

Theme 2: American Indians in Iowa

Learning Goals:

- Students will understand the migratory life style of the Iowa Indian tribe.
- Students will understand the perspective of Black Hawk and appreciate the Indian way of life prior to pioneer settlement.
- Students will understand the historical events surrounding the Black Hawk War.

Iowa History Content Benchmarks:

2. Native Americans
 - b. The first Iowans used the earth's resources for food, clothing, and shelter.
 - c. The Federal government tried to control American Indians through treaties and forced land sales. As a result, tribes frequently moved into and out of Iowa.

Materials:

Migration of the Iowa Tribe

Student copies of the map accompanying Migration of the Iowa Tribe

Black Hawk's Narrative

Iowa history reference material on Black Hawk

Events Leading to the Black Hawk War

Background information for Teachers on the Black Hawk War

Activities:

The following learning activities in no way pretend to encompass the history of American Indians in Iowa. Rather these activities are designed to supplement a larger study of American Indians in Iowa's history. The Iowa or Ioway Indians were one of the first Indian groups to inhabit present-day Iowa.

MIGRATION OF THE IOWA TRIBE

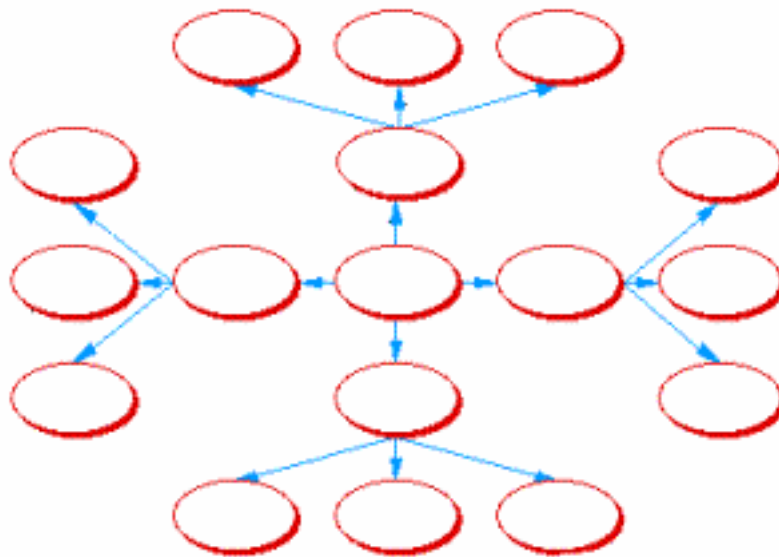
1. Give each student a map of the Migration of the Iowa Tribe. Have them draw present-day state boundaries on the map.
2. Next, have students read Migration of the Iowa Tribe. As each section is read, locate the particular site on the map.
3. Direct students' attention to the final paragraph of the reading. Discuss reasons for the various migrations, types of homes, and other details that are hinted at in the reading.
4. **Research Questions: What kinds of homes might the Iowa Indians have lived in? What kind of clothing would they have worn? What foods would they have eaten?**

5. After making predictions about answers to the research questions, explore the website [1700 Ioway Farm](#) at Living History Farms for clues to the Iowa Indians. Search online under the terms “Iowa Indians” or “Ioway Indians” to locate additional information.

BLACK HAWK'S NARRATIVE

1. Precede this lesson by briefly overviewing the life of Black Hawk and background information on the Sac and Fox tribes.
2. Introduce to students the Black Hawk's Narrative. Divide the class into six groups and assign to each one of the following topics:
 - food
 - clothing
 - shelter
 - farming
 - customs
 - festivals
3. Have each group search Black Hawk's Narrative for information on their topic.
4. Then have the class meet again to summarize information for their topics. Develop a concept map as students report their findings. Have each group present the most significant pieces of information related to their specific topic.

CONCEPT MAP



EVENTS LEADING TO THE BLACK HAWK WAR

1. Have students search online for summaries of the Black Hawk War using the terms “Black Hawk War”
2. After students have read background information, develop a timeline of the events surrounding the Black Hawk War.
3. Introduce the Events Leading to the Black Hawk War. Have students match the following descriptors to the five primary source selections found in this document.
 - A statement threatening military force if Black Hawk and his band do not leave Illinois.
 - An Indian agent requests a treaty with Black Hawk and his band who have begun planting again at their old fields in Illinois near the Rock River.
 - A superintendent of Indian Affairs asks that a council be held with the Sac and Fox tribes to negotiate for their land in Illinois.
 - An Indian Agent reports a conference with the Sac and Fox Indians living in Illinois along the Rock River. He reports how previous treaties made remaining in the area illegal.
 - A Superintendent of Indian Affairs reports that the governor of Illinois has sent out troops for the protection of settlers in Illinois.
4. Have students place these pieces of correspondence on the timeline in the appropriate location.
5. Then hold a simulated peace negotiation having students assume the following roles:
 - Black Hawk
 - Black Hawk’s followers
 - Chief Keokuk
 - Gen. Henry Atkinson
 - Legislators of the State of Illinois
 - White settlers
6. Conclude the lesson by “rewriting history.” **Discussion Question: How might these events have been handled differently? What modern day world conflicts are similar to the conflict between the pioneer settlers and Black Hawk?**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

THE BLACK HAWK WAR. 1832

As one studies the treaty documents emanating from the councils of 1804, 1816, 1824, 1825, and 1830, one can see a definite pattern taking shape: encroachment, conflict, negotiation, and settlement, always in favor of the United States government as it took the part of the advancing waves of settlers. The Iowa of the future was the beneficiary of these treaties and others to come.

The most basic and most helpful dispossession of the Indians, from the viewpoint of Iowa, was the one arranged in the Black Hawk Purchase Treaty, September 21, 1832, concluding the Black Hawk War between the national government and the Sauk and Fox, primarily that portion of the Sauk following the Sauk war chief, Black Hawk, whose following was called the British Band, because of his alliance with the British in Canada.

It is one of the ironies of history that this little war, so important and rewarding to Iowa, did not originate in Iowa but in Illinois; that the fighting did not take place in Iowa but in Illinois and the Wisconsin portion of Michigan Territory; yet the penalty paid by the Indians benefited Iowa, not Illinois or Wisconsin.

The war has usually been described either in highly sentimental language apotheosizing Chief Black Hawk, whose autobiography set the style for this interpretation, or in lighthearted phrases ridiculing the Illinois frontier militia and the United States Army regulars alternately chasing and running away from red skinned warriors who were encumbered by their wives and children, or sometimes running away from imagined opponents. If one looks more deeply, he may find an episode which illustrates all the phases of frontier conflict between Indians and whites.

"The 'war' itself resulted in part from vacillation, slow communication, treachery, political opportunism, and the rashness of frontier militia" is the verdict of a keen student of Indian affairs and biographer of the commander of the United States regulars. All these points are well taken as immediate causes of the war, but not the basic causes: relentless pressure by the land-hungry whites on the Indian holdings, and the failure of the Emigration, or Indian Removal, Policy.

A very important corollary of that policy was the assumption that the Indian tribes would give up their wars against one another and live in neighborly peace. This assumption proved to be too generous; the Sauk and Fox to the south and the Sioux to the north were not ready for such idealism. They hated each other, and the Sauk and Fox plainly feared the Sioux, as well they might. Here is the setting for a vital point: Chief Keokuk was ready to believe that the American whites would help his people against the Sioux; Black Hawk, the Sauk war chief, was not so trustful.

In short, Black Hawk's fears made him resist the Emigration Policy, and he became the spokesman for the dissenting minority of his people, ready, if necessary, to fight the Sioux and the Americans. Chief Keokuk, by contrast, was the leader and spokesman for those who would cooperate ("collaborate") with the outsider (the whites) and resign themselves to the best fate possible, probably dependency in a white man's world. Black Hawk had his reasons. Behind his war of 1832 lay twenty-eight years of friction, marked by undeviating resistance to American white pressures. He had dissented from the Treaty of 1804; he had fought us at Fort Madison; he

had accepted anti-American aid from the British; and now he was proudly ready to go it alone against us, whereas Keokuk and others were willing to place their trust in American friendship and possible assistance.

In the 1820s the whites had begun to encroach on the Rock River lands, causing much friction. As a partial solution, lands along the Iowa River in the future Iowa were set aside for the exclusive use of the Sauk and Fox. Not satisfied, Black Hawk and his followers insisted on returning in the spring of 1830 and again in 1831 to their former homes, fields, and hunting grounds in the Saukenuk region of Illinois, and complained loudly that the whites were intruders, not only taking their lands but destroying their burial grounds.

Under this cover of charge and countercharge, General Edmund P. Gaines, commander of the Western District, made what should have been the final settlement of the whole ugly business. On June 30, 1831, Black Hawk "touched the goose quill" to the so-called Corn Treaty in which he committed his people to retire to their assigned lands along the Iowa River, to accept the authority of Chief Keokuk, to abandon all contacts with the British, and to agree to let the United States build military and post roads in the area. There were also oral promises of reimbursement for the corn and other crops they were about to abandon. Among the sad might-have-beens of history, then, is the thought that if this agreement had been honorably observed, there would have been no Black Hawk War.

Unfortunately, a series of little incidents created a war situation, in this case a war made up of a few skirmishes, capped by one bloody and disgraceful slaughter which illustrates war at its worst. The incidents were slight when viewed separately but somehow ran together in such a way as to push both sides into a "war". One of the more notable was the bad advice given to Black Hawk by a young chief, Neapope, who claimed to have promises of help from the British; this was followed by equally bad advice from the Winnebago Prophet, and by others who promised aid.

Many persons less vain and less childish than Black Hawk would have yielded to such flattery and cajolery and Neapope's outright deception. Chief Keokuk pled in vain that it would be foolish for a handful of braves, with their squaws and children tagging along, to make war against the Long Knives, even proposing the extreme logical conclusion that the warriors should put their dependents to death and then go on to their inevitable defeat and extinction, a course of action which they rejected.

The whites then compounded the troubles by denying Chief Keokuk's request to go to Washington and negotiate with the Great White Father, a mistake charged up to William Clark. "Then and there, despite his promises to the contrary, the old Sac [Black Hawk] decided to return to Saukenuk in the spring." True to Keokuk's warnings, Black Hawk and his people crossed the Mississippi, on April 6, 1832, and straggled toward the rendezvous with the Winnebago on the Rock River, forty miles from Saukenuk.

There was only one clear charge to be made against Black Hawk: he had led his followers across the river to their old haunts in violation of the Corn Treaty of 1831. In spite of the desertion or nonappearance of his allies and promised allies, Black Hawk haughtily rejected all calls for a return to his Iowa River lands, and moved farther up the Rock River. General Atkinson was left with no choice but to send troops after him -- "and so the war came."

"Battles" of the Black Hawk War

It has seemed more important by far to explain the causes of the war and the eventual results than to elaborate on the skirmishes that made up the fracas. In the words of a leading authority on the subject, "The Black Hawk War of **1832** was barely a war. It lasted but fifteen weeks. It cost the lives of but seventy settlers and soldiers," This recently corrected number of fatalities is significantly smaller than the original estimate of two hundred as given by earlier writers.

In retrospect, the conflict has elements of both farce and tragedy, and therefore it may be called a tragicomedy. There were skirmishes at several places in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. Black Hawk's goal was to get across the Mississippi and vanish into the freedom of the wide open spaces beyond; General Atkinson's strategy called for blocking the crossing of the river. The attempted crossing at the mouth of the Bad Axe River was the climax of the little war. Atkinson's forces were supplemented by a gunboat and by Sioux Indians who gleefully helped to butcher the Sauk as they tried to swim across the river. Black Hawk escaped to the north but was soon apprehended, along with his companion and evil counselor, Neapope.

The Purchase Treaty of 1832

The victors first dealt with the Winnebago, then summoned spokesmen for the Sauk and Fox, principally Chief Keokuk, to Fort Armstrong on Rock Island to hear the dictated terms of peace on September 21, 1832. Black Hawk, now a humiliated prisoner at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, was not allowed to attend or even to send advice. General Winfield Scott was the spokesman for the United States, hence the name long used for the treaty lands, "Scott's Purchase." A better name for the white man's prize might have been "Black Hawk's Folly."

The only lands which the Sauk and Fox could surrender were those along the Iowa River. These must now be given up, though the bitter pill was sweetened by small payments of money and added benefits. The forfeited lands were carefully marked off as follows: beginning at a point on the Mississippi at the Sauk and Fox northern boundary line of 1830, running fifty miles to the west; then south to the Red Cedar of the Iowa River, forty miles from the Mississippi; then on a straight line to a point on the northern boundary of Missouri, fifty miles from the Mississippi; then up the western side of the Mississippi to the starting point. A segment of four hundred square miles was reserved for the use of Chief Keokuk and his followers as a reward for their neutrality.

For all these lands the monetary cost to the United States was trivial. The Government would make thirty annual payments of \$20,000, and further provide blacksmithing services, forty barrels of tobacco and a like amount of salt per year, and assume Indian debts of \$40,000. Two sections of land were awarded to the famous half-breed interpreter and mediator, Antoine Le Claire. A very specific point was made that these lands were not to be used by the Sauk and Fox for hunting grounds or for planting. Black Hawk and others were held as hostages; supplies were to be issued to the widows and children of those killed in the war; rewards would be given to those Indians who gave information about mines or minerals which proved to be of value.

The Purchase Treaty did not provide for the opening up of these lands to settlers; this provision was there by inference only. Since the Indians had to "remove from the lands ceded" by the following June 1, 1833, the natural assumption would be that settlers would be allowed to come in after that date. With the removal of the soldiers who were guarding the frontier, such

proved to be the case. At the price of \$640,000 in cash and a few lives lost on each side, the United States-not Iowa thus became the owner of a vast amount of good land. The nucleus for another state had been secured.

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