

**REMINISCENCES OF QUINCY,
ILLINOIS, CONTAINING
HISTORICAL EVENTS, ANECDOTES,
MATTERS CONCERNING OLD
SETTLERS AND OLD TIMES, ETC.**

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Reminiscences of Quincy, Illinois, Containing Historical Events, Anecdotes, Matters
Concerning Old Settlers and Old Times, Etc. by Henry Asbury

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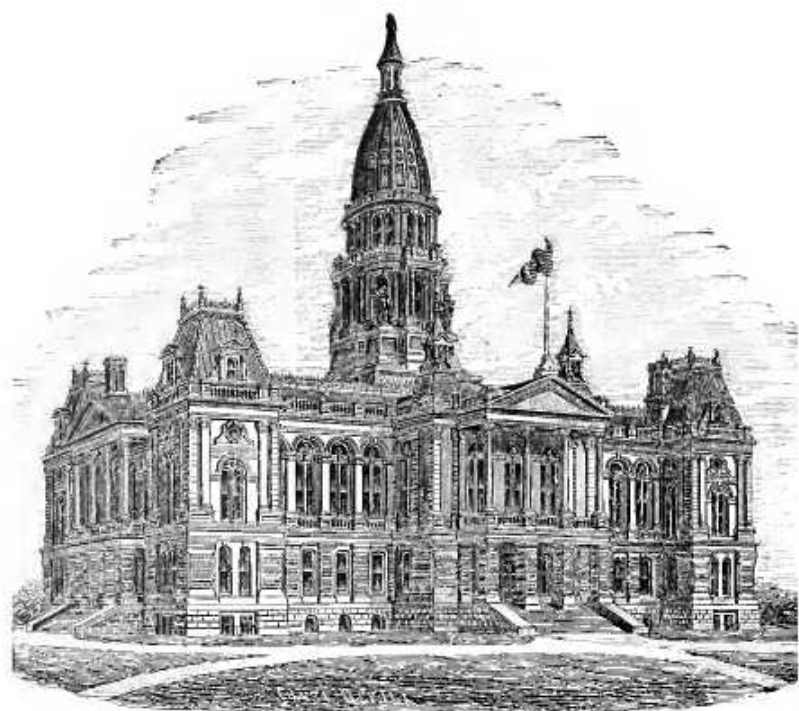
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HENRY ASBURY

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ADAMS COUNTY COURT HOUSE.

LOCATED AT QUINCY, ILL.

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Recd. by J. Feb. 19/10

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

ALMOST, since the settlement at Jamestown, Va., in 1607, and the subsequent landing and more permanent settlement of the Pilgrims at Plymouth in 1620, there has grown to be a laudable custom in America to preserve more or less extensive histories of the early times, old stories, and matters of supposed interest pertaining to such particular localities as challenge the allegiance and the affections of pioneer people.

If the histories of Rome go back to Romulus and Remus, why may not our earliest settlers, such as John Wood and Willard Keyes, figure in the history of Quincy. Rome at the end of the first fifty years after her first settlement was no larger than Quincy is now.

In writing this short history of Quincy, I can not reasonably expect to avoid such errors as seem predestined to creep into every book. Though this book will most probably be read by but few outside of our own city and county, I desire to preserve in it, some matters of a wider range.

Who was the first white man that visited the spot now covered by our city? Of course this inquiry does not relate to prehistoric times. The question of who were the mound builders, what people buried their dead upon our Mount Pisgah—the high mound through which Maine street was opened to the river—and other high points along the river bluffs, I leave for others to explain. Historically, we know that Marquette, the Frenchman and Roman Catholic Ecclesiastic, discovered the upper Mississippi river, passed down this river, and passed the present site of Quincy (whether he landed here or not we do not know) about July, 1673. He was probably the first white man who looked upon our bluffs. But coming down nearer to our own times we find that in 1805, or probably 1806, General Zebulon Pike (afterwards killed during the war of 1812, at York, in Canada) was ordered by the war department to ascend the Missis-

ssippi from St. Louis to the Falls of St. Anthony, and to locate the sites of a number of forts for the protection of the frontier at such points as he might deem most suitable. In the discharge of this duty, he selected Fort Edwards (now Warsaw), Fort Madison, Fort Armstrong (Rock Island), Fort Crawford (Prairie du Chien), and Fort Snelling, near the Falls of St. Anthony; all of these forts were built and garrisoned not long afterwards.

Fort Madison, at or near the present town of Fort Madison, Iowa, was, during the year 1812, burned down. This old fort was succeeded by the new fort, built some years afterwards. It was garrisoned as late as 1835. The old Fort Edwards at Warsaw was abandoned, but some of the buildings were still standing in 1835. As stated by an authority before me, General Pike started up the river from near St. Louis on Friday, Aug. 9, 1805, with one sergeant, three corporals and seventeen privates, in a keel-boat seventy-five feet long, provisioned for four months, and arrived at the Falls of St. Anthony Sept. 26, thus making the voyage of about 800 miles in forty-eight days, or making the distance of twelve and a half miles per diem, which seems very fast keel-boat traveling.

The expedition left their keel-boat at the Falls and proceeded some distance in smaller vessels up the river, above the falls, and from the highest point they reached on the Mississippi, they thence started by land through the wilderness in a west and southwestern direction, crossing the Missouri river and extending their expedition till they came in view of what was then called the *Spanish Mountains*, and particularly noting that high peak of mountain now known as Pike's Peak—and so named for General Zebulon Pike. The remnant of his expedition finally reached the Mississippi river and, I believe, returned to their starting point. I find no account of even keel-boat transportation upon the upper Mississippi prior to the ascent of General Pike in his keel-boat in 1805 or 1806. After the establishment of the forts their supplies were, however, for a time furnished by *keel-boats*, and up to the time of the introduction of steamboat navigation. The upper Mississippi had, however, been early used for the transportation of rafts of lumber, and by Indian traders in the use of the small keel-boat, or "Perogue."

In early times a set of men, called half-breeds, with some pure-blooded Indians were employed as keel-boat men. Mr. Hiram Lindsay, who for a time was owner or supercargo of

one or more of these boats, told the writer that on one occasion his crew consisted almost entirely of Indians of the Sack or Saukee tribe, with one Kickapoo. It appears that on one occasion in coming up the river, about opposite the present location of Quincy, in some way the Sacks heard that one of their tribe had been killed by the Kickapoos. It was solemnly decided by the Saukees that the Kickapoo must be killed in retaliation. They informed the Kickapoo that he must die, and that he was allowed to go into the woods (the boat then being tied up at the shore) and sing his death song, being watched by the Saukees to prevent his escape. Mr. Lindsay said he never heard so doleful a noise as the poor Kickapoo made in singing his death song, which consisted mainly of the following expressions in broken English: "O-o-o, poor one Kickapoo me; whole heap of Saukee! O-o-o, poor one Kickapoo me, whole, whole heap of Saukee! O-o-o-o, poor one Kickapoo me, whole, whole, "whole heap of Saukee!" Mr. Lindsay, finding out what was intended by the Sacks, with much trouble managed to let the Kickapoo escape. I have never, since hearing this story, seen a crowd set upon one man, without any justification, but what I have thought of that one poor Kickapoo surrounded by a whole heap of Saukees.

Our own local history tells that our first settler within the original limits of Quincy, Willard Keyes, passed down the river past the present site of the city on a raft of lumber on the 10th of May, 1819.

Quincy was for many years, and still is substantially in a business and historical point, the most important place of the old Military Bounty Land Tract. Its history includes somewhat its surroundings, and particularly the laws which attach to its locality. By an act of Congress approved May 6, 1812, and other acts concerning Military Bounty lands, all the country lying between the Mississippi and Illinois rivers at far up as 15 north of the base line, as the same was afterwards surveyed, was with other lands lying in the territory of Michigan, in the territory of Louisiana, afterwards Missouri and Arkansas set apart for satisfying the bounties of 160 acres promised to each of the non-commissioned officers and soldiers of the United States.

The Illinois Bounty Land Tract, which includes Quincy and Adams County, was surveyed by the government during the years 1815 and 1816. The title to the whole remained in the United States until after the survey and distribution of the lands

by patents to the respective soldiers entitled thereto, so that no patents or deeds to any part thereof were recorded in any County in the State, until after the issuing of such patents. The whole of the land in this Military Bounty Land Tract was not, however, patented to the soldiers; a large portion of it was afterwards sold by the government to purchasers.

The County of Madison, the present boundaries of which lie on the east side of the Illinois river, was organized by proclamation of Gov. Edwards, March 14, 1812. The County embraced all the territory lying north of a line beginning on the Mississippi river, with the second township line above Cahokia, and running east to the Indiana territory—this boundary of Madison County thus embraced all the country north of its south line, and including the whole Military Tract as the same was afterwards surveyed.

An act to form a new county on the Bounty Lands was approved Jan. 21, 1821. It defined the *boundaries* of Pike County as beginning at the mouth of the Illinois river and running thence up the middle of said river to the fork of the same, thence up the south fork of said river until it strikes the State line of Indiana, thence north with said line to the north boundary line of this State, thence west with said line to the west boundary line of this State and thence with said boundary line to the place of beginning.

Pike County thus bounded was to form part of the First Judicial Circuit. The election for County officers which completed the organization of "Old Pike," took place at Cole's Grove, (now Gilead, in Calhoun County) April 21, 1821.

By an act approved Dec. 30, 1822, the County of Pike was again bounded so as to include only all of the Military Bounty Land Tract south of the *base* line, but all the rest of the country or territory within its original limits was still attached to and made a part of the County until otherwise disposed of by the General Assembly of the State.

The County of Fulton was organized under the act of Jan. 28, 1823, and contained the same boundaries as at present. But the act provided that all the rest and residue of the attached part of the County of Pike *east* of the fourth principal meridian should be attached to and made a part of said County of Fulton until otherwise disposed of by the General Assembly of the State.

By an act of Jan. 10, 1825, forming new Counties out of Pike and Fulton Counties and attached parts thereof, the boundaries of a number of unorganized Counties were defined. Hancock was attached to Adams, and all that tract of country north of Schuyler and Hancock, and *west* of the fourth principal meridian, was attached to Schuyler for all County purposes, until such time as it shall appear to the Judge of the Circuit Court that any of these unorganized Counties should contain three hundred and fifty inhabitants, when the Judge was required to grant an order for an election of County officers, which election was to complete the organization of the County.

The act approved Jan. 13, 1825, among other things therein provided that all that tract of country within the following boundaries, to-wit: Beginning at the place where the township line between townships three and four south touches the Mississippi river, thence east on the said line to the range line between ranges four and five west, thence north on said range line to the northeast corner of township two north, range five west, thence west on said township line to the Mississippi river, thence down said river to the place of beginning, should constitute the County of *Adams*. The commissioners appointed by the act to select the county seat were Seymore Kellogg of Morgan, Joel Wright of Montgomery, and David Dutton of Pike County. Prior to the passage of this act, John Wood made in the *Edwardsville Spectator* the notice required by the act of Jan. 30, 1821, for the organization of new Counties.

From the foregoing acts of the General Assembly, it appears that from the organization of Madison County, in 1812, to the organization of old Pike County, in 1821, deeds for lands lying in the Bounty Land Tract were properly recorded in Madison County. After the formation of "Old Pike" for a time and until new Counties were formed out of her immense territory, all deeds for lands in the Military Tract were properly recorded in Pike County. At the date of the act of Jan. 21, 1821, which fixed the boundaries of the old Pike County, the whole population could not have exceeded one hundred of whites, including a few French families upon the Illinois river. The present population of that territory is not less than one million. After the organization of Fulton County, in 1823, deeds for lands in the Military Tract, and all east of the fourth principal meridian, were properly recorded in Fulton County, until the organization of Counties lying north of Fulton proper. After the act of January, 1825