

= Winnebago War =

The Winnebago War was a brief conflict that took place in 1827 in the Upper Mississippi River region of the United States , primarily in what is now the state of Wisconsin . Not quite a war , the hostilities were limited to a few attacks on American civilians by a portion of the Winnebago (or Ho @-@ Chunk) Native American tribe . The Ho @-@ Chunks were reacting to a wave of lead miners trespassing on their lands , and to false rumors that the United States had sent two Ho @-@ Chunk prisoners to a rival tribe for execution .

Most Native Americans in the region decided against joining the uprising , and so the conflict ended after U.S. officials responded with a show of military force . Ho @-@ Chunk chiefs surrendered eight men who had participated in the violence , including Red Bird , who American officials believed to be the ringleader . Red Bird died in prison in 1828 while awaiting trial ; two other men convicted of murder were pardoned by President John Quincy Adams and released .

As a result of the war , the Ho @-@ Chunk tribe was compelled to cede the lead mining region to the United States . The Americans also increased their military presence on the frontier , building Fort Winnebago and reoccupying two other abandoned forts . The conflict convinced some officials that Americans and Indians could not live peaceably together , and that the Natives should be compelled to move westward , a policy known as Indian removal . The Winnebago War preceded the larger Black Hawk War of 1832 , which involved many of the same people and concerned similar issues .

= = Background = =

Following the War of 1812 , the United States pursued a policy of trying to prevent wars among Native Americans in the Upper Mississippi River region . This was not strictly for humanitarian reasons : intertribal warfare made it more difficult for the United States to acquire Indian land and move the tribes to the West , a policy known as Indian removal , which had become the primary goal by the late 1820s . On August 19 , 1825 , U.S. officials finalized a multi @-@ tribal treaty at Prairie du Chien , which defined the boundaries of the region 's tribes .

By that time , however , white Americans had begun to trespass on Ho @-@ Chunk (or Winnebago) lands in large numbers , drawn by the promise of easy lead mining along the Fever (later Galena) River . Native Americans had mined this region for thousands of years , and exporting lead had become an important part of the Ho @-@ Chunk economy . Ho @-@ Chunks tried to drive away the trespassers , but they often suffered abuse at the hands of aggressive miners . Some U.S. officials , concerned that Ho @-@ Chunk mining would delay what they saw as the inevitable American possession of the mining region , worked " to dissuade the Indians from their mining plans " .

= = = Methode family murder = = =

In March 1826 , a French @-@ Canadian man named Methode , his Native American wife , and their children were gathering maple syrup in present @-@ day Iowa , about twelve miles north of Prairie du Chien , when they were murdered , apparently by a Ho @-@ Chunk raiding party that had been passing through . The murderers evidently had no specific grievance with the victims , who were targets of opportunity . Two Ho @-@ Chunk suspects were arrested by Prairie du Chien militiamen and taken to Fort Crawford . After they escaped , U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Willoughby Morgan seized two Ho @-@ Chunk hostages and demanded that the Ho @-@ Chunk tribe turn over the murderers .

On July 4 , 1826 , the Ho @-@ Chunks delivered six men to Morgan at Fort Crawford . In accordance with Ho @-@ Chunk custom , writes historian Martin Zanger , the six men were not all involved in the murders ; they were surrendered to appease American anger and deflect punishment away from the tribe as a whole . The Americans , however , wanted to punish those personally responsible for the killings . Colonel Morgan was unable to determine who was guilty , and so he detained all six and demanded that the Ho @-@ Chunk chiefs identify the killers . Colonel Josiah

Snelling , commander of the 5th Infantry Regiment , reinforced the fort amid rumors that the Ho @-@ Chunks were going to attempt to free the prisoners . Eventually , two Ho @-@ Chunks , Wau @-@ koo @-@ kau (or Waukookah) and Man @-@ ne @-@ tah @-@ peh @-@ keh (or Mahnaatapakah) , were turned over to the Americans and indicted for the murders .

= = = Evacuation and rumors = = =

The rumored Ho @-@ Chunk attack on Fort Crawford never came , and so in October 1826 , Colonel Snelling moved the garrison to Fort Snelling , where he hoped to reduce hostilities between the Dakotas (Sioux) and the Ojibwes (Chippewas) . The two Ho @-@ Chunk prisoners were also moved to Fort Snelling . In May 1827 , after Dakotas attacked an Ojibwe party near Fort Snelling , Colonel Snelling arrested four of the Dakotas and turned them over to the Ojibwes , who killed them . This angered some Dakotas , who encouraged the Ho @-@ Chunks to help them strike at the Americans , falsely telling them that the Ho @-@ Chunks prisoners had also been turned over to the Ojibwes for execution .

The false story of the execution of the Ho @-@ Chunk prisoners , along with the incessant American trespassing , convinced some Ho @-@ Chunks to take up arms against the United States . The timing seemed right , since the evacuation of Fort Crawford appeared to be a sign of American weakness . Another grievance was the news that some Ho @-@ Chunk women had been sexually assaulted by American riverboat crews along the Mississippi River , although this story , like the one about the executions , may have been a false rumor . The Ho @-@ Chunks broke off diplomatic relations with the United States by not showing up for a scheduled treaty conference , and prepared for war .

= = Hostilities = =

In late June 1827 , a Ho @-@ Chunk leader named Red Bird , along with Wekau (or Wa @-@ ni @-@ ga , The Sun) and Chickhonsic (or Chic @-@ hong @-@ sic , Little Buffalo) , went to Prairie du Chien to seek revenge for what they believed were the executions of the Ho @-@ Chunk prisoners . Unable to locate their intended victim , they instead targeted the cabin of Registre Gagnier , the son of an esteemed African @-@ American nurse and midwife named Aunt Mary Ann . Gagnier welcomed the three Ho @-@ Chunks into his home for a meal . What happened inside varies according to sources . According to one account , Red Bird shot and killed Gagnier , while Chickhonsic shot and killed Solomon Lipcap , a hired man or friend of the family . Wekau tried to shoot Gagnier 's wife , but she wrestled his gun away before escaping with her young son . Wekau had to settle for stabbing and scalping Gagnier 's infant daughter , who survived the attack . Another account says that only Red Bird committed the murders . Red Bird and his companions returned with the three scalps to their village at Prairie La Crosse , where a celebration was held .

On June 30 , 1827 , the Prairie La Crosse Ho @-@ Chunks struck again . About 150 Ho @-@ Chunks , with a few Dakota allies , attacked two American keelboats on the Mississippi , near the mouth of the Bad Axe River . Two Americans were killed and four were wounded in the skirmish ; about seven Ho @-@ Chunks died in the attack or later from their wounds . According to historian Patrick Jung , " The attack , while relatively small , was significant because it was the first act of war committed against the United States by Indians in the region since the War of 1812 . "

In their nascent war against the Americans , the Prairie La Crosse Ho @-@ Chunks sought to recruit allies among the Dakotas , Potawatomis , and other Ho @-@ Chunk bands . Most leaders of these tribes , while sympathetic to Ho @-@ Chunk grievances , urged neutrality . Some Potawatomis participated by killing some American livestock , but Potawatomis leaders Billy Caldwell , Alexander Robinson , and Shaubena rode among the Potawatomis settlements and urged people to stay out of the war ; they would do the same five years later during the Black Hawk War . Many Ho @-@ Chunks also distanced themselves from the actions of Red Bird and the Prairie La Crosse Ho @-@ Chunks . Without allies , the effort to ignite a widespread war was doomed . By mid @-@ July , writes historian Martin Zanger , " for all practical purposes the ' Red Bird Uprising ' was over " .

= = American response = =

The attacks created panic among the American population of the area . Settlers , fearing the outbreak of a wider Indian war , fled to towns such as Galena and Chicago , or sought sanctuary in the abandoned Fort Crawford .

Lewis Cass , the governor of Michigan Territory , and Thomas McKenney , the Superintendent of Indian Affairs , were hosting a treaty conference near Green Bay when they learned of the attacks . To discourage the spread of the uprising , Cass promptly invited Native Americans in the region to come to the treaty grounds to receive gifts and food ; more than 2 @, @ 000 people eventually arrived . McKenney warned the Ho @-@ Chunk chiefs in attendance that the only way to avoid an American military invasion of their homeland was to surrender those responsible for the attacks . Other American officials met with other Native leaders , including Keokuk and Wabokieshiek , and urged them to stay out of the war .

Meanwhile , American officials scrambled to mobilize troops . Cass hurried to Prairie du Chien , where he organized the local militia . Colonel Snelling arrived at Prairie du Chien on July 10 , bringing about 200 regulars from Fort Snelling to reoccupy Fort Crawford . He was joined there on July 29 by Brigadier General Henry Atkinson , who brought 500 men upriver by steamboat from Jefferson Barracks . Several days later , Henry Dodge arrived at Fort Crawford with 130 mounted militiamen , mostly miners . Governor Ninian Edwards of Illinois sent 600 mounted militiamen north to Wisconsin .

To the east , McKenney and Major William Whistler organized another force . Whistler had about 100 regulars from Fort Howard , along with 50 mostly métis militiamen from Green Bay , 60 New York Indians , and 120 Menominees . On August 29 , Atkinson 's force began moving up the Wisconsin River towards Portage , Wisconsin , where the hostile Ho @-@ Chunks had concentrated , while Whistler 's force converged on the same location from the north .

On September 1 , 1827 , McKenney and Whistler 's force arrived at the Portage . On September 3 , two Ho @-@ Chunk leaders , Waukon Decorah and Carymaunee , surrendered Red Bird and Wekau to the Americans . Carymaunee asked the Americans not to put irons on Red Bird and Wekau ; this request was granted . He then offered to give the Americans twenty horses in exchange for the prisoners , but this was declined . The Ho @-@ Chunks turned in four more men involved in the uprising in the following weeks .

= = Aftermath = =

In diplomatic talks with the Ho @-@ Chunks at the close of the war , General Atkinson promised that the U.S. government would look into their grievances in the lead mining region . Thomas McKenney requested military aid to evict American miners who were trespassing on Ho @-@ Chunk land , but after the war , settlers poured into the region in unprecedented numbers , and U.S. officials proved to be unable or unwilling to stem the tide . By January 1828 , there were as many as 10 @, @ 000 illegal settlers on Ho @-@ Chunk land , including militia general Henry Dodge , who established a mining camp after the war and boasted that the U.S. Army could not make him leave . Having no other options , on August 25 , 1828 , the Ho @-@ Chunks signed a provisional treaty with the United States , agreeing to sell the land occupied by the miners in a more formal treaty to be held later .

Eight Ho @-@ Chunks were detained by the U.S. government at Fort Crawford for trial after the war . American officials most wanted to convict Red Bird , believing that he had been the leader of the uprising . This belief , according to historian Martin Zanger , was based on an American failure to understand the decentralized nature of Ho @-@ Chunk society . " Because Red Bird was well known to the white frontiersmen , " writes Zanger , " they focused their resentment on him , mistakenly attributing to him a leadership role he did not deserve . " Red Bird was never tried ; he contracted dysentery and died in prison on February 16 , 1828 , before his trial got underway .

The trials were delayed due to the difficulties in bringing together witnesses , prosecutors , defense

attorneys , and interpreters . The proceedings finally began in August 1828 , with Judge James Duane Doty presiding . Wau @-@ koo @-@ kau and Man @-@ ne @-@ tah @-@ peh @-@ keh , the two warriors imprisoned for the 1826 murders of the Methode family , were released due to a lack of witnesses , as were three Ho @-@ Chunks held for the attack on the keelboats . Only two men , Wekau and Chickhonsic , were prosecuted . According to historian Patrick Jung , it became clear during the trial that Red Bird had committed the murders at the Gagnier cabin , and that there was not enough evidence to convict Wekau and Chickhonsic . Despite this , the white and métis jury found them guilty . Judge Doty sentenced them to hang , as he was required to do by law . Their lawyer filed a motion for a new trial , arguing that the jury had ignored the evidence , and so Doty suspended the death sentences .

On November 3 , 1828 , President John Quincy Adams , having been told that the executions would likely spark another uprising , pardoned the prisoners in exchange for a land cession . In July and August 1829 , in treaties signed at Prairie du Chien , the Ho @-@ Chunks and the Three Fires Confederacy formally ceded the lead mining region to the United States for annual payments of \$ 16 @, @ 000 and \$ 18 @, @ 000 respectively .

Hoping to prevent further uprisings , the United States decided to strengthen its military presence in the region after the Winnebago War . Fort Crawford was reoccupied , as was Fort Dearborn in Chicago , which had been abandoned in 1823 . A new outpost , Fort Winnebago , was built in October 1828 at the portage between the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers .

The conflict also helped to promote a change in U.S. policy regarding Native Americans . Previously , many Americans had argued that Indians should be " civilized " and assimilated into white American society . But for some , the Winnebago War discredited the idea that Indians and Americans could live peaceably together . In his State of the Union Address of December 2 , 1828 , outgoing President Adams announced that the " civilization " policy had been a failure , and that Indian removal ? moving the tribes to the West ? was the policy of the future . That policy would be taken up by Adams 's successor , Andrew Jackson .