

# The Black Hawk War, 1832

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## Letters – "The Battle of Wisconsin Heights: Henry Dodge's account"

Account of Henry Dodge written by Brigadier General Atkinson at the Camp on the Wisconsin, 30 miles below Fort Winnebago on July 22, 1832.

On the 20th. We made a forced march & reached the head of the 4 lakes, and on the 21st. We overtook the enemy at this place, our advanced spies killed two Sacks [Sauks] before we met with a body of the enemy-- they showed themselves frequently on the surrounding hills to divert our attention, our spies met with three and pursued them within a mile of their camp, our men were pursued in turn by the enemy on horseback. Believing the main body of the enemy near us, I dismounted my squadron of horse, which formed the right and left columns of the advanced guard, the centre column was composed of the spies commanded by Colo. Ewing, I ordered my squadron to advance in front, and fortunately met with a good position, a natural elevation of ground which covered my men who were ordered to squat down, the Enemy raised the Yell and Galloped up within thirty yards of us, we fired on them and killed one and wounded one or two others, when they retreated. The Indians occupied a height which enabled them to kill one of Genl Henry's men & wounded one of mine.

After consulting Genl Henry we determined to charge the enemy. . . . we dislodged him from his position & drove him down the height into the high grass in the swamp. Our fire was so heavy he soon gave way. . . . the enemy then gave way in every direction retreating to the river. The Winnebagoes scalped eleven Indians killed by the whites, and the whites took thirteen scalps last night--eight were found today and three were killed in the chase. The enemy were seen to carry a number from the field during the action, so that the numbers killed cannot fall short of forty (perhaps more) many were wounded but the number is not known. We lost one killed & seven wounded, one of our men was wounded before the battle, on our march.

When the battle was over it was 7 Oclk. Our men had made a forced march of forty miles many of them on foot, and exposed about six hours in the rain their arms wet and out of order. Knowing they had retreated to the river and that they had chosen their position and that we could not reach them before dark, after consulting with Genl. Henry it was agreed to defer a further attack on the enemy untill the next morning.

We marched from our position to the river early in the day, and found he had crossed the river, he had left his camp in much hurry & confusion, from the appearance of the trees, bark canoes had been prepared for the purpose of crossing the Wisconsin when they might arrive there with the main body.

The conduct of the officers & men composing my Squadron was brave and cool, they advanced to the charge with a quick pace and even front, they behaved well, and it would be difficult for me to discriminate between them, they deserve the confidence of their country. . . . They have done honor to their state & themselves. I would always unite with great confidence with such brave and gallant men. I am with sentiments of great respect.

Your obedient Servant H Dodge Col. Commanding Michigan [Territory] Mounted Volunteers