

The Black Hawk War
and
The Hall Family

The Black Hawk War
and
The Hall Family

by

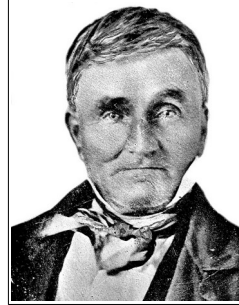
Fred South
Prophetstown Area Historical Society
June 2025

Introduction

My Great Grandmother was Mary Maliinda Hall, who married Steven South my Great Grandfather. Her father was John Hall and was my Great, Great Grandfather. John had a brother named William, whose story is unfortunate and very sad.



Mary Malinda Hall-South



John Hall

John and William (my Great, Great, Great Uncle), along with their father, Edward H. Hall, a Revolutionary War vet, moved into Bureau County, Illinois. A few years later William moved his family to the Indian Creek area, which lay northeast of his original location.

In 1832 the Black Hawk War broke out in northern Illinois and was to have a devastating affect on the William Hall Family. We think of the Black Hawk War as happening north of Prophetstown and up into Wisconsin. That is true, but there is more to it than that. The following describes what happened to William Hall and his family.

William Hall

He was born in Washington County, Georgia, on March 24, 1786. He was married to Jennie Williams in Warren County, Kentucky. She was a sister of Curtis Williams, father of Mary Williams, wife of Henry J. Miller, making her Mary's aunt. He, too, came to Illinois, settling in Bureau County, near where La Moille is now. About eighteen months later, he sold out and moved about 12 miles north to Indian Creek and, for him, it was not a good move. In the early 1830s, whites began to migrate into northern Illinois in great numbers and the Indians did not like it. Often they struck back.

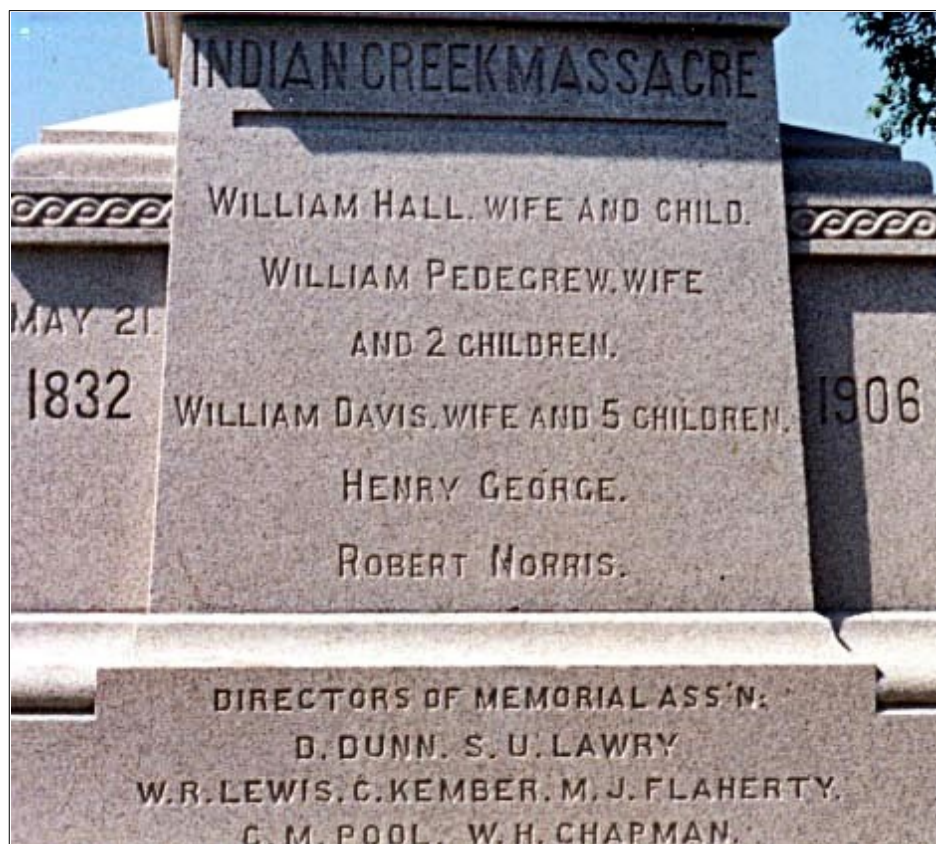
In early 1832, (Because of the Black Hawk War.) the William Hall family, along with a number of other families in the area, had been warned by a friendly Indian (Shabbona) to remove themselves to the safety of the fort at Chicago or, better yet, to nearby Ottawa, where they would find safety in numbers. William took the warning seriously and began moving in the direction of Ottawa. On the way, he and the family stopped at the farm of a friend, William Davis, at which point Davis persuaded them to stay. It seems that Davis was a man of considerable courage and strength, but had been roundly embarrassed once before when he fled to avoid renegade Indians who never came. Others besides the Halls were persuaded to stay, rather than move on to the fort. To complicate matters, Davis had found two Indian children breaking up the dam he built on the creek and had severely beaten them. This, no doubt, gave the Indians even more incentive to do something.

The thinking was that with all of them on the one farm they would be safe. Such was not to be the case, unfortunately. For some reason, the men went to work in the fields, and out buildings, leaving the women and children alone at the house. The rationale for this escapes me! At any rate, while the men were away, 70-80 Indians attacked the main house, killing 15-16 people on either May 20 or 21, 1832. The state monument gives one date, the family monument the other.

Some of those killed were men and older children who were working on the farm, though women and young children were the first to die, as they were in the house. William, his wife, and one child died there that day. One son, John, escaped by hiding under a creek bank. Other sons, Greenberry and Edward H., were in a field and escaped. Two daughters, Sylvia and Rachel, were taken captive and carried to Wisconsin, where they were later ransomed by the U.S. government for about \$2,000, mostly in ponies. In the museum at Utica, Illinois, they have in a glass case on the wall the vest worn by William that day and his wife's bonnet, the latter with a bullet hole in it.

The State of Illinois in 1833 gave the two girls 160 acres of land that had been given to Illinois by the U.S. for the construction of a canal between Chicago and Ottawa. The land was sold, eventually, for a modest sum. The same parcels are worth a great deal today. In 1877, William Munson and his wife Rachel (one of the captive girls) erected a monument at the site of what became called the Indian Creek Massacre. In 1905, the State of Illinois appropriated \$5,000 to place a monument at the grave site (the bodies were buried on the scene), which is located on the Creek, which gave that terrible event its name. It is now called Shabbona Park.





INDIAN CREEK MASSACRE

WILLIAM HALL, WIFE AND CHILD.

WILLIAM PEDEGREW, WIFE
AND 2 CHILDREN.

WILLIAM DAVIS, WIFE AND 5 CHILDREN.

HENRY GEORGE.

ROBERT MORRIS.

DIRECTORS OF MEMORIAL ASS'N:

D. DUNN, S. U. LAWRY

W. R. LEWIS, C. KEMBER, M. J. FLAHERTY,

C. M. POOL, W. H. CHAPMAN.



Rachel and Sylvia Hall in later life.