

Maj. Elijah Iles on the Black Hawk War.

In 1883, a few months before his death, Maj. Elijah Iles wrote his "Footsteps and Wanderings", a little volume of 64 pages containing the story of his own life and an excellent view of pioneer civilization in Kentucky, Missouri and Illinois. The book was printed for private circulation, and of the few copies issued only one, owned by Mr. Obed Lewis of Springfield, Ill., is known to be extant now. One of its most ~~most~~ interesting chapters describes the part Maj. Iles ~~performed~~ ~~xxxxxx~~ and the soldiers of his company performed in the Black Hawk War. Maj. Iles (he had been a Major in the command of Col. T. McNeal, which was organized in 1827 to fight the Winnebagoes) first enlisted for the Black Hawk War as a private in Capt. Dawson's company. This company, with others, went to Rock Island, and then marched up the Rock River valley. On the day following Gen. Stillman's defeat he helped bury the dead. "After the dead were buried," says Mr. Iles, "and before returning to camp, we took our lunch. The army was scant of provisions, and my mess had for rations only a small piece of fat ^{bacon} and some parched corn. I was selected to cut the bacon into eight equal parts--the number in my mess. The boys watched me closely. We took our seats on the grass by the side of a pool of water thick with wrigglers, and ate our lunch. The boiling of the water for coffee fixed the wrigglers. We were more particular with what we drank, straining that through our pocket handkerchiefs. We got back to

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camp after dark, very tired, and lay down on sloping ground with our saddles for pillows. I slept soundly until a heavy rain fell, which almost covered me in water before I awoke." ~~My next~~

Maj. Iles and William S. Hamilton (a son of Alexander Hamilton) were sent out to ascertain in what direction the Indians had fled. The Indian village three miles from the scene of Stillman's defeat was found to be deserted. It was reported that the Indians had gone ~~ix~~ ~~the~~ to the Illinois river, ~~xxx~~ plundering and murdering the people on the way, and taking two girls prisoners. The army started out in pursuit. Upon reaching the Illinois river, at the point where Ottawa is now situated, the term for which the volunteers had enlisted expired and they were disbanded. A few companies from the disbanded troops again enlisted for twenty days for the protection of the settlers until new troops could assemble.

"I was elected captain of one of these companies," says Maj. Iles, "although there was hardly a man in it but what was better suited to be a commander. It was made up of Generals, Colonels, Captains and distinguished men from the disbanded army. I was proud of it."

Lincoln was among the officers who re-enlisted in this company as a private. The company was mustered in by Lieut. Anderson, of Fort