



“God grant that America may never have greater cowards in her armies than the ladies on Apple River Fort.”

The Galenian, July 4, 1832



LOCATION

Apple River Fort State Historic Site
 P.O. Box 206 • 311 E. Myrtle • Elizabeth, IL 61028
 815.858.2028 • www.appleriverfort.org

DIRECTIONS

Take Hwy 20 to Elizabeth, Illinois.
 Go East on Myrtle/Apple River Road. Turn right into parking lot. Start your tour at the Interpretive Center. The fort is located 1/4 mile behind the Interpretive Center.

ADMISSION

Suggested donation of \$4.00 per adult,
 \$2.00 17 years old and younger or \$10.00 per family.

HOURS

Open Wednesday – Sunday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
 Closed Monday & Tuesday
 Groups scheduled year-round by appointment.

Apple River Fort State Historic Site is operated by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.



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Apple River Fort

Elizabeth, Illinois



Apple River Fort

The Black Hawk War

The Apple River Fort was the site of an important battle during the Black Hawk War. It was the only fort attacked by Black Hawk during the turbulent summer of 1832. On June 24, 1832, the settlers at the fort turned back an attack by some 200 Sauk and Fox warriors led by Black Hawk. The war, which lasted only 16 weeks, ended the threat of Indian attacks in the area and opened the region to further settlement.

The Fight for Land

Black Hawk, a Sauk warrior who had fought with the British against the United States in the War of 1812, was determined to return to the land of his people. On April 5, 1832, he started up the Rock River with a band of 500 warriors and about 700 women, children, and old men. Governor Reynolds, fearing attack, called out the militia, and when Black Hawk's warriors defeated the militia at the Battle of Stillman's Run on May 14th, the Black Hawk War had begun.

The Apple River Fort was hastily built in May of 1832 when the men and women of the Apple River settlement (now Elizabeth) learned that Black Hawk's 40 warriors had defeated 275 Illinois militia at the Battle of Stillman's Run.

In fear of an attack, the settlers felled logs, dug a trench, and erected a palisaded fort. It enclosed a settler's cabin at one corner and another structure at the opposite corner, which they made into a block house. The size of the fort was 50 feet by 70 feet.

About 45 men, women and children were in the fort when Black Hawk and 200 braves attacked on June 24th. Inside, the men kept up a steady stream of fire, aided by the women, who molded musket balls and loaded weapons. A fierce battle ensued, lasting about 45 minutes. Casualties in the fort were light – one man killed and another wounded.

The Early Settlers

The discovery of lead in the Galena area during the 1820s brought many miners to the area. Nearby, at the Apple River settlement, the miners built a cluster of cabins and in 1827 opened the first general store. The lead was processed in smelting furnaces, which produced 70 lb. bars. They built log cabins and were mainly of Southern extraction (Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri).

Apple River Fort Rediscovered

In the spring of 1995, the Apple River Fort Historic Foundation set out to locate the site of Apple River Fort. The group hired an archeologist who initially found artifacts and items from the 1830s. The original site was rediscovered in 1996, which put into motion an effort to re-create the site.

Building the Fort

Work began in earnest, to present the story of both sides: that of the settlers inside the fort, and the Sauk and Fox warriors outside the fort for the Apple River Fort battle. Volunteers from 19 states and four foreign countries participated in the rebuilding, which was completed in 1997.

