

Red Bird



In Memory of Wendy Benish Kotte 1964-2014

Without Wendy's Kotte's enthusiastic support of my *Send a Story* project in its infancy, I doubt that I would have published or that it would have developed as fully as it did. Once so long ago she was a student in my junior English class; decades later she became my trusted friend and valued collaborator. She kept a running list of topics she thought should be in the series. From the first, she argued for the Red Bird story. I resisted, and she quietly persisted. Finally, in Volume IV, I wrote the story and dedicated it to Wendy. I am so glad I did.

Sadly, Wendy passed away unexpectedly in December 2014 at 49. To acknowledge her significant contribution to *Send Story of Prairie du Chien*, I release this favorite of hers. I hope that those of you who share our love of Prairie du Chien and its storied past will enjoy *Red Bird: All Swallowed Up and Lost* and remember Wendy with gratitude for all she gave to those of us who were lucky enough to know her.

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Red Bird

Swallowed up and Lost



The Surrender of Red Bird
Painting by Hugh Ballin

For Wendy and all who love this story.

Send a Story of Prairie du Chien

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Our Sad Story

Readers of *Send a Story of Prairie du Chien* asked for Red Bird's story since Volume I and couldn't believe that it didn't show up in Volume II or III either.

Even after many readings, this tale of violence, betrayal and tragedy, makes me sad to the bone.

A faithful reader argued, "It's our sad story and belongs in your series." Red Bird is an important part of Prairie du Chien's and America's story. She is right, yet is it so wrong to want a happier ending? Granted, the people are compelling especially Red Bird and the youngest victim, still this is the stuff of Greek tragedy.

Telling it is quite the challenge. The limited source material has been filtered through 185 years of repetition and countless storytellers. Although important details have been lost, the essential parts of the story do not vary and have taken on a mythic patina.

Antique dealers warn collectors not to refinish valuable old pieces—leave the patina alone. The trick is to renew an old treasure without diminishing its value.

So with some reluctance, I share what I have found about the Red Bird Incident of 1827—an unforgettable event that changed everything.

The title is from a piece published at the time of Red Bird's death. "**But all this distinction was *swallowed up and lost* in one fell resolve—one act of guilt....**"

The details of the incident itself come from the Gagnier family who survived the attack. Journalist and witness, William J. Snelling, told of the keelboat attacks. Indian Superintendent Thomas McKenney's description of the surrender has been repeated often, and translated into drama and poetry.

The traditional ballad on pages 24& 25 was written in 1830. The photo on the back cover is of a bluff just north of Wal-Mart. The Red Bird Incident occurred there on a blue-sky, white cloud June afternoon long ago.

Mary Ann

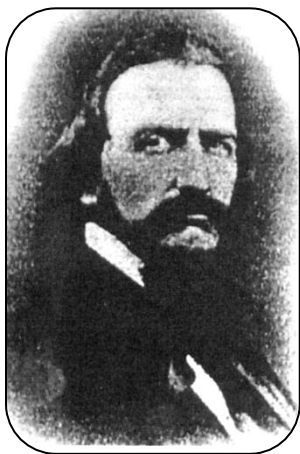
The Pride of the Prairie

Red Bird was the respected leader of a Winnebago band who lived near present day De Soto 35 miles north along the Mississippi. He had the hunter's wealth— traps, spears, wampum and influence. Always welcome in Prairie du Chien, he ate and drank with the settlers in their homes. In fact, he was so trusted that when settlers, like James H. Lockwood, traveled east on business, they asked Red Bird to look after their family and property. As one said, "Red Bird was *the pride of the prairie*."

A Gathering Storm

The lead miners in Southwest Wisconsin had been moving on to Winnebago lands although the Winnebago had repeatedly been promised that their lands would be respected and protected. Empty promises made them increasingly frustrated and restive. They watched as the miners arrived in increasing numbers taking their land.

During the maple sugar season of 1826, the French Canadian Methode family was murdered in their sugar camp near the intersection of Paint Creek and the Yellow River in Iowa. The Winnebago offenders were found and imprisoned at Fort Crawford.



Nicholas Boilvin

Then the record flood of 1826 left Fort Crawford uninhabitable, and the army abandoned it in late summer of 1826. The Winnebago prisoners were removed to Fort Snelling. The residents were left feeling exposed and vulnerable.

Nicholas Boilvin, the longtime Indian agent had left for St. Louis and lost his life in a river accident in May. He was very skilled at relating to the Indians and keeping

tensions in check. Had he lived, things may have turned out differently.

In his stead was John Marsh, sub agent known to have sympathy for the Sioux since his consort was Sioux. He heard from them that the Winnebago, emboldened because the army had abandoned the fort, planned to attack Prairie du Chien and murder everyone that summer.

The Red Bird Incident

Various versions have conflicting details. The date is recorded as June 11, 26 and 27. This version comes, from the Gagnier child who miraculously survived being scalped at 11 months. Before her death, Mrs. Cherrier repeated what her mother had recounted to her many times during her childhood. She in turn told her children. Even some of her accounts had differing details as she repeated the story over a lifetime.

The Trigger

In the spring of 1827, Red Bird came back from an unsuccessful raid against the Chippewa dissatisfied. Into camp came a Sioux with a lie on his lips. He said soldiers at Fort Snelling had killed the Winnebago prisoners and cut their bodies into pieces no bigger than beads. Red Bird's band was enraged

The Tribal Code

Red Bird was honor bound to uphold the ancient Winnebago law—to kill two for one of their own killed. His tribal responsibility collided with his long-standing friendship with settlers in the area. In his dilemma, he had no way to win.

Red Bird reluctantly agreed to lead the group to Prairie du Chien, but he returned saying they couldn't find anyone to kill. His angry young warriors mocked him, so determined to succeed, he returned to Prairie du Chien.

June 28, 1827

On June 28, Red Bird took Wekau, the Sun, Little Buffalo and two others with him. Although traders were not to sell alcohol to soldiers or Indians, Red Bird got an eight-gallon barrel of whisky on credit to be paid for with furs at the end of the season. Later, the townspeople accused Joseph Rolette of illegally selling the liquor.

James H. Lockwood's Home

After several drinks, they headed for Lockwood's store, but he had just left for an extended journey.

They entered through the kitchen and made their way to Mrs. Lockwood's bedroom where she sat alone. She went out another door to the parlor and made her way to the store where her 16 or 17 year old brother was the clerk.



James H. Lockwood

Duncan Graham, a Scottish trader, was in the store. Since he was associated with the British, they felt friendly to him. He had been trading successfully with them for the 40 years he had been in the area. He managed to draw them away from the Lockwood house.

Registre Gagnier's Home

The group left and went three miles south of Prairie du Chien to the home of Red Bird's friend, Registre Gagnier, who had a small farm on the prairie. [See the back cover for the site as it looks today.]

Registre was gone from home overnight. Theresa Gagnier saw Indians along the bluffs east of the house the afternoon before, but since Indians were often there, she had no reason to be alarmed. She was in the house with 2 small children. Louisa 10 months who had been born August 15, 1826 and Frank about 3. With her was a retired soldier and hired hand, Solomon Lipcap.

Registre returned just before noon and brought along, his half-brother, Pascal Menard, a boy of about 10.

About 3:00 p.m., the extended family was visiting in their one room cabin where they had moved that spring. The cabin door faced the eastern bluffs. Opposite the door was a window in the west wall. Mrs. Gagnier had been washing clothes there. The baby had been asleep on the bed, which was to her left in the southwest corner of the room. Menard was sitting in the open window. Lipcap had gone back to work in the corn patch. The baby crept to her father and pulled herself up on his clothing.

Just then, four Indians entered and Mrs. Gagnier gave them chairs and asked if they wanted food. They said they weren't hungry but wanted drink, which she provided. In another account, she said they asked for fish and milk which she provided.

In French, Mrs. Gagnier told her husband that they meant to do harm. Three of the Indians had guns in their hands. One of the Indians reached up and took Gagnier's gun from the wall. He asked his wife to take the child and then took his gun back from the Indian and set it against the wall.

Little Sun sitting near Gagnier shot him with a handgun he had concealed under his clothing. Another Indian shot at Menard who fell out the window. They assumed they had killed him, but he escaped into the nearby woods.

The 3 year old boy was crying for his mother and she scooped him up and ran out of the smoke filled house. She got to the fence and dropped her son there when she realized one of the Indians had gotten there before she did. She grabbed his gun away from him and

cocked it ready to shoot. She couldn't bring herself to pull the trigger and threw the gun down.

Mrs. Gagnier returned to the house. The baby had crept under the bed, so her mother didn't see her. Her husband was still alive but couldn't speak, but motioned with his eyes that she should escape. She ran out of the cabin toward the neighbor's cabin. He asked her to bring his horse, which she did. Then he rode away as fast as he could without helping her. She was stunned.

She went back to the cabin, and again her husband's eyes pleaded that she should leave. She took her son and met up with Menard in the trees. Fifteen feet from her hiding place, she saw the Indians shoot Lipcap who was running to join Mrs. Gagnier and the children.

While they were busy with Lipcap, Pascal Menard escaped and ran to the village to the home of Julien Lariviere. Mrs. Gagnier had found one of her husband's horses and with her son rode toward Prairie du Chien.

Wekau gave this next part of the story in testimony at his trial in September 1828. The Indians went back to the house and found the baby crawling around in the middle of the floor. He hit her with the butt of his gun, picked her up, and scalped her taking part of her skull. He cut the back of her neck to bone and threw her under the bed. He told the court that he saw Gagnier then near death with tears in his eyes.

When the Indians heard people coming from Prairie du Chien, they hurried away.

The son of Julian Lariviere wrapped the baby in his handkerchief and carried her to town. Later when they were washing her and preparing her for burial, they discovered she was still alive.

The family thought they had been targeted because Registre Gagnier had once confronted Wekau when he blocked a church procession. Gagnier shoved him out of the way and Wekau fell. He threatened to throw Gagnier down so that he would never get up again.

Red Bird and his companions returned to his village. Thirty-seven warriors who followed Red Bird



The Red Bird Incident

Painting by Cal Peters

Property of the Wisconsin Historical Society on display at Prairie du Chien City Hall

gathered with their wives and children at the mouth of the Bad Ax River. They tapped the keg, celebrated their “taking of meat”, and planned what they would do next. When they were feeling no pain, they saw a keelboat coming down river and decided to attack it and kill everyone on board.

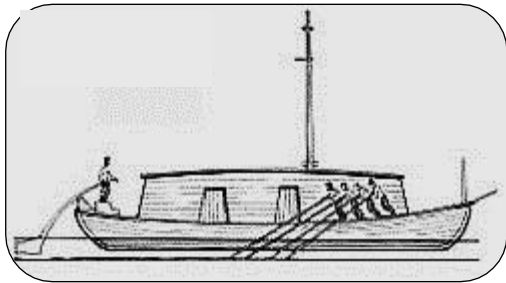
The 1st Battle of Bad Ax

The Attack on the Keelboat

When Mr. Lindsay, a tough Kentuckian had delivered supplies to Fort Snelling, he asked for arms for his crew for their trip south. The Dakota and Chippewa were feuding and the Dakota had threatened anyone going through their territory. Once they passed Wabasha’s Prairie, present day Winona, they thought they could relax.

The keelboat, *Oliver H. Perry*, approached the camp near Bad Ax; the wind was strong and they drifted toward the shore. Some on board remained wary and wanted to stay their distance.

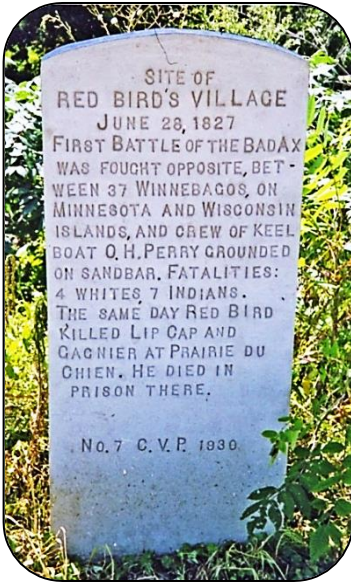
When they were within thirty feet, trees and rocks sounded with blood chilling yells, war hoops and a round of bullets.



A voice in Sauk asked if the crew was English and when they said yes, invited them ashore. Not trusting the invitation, the crew answered back insultingly. A second round came from the shore. An American named Stewart was shot under the left arm. The bullet passed through his heart killing him instantly.

The Standoff

The Winnebago boarded the boat since no one fought back. The crew members recovered, fought back and killed two of the attacking Winnebago. All were driven back except two who managed to ground the keelboat in direct line of fire of the Winnebago. The crew later killed both men before they could get off the boat; one was scalped. The whites lay in the bottom of the boat below the watermark as shots went right through the boat. Rarely did they rise to fire; both sides wanted to save their ammunition. The crew waited in blood and bilge for three hours.



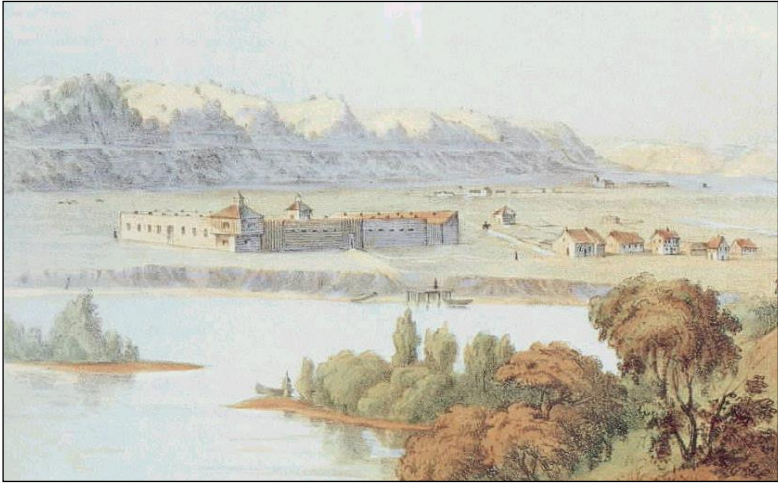
Historic Marker near De Soto

When it was almost dark, Saucy Jack

Mandeville, an old sailor, and other crewmen jumped in the water and freed the boat as bullets rained around them going through their clothes. Finally, they floated out of shooting range. Of thirty-seven Indians in the battle, seven died and fourteen were wounded. They put 693 bullets in and through the boat. This was the first Battle of Bad Axe.

A second Lindsay keelboat, *The General Ashby*, came through the same area about midnight. The Indians opened fire that was returned immediately. That boat passed without damage or injury. Aboard the second boat was William J. Snelling who told the account of the first Battle of Bad Ax.

When the keelboats reached Prairie du Chien, the alarmed people left their houses and farms and crowded in the abandoned fort.



The First Fort Crawford

The attacks on the keelboats turned an isolated incident into the Winnebago War.

The settlers organized themselves and sent a dispatch to Galena and one to Fort Snelling. Within a few days, Galena sent about 100 volunteers, and everyone



Governor Lewis Cass

breathed easier. Still every man and woman was on guard and never far from a rifle. They talked about doing a raid of Red Bird's village, but the volunteers had agreed to defend the people not wage an offensive Indian war.

Within a few days, four companies of infantry returned from Fort Snelling to reoccupy Fort Crawford. Lewis Cass, Governor of Michigan Territory, came to Prairie du Chien and activated the Prairie du Chien

Militia under Thomas Mc Nair.

The commander at Fort Crawford seized the chief, Old Dekauray. If Red Bird were not turned over, the chief would die instead. The old man didn't like confinement and promised that he would return each night if they let him out during the day. The commander let him out, and true to his word, he returned at dusk.

General Henry Atkinson then stationed at Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis moved north into the heart of Winnebago country to capture Red Bird and show sufficient force to deter the Winnebago from widening the conflict. The papers that fall said General Atkinson had handled the war just right.



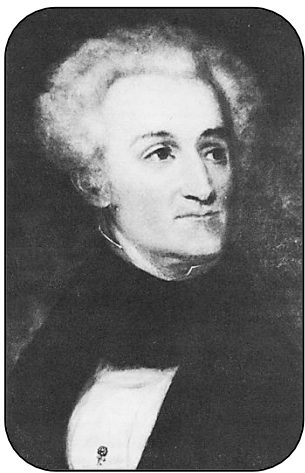
Gen. Henry Atkinson



Major Wm. Whistler

Major William Whistler brought a force from Green Bay down the Fox, Wisconsin waterway to Portage where he was to await Atkinson. Red Bird was reported to be holed up in that area. Whistler was the ancestor of the famous family of painters.

He had been in the military since 1801 and would serve another 30+ years retiring in 1861 with 60 years of service. Talk about a career soldier!



Col. Thomas McKenney

Eyewitness Account

Colonel Thomas Mc Kenney, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, was with Major Whistler when Red Bird surrendered and gave a detailed eyewitness account.

Most narratives of the surrender derive from his writing, which is paraphrased below. His version appeared in many Eastern papers and in London.

Red Bird's Surrender

Messages from Red Bird

At four o'clock, August 31, 1827 a group of Winnebago approached Whistler's camp near Portage. Whistler took them into custody and promised to feed them and take good care of them if they behaved. General Atkinson had sent Whistler an order not to capture Red Bird until he arrived. There had been a council at La Butte De Morts near Green Bay earlier that August. The Winnebago had been warned that the security of the tribe depended on the surrender of the murderers.

A single Indian arrived at Whistler's tent and told Colonel Mc Kenney that before the sun went down the next day Red Bird and Wekau would come in. Two others came to camp singly that afternoon and delivered the same message. All said the message and quickly hurried away presumably to avoid attack.

The Approach of Red Bird

About noon September 1, the army men noticed a group coming toward them, some mounted, others on

foot. With the help of a spyglass, they saw the group was unarmed.

About the time, they were going to cross the Fox River; the men heard singing which they identified. “Red Bird is singing his death song.” Right before the party crossed the river, the army heard scalp yells. The Menomonee, who were with the army, became alert and ready for battle. They were not sure if the scalp yells were for scalps to be *taken* or to be *given*. The army sent barges across the river with a military escort. They could see that Red Bird carried a white flag.

While they were waiting, a rattlesnake came by. A Menomonee cut off the head, burned the fangs and cut up the body in small pieces for their medicine bags. The Indians considered the appearance of the rattlesnake a good omen.

Leading the party was Nawkaw, a distinguished chief from the turtle clan. He was wise, peaceful and honest. He spoke: “They are here—like braves they have come—do not put them in irons.”

The military men were drawn out in a line. The Indians, Menomonee and Oneida were in groups squatting on the left. On the right, the military band readied to play. In front, ten steps away from the officers in charge were the murderers. On both their right and left in a semi-circle were those who had come with them. Red Bird and Wekau were ahead of the others.



Nawkaw

Red Bird's Impressive Demeanor

McKenney was clearly taken with Red Bird.

"All eyes were on Red Bird, for without exception he is the most perfect in form, face and gesture of all the Indians I ever saw. He is about six feet, straight but without restraint. His proportions are those of the most exact symmetry and this embraces the entire man from his head to his feet.... [His face] appears to be a compound of grace and dignity, of firmness and decision all tempered with mildness and mercy.

His face was painted, one side red; the other green and white. He wore a collar of blue and white wampum interspersed with claws of panther. He wore a Yankton dress, beautiful new elk skin, almost pure white. Across the chest diagonally was his war pipe at least three feet long ornamented with dyed horsehair, feathers and bills of birds. In his hand he carried a white flag; in the other a peace pipe.

Is this the man who shot and cut the throat of Gagnier?

Wekau, the miserable looking accomplice, was the opposite of Red Bird. One seemed a prince born to command worthy to be obeyed; the other as if born to be hanged. Meager, cold, dirty in person and dress, crooked in form like a starved wolf—gaunt, hungry and bloodthirsty. Red looked about thirty but was said to be about forty. Wekau was forty-five.

Red Bird's Plea: "Let me be free."

Red Bird, without motion or expression, stood with an air of a man who had done nothing wrong according to his own values. He and Wekau were told to sit; he sat with the same absolute grace as he did everything else. The band played *Pleyel's Hymn*. When the music stopped, Red Bird reached for his otter skin pouch, took some tobacco and *kinninnic*, mixed the two, filled his pipe, struck his flint and steel, and lighted and smoked his pipe.

The Indian speakers said that they had brought in the murderers, as they were demanded, but one had escaped. They again asked for kind treatment, no irons for the prisoners, food, and tobacco for themselves. The white representatives commended them for their good judgment for saving their people from war and cautioned the Winnebago to avoid situations like this in the future.

Red Bird stood up when they had finished talking and faced Major Whistler. "I am ready. I do not wish to be put in irons. Let me be free. I have given my life away. It is gone."

He stooped took up some dust between his thumb and finger and blew it away. "I would not take it back. It is gone." The literature about Red Bird includes a surrender speech, which voices the Indians often-repeated grievances. [Page 19] How it came to be recorded is less clear.

Major Whistler stepped aside and Red Bird and Wekau walked through a double line of soldiers to the tent set apart for them. After they entered, a guard was posted. Their companions took leave of the whites with their good advice and some flour, meat and tobacco.

The Aftermath

Red Bird and his Winnebago companions expected that he would be executed shortly. Instead, they were jailed at Fort Crawford. Imprisonment to Red Bird was worse than death. The Winnebago concluded their captors were too cowardly to inflict capital punishment,

With his surrender tensions eased somewhat, but there were still rumors that the Winnebago intended to launch more attacks in the lead mining region. James Street, the new and inexperienced Indian agent who replaced Boilvin, voiced concern that if Red Bird were tried and put to death, war would break out.

Surrender Speech attributed to Red Bird

I do not know that I have done wrong. I come now to sacrifice myself to the white man because it is my duty to save my people from the scourge of war. If I have done wrong, I will pay for either with horses or my life.

I do not understand the white man's law, which has one set of words for the white man and another for the red. The white men promised the lead mines would be ours, but they did nothing to put the men who took possession away from the lands. If an Indian took possession of something belonging to the white man, the soldier would come quickly enough.

We have been patient. We have seen all this. We have seen our ancient burial grounds plowed over. We have seen our braves shot down like dogs for stealing corn We have seen the white men steal our lands, our quarries, our waterways by lying to us, cheating us and making us drunk enough to put marks on papers without knowing what we were doing. When first the Long Knives came, the prophets told us they would never be honest with us. We did not believe them. We do now.

When word came that our brother was slain, I went forth and took meat. I did not know the report was false, so I did no wrong. I fulfilled the law of the Winnebago. I am not ashamed... I come because the white men are too strong, and I do not wish my people to suffer. Now I am ready, take me.

Retrieval



John Marsh

In December, James M. Street ordered John Marsh to go to the La Crosse area and retrieve the scalp of Gagnier, which hung over the graves of the Indians who had died that summer. The placement of the scalp was a warning to the Indian agents that the Winnebago were ready for the war path. Marsh traveled through the snow and waited through most of one night to get the scalp.

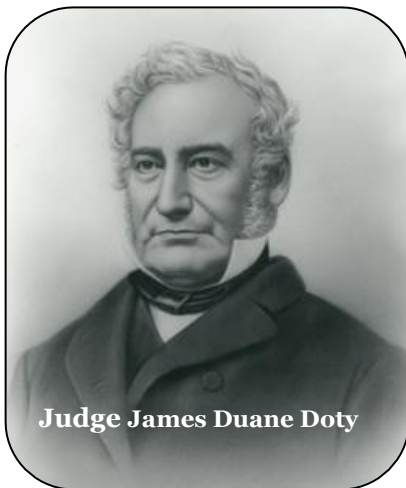
Death of Red Bird

Red Bird sickened and died in prison February 16, 1828 and was said to be buried at Fort Crawford. Some say he just stopped eating and died of loss of freedom and his way of life. Others say he picked up a white man's disease and died as a result.

Trial and Verdict



Joseph M. Street



Judge James Duane Doty

Red Bird-Dead

This was an extraordinary man.

In form and appearance, he had few equals, and in the graces of action, face and spirit, he was not surpassed.

His character, too, during his whole lifetime and up to the period of his bloody adventure, had been marked by all that was kind, and friendly and faithful.

His hospitality to the whites and Indians was notorious —and his means were ample. He was rich in traps and spears, in wampum, and all that constitutes the wealth of the hunter.

He was highly distinguished and beloved in all regions of the Northwest.

But all this distinction was ***swallowed up and lost*** in one fell resolve—one act of guilt....

Maryland Torchlight
24 April 1828

In the September term of Judge Doty's court at Prairie du Chien, Wekau, the Sun and Chickhongsic, Little Buffalo were tried, convicted and sentenced to hang on December 26, 1828. Street made clear that an execution would spell real trouble in the area. Doty argued that the trial should have been held in the military court not the civil court since Red Bird committed an act of war.

A Pardon

The Winnebago lead by Nawkaw appealed to the President for pardon. John Quincy Adams was a lame duck president who had lost to Andrew Jackson in the election of 1828. For whatever the reason, he pardoned the men in November 1828, and they were freed before the sentence could be carried out.

A Land Grab

The Indians welcomed the pardon, but didn't realize the price they were paying. The Winnebago agreed to give up the title to their lands in the lead-mining region east of the Mississippi in the Treaties of 1828 and 1829.

In the Treaty of 1829, the Winnebago granted Therese Gagnier and her two children two sections of land as payment for the death of her husband and their father as well as an annual payment to be deducted from the Winnebago annuity.

A decade later in, the Winnebago were forcibly removed across the river first to Iowa and then to Minnesota and Nebraska. Some of them kept sneaking back to their Wisconsin homes. Today the Hochunk have a large presence in Wisconsin.

Good News

Amazingly the badly wounded baby survived providing the only happy note to this tragic tale.

A Surprising Survival



Mary Louisa Gagnier

Louisa Cherrier, also known as Mary Louisa survived her brutal attack. The baby's neck under the occipital bone was cut to the bone and her head scalped by Wekau; defying all odds, she survived until February 1893. [See the page 27 photo shortly before her death.] She had ten children by her first husband, Moreau. When he died, she married Combe Cherrier with whom she had 3 children. Her descendants still live in the area.

They pounded a silver dollar until it was large enough to replace the piece of lost skull. Her grandmother, Aunt Mary Ann Menard, covered the hole in her skull with that silver dollar and used her arsenal of herbs to heal the wound. Some sources credited an army surgeon with this life saving action.

The survivor always wore a cap or ribbon on the back of her head to cover the wound. Supposedly, she got so tired of others wanting to see her scars that Louisa started charging for a look.

Aunt Mary Ann is referred to as Prairie du Chien's first doctor. Part African American, and French, she came with her husband in the early 1800's. She was married three times and had 14 children. Registre was the son of her second husband, Claude Gagnier.

She nursed people before the army surgeons came on the scene. People still sought her care because she was less expensive and often had success that escaped the doctors. By all accounts, she was a gifted nurse. Some army doctors including Dr. William Beaumont

complained that she cut into their business. When the new hospital is built, it will be in the shadow of the Red Bird site—Aunt Mary Ann Menard must be smiling.

Red Bird's Bones

In 1939, when the WPA workers were excavating



the First Fort Crawford site, they found bones, which they thought might be Red Bird's. They were found in a wood coffin made with hand-forged nails. The skeleton was under an intact Indian pipe. At that time, the photo left appeared in state newspapers. Later, this theory was discredited. What happened to the bones is a mystery.

Said to be the bones of Red Bird

Peters, a Wisconsin artist was hired to develop exhibits for the Prairie du Chien Museum. After careful research, he painted *The Red Bird Incident*, which hangs in a conference room at City Hall. [See the picture page 10.]

The Red Bird Incident foreshadowed the Black Hawk War —another sad story that played out across southern Wisconsin and ended at the tragic second Battle of Bad Ax in early August 1832.

During that period, Cal

The Indian Chief Red Bird

*A distinguished Winnebago sachem
who died in prison in Prairie du Chien*

Lonely and low in his dungeon cell
The captive chief was lying,
Whilst the mourner wind, like the spirit's voice,
Mid the grated bars was sighing.

The full bright beams of the midnight moon
From his wampum belt was gleaming,
But keener the glance of the warrior's eye,
In its fitful witness gleaming.

No kindly friend in that fearful hour
By his dying couch was kneeling,
To whisper of that far sunny clime,
Whither his spirit was silently stealing.

Pale was the hue of his faded cheek,
As it leaned on its cold damp pillow.
And deep the heave of his troubled breast,
As the lift of the ocean billow:

For he thought of the days when his restless foot,
Through the pathless forest bounded.
And the festive throng by the hunting fire,
Where the chase-song joyously sounded.

He thought of his distant but the while
By the brooding hemlock shaded,
And the frowning ghosts of his awful sires,
By his own sad doom degraded.

But ah! The thought of his Indian boy,
In his wind- rocked cradle sleeping,
And the wail forlorn of his bosom one,
At his fated absence weeping.

He heard too the voice of the shadowy woods
O'er the night bird's music swelling,
And the jocund note of the laughing brook,
As it danced by his lonely dwelling.

He heard those sounds—to his bosom dear
As the dreams of friendship parted.
With a gleam of joy o'er his withered cheek,
Like a flash of sunlight darted.

It fled—for the chill of the white man's chain
O'er the lightning trace came stealing.
And his phrenzied spirit in the darkness passed.
Into the rush of that conquering feeling.

He had stood in the deadly ambushade
While his warriors were falling around him.
He had stood unmoved at the torturing stake,
Where the foe in his wrath had found him.

He had mocked at pain in every form—
Had joyed in the post of danger.
But his spirit was crushed by the dungeon's gloom,
And the chain of the ruthless stranger.

**This poem in the style of the time resembles
the poetry of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow .
The New York Mirror published it July 17, 1830**



Mary Louisa Gagnier Cherrier 1826-1893



**Site of the Red Bird Incident in McNair's Coulee
Just north of Wal-Mart**