

## **The Forgotten War: Missouri from 1812-1815**

By Michael Dickey

The War of 1812 is probably one of the least remembered military affairs of the United States. This is the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the war, but its bicentennial has been overshadowed by the Civil War Sesquicentennial. Even less well known is Missouri's role in the war. Missouri was the scene of the westernmost fighting and played a strategic role in national events. Almost all the lead used for ammunition by American military forces was mined in Missouri and the territory was the gateway to the valuable fur trade of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. Despite being largely forgotten, the War produced lasting consequences for the nation and our state:

On August 24, 1814 British troops occupied Washington DC burning the White House, the capitol building (shown here) and several government buildings. It is the only time in our history that the nation's capital has been occupied by an enemy force.

Francis Scott Key wrote the National Anthem following the British bombardment of Fort McHenry in Baltimore Harbor on Sept. 13-14, 1814.

The Battle of New Orleans fought on January 8, 1815 was one of the epic battles of the war. It produced a crushing defeat for British forces. In 1959, it gave us the number one hit song on the Billboard Hot 100 "The Battle of New Orleans" by singer Johnny Horton.

General Andrew Jackson had defeated the Creek Nation in August of 1814, but he gained national notoriety for his victory at New Orleans which propelled him to the presidency in 1828. As president he paid off the national debt, the only time it has been done in our history, he opposed the formation of a national bank and oversaw the removal of Indians and their land opened to settlement. Jackson's election set the tone of the nation for decades and his election was likely only because of his role in the War. So what caused the war in the first place? It is a complex issue and still debated in historical circles just as much as the causes of the Civil War are still debated.

First and foremost was British maritime policy. British ships blockaded American trade with the rest of Europe. British ships stopped and boarded American ships on the high seas and impressed or forced recruitment of American seamen into British service, sometimes claiming they were British deserters. France being at war with England also sought to block American shipping to Britain. President Jefferson declared an embargo on American shipping in an effort to get both countries to relent.

Following the American Revolution, Britain still maintained trading posts for the Indians on American soil. British traders operated with impunity among the Indian tribes on the Missouri and upper Mississippi Rivers. Whenever Indians offered resistance to American encroachment in their territory, it was automatically assumed that the British were inciting the tribes to violence as depicted in this political cartoon of the day. However, American officials conveniently overlooked the fact that Indians were angered over being stripped of tens of millions of acres of prime hunting ground by a series of highly dubious treaties secured between 1804 and 1811.

Heightening the tension between Americans and the Indians, Shawnee brothers Tecumseh and Tenskawatawa “The Prophet” began in 1805 building a confederation of Indian nations stretching from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, as a last stand against American settlement. Tenskawatawa was calling for the tribesmen to reject everything they had learned from white culture and return to their traditional ways. Tecumseh regularly consulted with British officials in Canada. The British clearly desired to have an “Indian state” as a buffer between Canada and the expanding United States and to continue the lucrative fur trade with the Indians. But both the British and Tecumseh took steps to limit Indian actions against American settlers, wanting to buy time for the confederacy to grow in size and unity. But they both found it hard to overcome the tribal animosities and blood feuds that had gone on for untold generations.

Younger Indian warriors felt that American settlers were going unchallenged and struck out in small war parties from Indiana to Missouri, making the year 1811 a powder keg on the frontier. General William Henry Harrison encamped his forces within sight of “Prophetstown” Indiana, the headquarters of the Indian confederacy. The following day on November 7, the Battle of Tippecanoe was fought. Although not a clear victory for the United States, it knocked the Indian alliance off balance. The Piankeshaw band of the Miami tribe was sent by Harrison to the Boonslick Country of central Missouri to eliminate their further participation in the confederacy. The Winnebago, who had taken the most casualties on the Indian side retaliated on January 1, 1812 by pillaging and burning the trading house of Nathaniel Pryor on Dog Island, north of St. Louis. They caused over \$5,200.00 in damages and the Missouri frontier went on high alert.

Between the effects of British maritime policy, their outposts in the western territories, and the perception that they were arming and inciting the Indians, there was a sense that America was not truly free of British dominion. A sentiment arose that the war was being fought as “the second war for independence.” However, while war sentiment was strong in the South and West, the New England states were opposed to the war. Jefferson’s shipping embargo, continued by President James Madison had hurt them economically.

President Madison signed the declaration of war on Great Britain on June 18, 1812. The news was not well received in St. Louis. Local newspapers decried the “defenseless position” the territory found itself in. In all of Missouri Territory there were only about 260 regular army troops available for defense. In 1780, St. Louis had been attacked by nearly a thousand Indian warriors and British agents descending the Mississippi. Undoubtedly many leading citizens of the town remembered that event and feared its repetition. In contrast to the 260 US troops, there were upwards of three thousand experienced Indian warriors that could threaten Missouri. Many tribes were divided in their loyalties, usually over the issue of whether to trade with the Americans or the British, but it appears that at least a slight majority of Indians supported the British side.

The principal threat to Missouri came from tribes closest to the sphere of British influence in Canada. The largest tribe was the Sac and Fox in Illinois. They were capable of fielding over 1,200 warriors. They resented being duped into signing a treaty in 1804 by which they surrendered nearly all their territory in Illinois and a chunk of northeast Missouri. Next were the Winnebago from Wisconsin, who had already destroyed Pryor’s trading post. Along with the Menominee they were capable of fielding 800 warriors. Then there were the Ioway

along the Des Moines River with 300 warriors. On the Illinois side of the Mississippi were the Kickapoo and Potawatomi who made forays into the St. Louis/St. Charles districts, each capable of fielding about 500 or more warriors. If the eastern Santee Sioux were persuaded to join the fight, that would be another 1,200 warriors as British auxiliaries.

Washington could ill-afford to supply more troops to protect the Missouri frontier. As the threat of Indian war loomed, Congress authorized the raising of three Ranger companies to patrol and protect the frontier in March of 1812. The Rangers were hardy backwoodsmen who signed up for a three month tour of duty. They had to provide their own weapons and horses but received federal pay for their services, distinguishing them from the militia companies of local settlements. The pay rate 75 cents per day on foot and \$1.00 per day for mounted service. Nathan Boone and Daniel Morgan Boone, sons of the famous frontiersman Daniel Boone both received commissions at the head of Ranger companies.

The first year of the war did not go well for the United States. On July 17, Fort Mackinac at the entrance of Lake Superior was captured by surprise. August 15 Fort Dearborn (Chicago) was evacuated and the garrison was attacked and wiped out while enroute to Fort Wayne. The following day, Fort Detroit was surrendered without firing a shot as depicted in this illustration. On Sept. 3, Indians massacred about 26 settlers at Pigeon's Roost in southern Indiana. On Sept. 5 and 6<sup>th</sup> Fort Madison on the Mississippi and Fort Wayne in Indiana were besieged. American forces invaded Canada but were defeated at the Battle of Queenston Heights Oct. 13 and had completely retreated from Canada by November 23. In November the British blockaded the South Carolina and Georgia coasts and extended the blockade to Chesapeake Bay and Delaware Bay in December. All these events meant Missouri became even more relegated as a backwater theater of the war.

At the beginning of the war, there were three population centers in Missouri Territory: the lower Mississippi Valley and lead district, the St. Charles/St. Louis district and the Boonslick settlement on the western frontier. The three main military outposts of the territory were Fort Belle Fountain 12 miles north of St. Louis, Fort Osage on the Missouri River at the Indian boundary (present day Sibley) and Fort Madison just above the mouth of the Des Moines River. During the war there were several temporary military forts established on the Mississippi between St. Louis and present day Hannibal; Fort Mason, Buffalo Fort, Cap au Gris, and Desha's Battery at Portage des Sioux.

Fort Belle Fontaine was established in 1805 by General James Wilkinson who became infamous for his acts of treason. The first US military installation west of the Mississippi, Belle Fontaine was first built in the Missouri River bottoms. Most of the garrison was continuously ill and by 1810, the fort had rotted away because of the overflowing river. The fort was then moved to the top of the bluff. During the war, the Fort served as headquarters for Colonel Daniel Bissell, the military commander of the District of Missouri. From here Bissell directed the activities of troops at Fort Madison and Fort Osage; until he was promoted and reassigned in 1814.

Fort Osage was constructed in September 1808 by William Clark to trade with the powerful Osage nation and keep them in check. The factory or trading post at the fort was the most successful of 22 such posts built by the government. It offset the enticements of the British and Tecumseh to get the Osage to join their side. In 1812, Col. Bissell and Territorial Governor

Benjamin Howard deemed the fort too far out on the frontier to contribute to the line of defense and it was vulnerable to having its supply line cut. The post was closed in June, 1813 and the garrison of 63 troops from the 1<sup>st</sup> US infantry was sent east. On July 25, 1814 these troops fought at Lundy's Lane near Niagara Falls, the bloodiest battle of the war. During the fort's closure, trade had to be carried on to maintain the alliance with the Osage. The trading component of the fort was reestablished at Arrow Rock in October 1813, under the direction George C. Sibley, the government factor at Fort Osage. The post operated profitably from October through April of 1814 and succeeded in maintaining the loyalty of the Osage to the US. Fort Osage was reopened late in 1815.

Fort Madison above the mouth of the Des Moines was established in October 1808. It is in Iowa but at the time was under the jurisdiction of Missouri. Fort Madison did not enjoy the success that Fort Osage did. The fort was poorly situated for defense and was harassed by the Sac & Fox, Winnebago and Potawatomi almost from its beginning. Individuals straying outside the walls of the fort took were attacked. Factor John Johnson even wrote on January 8, 1812 "every hour I look for a war party and God only knows when it will end." The fort underwent a major siege Sept. 4-8, 1812 in which several buildings were burned. Col. Bissell wanted to close Fort Madison but Governor Howard disagreed. He felt that abandoning the fort after successfully withstanding the siege would be seen as a sign of weakness by the Indians. The fort also served as a distant early warning station in the event a major British and Indian force descended the Mississippi towards St. Louis.

Indian harassment of the fort continued and on July 16, 1813 an unfinished blockhouse built to cover a ravine next to the fort was assaulted. A Sac warrior named Wee-sheet (Sturgeon's Head) repeatedly thrust his lance between the unchinked logs and killed four Rangers manning the blockhouse. George Catlin painted a picture of Wee-Sheet in 1832 at the conclusion of the Black Hawk War. He told him that he had killed four whites in the war with the lance he posed with, but Catlin doubted his story. However, when Wee-Sheet referred to the war it seems likely he was referring to the War of 1812. The Sac and Fox did not consider the action of 1832 as a war. After living in a state of continual siege and lacking proper provisions, the fort commander Lt. Hamilton abandoned and burned the fort in November of 1813 and the troops made their way to Fort Belle Fontaine.

With the onset of war, Missouri settlers began "forting up". Most had done this previously in Kentucky and Tennessee when threatened with Indian raids. There were clusters of small family forts in the Boonslick settlement and the St. Charles and St. Louis districts and also on the Illinois side of the river. Cooper's Fort and Fort Hempstead in Howard County were large enough to house multiple families. Governor Howard encouraged the outlying settlers to come in to the safety of St. Louis. Benjamin Cooper at the Boonslick settlement replied, "*We have made our homes here and all we have is here and it would ruin us to leave now. We be all good Americans, not a Tory or one of his Pups among us, and we have 2 hundred Man and Boys that will fight to the last and have 100 Women and Girls that will take their places with. Makes a good force So we can defend the settlement. With God's Help we will do.*"

Samuel McMahan from Arrow Rock reminisced about the family forts of the era. "*The forts were simply strong log-houses, with a projecting upper story, and with loop-holes for musketry.*" Some of these family forts had stockades while others did not. The larger forts, such

as Coopers Fort and Fort Hempstead probably fit the vision we normally have of forts – stockade pickets and a blockhouse at one or more corners of the fort.

With the approach of spring, rumors of a massive Indian invasion down the Mississippi were reignited. Instead only sporadic attacks and horse stealing raids against isolated cabins occurred across Illinois and northern Missouri. Black Hawk the Sac and Fox war leader, wanted to strike the Missouri Settlements. However, Colonel Robert Dickson, the British agent at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin recruited most of the first line warriors to assist British forces with campaigns around Detroit and in Ohio. He convinced the warriors that once the eastern frontier was secure, the Missouri frontier would be easy pickings. The resulting small scale of raids in Missouri led frontier officials to erroneously believe that they were successfully containing the Indian threat.

Governor Benjamin Howard spend most of his time at home in Kentucky. In May 1813, St. Louis fur trader Auguste Chouteau under the direction of acting territorial governor Frederick Bates enlisted the Osage to strike the pro-British Sac & Fox. Nearly a thousand warriors volunteered to go. Chouteau whittled the number down to 275 first line warriors. In the interim, Howard returned to Missouri and learning of the plan, sent a messenger to stop it. He intercepted the Osage expedition just as it was about to cross the Missouri River. A portion of the Sac and Fox who were not in the British camp came to St. Louis and offered to fight for the United States but Howard flatly refused them. The disappointed headmen replied that “*with war swirling all around them the young men would undoubtedly now fight for the British.*” Howard was unmoved. As an old Kentuckian, Howard distrusted all Indians whether friendly or not. Furthermore, it was official US government policy to keep the Indian tribes “neutral” whereas the British now actively recruited and equipped them for war. A meeting Dec. 3, 1812 in St. Charles praised Howard’s administration but they also lamented, “*We consider our lives, our property and our all neglected and measurably forgotten by the general government.*” The federal government remained preoccupied with the larger campaigns in the east leaving Missouri to fend for herself.

Howard resigned as governor and was made a Brigadier General in the Army and on September 8, 1813 he moved to take the fight directly to the Indians. He led a force of 1300 regular soldiers and Missouri Rangers to up the Mississippi and the Illinois River to build a fort at Lake Peoria. His chief scout was Nathan Boone. Unseasonably cold weather on October 15 forced the ill-prepared troops to withdraw from Peoria. The expedition encountered few Indians and killed even fewer. Still, Howard wrote on October 28 that the expedition had not been useless. Several deserted villages were burned and Boone at the head of the Missouri Rangers scouted across northern Illinois and northern Missouri. It was to no avail as the Indians refused to be drawn into an open fight. But once again, the bulk of the first line warriors were away campaigning with the British further east.

On October 5, 1813, Tecumseh was killed during the Battle of the Thames in Ontario, Canada. The Indian Confederacy which had been knocked off balance at Tippecanoe two years earlier was now shattered with the death of its leader. Several tribes, notably the Miami and Delaware sued for peace and dropped out of the conflict. The British had depended heavily on their Indian auxiliaries in the Great Lakes region.

In the meantime, William Clark, now governor of Missouri Territory had resettled that part of the Sac and Fox still professing friendship to the United States to Little Moniteau Creek upstream from present-day Jefferson City. John Johnson the factor from Fort Madison operated the trading house for the “Missouri Band” as this group of Sac and Fox was designated. Black Hawk and his warriors became disillusioned with the British method of warfare saying they wasted men needlessly in battle and that the Indians had gotten no plunder. When General Henry Proctor blamed the Indians for his failure to capture Fort Meigs and Fort Stephenson in Ohio in the fall of 1813, it was enough for the Sac war leader and he and his warriors returned home to the Rock River. Black Hawk expressed the sentiments felt by many Indians, “*Why did the Great Spirit ever send the whites to this island, to drive us from our homes and introduce among us poisonous liquors, diseases and death? They should have remained on the island where the Great Spirit first placed them.*” With Black Hawk at home, the military leadership of the Sac & Fox was revitalized and he would soon turn his attention to the Missouri frontier, fighting in traditional Sac & Fox style.

The spring of 1814 saw a large group of Rock River Sac & Fox arrive at Moniteau Creek to visit their relatives. The Indians became restless and “*raised the English flag at the door of the Council House*” when asked by Johnson to take it down, Chief Nomwaite told him a few bottles of whisky would induce him to put the flag away. The Rock River Sac attempted to pillage the trading house, but were restrained by their kinsmen. The Osage also became restive, robbing several trappers on the Gasconade River and killing some hunters on the White River. The situation in Missouri was becoming disintegrating and Sibley abandoned the Arrow Rock post and Johnson soon followed, both retreating to St. Louis.

The Sac and Fox headed upstream to the Boonslick settlement. The settlers on the south side of the river had just finished crossing the Missouri River to the greater safety of Cooper’s Fort when the Indians burned McMahan and Reid’s forts. A cabin filled with drying flax was ignited and the flames were visible from Cooper’s Fort nearly six miles distant. The August 14, 1814 edition of the Missouri Gazette reported “*A few days ago, a barge belonging to Messrs. M. Lisa & Co. which was ascending the Missouri to their trading establishment, were induced to stop at Mackay’s Saline, (commonly called Boon’s Lick) as the country was overrun by the Indians and all the inhabitants were in Forts. The crew which arrived here on Saturday night, last...reports that on the south side of the Missouri, the Indians had taken all the horses and were killing the cattle for food; that on their arrival at the Saline, the people of Coles’ fort were interring a man just shot by the Indians. On the north side near Kincaid’s fort a man was killed in a flax field.*”

Sarshall and Benjamin Cooper appealed for help from Governor Clark. In response he sent Colonel Henry Dodge with 150 Rangers and 50 allied Shawnee scouts arrived in early September. Reinforced by 90 members of the Boonslick militia, the force crossed the river at the Arrow Rock bluff and made for the nearest Indian village, the Piankeshaw Miami near the present-day town of Miami. This was the same group removed from Indians in 1811 by General Harrison. The force found the village deserted but the Shawnee located the Miami behind breastworks of logs in a hollow about two miles away. Dodge and the Kish-kal-wa the leader of the Shawnee scouts persuaded the Miami they would not be harmed if they surrendered. Outnumbered, they complied but as the Boonslick militia looted the Indian belongings they found a rifle identified as one belonging to Campbell Bolen the man slain in the flax field near

Kincaid's Fort. The angry Boonslick militiamen prepared to massacre the Miami, but Dodge intervened. During an argument between Ben Cooper and Dodge, Daniel Morgan Boone arrived on the scene and backed Dodge. The Boonslick militia relented and was mustered out of service at Arrow Rock. Dodge escorted the 153 Miamis captured to the Mississippi River and told them to return to Indiana. But the expedition brought no relief to the Boonslick settlements. Raids by the Sac & Fox resumed shortly after Dodge's departure.

While this action had been occurring in the Boonslick, William Clark prepared to carry the war to the Indians. Prairie du Chien was the base of British operations in the Mississippi valley. Clark knew if it was neutralized, the Indians would no longer receive arms and ammunition. Clark ordered the building of five "gunboats" fortified keelboats heavily armed with cannon and swivel guns. A British officer who saw them described them as a "*floating blockhouse*." Clark set out from St. Louis with 200 regular troops and Rangers on May 1, 1814 to capture Prairie du Chien. Enroute he met several parties of Sac & Fox and fired on them and succeeded in capturing several. The Indians were cowed by Clark's harsh and no-nonsense treatment. As the flotilla approached Prairie du Chien, the Indians refused to support the British militia which then fled. Clark's force landed without opposition and began constructing Fort Shelby which was finished June 8.

Clark returned to St. Louis leaving Lt. Joseph Perkins in charge with two gunboats moored offshore. When their terms of enlistment were up, all but 60 of the troops left in one of the boats. On July 17, a reconstituted British and Indian force attacked Fort Shelby capturing it on the 20<sup>th</sup> and renamed it Fort McKay in honor of the British commander. The remaining gunboat, the *Governor Clarke* fled downstream the 18<sup>th</sup>. Even then a relief force of 60 regulars and 60 militia and 40 camp followers was making its way to Prairie du Chien under the command of Major John Campbell. Campbell met the Sac and Fox at their village Saukenuk at the mouth of Rock River on the 18<sup>th</sup>. His guard was relaxed, probably believing that Clark had sufficiently cowed the Indians. That night an Indian runner reached the Sac villages with news of the siege of Fort Shelby and the route of the gunboat. The British also asked the Sac and Fox to renew their fight with the Americans.

Campbell got underway the 19<sup>th</sup> but the three boats got separated by several miles. Gale force winds blew Campbell's boat to the shoal of an Island. The troops disembarked but the island was swarming with hundreds of Sac and Fox and the first volley killed five soldiers and wounded two. Even the women joined the fighting using their hoes to chop holes in the boat for the warriors to fire into. Then the boat was set on fire. The boats further upstream saw the smoke and returned to investigate. They raked the island with gun fire and picked up the survivors. Just then the fleeing *Governor Clarke* appeared on the scene with news of the loss of Fort Shelby. The entire fleet now retreated to St. Louis leaving Campbell's burning boat behind.

News of the defeats enraged General Howard. He dispatched 430 Rangers, militia and regulars soldiers in 8 boats under Col. Zachary Taylor (the future president) with orders to destroy all the Saukenuk and retake Prairie du Chien. As this new "Missouri Navy" proceeded upriver, Indian scouts kept Colonel William McKay informed of their location. The Colonel reinforced the village of Saukenuk with three cannons under Lt. Duncan Graham.

Taylor reached Credit Island near Saukenuk on September 4. The island was so named because it had been a place for trading. Taylor planned to deceive the Indians with a flag of

truce and then attack them. The Sac and Fox refused the bait and Taylor pressed on upstream, as though he was heading for Prairie du Chien. During the night he tied up to a small willow island, planning to drift back and attack Saukenuk early in the morning. However, Sac warriors infiltrated the island during the night and at first light they killed the sentries.

Taylor's guns began raking the island when suddenly cannon shot began splintering the boats and ripping their sails. Astonished that they were taking artillery fire, Taylor's boats began retreating downstream. Soon, more than a thousand Sauk, Fox, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Ioway, Santee Sioux, and Winnebago warriors began pouring gunfire into the boats from the riverbanks. The gauntlet continued for two miles while Lt. Graham wheeled his cannons along shore, keeping up fire on the retreating boats. For a second time, a major American expedition had been routed in the shadow of Saukenuk. American forces in Missouri went back on the defense. The Sac lost all fear and respect of the United States and war parties struck up and down the Missouri and Mississippi with renewed vigor. 1814 became known as "the bloody Year" on the Missouri frontier.

In late September, William Clark observed the British were making "*great exertions to win over the Osage, Kansa, Otoe, Missouri and Sioux.*" Manuel Lisa St. Louis fur trader and Indian sub-agent in the West countered the British efforts on the Missouri River. In fact he persuaded the Omaha and Ponca to raid the Ioway, limiting their threat to the Missouri settlements. The Otoe declined his war offer as they had no quarrel with the Ioway. Lisa held a council with the Teton Sioux at his post in Nebraska and they promised to attack pro-British Indians the following spring.

On December 24, 1814 British and American envoys signed a treaty of peace at Ghent Belgium. The British agreed to abandon all posts on American soil but otherwise the treaty simply agreed to return all conditions to pre-war status. They had already abandoned their maritime positions and practices at the beginning of the war. But a separate peace had to be made the Indians. News that the war was over was slow to reach America and even slower to reach the western frontier. The "Indian War" as the conflict was now known in Missouri continued unabated.

The Sac and Fox stole several horses from Loutre Island in the Missouri River. They were trailed by Rangers under Capt. James Callaway. On March 7, 1815 the warriors ambushed Callaway's command as they crossed Prairie Fork Creek near its junction with the Loutre River in Callaway County. Lt. Riggs feared an ambush as they approached the site but the normally cautious Callaway disregarded the admonitions of his junior officer and pressed ahead. He and three other rangers were shot trying to cross the flooded creek. Several other Rangers were wounded in the retreating gun battle. It was a scorching defeat for the Rangers and severely felt in Missouri; Callaway was the grandson of Daniel Boone.

April 4<sup>th</sup> a large contingent of Sac, Fox and Ioway attacked Cote sans Dessein, an isolated settlement of mixed heritage French-Osage opposite of present day Jefferson City. The Indians shot flaming arrows on the roof of the blockhouse. When the inhabitants ran out of water, the fires were put out with the contents of chamber pots. A burning powder magazine exploded killing or wounding about 18 Indians who then broke off the attack. On April 14, Sarshall Cooper a key leader of the Boonslick settlement was shot and killed by an Indian firing through some loose chinking in the walls of Coopers Fort.



On April 8, 1815 Captain A. N. Bulger assured 1,200 Indian warriors gathered at Prairie du Chien that the British were continuing the war solely on their account. Bulger sent Lt. Graham to Saukenuk to dispatch more war parties against the Missouri settlements. Several days later, the gunboat *Governor Clarke* appeared at Prairie du Chien bearing news of the Treaty of Ghent. Bulger and Graham frantically tried to recall the war parties they had just sent out. On May 10, Bulger read the treaty to about 800 assembled angry Indian warriors. An enraged Black Hawk stormed out of the council meeting. The British now feared their former allies. The guard at Fort McKay was doubled and the troops slept on their arms.

In the meantime President Madison had appointed a commission to make peace with the Indians. These were William Clark, Governor of Missouri Territory, General of the Militia and Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the West; Auguste Chouteau the St. Louis fur trading baron, and Ninian Edwards, Governor of Illinois Territory and General of the Militia. The commission convened on May 11, and sent runners to the Indians notifying them of the peace council. The messenger that went to Saukenuk was killed and scalped. Black Hawk personally led renewed attacks on the Missouri frontier. The sensational murder of the Ramsey family near Marthasville on May 20 made the front page of the St Louis papers, and led to calls of “no peace” with the Indians and the extermination of the Sac.

A contingent of Rangers encountered the large Sac war party under Black Hawk on May 24 and chased them into a large wooded sinkhole in present day Lincoln County. The Rangers found a cart nearby, reinforced it with oak planks to make a mobile battery and rolled it to the edge of the sinkhole so they could fire down on the Indians. But the “tank” did not work as well as planned; the Indians had a better line of sight on the firing aperture than the Rangers did. As night fell, another party of Sac fired on nearby Fort Howard causing the Rangers to withdraw towards the fort and allowing Black Hawk to escape. When the Rangers returned to the sinkhole the following morning, they found a lone dead Sac warrior symbolically perched atop a fallen Ranger. This was probably the largest armed encounter between Indians and Rangers in Missouri during the entire war. Eight Rangers were killed in the fight and five wounded and one was missing; a scorching defeat for the Rangers.

In June, over 700 Teton Sioux traveled from Manual Lisa’s fort on the Missouri River to the conference with William Clark. Along the way, they attacked the Ioway village on the Chariton River north of Glasgow, burning the cornfields and killing 24. They captured two people who they eventually turned over to Lisa. The Teton may or may not have been aware the war was over. However since the Ioway were traditional enemies they probably simply saw this as an opportunity for some payback.

Without British support, the attacks led by Black Hawk gradually abated. The treaty proceedings were finally started at Portage des Sioux, north of St. Louis on July 18. Nineteen tribes were represented, except for the recalcitrant Black Hawk’s band of Sac & Fox. One Sac chief present angrily accused Clark of speaking with two tongues. Clark ordered the artillery company to perform firing drill next to the Indian encampment. The message was not lost on the chief who meekly said he had been misunderstood. Clark informed the assembled Indians that since the leaders of the Rock River Sac were not present, it was open season on them. The assembled Indians stood and yelped their approval. The few Sac & Fox who were present became alarmed and slipped out of Portage des Sioux that night. The grand council finally concluded on September 16. The purpose of the treaty was to *"restore to such Tribes or Nations*

*respectively all the possessions, rights, and privileges which they may have enjoyed or been entitled to in 1811.*" The tribes swore friendship and loyalty to the United States and affirmed all previous treaties signed with the United States. They were not required to surrender any additional lands or make any restitution for the war. This made Clark very unpopular with Missouri settlers as being "too soft" on Indians and it cost him his political career.

Even after the peace treaty was concluded, clashes between the Boonslick settlers and Indians still occurred. Horses belonging to Henry Ferrill and Braxton Cooper were stolen from Cooper's Fort. They followed the trail of the Indians to the river and heard them shooting in the river bottoms below the Arrow Rock bluff where the horses of several other settlers were grazing. The next morning a party from the fort crossed the river and found "... pens or pounds in the bottom which the Indians had made and driven the horses into, for the purpose of catching them." The Ioway chiefs returning from Portage des Sioux passed through the Boonslick and promised to return the stolen horses to the settlers. The settlers went to the Ioway village on the Chariton River, but only two of their horses were returned and just as quickly recaptured by the Indians. Not in a position to fight the Ioways, the settlers returned home and filed a claim with the federal government for their loss. Under pressure from neighboring tribes Black Hawk and the Rock River Sac & Fox finally signed the peace treaty in St. Louis on May 16 of 1816. The war was officially over in Missouri.

The Treaty of Ghent and the Treaty of Portage des Sioux returned conditions to "prewar status." However, conditions had in fact had changed. Settlers who had been living in a state of siege and fear for four years moved out of their forts. John Mason Peck reported that so many horses had been stolen that settlers were forced to plow with their milk cows, nearly all the beef cattle and hogs were killed and bear meat and raccoon bacon became a substitute. Deerskin rather than cotton or linen cloth became the daily attire. However, Indian dominance in Missouri rapidly waned and the divisions and cultural unraveling exacerbated by the war accelerated. For instance, the Missouri Band of Sac & Fox never rejoined the rest of the tribe. The Missouri Band still has their reservation on the Kansas-Nebraska border and the other group is located in Oklahoma. The Ioway were also split into the northern and southern divisions.

There was no longer a foreign power for the Indians to turn to for aid and support and frontier officials knew it. The treatment of Indians became even heavier handed than before. Immigration to Missouri had been reduced to a trickle from 1810 to 1815 because of the Indian threat. Even some outlying settlements had been abandoned for the greater safety of St. Charles or St. Louis. But in the fall of 1815 and in subsequent years, a tidal wave of new settlers began pouring into Missouri. Towns literally sprang up in the wilderness overnight and Missouri began entering a new phase of preparing for statehood.

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