

The Black Hawk War of 1832

By Patrick J. Jung

(Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007. Pp. xiv, 275. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.)

Between April and August 1832, the Sauk warrior, Black Hawk, and 1,100 of his supporters crossed the Mississippi River and returned to their homelands in Illinois in defiance of a federal order. Their decision to question the legality of the treaties of 1804 and 1816 resulted in the deaths of approximately 520 members of the "British" band of the Sauk tribe, along with a significant number of Fox (Meskwaki), Kickapoo, and Winnebago (Ho-Chunk) allies. In contrast, 77 white civilians, volunteers, and regulars lost their lives. After the British band's initial victory at Stillman's Run, along the Rock River above modern-day Dixon, Illinois, the Sauk lost three successive battles in southern and southwestern Wisconsin, culminating in the devastating loss of life at the Battle of Bad Axe, above Prairie du Chien on the Mississippi River. In just five months, both the Sauk and American settlers dehumanized each other in a war that regularly featured the mutilation of the dead and wounded. And in the end, the war became the last act of military resistance to federal Indian policy for the Algonquian peoples of the Midwest, as both the Native allies and enemies of the Sauk resigned themselves to the Indian Removal Act.

In a war that featured an overabundance of intimate violence, it

sometimes becomes difficult to discern the motivations of those involved. This is especially the case for Black Hawk and his many supporters. Their attempt to return to Saukenuk and the rich cornfields that they had cultivated since moving there in 1767 seems like a fool's errand. Historian Patrick J. Jung tells us that Black Hawk's decision to return was informed by the Sauk's misunderstanding of the Treaty of Ghent, which they believed defended their right to their homelands. Sauk diplomatic missions to British outposts in Ontario led some to believe that the British might come to their aid. Finally, Black Hawk followed the advice of a Winnebago Prophet named Wabokieshiek, who suggested that the Sauk might be able to remain at Saukenuk if they remained peaceful.

Unfortunately, the context of American settlement is largely missing from Jung's analysis. For example, the proliferation of American lead miners, the growing monopoly of the American Fur Company, and the presence of squatters on their lands deeply antagonized the Sauk. Rather than addressing these crucial elements of the story, Jung argues that "Black Hawk should have been more objective in his analysis of the situation," and given up his claims in Illinois.

These and other conclusions assume that Black Hawk shared the same epistemological vision of the world as the settlers who fought against him and the historians who have written about him ever since. Yet one could argue that the Black Hawk War, and the madness that its combatants exhibited toward each other, illustrates the profound cultural differences that increasingly shaped relations between American Indians and Europeans on the lands once characterized as a cultural “middle ground.”

In *The Black Hawk War of 1832*, both the Sauk and their famous leader are victimized by bad advice, their own irrational decision-making, and an “anti-Americanism” that, for Jung, are analogous to the pan-Indian resistance movements led by Little Turtle, Blue Jacket, and Tecumseh between the Northwest Indian War and the War of 1812. Yet there are important limits to these connections, including the fact that the primary aim of Black Hawk and his people

was to return to the village that had sustained them for generations. In contrast, both the Northwest Indian War and the War of 1812 witnessed much larger numbers of multi-ethnic combatants who fought to preserve a vast territory and an even wider variety of cultures.

The intimate violence that characterized the Black Hawk War resulted in a primary source record that is fraught with prejudices, misunderstandings, and self-serving attempts to shape subsequent memories of the war. In this book, Jung does not situate these sources in a varied enough context to provide his readers with multiple perspectives on one of the more important and troubling events in American history.

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More Than Neighbors

Catholic Settlement and Day Nurseries in Chicago, 1893-1930

By Deborah A. Skok

(DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007. Pp. x, 241. Notes, bibliography, index. \$38.00.)

Using her 2001 University of Chicago dissertation as a base, Deborah A. Skok brings together the methods and concerns of women's history, Catholic history, urban history, immigration history, parish history, and demography into a single meticulously researched and engaging work.

The acknowledgements recognize the giants of Progressive Era women's history, especially Catholic women. Skok spent considerable time researching at Catholic institutions, usually a sign that the resources have been largely ignored by non-Catholic historians. Skok correctly calls work