

= Buffalo Grove ambush =

The Buffalo Grove ambush was an ambush that occurred on May 19 , 1832 as part of the Black Hawk War . A six @-@ man detail carrying dispatches from United States Colonel James M. Strobe at Galena , Illinois to General Henry Atkinson at Dixon 's Ferry was ambushed by Native Americans during the attack . William Durley was killed and buried near the site of the ambush . Durley 's remains were initially interred by the party that would become victims of the St. Vrain massacre . Two other men had bullet holes in their clothing , but were uninjured . In 1910 the Polo Historical Society moved Durley 's remains to a plot beneath a memorial they erected west of Polo , Illinois .

= = Background = =

As a consequence of an 1804 treaty between the Governor of Indiana Territory and a group of Sauk and Fox leaders regarding land settlement , the Sauk and Fox tribes vacated their lands in Illinois and moved west of the Mississippi in 1828 . However , Sauk Chief Black Hawk and others disputed the treaty , claiming that the full tribal councils had not been consulted , nor did those representing the tribes have authorization to cede lands . Angered by the loss of his birthplace , between 1830 ? 31 Black Hawk led a number of incursions across the Mississippi River , but was persuaded to return west each time without bloodshed . In April 1832 , encouraged by promises of alliance with other tribes and the British , he again moved his so @-@ called " British Band " of around 1000 warriors and non @-@ combatants into Illinois . Finding no allies , he attempted to return to Iowa , but ensuing events led to the Battle of Stillman 's Run . A number of other engagements followed , and the state militias of Wisconsin and Illinois were mobilized to hunt down Black Hawk 's band . The conflict became known as the Black Hawk War .

= = Prelude = =

When the Black Hawk War began in the spring of 1832 , the settlers at Buffalo Grove were notified of Black Hawk 's victory at Stillman 's Run and ordered to leave the grove . Most of the settlers went to Peoria where they remained for the duration of the war . On May 19 , 1832 a small unit was detailed to carry dispatches from Colonel James M. Strobe in Galena to General Henry Atkinson at Dixon 's Ferry ( present @-@ day Dixon , Illinois ) . The group of men , which included soldiers Fred Stahl , William Durley , Vincent Smith , Redding Bennett , James Smith , and mail contractor John D. Winters , left Dixon around 3 p.m. on May 19 .

= = Ambush = =

The Buffalo Grove ambush occurred near Buffalo Grove , Illinois , a small , unincorporated settlement in present @-@ day Ogle County . As the group neared the edge of the grove one of the party noted the increased chances for ambush and suggested that the party avoid the usual route by taking a more roundabout route . The suggestion was opposed and Durley reared his horse and entered the wooded area within the grove . He had traveled only a few " bounds " when he was cut down by gunfire from the previously suggested ambush .

On May 20 , 1832 , Sergeant Stahl returned to Dixon 's Ferry with the other four survivors of the attack and reported that his party had been ambushed by a group of Native Americans the evening before on the edge of the grove . He reported that Durley was killed instantly , scalped , and left on the spot . Stahl and James Smith both had bullets rip through articles of clothing but were uninjured and only Durley died in the attack .

= = Aftermath = =

The events of the Buffalo Grove ambush are closely interrelated with those of the St. Vrain massacre . A group of four men , including Aaron Hawley and John Fowler , both casualties of the

St. Vrain massacre , was en route to Galena when they stumbled upon the body of Durley at Buffalo Grove . The group returned to Dixon 's Ferry , reported their find and stayed there overnight .

When Atkinson returned to Dixon on May 23 it was with dispatches destined for Fort Armstrong . He ordered Indian Agent Felix St. Vrain to join the group that had discovered Durley 's body and travel with them to Galena . The group left Dixon and traveled north where they found , and interred the remains of Durley at Buffalo Grove .

The Polo Historical Society erected a memorial to Durley on May 19 , 1910 , the 78th anniversary of the attack . At that time , Durley 's remains were moved from where St. Vrain 's party buried him , near where he had fallen , and interred beneath the memorial . The Buffalo Grove ambush historical marker and memorial to Durley are located west of the city of Polo , Illinois along Eagle Point Road .