II. INDIAN TRIBES INVOLVED

Chief Makataimeshekiakiak, or Black Hawk, and his Sauk tribe were not the only ones involved in the war. Canadian fur trappers were quite interested in causing some internal trouble as well as other Indian tribes. In 1830 the trappers as well as the Winnebagoes, Ottawas, and Chippewas had agreed to side in with the Sauks in order to regain Black Hawk's village three miles south of Rock Island. Kickapoos, Pottawatomies, Sioux, and Dakotas were also roaming the territory and getting quite restless. When Black Hawk crossed the Mississippi in 1832 he felt he could count upon all of them to give him aid. When he discovered that he could not depend upon the British trappers or the other Indian tribes as allies

⁵ R. G. Thwaites, How George Rogers Clark Won the Northwest and Other Essays in Western History (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Co., 1903), pp. 138-139.

he sent out the white flag of truce.⁶ It was at this time that war could have been prevented had it not been for a nervous volunteer who fired upon the peace party. The tribes that had pledged to help the Sauks almost to the man turned on Black Hawk and fought with the whites. They proved to be quite valuable scouts for the army. This turn of affairs was probably due to the fact that they realized the odds were heavy against them and were possibly trying to gain favor with the white man.

III. MAJOR EVENTS OF THE WAR

With this latest breach of agreements, Governor Reynolds spoke of the territory as "being in the state of invasion" and called for 1000 volunteers. General Atkinson with troops from Jefferson Barracks and Colonel Zachary Taylor from Fort Crawford assembled at the junction of the Rock River and the Mississippi. From here they traveled up the Rock River, the regulars going by water, while the volunteers followed Indian trails. The first hostilities took place at Prophetstown where a Winnebago Indian village was burned to the ground by volunteers.

Four days later at Stillman Run Black Hawk won a major victory. In this battle eleven soldiers were killed. On Indian Creek near Ottawa nearly a week later the whites were

⁶ J. H. Hauberg, "The Black Hawk War, 1831-1832," Illinois State Historical Society, Transactions for the Year 1932, (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library Publication No. 39, 1932), p. 117.

surprised by an Indian attack; fifteen whites were killed.⁷

Up to this point the war had been taken very lightly. Now the settlers began to panic. They banded together and constructed rude forts on the Kentucky model. The country had not been so excited since 1812. In nearly all the battles so far Black Hawk had been outnumbered, yet was clearly holding his own. Many of the men who had volunteered thinking it a lark were now deserting. The Adjutant-General's report Volume nine for Illinois, which contains the roster of officers as well as enlisted men for the war, shows that many men were absent looking for their horses.⁸ I should not be surprised if many of these horses were "near home".

At this time Governor Reynolds of Illinois called for 2000 additional volunteers. Missouri, Indiana, Michigan, Kansas, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Virginia also took part in attempting to raise an army to defeat the Indians. On June 16, Andrew Jackson, President of the United States, called for regulars from Baton Rouge, Louisiana and New York. General Winfield Scott was placed in command.

⁷ J. H. Hauberg, "The Black Hawk War, 1831-1832," Illinois State Historical Society, Transactions for the Year 1932, (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library Publication No. 39, 1932), p. 92.

⁸ Elliot, Isaac H., Adjutant-Generals Report, Illinois; Roster of Officers and Enlisted Men from Black Hawk, Mexican and Spanish-American Wars, (Springfield: Journal Co., 1902), Vol. 9, p. 176.

When Black Hawk retreated into the marshes of Michigan Territory, now Wisconsin, many of the Illinois volunteers refused to follow, saying they had volunteered to fight only on Illinois soil. At their request many were mustered out. The land in northern Illinois at this time was mostly wooded and unsettled. Chicago had a population of from 200 to 300, living near the protection of Fort Dearborn. Small settlements were found near Peru, LaSalle, and Ottawa. The Indians had a clear advantage in fighting in this type of surrounding.

After Stillman's Run irregular hostilities followed for nearly a month. Occasional skirmishes between a small war party of Sauks and the army were the usual pattern. The final battle occurred at Bad Axe on the Mississippi River where the Indians were finally defeated. This battle took place August 2. The engagement was another black mark in the history of our country in dealings with the red man. When the end seemed in sight Black Hawk tried several times to break hostilities, always it was the white man who fired the shot. The battle of Bad Axe, which could easily have been prevented, was a slaughter of both men and women.⁹

The Winnebagos who had been scouting for the whites turned Black Hawk over to the government, and a peace treaty

⁹ R. G. Thwaites, How George Rogers Clark Won the Northwest and other Essays in Western History (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Co., 1903), p. 191.

was signed at Fort Armstrong on September 21. Black Hawk was kept at Jefferson Barracks that winter according to Stevens and was taken to Washington the following April. He died on October 3, 1838 on a reservation in Davis County, Iowa.¹⁰

IV. EFFECT OF THE WAR UPON ILLINOIS

The cost of the war for Illinois and the United States combined was nearly \$2,000,000. Thwaites says that approximately 250 whites lost their lives.¹¹ It was the last time that whites and Indians would fight on this territory. It helped in the rapid settlement of Illinois, not only because the Indian trouble was eliminated, but for another reason that could be overlooked. Hauberg brings out the fact that the Black Hawk War created publicity all over the country. Accounts of the battles appeared in the eastern papers, and soldiers from widely scattered areas took part in the war. During the chase of Black Hawk, these men, both soldiers and reporters, noted the vast natural resources of the territory and were eager to tell others about them. Consequently after the war many people moved to northern Illinois. The war also had an indirect effect upon the surrounding area.

¹⁰ F. E. Stevens, The Black Hawk War (Chicago: Frank E. Stevens, 1903), p. 240.

¹¹ R. G. Thwaites, How George Rogers Clark Won the Northwest and other Essays in Western History (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Co., 1903), p. 193.

Other tribes upon hearing of the defeat of Black Hawk and the Sauks were subdued, consequently there was little Indian trouble in this sector of the country for quite some time.¹²

¹² J. H. Hauberg, "The Black Hawk War, 1831-1832," Illinois State Historical Society Transactions for the Year 1932, (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library Publication No. 39, 1932), p. 132.

CHAPTER II

LINCOLN'S PART IN THE WAR

I. ENLISTMENT

Lincoln had lived in New Salem less than a year and was clerking in the Offut store when word reached him that Governor Reynolds was asking for volunteers. On April 21, 1832, at Richland, which was near New Salem, Lincoln enlisted in the Sangamon County Company for thirty days. New Salem was well represented as many of his friends and neighbors, including the Clary's Grove boys, enlisted with him. Sandburg gives two reasons for his action. One was the fact that his job as store clerk was soon to end. The other was the consideration that a war record would help in politics, and Abe was planning to run for the State Legislature.¹³ Angle states that Lincoln had already announced that he was a candidate.¹⁴ I doubt if anyone at the time realized that Black Hawk would put up the resistance that he did.

The state had quite an interesting law regarding the

¹³ Carl Sandburg, Abraham Lincoln, The Prairie Years (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1926), Vol. I., p. 154.

¹⁴ Paul M. Angle, The Lincoln Reader (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1947), p. 42.

militia at this time. As expressed by one author it was stated thus:

At that time all male white inhabitants between the ages of eighteen and forty-five were required to enroll in the militia and to provide themselves with 'proper accoutrements.' Refusal to enroll made one liable to punishment as a deserter. Those physically unfit or 'conscientiously scrupulous of bearing arms' were exempt in peace time on payment of seventy-five cents a year.¹⁵

One of the highest honors of his life, according to Lincoln, was bestowed upon him at Richland when he was elected captain of the company. He promptly chose many of his friends to take the ranks of sergeant and corporal. Jack Armstrong was chosen first sergeant and William F. Berry who was later his store partner was a corporal. The company did not impress the public with its appearance or conduct, one of Lincoln's first commands got the answer "go to the devil". On some occasions the settlers accused them of making war on the pigs and chickens, but nevertheless Lincoln undoubtedly knew he had a real fighting outfit.

II. MOVING NORTH

Although the company of which Lincoln was in charge was officially designated as the "mounted volunteers" none of the men as yet had any horses. After the election had

¹⁵ Benjamin P. Thomas, Lincoln's New Salem (Springfield, Illinois: Abraham Lincoln Association, 1934), pp. 53-54.

taken place the company marched to Beardstown where they assembled with other troops on April 22. Here four regiments were organized with Brigadier General Samuel Whiteside in charge.

Pratt gives a day by day account of the march toward the troubled area in the north. Governor Reynolds had ordered ample supplies for the troops. Included in this order were: 3000 bushels of corn, 100 barrels of flour, 100 barrels of pork or beef, 4000 pounds of lead, 1000 pounds of powder, and 6000 flints. While waiting for further orders from the north Lincoln drilled his men in the finer art of marching, details of which will be related in a later section of this report. On April 28 at Beardstown the Sangamon County Company was enrolled in the state service. Since horses were scarce the company traveled light. Before moving out of Beardstown Captain Lincoln drew the following supplies: soap, candles, flints, 50 grid irons, 4 tin buckets, 7 coffee boilers, 7 tin pans, 16 tin cups, 30 muskets and bayonets.¹⁶ The number present in the company at this time was probably near thirty. The march north was uneventful as far as Indians were concerned. The volunteers camped near Rushville on April 29, and moved six miles northeast of Macomb by May 1. By May 5 the group of 1,600 militiamen with Governor Reynolds had reached a point fifty miles south of Fort Armstrong.

¹⁶ Harry E. Pratt, "Lincoln in the Black Hawk War," Bulletins of the Abraham Lincoln Association, 1938-39 (Springfield, Illinois: Abraham Lincoln Association, 1940), Bulletin No. 54, pp. 4-6.

Food was so scarce that many hogs were shot by the undisciplined soldiers on the way. River boats from St. Louis were used to help supply the slow moving army. Finally on May 8 the company arrived near Rock Island and were mustered into Federal service. The following day the militia was reviewed by General Atkinson from Fort Armstrong.

III. PERSONAL INCIDENTS INVOLVING LINCOLN

While waiting at Beardstown for further orders many of the captains, Lincoln included, drilled their men. An incident related by many authors shows Lincoln's wit and ability to cope with any situation.

In marching one morning at the head of the company, who were following in lines of twenty abreast, it became necessary to pass through a gate much narrower than the lines. The Captain could not remember the proper command to turn the company endwise, and the situation was becoming decidedly embarrassing, when one of those thoughts born of the depths of despair came to his rescue. Facing the lines he shouted: 'Halt! This company will break ranks for two minutes and form on the other side of the gate.'¹⁷

Lincoln's record was not without blemish. On two occasions, while serving as captain, he was arrested. Most authors look upon these incidents as very humorous, which they were. On the first occasion it seems that there was an order

¹⁷ W. H. Herndon, Life of Lincoln (Paul M. Angle, editor, Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1949), pp. 77-78.

prohibiting the discharge of firearms within fifty yards of the camp. Lincoln disobeyed this order and was placed under arrest for one day; also, his sword was taken away from him.

Another time some of the men from his company broke into the officers quarters and stole some liquor. When they were unfit for marching the next day, much to the wonderment of Lincoln, the truth was discovered. On this occasion he was placed under arrest for two days and made to carry a wooden sword.¹⁸

Sandburg relates an incident that was probably a typical example of how Lincoln treated his men. It seems that on several occasions the volunteer companies were not receiving the same rations as the regulars, and in numerous other ways were being slighted. Lincoln went to the officer in charge and demanded that his company be treated the same as the regulars. The officer, doubtlessly impressed by the tall, raw boned captain, granted the request.¹⁹

One night, after the troops had marched north some distance, an old Indian wandered aimlessly into the camp. The men were all for killing the poor fellow, and very likely would have if it had not been for Lincoln. The Clary's Grove

¹⁸ W. H. Herndon, Life of Lincoln (Paul M. Angle, editor, Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1949), pp. 78-79.

¹⁹ Carl Sandburg, Abraham Lincoln, The Prairie Years (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1926), Vol. I., p. 156.

boys supposedly backed up their captain in this situation.

The only recorded incident which I found that involved Lincoln directly with combat took place at Kellog's Grove during his third enlistment. Lincoln with a small party of men came upon a group of five whites who had been scalped by the Indians. He helped in the burial of the victims and the incident seems to have made a lasting impression on him.

Throughout his period of service as captain there seems to be a great bond of affection between Lincoln and his men. His art as a story-teller and his ability at wrestling no doubt had something to do with this. Lincoln's stories no doubt made many men forget their poor rations and the seemingly fruitless search for Black Hawk. He loved to pit his strength against others and in most cases was victorious in his matches. On one occasion however he met his match in a man named Thompson who threw him in two successive falls. Herndon tells of a man named William L. Wilson, who not only defeated him in a two out of three fall wrestling match, but also won five dollars from Abe when he out ran him in a foot race.²⁰

IV. SECOND ENLISTMENT

After the Sangamon County volunteers had been mustered

²⁰ W. H. Herndon, Life of Lincoln (Paul M. Angle, editor, Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1949), p. 80.

into Federal service near Rock Island on May 9, the band moved to Dixon's Ferry and were camped there on May 12. There was constant grumbling among the men and Pratt points out that the marches during the next weeks, which were supposedly Indian scouting patrols, were actually just a means of keeping the men busy so they would not desert. On May 23 a crisis developed when the men demanded that they be discharged. The captains of the various companies were called together and a vote was taken. The vote resulted in a tie, but General Whiteside was so angry that he said he would no longer lead such men unless it was to be discharged.²¹ The army moved south to Ottawa and on May 27 Lincoln's company was mustered out of the service by Brigade Major Buckmaster. On this day Lincoln reenlisted in Captain Elijah Iles company for twenty days as a private.

Many of the men who desired to be discharged were very likely farmers who had work waiting for them at home. Also married men were anxious to be with their families. Since Lincoln had no such ties with family or job it is quite natural for him to have stayed in the service.

The new company into which Lincoln was mustered by

²¹ Harry E. Pratt, "Lincoln in the Black Hawk War," Bulletins of the Abraham Lincoln Association, 1938-39 (Springfield, Illinois: Abraham Lincoln Association, 1940), Bulletin No. 54, p. 8.

Lieutenant Robert Anderson was composed of former generals, colonels, and captains of the disbanded outfits. Within a few days the new company set out for Dixon's Ferry where they were to receive orders from Colonel Zachary Taylor. They arrived at their destination on June 7. From Dixon's Ferry Iles's company was ordered to march to Galena where all communications had been cut off. It was their assignment to restore communications there and to report on any Indian activities between the two areas. Upon reaching Galena they found the citizens thoroughly frightened but unharmed. On returning they reported to Fort Wilbourn near Peru, where the company was mustered out by Lieutenant Robert Anderson on June 16. Thus Lincoln's second enlistment term ended without any sight of action as yet.

V. THIRD ENLISTMENT

On the same day, June 16, Lincoln reenlisted for the third and last time. The captain of his new company was Jacob M. Early who was a preacher in Springfield during normal times and had been with Lincoln in the Elijah Iles company. The company was officially known as Captain Jacob M. Early's Independent Spy Corps.

This final term of enlistment also proved to be nothing more than a great deal of marching with no direct encounters

with the Indians. On June 22 Early's company was ordered to march to Dixon's Ferry to receive orders. While there word came that a battle was in progress at Kellogg's Grove. The company marched all night to this area but arrived after the battle was over. It was here that Lincoln helped to bury the five scalped victims. A few days later found the company on its way up the Rock River headed for Michigan Territory. Just north of what is now Beloit, Wisconsin scouts picked up Black Hawk's trail. However the area was completely surrounded by marshes and wilderness and the trail was lost. Many days of fruitless searching got them nowhere, and with supplies running short General Atkinson decided to dismiss the volunteers. At Black River, Wisconsin on July 16 Abraham Lincoln was honorably discharged from the army. The Adjutant-Generals Report on his discharge however says it occurred at White Water River on July 10.²²

VI. MUSTERING OUT

Very few veterans have a record like that of Lincoln. He entered the service a captain and a short time later was mustered out as a private. Lincoln's horse, as well as that

²² Elliot, Isaac H., Adjutant-Generals Report, Illinois: Roster of Officers and Enlisted Men from Black Hawk, Mexican And Spanish-American Wars, (Springfield: Journal Co., 1902), Vol. 9, p. 176.

of his messmate, having been stolen he had to make his way to Peoria by foot. Many men who had been mustered out at the same time also were traveling that way and it is quite possible that they shared their mounts for a part of the journey. At Peoria Lincoln and a fellow soldier bought a canoe and paddled down the Illinois River to Havana. From here Abe walked the distance to New Salem cross country. He arrived home in time to campaign briefly for the state legislature, his scalp still intact, and with a very good idea of the terrain in northern Illinois.

CHAPTER III

EFFECT OF THE WAR UPON LINCOLN

I. MILITARY EXPERIENCE

Through no stretch of the imagination can we look upon Lincoln's brief army career in the Black Hawk War as one of brilliance. True, he saw a job to be done and he did his part well, but the type of campaign that was waged against Black Hawk would not teach Lincoln military strategy of any high caliber. He did learn much, I am sure, of the life of the foot soldier. The long marches, poor rations, and outdoor life, to which he was already accustomed probably did much to contribute to his sympathy and understanding of the soldiers in the great war to come.

Lincoln was not known as "Captain Lincoln" in later years, although many men who had been officers with him in the war clung to their titles for the rest of their lives. He spoke lightly and in a humorous vein of his part in the conflict. At one time years later in 1848 while addressing Congress he made a speech that undoubtedly "rolled them in the aisles". The Democrats were using the military experience of Lewis Cass in the War of 1812 in an effort to elevate him to the presidency. Several biographers have used part of this speech. It follows:

By, the way, Mr. Speaker, did you know I am a military hero? Yes, sir; in the days of the Black Hawk War I fought, bled, and came away. Speaking of General Cass's career reminds me of my own. I was not at Stillman's defeat, but I was about as near it as Cass was to Hull's surrender; and, like him, I saw the place very soon afterward. It is quite certain I did not break my sword, for I had none to break; but I bent a musket pretty badly on one occasion. If Cass broke his sword, the idea is he broke it in desperation; I bent the musket by accident. If General Cass went in advance of me in picking huckleberries, I guess I surpassed him in charges upon the wild onions. If he saw any live, fighting Indians, it was more than I did; but I had a good many bloody struggles with the mosquitoes, and although I never fainted from loss of blood, I can truly say I was often hungry. Mr. Speaker, if I should ever conclude to doff whatever our Democratic friends may suppose there is of black-cockade federalism about me, and therefore they shall take me up as their candidate for the presidency, I protest they shall not make fun of me, as they have of General Cass, by attempting to write me into a military hero.²³

However, those who knew him well realized that Lincoln was truly proud of his only military experience as a soldier. As we have related before he thought of his election as captain in the Sangamon County Company as one of the highest honors of his life. Many authorities tell us that Lincoln also treasured the land grants given to Black Hawk War veterans by the government. One biographer gives us a detailed account of these grants of land.

Lincoln's land warrant under the Act of 1850, was No. 52076 for forty acres, issued April 16, 1852. The land was located July 21, 1854, by Lincoln's attorney John P. Davies, at Dubuque, Iowa, on the N. W. Quarter of S. W. Quarter of Sec. 20, Township 84 N. of Range 15

²³ Benjamin P. Thomas, Lincoln's New Salem (Springfield, Illinois: Abraham Lincoln Association, 1934), p. 57.

West. The patent to this tract signed by Franklin Pierce, was issued to Lincoln June 1, 1855.

The warrant under the Act of 1855 was No. 68645 for one hundred and twenty acres issued April 22, 1856, and located by Lincoln himself at Springfield, Dec. 27, 1859, on the E. half of the N. E. quarter and N. W. quarter of N. E. quarter of Sec. 18, Township 84 N. of Range 39 W. The patents to these tracts, signed by James Buchanan, were issued to Lincoln Sept. 10, 1860, in the midst of his campaign for the presidency, and they were sent to the Register of the Land Office at Springfield for delivery to Lincoln Oct. 30, a week before his election. Records Gen. Land Office, Interior Dept. Washington.

Lincoln owned this Iowa land when he was assassinated; it descended to his heirs, and on March 22, 1892, was sold by Robert T. Lincoln, the only surviving heir, for \$13,000, to Henry Edwards. Records Recorder's Office Crawford County, Iowa.²⁴

II. LINCOLN'S ASSOCIATES IN THE WAR

With Lincoln in the Black Hawk War were some very noteworthy associates. Chief among these was probably Zachary Taylor, then a Colonel, who was destined to become the twelfth President of the United States, and Jefferson Davis future President of the Confederacy. Many others who were not quite so famous were nevertheless with him on his rise to the highest office in the land. It is not the purpose of this paper to say that these men were responsible for his later success, but they did contribute to it. Hauberg tells of the important role some of these men played in Lincoln's

²⁴ A. J. Beveridge, Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1858 (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1928), Vol. I., 553n.

life. After returning to New Salem from his military career he was given a job as surveyor by John Calhoun. Later his old company, chief among them being the Clary's Grove boys, helped to project him into the legislature. John T. Stuart made a lawyer of him, and he served as a store partner with William F. Berry, who was his corporal in the Sangamon County Company. He served as legislator under three Governors; Ewing, Duncan, and Carlin, who had all seen service in the war. He was elected to Congress through the withdrawal of John J. Hardin, and Joseph Gilliespie presided over the State Republican convention which initiated his candidacy for the Presidency. Edward Dickenson Baker was the man who introduced him on the occasion of the first inaugural address at Washington, and O. H. Browning was his mouthpiece in the Senate during the Civil War. For a time General Winfield Scott was his army chief, and Robert Anderson, who as a Lieutenant had mustered Lincoln out of the Elijah Iles Company, was in command of Fort Sumter when the Civil War began. All of these men, and there were undoubtedly others, had taken part in the Black Hawk War.²⁵ What his life would have been had he not been in service for

²⁵ J. H. Hauberg, "The Black Hawk War, 1831-1832," Illinois State Historical Society Transactions for the Year 1932, (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library Publication No. 39, 1932), p. 133.

this short time we can not say, but I believe it is safe to concede the fact that the associations made by anyone will not harm them to a great extent. In Lincoln's case they seem to have helped.

CHAPTER IV.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The cause of the Black Hawk War can probably be traced to the Treaty of 1804 signed in St. Louis. However, with the westward movement of the population in the United States it was inevitable that two races with living habits so different would clash. Several times when the Indians under Black Hawk tried to sue for peace the white man forced the battle to continue. If the war had not taken place in 1832 though, I think many would agree that there had to be a "show down", and it would very likely have occurred in a few years. While Black Hawk and his Sauk tribe took the punishment they alone were not responsible for the conflict. Many other tribes as well as the British helped to keep the coals of hatred glowing.

The entire war lasted from April to August of the year 1832, and if major battles alone were to be considered there were only about ten. Two hundred and fifty whites, more or less, lost their lives. The Indian losses would be difficult to tabulate. Stillman's defeat was the high mark of the war for the Indian forces, when they had the entire area in a state of panic. The conflict ended in a not too glorious victory for the whites at Bad Axe on the Mississippi on August 2.

The effect of the war upon Illinois was twofold. It

eliminated forever the Indian problem in the state, and to some extent quieted the restless tribes around the surrounding territory. Secondly it speeded up the process of populating the state, since the reports from soldiers had enlightened the public on the vast natural resources to be found.

Lincoln was in New Salem at the time Governor Reynolds issued his request for volunteers. He enlisted at Richland a few miles south, and it was here that he received an honor that he cherished the rest of his life. This honor was his election as captain of the Sangamon County Company. The band of soldiers marched to Beardstown and from there made their way to Rock Island where they were mustered into federal service. Lincoln reenlisted two more times and at one time got as far north as Michigan Territory, which is now the State of Wisconsin. It was here that he received his discharge. In a unique situation Lincoln entered the service a captain and left it as a private. At no time during this period did he actually encounter any fighting Indians, but as he related later the mosquitoes were quite fierce. After his release from the army Lincoln walked south to Peoria where he purchased a canoe. He paddled to Havana, and from there walked cross country to New Salem, probably a tired but wiser man.

The military experience gained by Lincoln in the war was probably slight. However the associations he made proved to be quite valuable to him in later years.

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