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1865 and beyond: Black Hawk War

In short:

Growing frictions over land and resources led to Utah's most intense Mormon-Indian conflict, the Black Hawk War. The Utes and their allies killed around 75 Anglos; the Mormons in return killed many Indians. Both sides committed atrocities and killed many innocents before it was over.

More of the story:

On April 9, 1865, a group of Utes and Mormon settlers met near Manti to resolve a quarrel. The Utes had stolen and eaten some of the Mormons' cattle. During



Men who fought against Indians in the Black Hawk War, photo taken in 1866 by Charles

the talk, one of the settlers **Savage.** grabbed the one of the Indians and threw him down off his horse. This angered the Utes, including a young man named Black Hawk.

This was the start of the Black Hawk War.

Stealing cattle—and worse.

Black Hawk and several others got revenge for the insult by attacking and killing five Mormons and stealing hundreds of cows. The Indians had been starving, largely because the settlers had taken their land and changed their migration patterns—so the Utes welcomed the food.

Black Hawk began to rise in popularity among his people. He convinced groups of Utes, Paiutes, and Navajos to join in raids against the Mormons.

The sad results of war

From 1865 to 1867, many settlers lived in fear. They defended themselves by building forts and abandoning dozens of their new settlements. Militias tried but couldn't catch the Indians who were causing so much trouble. In the meantime, their enemies stole around 2,000 head of cattle and killed close to 75 settlers.

Unable to catch the perpetrators, and unable to tell which Indians were the enemies, settlers sometimes killed the nearest Indians at hand—including women and children. In reality, the portion of Native Americans involved in the raiding was quite small compared to the number in the state, and many innocents died.

Peace

In 1867, Black Hawk gave up raiding, and in 1868 Mormons and Indians signed a peace treaty. The violence continued off and on, however, until federal troops marched in to end it in 1872.

As for the Utes, the settlers didn't want them around any more. They were hustled off to a bleak [reservation](#) set aside for them in 1861.