



Blackhawk
Presbytery

What is in a name?



The Blackhawk Land and Name Acknowledgement (LANA) Task Force has been motivated by the Spirit to resurrect the history of the land and name of Blackhawk Presbytery because that history seemed lost and, therefore, unappreciated.



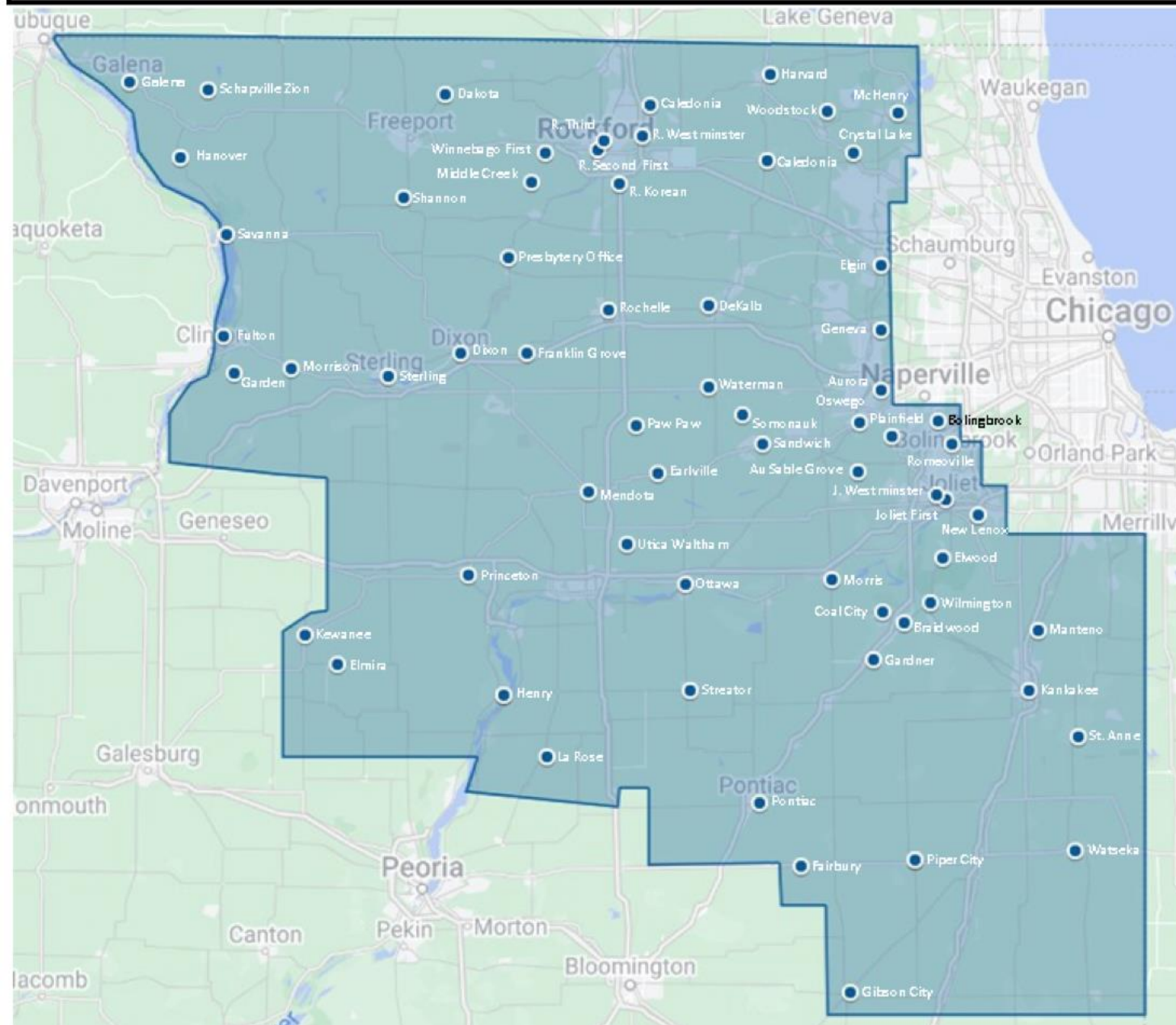
Blackhawk Presbytery

January 11, 1972, in a major restructuring of Presbytery boundaries in the state of Illinois, The Presbytery of Blackhawk was officially organized and named.

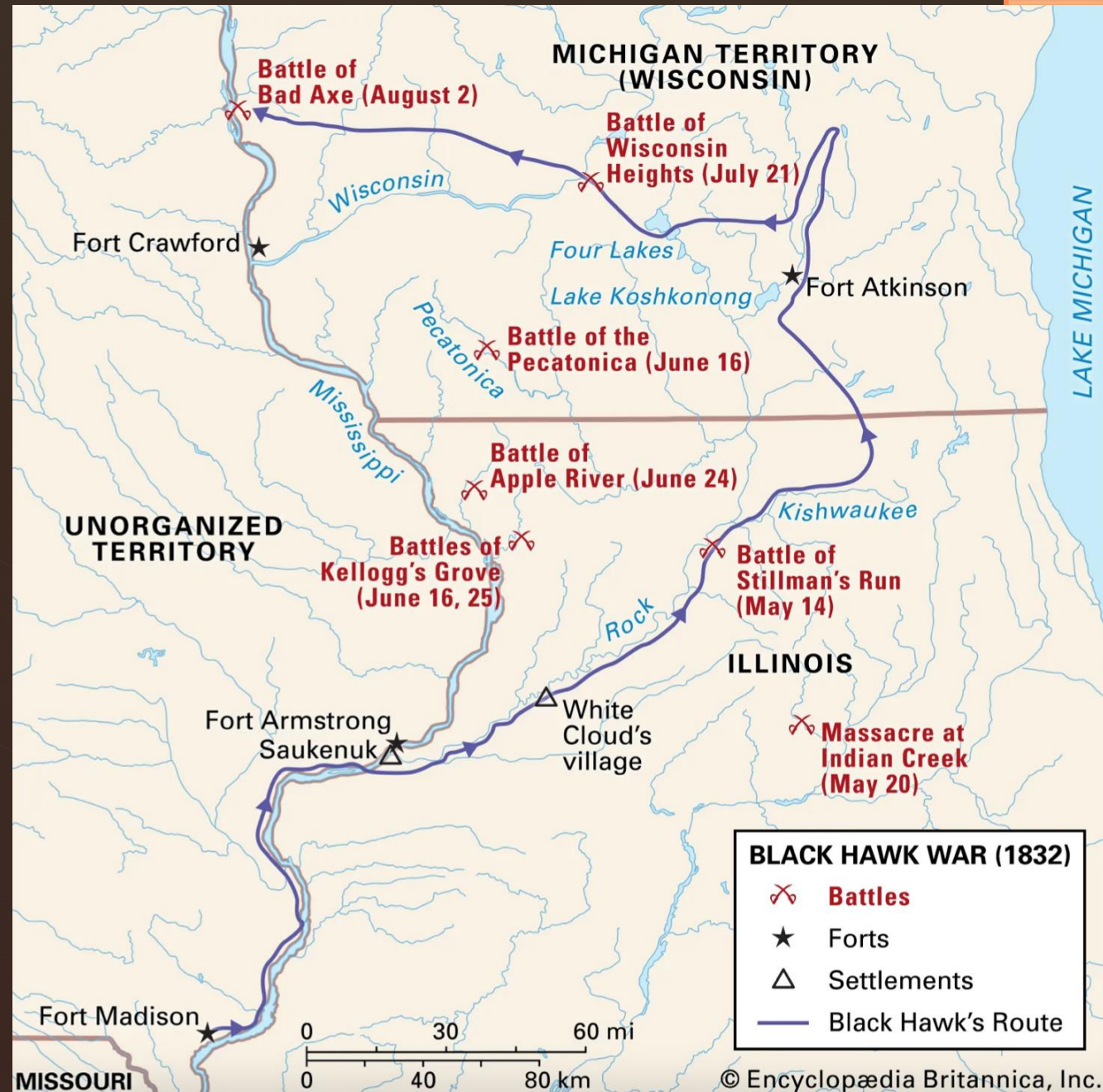
Blackhawk Presbytery is currently comprised of 65 congregations in large and small communities in northern Illinois.

PRESBYTERY OF BLACKHAWK

June, 2024 - 65 Churches



It includes the area where the Blackhawk War was fought (April-August, 1832). Our churches were founded starting in 1829 in Galena, just west of the Apple River Fort.



What is in a name?

From the perspective
of the person named
Blackhawk....

Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak

▀ **Black Sparrow Hawk**

1767-1838

“I am a Sauk...I am a Warrior”

Blackhawk fought hard to preserve his ancestral home, but was ultimately unable to avoid the wave of cultural change brought on by invading European-Americans.



**BLACK HAWK'S
AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

Through the Interpretation of
ANTOINE LECLAIRE

J. B. PATTERSON
Amanuensis and Editor of the First Edition

—
An Introduction and Notes, Critical and Historical

BY
JAMES D. RISHELL

ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS
AMERICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY
1912

Blackhawk's Wish for Us...

“May the Great Spirit shed light on [your pathway to glory]; and that you may never experience the humility that the power of the American government has reduced me to is the wish of him who in his native forests was once as proud and bold as yourself.”
(10th moon, 1883, p. vii)

Timeline leading up to Blackhawk

±15,000-2000 BCE Arrival of Native Nations in Illinois

They find giant bison, woolly mammoth and mastodon.

2000 BCE-1400 CE Growing a New Way of Life

Indigenous people make technological advancements.

Mound builders were active (1000 BCE to 700 CE).

1400-1700 Eve of European Exploration

Native people included immigrant groups from other regions as tribes become smaller and are relocated.

1673-1776 Colonial Outpost Native Americans traded with the French until their defeat by the British in 1763.

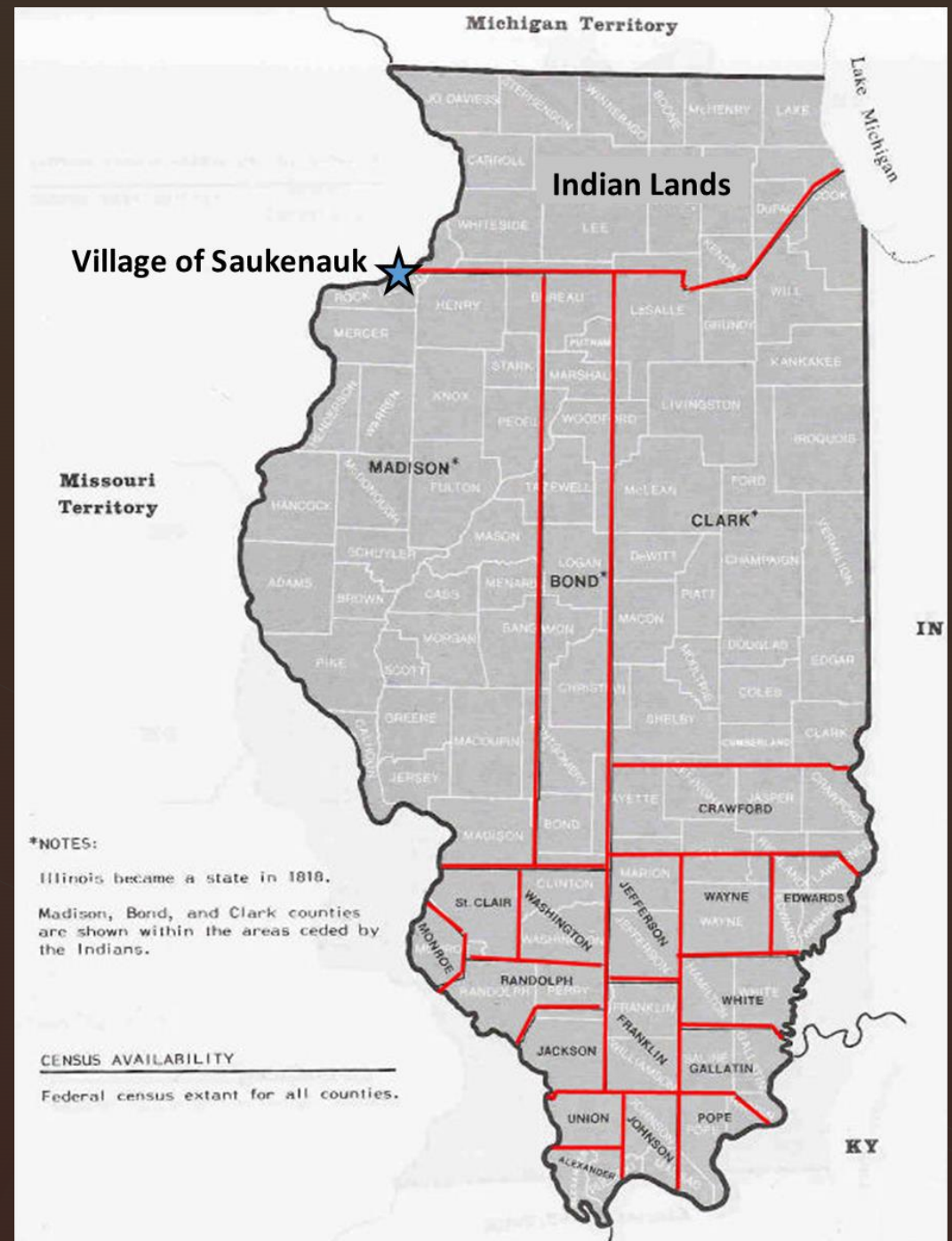
1776– 1818 The Illinois Territory Between 1803 and 1812

Native Americans not relating to the idea of private property, often under duress, and based on empty promises ceded most of their land in Illinois.

Blackhawk was born in 1767 in the village of Saukenuk on the Rock River (Rock Island, IL).

Illinois became a state in 1818.

This 1820 map labels Indian lands basically north of Interstate 80.



According to this 1804 Treaty, Blackhawk's ancestral lands were ceded.....

TREATY WITH THE SAUK AND FOXES, 1804.

A treaty between the United States of America and the United tribes of Sac and Fox Indians.

the said tribes, for and in consideration of the friendship and protection of the United States which is now extended to them, of the goods (to the value of two thousand two hundred and thirty-four dollars and fifty cents) which are now delivered, and of the annuity hereinafter stipulated to be paid, do hereby cede and relinquish forever to the United States, all the lands included within the above-described boundary

TREATY WITH THE SAUX AND FOXES, 1804.

ART. 7. As long as the lands which are now ceded to the United States remain their property, the Indians belonging to the said tribes, shall enjoy the privilege of living and hunting upon them.

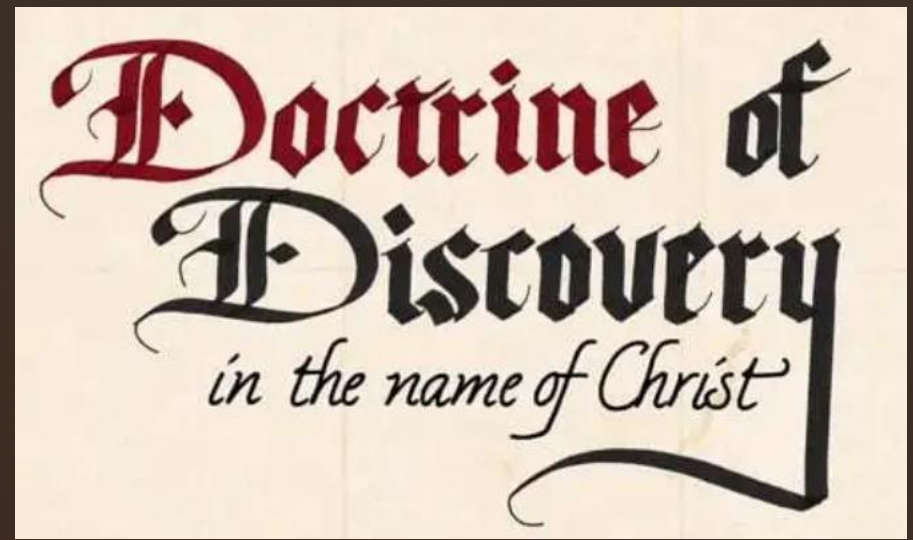
But, from Blackhawk's perspective...

“The prospect before us was a bad one. I fasted and called upon the Great Spirit to direct my steps to the right path....My reason teaches me that land cannot be sold. The Great Spirit gave it to his children to live upon and cultivate as far as necessary for their subsistence, and so long as they occupy and cultivate it they have the right to the soil, but if they voluntarily leave it then any other people have a right to settle on it. Nothing can be sold but such things as can be carried away.” (p. 84 of his autobiography)

Compared to the perspective of the ...

The U.S. Supreme Court in 1823, leaning on the Doctrine of Discovery,

stated that since European nations had assumed dominion over the lands of America upon discovery, Native Americans had lost their rights to complete sovereignty as independent nations and retained a mere right of occupancy in their lands.



The Blackhawk War began...

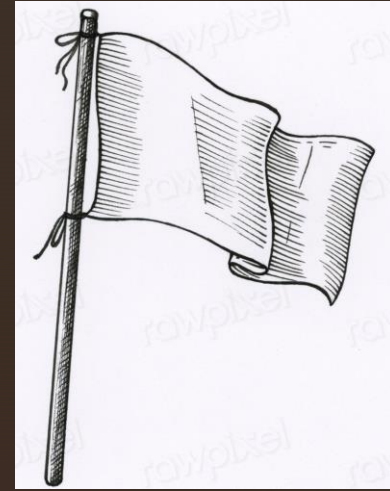
Blackhawk and his people

- had been forced to relocate west of the Mississippi.
- promises were not kept and food was scarce.
- Blackhawk planned to regain his homeland partly because he was wrongly told that the British and other native tribes would provide reinforcements and supplies.



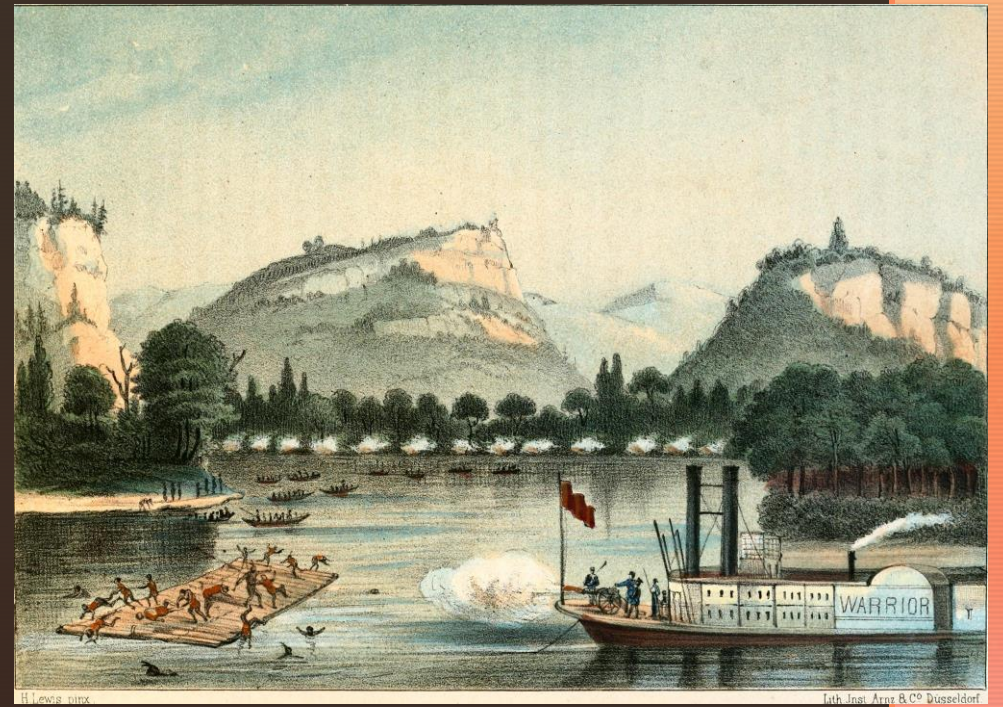
Blackhawk shared...

“I sent a flag of peace to the American war chief, who was reported to be close by with his army, expecting that he would convene a council and listen to what we had to say. But this chief, instead of pursuing that honorable and chivalric course, such as I have always practiced, shot down our flag bearer and thus forced us into war.”



Blackhawk soon realized the war was futile....

Blackhawk tried to surrender two different times during the war, but his white flag was not honored. At the end, in the Battle of Bad Axe (WI), the soldiers shot at anyone—man, woman, or child—whether they tried to swim across the river or to surrender. U.S. Soldiers also scalped most of the dead bodies.



Why were all Native People forced to leave Illinois?

President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act in 1830...

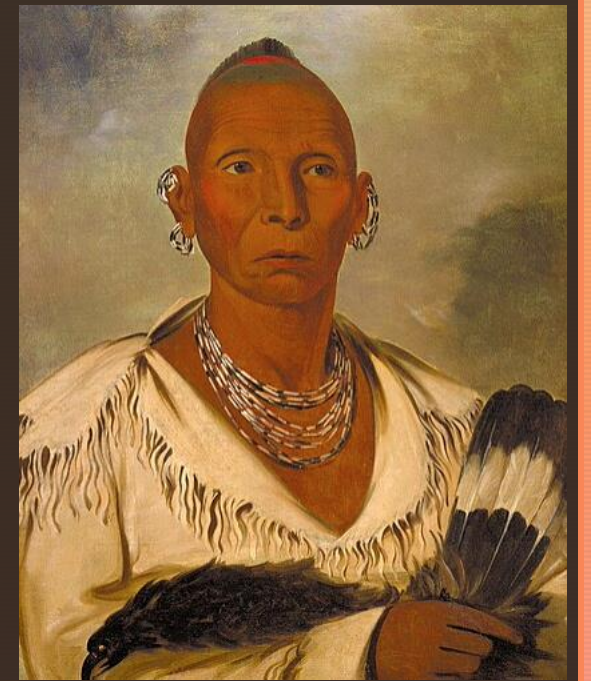
CHAP. CXLVIII.—*An Act to provide for an exchange of lands with the Indians residing in any of the states or territories, and for their removal west of the river Mississippi.* May 28, 1830.

Illinois used the power of this act to move all Native People to the west of the Mississippi River, even those tribes who were peaceful.

From Blackhawk's perspective...

He wondered...

“Why did the Great Spirit ever send the whites to this land to drive us from our homes and introduce us (to) poisonous liquors, disease, and death? They should have remained in the land the Great Spirit allotted them.” (p. 33)



How do we respond??

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in response....

- Called the church in 2016 to confess its complicity and repudiate the **Doctrine of Discovery**.
- In 2018 began requiring that national PC(USA) agencies begin meetings with land acknowledgment and, where possible, seek the greeting and welcome of the Indigenous peoples currently living on the land. **Presbyteries and congregations are also encouraged to adopt the same practice.**

- In 2020, the Presbyterian Church (USA) called upon mid-councils...
 - to improve Native American churches and chapels,
 - to engage in funds development for Native American church property repairs, and
 - to encourage support for **The Native American – Alaskan Native Peoples Fund (NAANP)**

Blackhawk Presbytery in response....

- Pledges to create a task team to change the policy for the use of funds from dissolving ministries so that funds and resources from any church dissolution be used to benefit Indigenous people.
- Will continue efforts to form meaningful relationships with Native people in our area and those relocated from our area.

- Will use Matthew 25 as an inspiration for action.
‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ (Matthew 25:40). We will see Christ in our native brothers and sisters. We will confront the causes of inequality and poverty. and confess our complicity. In so doing, our church, Christ’s body, will be revitalized



MATTHEW 25

- **Building congregational vitality**
- **Dismantling structural racism**
- **Eradicating systemic poverty**

www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/

Blackhawk's version of Matthew 25

“We must continue to do good throughout our lives. If we have corn and meat, and know of a family that have none, we divide with them. If we have more blankets than we absolutely need, and others have not enough, we must give to those who are in want.” (p. 60)

“It has always been our custom to receive all strangers that come to our village or camps in time of peace on terms of friendship, to share with them the best provisions we have, and give them all the assistance in our power. If on a journey or lost, to put them on the right trail, and if in want of moccasins, to supply them.” (p. 133)

In the end, Blackhawk said,

*“The tomahawk is buried forever! We will forget what has passed, and may the watchword between the Americans and the Sacs and Foxes ever be—
“Friendship.”*

I am done now. A few more moons and I must follow my fathers to the shades. May the Great Spirit keep our people and the whites always at peace, is the sincere wish of Black Hawk.” (p. 133)



Blackhawk Presbytery Land and Name Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that “We have participated actively and passively throughout our history in discriminatory behavior directed against indigenous peoples. We have stood by while they were killed and their lands taken, while the story of their participation in the history of our country was distorted and suppressed.” (GA 222 Overture 11-17)

Blackhawk Presbytery Land and Name Acknowledgment cont'ed

Our Presbytery is spread over much of Northern Illinois. This is what once was home to many native peoples and tribes going back as far as 15,000 BCE. Even the name of our Presbytery – Blackhawk – bears witness to this truth. And so, we acknowledge and respect this territory's significance for the Indigenous peoples who lived upon this land. We want to be honest about the ways our religious tradition has been used to colonize, to abuse, and to oppress people.

Blackhawk Presbytery Land and Name Acknowledgment cont'ed

Today we again declare our respect for these children of God and our desire to honor them and the truth of their lives and their history, our shared history including the broken promises and other sins for which we must repent.

Blackhawk Presbytery Land and Name Acknowledgment cont'ed

We affirm our responsibility to those who are still here, sometimes unseen, and we look for opportunities for true reconciliation, which we acknowledge will involve further action by, and change for, us. Among our transgressions are the harmful stereotypes created for our entertainment.

We vow to honor our Native siblings and seek to work for healing and justice that is truly “for all.”



Blackhawk
Presbytery

What is in a name?

Recognition
Peace
Belonging
Honor
Perspective
Connection
Identity
Friendship
Shared History
Shared Future
Reconciliation
Acknowledgement
Community
Confession
Respect
Appreciation
Tolerance

Now What??

Presbytery will...

- Provide all materials used today on its website
- Will propose a new policy on the use of dissolved churches' resources and funds
- Share relationships it forms with native peoples
- Use the Matthew 25 Committee for guidance



You and your local church are encouraged to...

- Explore your pre-European settlement history
 - Visit museums and historical sites
 - Document and share what you learn
- Write a local Land Acknowledgement Statement
 - Use that statement annually in worship
- Look for opportunities to celebrate native people
 - September 27 Native American Day
 - October 14 Indigenous Peoples' Day
- Seek relationships with Native People
- Be attuned to the language you use. Words matter!

Find help at the Blackhawk Presbytery website under Resources...



[ABOUT US](#) ▾ [MEETINGS & EVENTS](#) ▾ [COMMITTEES](#) ▾ [MISSION & MINISTRY](#) ▾ [RESOURCES](#) ▾

A photograph of a vintage-style compass with a blue needle, resting on a textured, light-colored fabric surface. The compass face shows cardinal and intercardinal directions.

LAND AND NAME ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Discovery Guide

Compiled and offered by the Land and Name
Acknowledgement Task Force of Blackhawk Presbytery

1. Apple River Fort and other 1832 Blackhawk War sites
- 2-3. Black Hawk State Historic Site & Hauberg Museum: Saukenuk village was home to Black Hawk and his tribe
4. Thomson Causeway: Woodland Indian Mound
5. Casper Bluff Land & Water Reserve: Thunderbird Effigy Mound
6. Dunleith Mounds / Gramercy Park: E. Dubuque: 20 mounds, trails & markers
7. Albany Mounds Historic Site: Important archaeological site
8. Sinnissippi Mounds, Sterling Parks: Mound group located at a 2000-year old trading crossroads
9. Mitchell Museum of the American Indian, Evanston: A hands-on, family-friendly education center.
10. Cahokia Mounds: Largest prehistoric settlement north of Mexico, with mounds and interpretive center (check for renovation status)
11. Dickson Mounds State Museum: Important archaeological site. Culturally sensitive reinterpretation efforts ongoing (see The Repatriation Project)
12. Piney Creek Ravine Nature Preserve: Petroglyphs (rock art)
13. Millstone Bluff Archaeological Area: Petroglyphs and evidence of a village and burial grounds
14. Trail of Tears National Historic Trail: In the winter of 1838-1839, thousands of Cherokee suffered and died in IL during this forced migration

Please find this guide, links and more information at
blackhawkpresbytery.org/land-and-name-acknowledgement/

This Year...

You are invited to learn more about the

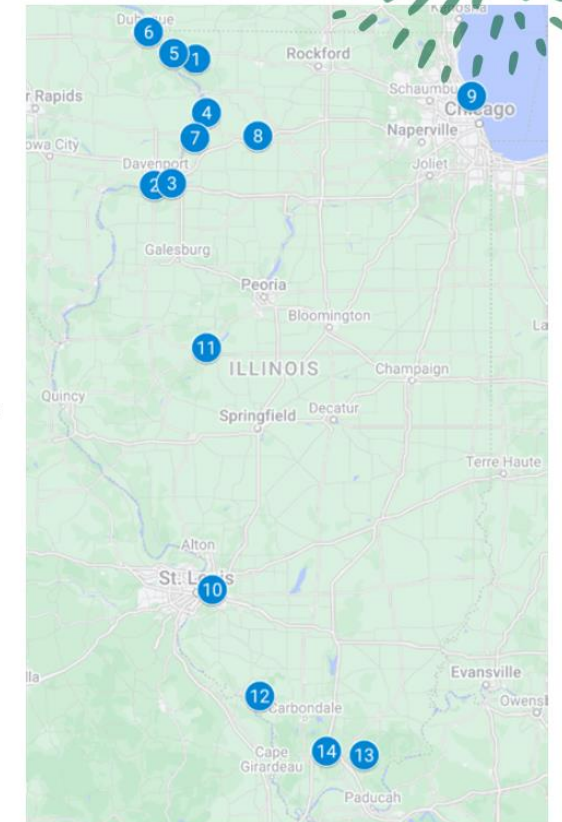
Indigenous people who were the first to call Illinois home

Discovery Guide

to Native American Sites in Illinois

- 1 Apple River Fort State Historic Site
- 2 Hauberg Museum
- 3 Black Hawk State Historic Site
- 4 Thomson Causeway
- 5 Casper Bluff Land & Water Reserve
- 6 Gramercy Park
- 7 Albany Mounds State Historic Site
- 8 Sinnissippi Mounds State Historic Site
- 9 Mitchell Museum of the American Indian
- 10 Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site
- 11 Dickson Mounds State Museum
- 12 Piney Creek Ravine Nature Preserve
- 13 Millstone Bluff Archaeological Area
- 14 Trail of Tears National Historic Trail

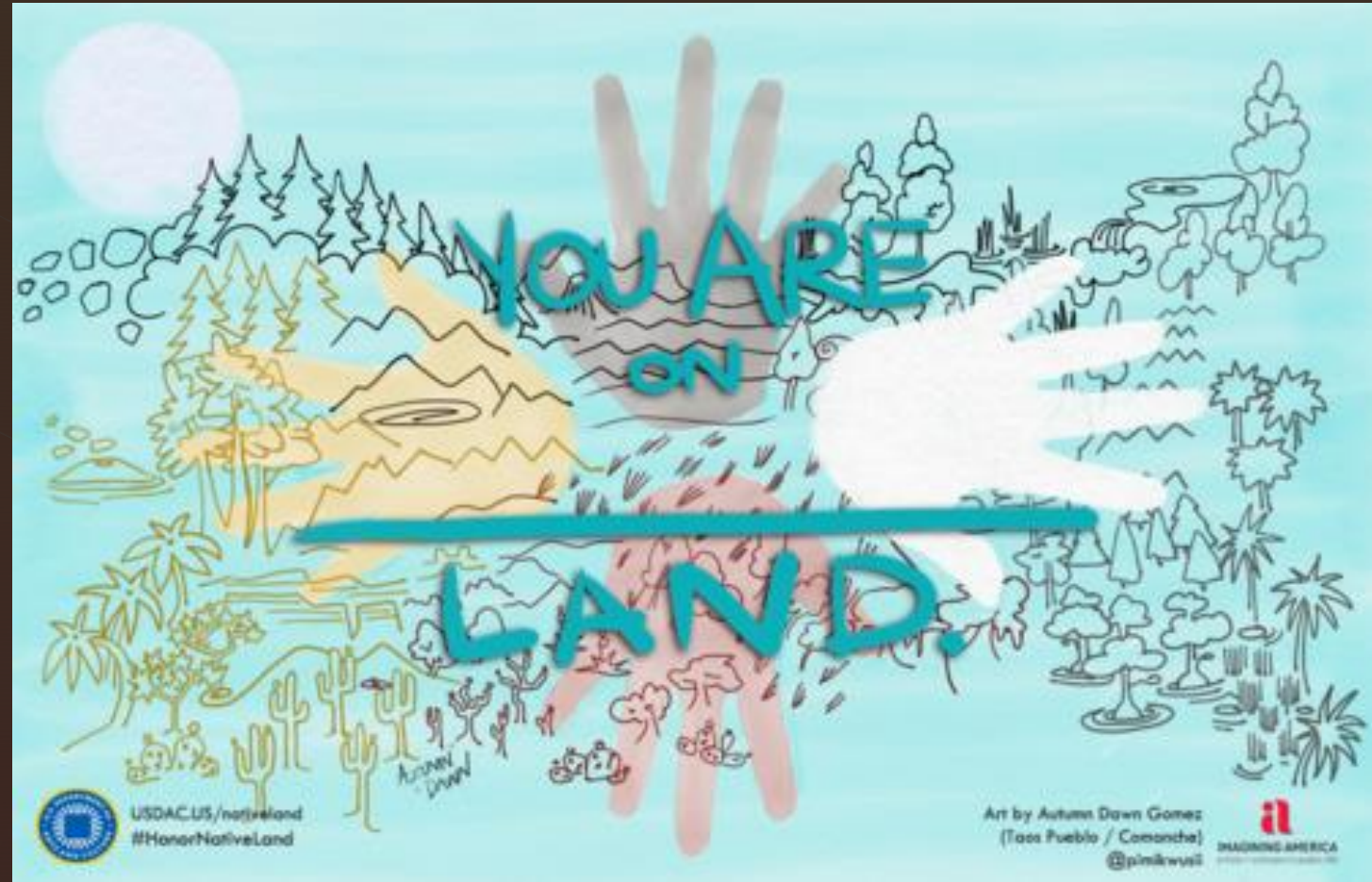
Note: This is not an all-inclusive list of sites



Blackhawk Presbyterians are encouraged to educate themselves about the history of our land and our name, and to honor that history and the Indigenous people who lived here before us.

May we recognize and acknowledge that throughout the last several centuries, the rights of Native Americans were severely abused by both church and state. This history has had lasting implications. Beginning with knowledge and confession, may we seek paths of reconciliation with the living descendants of Indigenous peoples.

Let us know if your local church would like help developing their own land acknowledgement statement.



<https://usdac.us/nativeland>