

= Battle of Waddams Grove =

The Battle of Waddams Grove , also known as the Battle of Yellow Creek was part of the Black Hawk War . It took place in present @-@ day Stephenson County , Illinois on June 18 , 1832 . After several incidents of Sauk Indian raids on settlers along the Apple River , Captain James W. Stephenson left Galena with a group of volunteer militia in pursuit of the Native party . The group clashed on June 18 , 1832 near Yellow Creek and the ensuing battle descended into a bayonet and knife fight in which several Sauk and three militia men were killed . Stephenson was severely wounded by a musketball to the chest during the fighting . The dead were eventually interred in a memorial cemetery in Kellogg 's Grove , Illinois where a stone monument was erected in memory of those killed during the war .

= = Background = =

Angered by the loss of his birthplace , in prior disputed treaties , Black Hawk led a number of incursions across the Mississippi River beginning in 1830 . Each time , he was persuaded to return west without bloodshed . In April 1832 , encouraged by promises of alliances with other tribes and the British , he again moved his " British Band , " of around 1 @,@ 000 warriors and civilians , 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 .

Following the first confrontation of the war Stillman 's Run , the exaggerated claim that 2 @,@ 000 " bloodthirsty warriors were sweeping all northern Illinois with the bosom of destruction " sent shock waves of terror through the region . Several small massacres and skirmishes ensued and until the Battle of Horseshoe Bend , fought two days before the clash at Waddams Grove , public confidence in the militia was low .

= = Prelude = =

On June 9 , 1832 , between two attacks that occurred at Fort Blue Mounds , a party of Native Americans crossed over from the west side of the Mississippi River near Galena . The group continued up the Apple River , looting and stealing horses along the way , including an incident about ¾ of the way up the Apple River in which about a dozen horses were stolen from a small stockade . The Sauk raiding parties were mostly stealing food and supplies for Black Hawk 's band of 1 @,@ 000 men , women and children which were camped in the marshes of southwestern Wisconsin . A similar incident a few days later , though without injury or death , prompted a reaction from the white militia in the area .

Rising anxiety levels in the white settlers caused Captain James W. Stephenson to gather 12 volunteers and move toward the area of the disturbances from Galena . Stephenson recruited more men at Apple River Fort and then traveled eastward . Stephenson and his men rose before dawn on June 18 and started following the trail of the band of Sauk who had stolen the horses . The militia marched through pounding rain before they finally caught up with the Sauk .

= = Battle = =

Stephenson caught up with the band of Native Americans on June 18 , 1832 in an open area near Yellow Creek , about 12 miles (19 km) east of Kellogg 's Grove , Illinois . Initially , the militia could not get a clear shot at the Sauk as they rushed for cover in a wooded area near the creek . The militia men observed from what was likely to be West Point Hill .

Shots rang out from Stephenson 's men but the Sauk did not immediately return fire and the fight eventually descended into a bayonet and knife battle . The militia charged into the thicket and the Sauk returned fire , killing Stephen P. Howard . The militia force made two more charges into the

woods . During one of these , Thomas Sublette stabbed a Sauk in the neck and George Eames was killed in action . The third charge resulted in severe wounds for Stephenson , who was shot in the chest with a musketball , and the death of militia man Michael Lovell . According to Stephenson 's account of the battle , five or six Native American warriors were killed and the militia lost three men . The Sauk forces outnumbered Stephenson 's militiamen and the group was forced to withdraw and retreat . When they left they took with them most of the horses that the Sauk had stolen in their journey up the Apple River .

= = Aftermath = =

Although it allowed the militia men to draw Native American blood in revenge , the result of the battle was inconclusive with respect to its original purpose of stopping the Native American raids in the area . The men of the militia returned triumphantly to Galena , Illinois bearing the scalps of two Sauk warriors they had slain . The battle helped raise public opinion towards the militia . After the disastrous defeat at Stillman 's Run in May , the battle at Yellow Creek coupled with the Battle of Horseshoe Bend , helped to demonstrate that the militia could stand up to and defeat Black Hawk 's warriors .

The militiamen killed in the Battle of Waddams Grove were eventually interred in a memorial cemetery in Kellogg 's Grove . The graves are located beneath a large stone monument dedicated to those militia men killed during the Black Hawk War . The battlefield itself is believed to be located along the Yellow Creek northwest of William Waddams ' original land claims north of the present day unincorporated town of Waddams Grove , Illinois .