

= Attacks at Fort Blue Mounds =

The attacks at Fort Blue Mounds were two separate incidents which occurred on June 6 and 20 , 1832 , as part of the Black Hawk War . In the first incident , area residents attributed the killing of a miner to a band of Ho @-@ Chunk warriors , and concluded that more Ho @-@ Chunk planned to join Black Hawk in his war against white settlers . The second incident occurred east of the fort as a Sauk raiding party , estimated by eyewitnesses to be as large as 100 warriors , attacked two militia men who were investigating noises heard the night before . Two members of the militia stationed at Blue Mounds were killed in the attack , and both their bodies were badly mutilated .

The attacks followed an increase in tension after the Hall sisters were released at Fort Blue Mounds on June 1 . The sisters had been kidnapped during the Indian Creek massacre in May and were brought to Blue Mounds by a party of Ho @-@ Chunk . Militia leader Henry Dodge became suspicious of the Ho @-@ Chunk and took them prisoner , though they were later released as tension between the Ho @-@ Chunk and white settlers increased . The attacks also lent credence to the belief that more Ho @-@ Chunk were set to join Black Hawk 's war against white settlers in Illinois and Michigan Territory . Though other attacks on the fort were expected they never happened and Fort Blue Mounds served as a supply center for the remaining days of the war .

= = 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 in 1828 and moved west of the Mississippi River . 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 , Black Hawk led a number of incursions across the Mississippi River beginning in 1830 , but each time was persuaded , without bloodshed , to return west . In April 1832 , encouraged by promises of alliance with other tribes and the British , he again moved his so @-@ called " British Band " of around 1 @, @ 000 warriors and civilians into Illinois . 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 that ensued became known as the Black Hawk War .

= = Prelude = =

Upon hearing of Black Hawk 's return , settlers throughout northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin hastily constructed forts . Construction on a fort began at Ebenezer Brigham 's Moundville settlement (now Blue Mounds , Wisconsin) on May 10 . As construction of the fort commenced Black Hawk found no allies so he attempted to return to Iowa , but events overtook him and led to the Battle of Stillman 's Run . The battle likely caused the builders of Fort Blue Mounds to accelerate the pace of construction .

One week after the clash at Stillman 's Run , on May 21 , 1832 , the Indian Creek massacre occurred well south of Fort Blue Mounds , near present @-@ day Ottawa , Illinois . During the attack , two teenage girls were kidnapped by a raiding band of Potawatomi . The girls , Sylvia and Rachel Hall , were released on June 1 at Fort Blue Mounds by the party of Ho @-@ Chunk who had helped secure their release ; the party included several important chiefs . Commander of the Michigan Territory militia Henry Dodge arrived with a company to retrieve the girls but became suspicious of the Ho @-@ Chunk and took them prisoner in an attempt to secure the alliance and good behavior of other Ho @-@ Chunk in the vicinity of Blue Mounds . The chiefs were soon released but friction between white settlers at Moundville and the Ho @-@ Chunk residing in the area increased . Indian Agent Henry Gratiot tried to calm the situation by appeasing the Ho @-@ Chunk through gifts . Despite Gratiot 's attempts , the tension exploded into violence a few days later .

= = Attacks = =

The first incident near Fort Blue Mounds occurred when William Griffith Aubrey was attacked and killed by Native American warriors on June 6 , 1832 . According to one witness statement , directly preceding the first attack at Fort Blue Mounds on June 6 , there was an argument between William Aubrey 's wife and a Ho @-@ Chunk man . During the exchange the Ho @-@ Chunk man threatened to kill her husband . Aubrey was a miner who was working for Brigham about 1 ½ miles away from Fort Blue Mounds when he was attacked . He and Jefferson Smith were detailed to retrieve water from a spring near the fort when they were ambushed by a small party of warriors . Aubrey was shot twice and stabbed through the neck with a spear . His companion , though shot three times , managed to escape with his life . Smith fled back to the fort , leaving his gun and horse behind . At the fort , the settlers correctly guessed that the attackers were Ho @-@ Chunk and not the warriors of Black Hawk 's " British Band , " which was 40 miles (64 km) away at Lake Kegonsa .

The second attack occurred on June 20 , 1832 , two weeks after the first incident . In the attack , a large Sauk war party attacked Blue Mounds and two members of the militia , Emerson Green and George Force , were killed . Eyewitness accounts estimated the size of the group between 50 @-@ 100 warriors . The night before the second attack of June 20 strange noises were heard in the vicinity of the fort . Force and Green had left the fort , on horseback , to investigate the previous night 's disturbances and were several miles east of Fort Blue Mounds when they came across Black Hawk 's band , guided to the fort by sympathetic Ho @-@ Chunk . Force was killed immediately but Green broke for the fort and almost made it back to safety when , in view of the fort 's occupants , his horse was shot out from underneath him . Green was surrounded by the war party and killed , eyewitness accounts indicate that his body was badly mutilated .

= = Aftermath = =

Following the murder of Aubrey , people in the area quickly suspected that the Ho @-@ Chunk were involved which exacerbated the fear that more from the Ho @-@ Chunk Nation were set to join Chief Black Hawk 's band against the white settlers in Michigan Territory and Illinois . With the loyalty of the Ho @-@ Chunk in question the possibility of a two @-@ front war emerged . After the deaths of Green and Force , U.S. interrogators questioned two Ho @-@ Chunk warriors they had captured . The braves , members of the Prophet 's Band , took credit for the killings , even boasting of them .

The location of Aubrey 's death was in Michigan Territory near present @-@ day Blue Mounds , Wisconsin . Following his death , mounted troops and riders from the fort traced the band responsible for the attack to a recently abandoned camp , and then to the Wisconsin River , where the search ended . Aubrey was buried on a high piece of land overlooking the fort from the northeast .

Green 's body was buried at the fort but Force 's remains laid on the prairie for four days before they were retrieved ; the fort 's residents were too frightened to venture far from the building . On June 24 General Henry Dodge and Captain James H. Gentry arrived at Fort Blue Mounds with part of Gentry 's company . Their purpose was to conduct reconnaissance operations but they ended up finding the body of Lieutenant Force beneath a tree about two miles (3 km) east of the fort . Early histories indicate Force 's body was badly mutilated and missing a " part . " Force was buried near the fort , along the main trail about two miles (3 km) east of the fort .

Though Brigham fully expected an all @-@ out attack on Fort Blue Mounds following the incidents , it never came . The only violence that befell the occupants of the fort was that perpetrated on those who left its confines on June 6 and June 20 . Dodge left a detachment at the fort for a time but after the June 20 attack the fort was never again a target during the Black Hawk War . Until the end of the war , Fort Blue Mounds served primarily as a supply center for the militia as they continued their pursuit of Black Hawk across Wisconsin .