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The Life of a Pioneer: Social Conditions in Illinois,  
1815-1820.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of the  
University of Minnesota,

by  
Solveig M. Magelssen

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

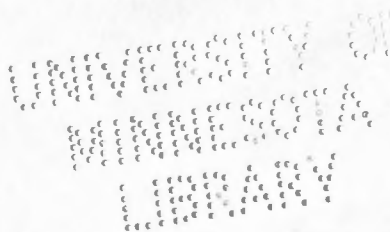
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## I. Introduction.

From 1815 to 1820 Illinois grew from a territory to a state with a population of 55,211.<sup>1/</sup> During these five years, frontier settlement was pushing northward in Illinois and westward in Missouri. This great expansion was the work of the pioneer:- the trader, the farmer, and the townsman. Hardy, courageous, and adventurous, their numbers were swelled by foreign immigration, and by domestic migration, in the early years, principally from the southern states, but also from New England. By way of the Ohio River and its tributaries, suffering hardships, dangers, and privations - many, deprived of long accustomed though simple comforts, a few, of ease and luxury - the pioneers found their way into the fertile river bottoms and expansive prairies of Illinois. There they made their homes; some, only to move ~~still~~ <sup>yet</sup> farther westward.<sup>2/</sup> a smaller number to return discouraged to their former homes, but the vast majority to build the foundation of the populous and prosperous state of Illinois.

1. 53,837 whites, 1,374 negroes. Statesman's Year Book, 1914, p. 473.

2. "The American has always something better in his eye, farther west; he therefore lives and dies on hope, a mere gypsy in this particular." William Faux, Memorable Days in America 1819-1820, in Thwaites, Early Western Travels, 11:179.

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expected

had  
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## II. Coming to Illinois.

Crafts of every description from the canoe to the steamboat navigated the Ohio River. Steamers were numerous, expeditious, and commodious between 1815 and 1820. At Shippingport, near Louisville, William Faux counted twelve to sixteen "elegant" steamboats aground waiting for water. He boarded and examined the Post-boy, a passenger steamer, which cost fifty thousand dollars, and contained fifty berths, a separate dining room, ladies' room, staterooms, three decks with a fine promenade on top, and "all necessary and elegant appurtenances."<sup>1/</sup> "Large, fine steam-boats" proceeded down the Ohio "at the rate of 10 miles an hour, and charge passengers 6 cents a mile, boarding and lodging included. The price is great, but the time is short."<sup>2/</sup>

In spite of these conveniences, comparatively few of the emigrants of 1815 to 1820 came by steamboat. A few walked or rode horseback, some came in light wagons; but the majority considered the trip most economic-

1. Faux, in Early Western Travels, 11:197. The United States was rumored to be even finer. Faux thought that there were between sixty and seventy steamboats on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers.
2. Thomas Hulme's Journal 1818-1819, in ibid, 10:45. For further information on the steamboats see Thaddeus Harris, Journal, in ibid, 3:335; Estwick Evans, Pedestrian Tour, in ibid., 10:256, 269; Edmund Dana, Geographical Sketches of the Western Country... 7

ally made by floating with the current down the Ohio River, on keels and flat boats.<sup>1/</sup> To reach the headwaters of the Ohio, the usual method was a rough, wearisome journey of about three hundred miles by stagecoach over the mountains from Philadelphia to the end of the route, Pittsburgh.<sup>2/</sup> George Flower and his party, on their way to find the prairies of which they had heard much and where they wished to locate an English settlement, traveled on horseback because they wanted to see the country. Each one was equipped with a horse, a horse blanket, a blanket for himself, a pair of well filled saddle bags, a great coat, and an umbrella "strapped behind." In the party of ten, six were under twenty, three under thirty, while Morris Birkbeck was fifty-four. As the horses became spiritless and dull, the little cavalcade would sometimes be strung out for three or four miles. A clap of thunder

1. A keel boat was from forty to eighty feet long, seven to nine feet wide, the largest requiring one man to steer and two to row going down the Ohio. The boat's capacity was about one hundred barrels of salt; the boat's cost, two and a half to three dollars a foot. A flat boat was from thirty to ninety feet long, twelve to fifteen feet wide, and practically all fastened together with wooden pins. Four men to row and two to steer were sufficient descending the Ohio. A flat boat could carry seven hundred barrels of flour, and cost about one dollar a foot. Elias Pym Fordham, Personal Narrative 1817-1818, p. 79. See also Christian Schultz, Travels on an Inland Voyage, 1:129-133.
2. George Flower, History of the English Settlement in Edwards County, 49; 95; Morris Birkbeck, Notes on a Journey in America, 56; Henry B. Fearon, Sketches of America, 340.

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and a drenching rain usually brought them together. Swollen and rapid streams were a constant danger. The privations were many. The taverns, often "mere shanties," sometimes without either door or window, offered only a place on the floor on which to spread one's coat for a bed. At such little taverns, the women, used to the quiet and comfort of English life, would try to secure extras for the next day's travel. But the trip was not without its humorous incidents. Once young Bradford Birkbeck, in charge of the pack horse, had a spill in a main street of Cincinnati. While the crowd mocked at the pack, which had slipped under the horse because of a loosened girth, the horse walked placidly on over fallen blankets and clattering coffee pot.<sup>1/</sup> When Flower came to Illinois the second time, his family occupied a keel boat to which was lashed a flat boat for the horses, with the carriage fastened on the top. Flower had the assistance of four rowers; and for the time when least needed, a pilot. After the pilot deserted, Flower took the helm himself with the Pittsburgh Navigator as his guide on the dangerous and exciting trip.<sup>2/</sup>

not  
in good  
shape

1. G. Flower, History; 49-53.

2. Ibid., 106 ff.



Among the many interesting journeys recorded is that of Rev. John Mason Peck, who, with his wife and three small children, left Litchfield, Connecticut, July 25, 1817, in a light, one-horse wagon. November 6, they reached Shawneetown, Illinois, where unusually high fall floods made it impossible for them to proceed. Leaving the horse and carriage to be taken on by his brother-in-law, Mr. Paine, when the water receded, Peck and his family took passage for twenty-five dollars on a keel boat to St. Louis. On the way his family shared the six by ten cabin with the captain. Mrs. Peck's accommodations for cooking and serving the meals for her family, were the "midships" section. The hands were civil young men going West. Peck and his family were a "little crowded" but "comfortable and happy." Sometimes they floated with the current, only rowing when they went to shore for the night or for safety when a storm threatened. To increase the speed, the men used a "setting pole" ten to twelve feet long, iron shod, with a knob at the upper end which they pressed against their shoulders. If the boat passed along the shore, it was advantageous at times

*Peck*

to drop the poles and drag the boat along by grasping the limbs of trees - "bushwhacking." Steering was done by the captain or pilot who stood on the roof and managed a long, heavy oar with a wide blade, which moved in a pivot and was attached to the stern. Going up the Mississippi, progress was slow, and the "cordelle" was used. This was a long rope fastened to the bow of the boat and drawn over the shoulders of the men, who walked in a stooping position along the shore. Weakened by long illness, Peck finally landed with his family at St. Louis, December 1. Paine, who had been left to come later with the horse and wagon, had traveled overland and arrived in St. Louis one week earlier.<sup>1/</sup>

Life on the river in 1820 is suggestively described by James Hall: "To-day we passed two large rafts lashed together, by which simple conveyance several families from New England were transporting themselves and their property to the land of promise in the western woods. Each raft was eighty or ninety feet long, with a small house erected on it; and on each was a stack of hay, round which several horses and cows were feeding, while

1. Rufus Babcock, Memoir of John Mason Peck, 71-84. For the methods of propelling a river craft see also Evans, Pedestrian Tour, in Early Western Travels, 8:256.

the paraphernalia of a farm-yard, the ploughs, wagons, pigs, children, and poultry, carelessly distributed, gave the whole more the appearance of a permanent residence than of a caravan of adventurers seeking a home. A respectable looking old lady, with spectacles on nose, was seated on a chair at the door of one of the cabins, employed in knitting; another female was at the wash-tub; the men were chewing tobacco, with as much complacency as if they had been in 'the land of steady habits,' and the various family avocations seemed to go on like clock work.<sup>1/</sup> Having stopped for the night, Hall heard his crew, seated in groups on the river bank, sing,-

"Here's to you and all the rest,  
And likewise her that I love best;  
As she's not here to take a part,  
I'll drink her health with all my heart."

Many were the crew's pranks and jollities that night before they were again started down the river, singing as they rowed,-

1. James Hall, Letters from the West, 87. It is interesting to note the classification of the children and the division of labor.

"Some rows up, but we rows down,  
All the way to Shawnee town,  
Pull away - pull away!"<sup>1/</sup>

Coming by boat, travelers at least avoided the taverns, which though offering "beds generally cleanly,"- when any at all were offered - were "indeed too true..... infested with that ugly and sleep-destroying insect the bug."<sup>2/</sup> One had good reason, moreover, to find fault with the food. Even in this early period, present familiar expressions were current. A traveler was greeted "with a smile" when he remarked at a tavern gathering that "he had been obliged to eat bacon until he was ashamed to look a pig in the face."<sup>3/</sup> At times one would be so fortunate as to secure accommodations at a "house of private entertainment." Here "travellers are received but neighbors are not allowed to drink." The result was usually cheaper and more comfortable lodging. The traveler took his meals with the family, after which he retired to the "stranger's room." The host generally followed his guest for a chat. Calls for liquor were not expected and liquor was not often kept. Perhaps it was

*bring in  
more  
parental help*

1. Hall, Letters from the West, 92, 94.
2. Richard Flower, Letters from Lexington and the Illinois, in Early Western Travels, 10:93.
3. Hall, Letters from the West, 118.

increased experience or less good fortune in finding the "house of private entertainment" that caused the same traveler to write, "Though the houses near Henderson [Kentucky] are bad, there are some good gardens and ice houses; and cleanliness which strongly contrasts with the dirty Ohio houses, and the Indiana and Illinois pigsties in which men, women and children wallow in promiscuous filth."<sup>1/</sup>

The English emigrants have recorded many interesting figures on their journeys. John Woods<sup>2/</sup> gives three hundred pounds as the cost of his trip from Cowes, England, to English Prairie, in Illinois. The expense included that of transportation for nine people and six thousand pounds of baggage. Woods left Cowes May 9, 1820, reaching Baltimore July 6. He left Baltimore July 22, for Wheeling, a distance of about 280 miles, where he purchased an ark for twenty-five dollars and hired two men for eighteen dollars and board, to take him and his family 906 miles

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1. Fordham, Narrative, 158, 216. Fordham was a promising young English engineer, a keen, accurate observer. He and his sister accompanied their cousin, George Flower, on his first trip to Illinois. After a few years Fordham was back in England practising his profession.
  2. John Woods was a substantial English farmer whose information is careful and detailed.

to Shawneetown. At Louisville, Kentucky, his boatmen became intoxicated and quarrelsome. September 15, he anchored among the "keel boats, arks, etc." at Shawneetown. From there Woods and his family walked to English Prairie, about seventy miles. The freight was sent by keel boat to the mouth of the Bonpas River. Because of the great heat and his daughter's travel-weary feet, the walkers' progress was slow. Where the Wabash mill dam was broken, they crawled over on the slanting timber. After having been 140 days on the way, they arrived at English Prairie, September 25, 1820. Although ~~the~~ American manners were rougher than those of the English, Woods declared that he met with as good treatment as he would have in England.<sup>1/</sup> Hulme gives the cost of his trip as far as Philadelphia, (a journey of seventy-two days) including the loss in the sale of a horse, as \$270.70.<sup>2/</sup>

Fordham gives a more detailed account: passage in a stage and expenses from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, fifty dollars; a nine hundred mile journey down the Ohio, (about Shawneetown) ten to fifteen dollars; to St. Louis by steamboat, twenty dollars, by land on horseback, eight

1. John Woods, Two Years' Residence ...English Prairie, in Early Western Travels, 10:338,188 ff.,254,257.

2. Hulme, in Early Western Travels, 10:83.

*see Hulme  
see Hulme*

dollars.<sup>1/</sup> In general, the pioneers went by boat to Shawneetown if they wished to settle in the valley of the Wabash, at English or Birk's Prairie. They proceeded on foot or by wagon across the country, sometimes sending the baggage by boat up the Wabash. Those wishing to settle in the American Bottom, in the valley of the Kaskaskia River, continued past Shawneetown, down the Ohio and up the Mississippi to St. Louis. On the whole transportation was cheap enough to enable men with comparatively small capital in money and goods, but with large families, to reach Illinois. The tribulations were many, but the pioneers' hope of success and faith in the West were great.

1. Fordham, Narrative, 118.

### III. The Trader

Before the stage, the keel boat and the barge brought settlers to Illinois, a still earlier pioneer class constituted the outposts of civilization. These men were the traders, who followed close upon the Indian in his hunt, supplying the red man with food, blankets, implements, and ammunition (all so necessary after his first association with white men) in return for pelts and hides, which were gathered together at Mackinac Island by the traders and agents of the American Fur Company. Among the early traders was Guy Saltonstall Hubbard, upon whose description of his life in the employ of the Fur Company the following account is based.

May 13, 1818, at the age of sixteen, Hubbard entered the service of the American Fur Company, with headquarters at Mackinac. He signed a contract to serve as clerk for five years, with an annual salary of \$120. In the fall one outfit of traders after another departed for its winter quarters. "The boats glided from the shore, the crews singing some favorite boat song, while the



multitude shouted their farewells and wishes for a successful trip and a safe return." The Illinois brigade of twelve boats was among the last of the outfits to leave. September 10, 1818, they departed, each batteau manned with four men to row, one to steer, and the clerk. Besides the clothing of the men and their rations of "corn and tallow," there were three tons of merchandise. The three or four single men clubbed together for meals; the others had Indian wives who did their cooking. The clerks were furnished with "salt pork, a bag of flour, tea and coffee, and a tent for shelter, and messed with the commander and orderly." The commander took the best boat, and his will was law. Hubbard was under the command of Mr. Deschamps, who had a good mess, securing fish, meat, and wild fruits from the Indians on shore, who expected salt and powder in exchange. On fine days when a sail could be hoisted, the rowers' usual forty miles a day was made seventy to seventy-five miles. In case of storm the boats had to be hauled laboriously up the beach, the goods unloaded and covered with tarpaulins. The goods so covered and protected formed the men's only

*found*

shelter; they had no tents. If the storm lasted for several days, the men amused themselves by racing, wrestling, playing cards, sometimes hunting or fishing. This voyage around Lake Michigan took twenty days. October 1, with holiday attire and flags flying, the brigade started for Fort Dearborn, the site of present Chicago. Hubbard effectively describes his first impressions: "Arriving at Douglas Grove where the prairies could be seen through the oak woods, I landed, and climbing a tree, gazed in admiration on the first prairie I had ever seen. The waving grass, intermingling with a rich profusion of wild flowers, was the most beautiful sight I had ever gazed upon... Looking north I saw the whitewashed buildings of Fort Dearborn sparkling in the sunshine."<sup>1/</sup>

*Texas*

From Fort Dearborn the boats were taken up the South Branch River, through Mud Lake into the Des Plaines River. Only in wet seasons was there enough water to "float an empty boat." The mud was deep and tall grass and wild rice, strong and dense, grew taller than a man. The boats were unloaded and drawn on wooden rollers over

1. Henry E. Hamilton, ed., Incidents in the Life of Guy Saltonstall Hubbard, 10, 24, 28-32.

the hard clay bottom. When the lake was reached, the mud was thick and deep; but water, rare. "Forked tree branches were tied upon the ends of the boat poles, and these afforded a bearing on the tussocks of grass and roots, which enabled the men in the boat to push to some purpose. Four men only remained in a boat and pushed with these poles, while six or eight others waded in the mud alongside, and by united efforts, constantly jerking it along." Those wading frequently sank to their waists and clung to the boat to prevent the mud going over their heads. In the evening their bodies were covered with blood suckers which were removed with tobacco. Myriads of mosquitoes made sleep impossible. The waders' limbs were "swollen and enflamed" for two or three days. The goods had to be carried through on the men's backs. Three days were necessary to pass all the boats through Mud Lake.<sup>1/</sup>

Down the Des Plaines River to Isle la Cache low water again necessitated unloading and reloading. Most of the distance of the Illinois River, the goods were again carried and the boats pulled over the shallow

1. Hamilton, Hubbard, 39, 104.

places. After Starved Rock was reached, the navigation was easy.<sup>1/</sup>

Another, though less graphic account of the Chicago portage is given by John Tanner,<sup>2/</sup> who, with his children, arrived at Chicago, sick with fever, without provisions, and in great distress. His sufferings were relieved by a Frenchman, who had just returned from taking boats across the portage. Although his horses were worn out, he agreed to take Tanner and his canoe one half the whole distance, or sixty miles, if the horses would hold out. The Frenchman also kindly gave Tanner, who was too weak to go in the canoe, a young horse to ride. The Frenchman soon became ill, and Tanner tried to go on alone. For three miles he pushed the canoe by walking in the water; but becoming exhausted, he bargained with an Indian for a blanket and a pair of leggins, to take the children and baggage overland to the mouth of the Yellow Ochre River (the Vermillion) where there would be enough water for the canoe.<sup>3/</sup>

1. Hamilton, Hubbard, 41.
2. John Tanner, when a small child, was captured by the Indians. In mature life, unable to speak English, he regained his freedom and returned to southern Illinois.
3. Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner, 257.

Hubbard, after returning from leave of absence to go to St. Louis to see his father and brother - who had come from Detroit, intending to settle in the West - was encamped for the winter about sixty miles above Peoria. Hubbard had been assigned to keep the accounts for Beebeau, a fat and sickly man, who could neither read nor write but kept his record by a system of hieroglyphics. During the winter season, Hubbard made two trips into the interior, one to Rock River, another to the Wabash, each time carrying a pack of fifty pounds, while the others carried eighty. They returned successful with their furs and peltries packed on hired ponies. Through training and necessity, Hubbard learned to walk sixty miles from daylight to dark.<sup>1/</sup>

During the winter Hubbard lived in a log cabin, keeping track of the days by notches in a stick. The cabin was built with the end logs perpendicular and the side logs horizontal, held by stakes, bark, and wooden pins. The cracks were daubed with cement made of clay and ashes. The split-log roof was sodded with grass.

1. Hamilton, Hubbard, 44, 58.

A fireplace was constructed of the same cement, smoothed with the hands, about poles and saplings. The floor and door were made of puncheons (split logs with the faces smoothed). Intruders were kept out by simply closing the door and pulling in the latch string. The window was about eighteen by twenty or thirty inches, with a paper, oiled with bear or coon grease, pasted over a rough sash to serve for glass. The house when completed was warm and comfortable. The beds were made berth-like of puncheons; the mattress - coarse grass covered with a buck skin or an Indian mat - was raised at the head to form a pillow. Each man had one blanket. The furniture consisted of a puncheon-top, three legged table and similar stools. An ax, a two inch auger, a scalp knife, a six inch crooked knife, and a tomahawk comprised the tools. The kitchen utensils were equally limited: a frying pan, a couple of tin pots, one very large wooden Indian bowl, and several smaller ones. There were no table knives or forks but several spoons holding from one gill to one pint. Fire wood was plentiful. The camp kettle chain hung from the ceiling on a hook made

from a tree branch; and cords were suspended on which to hang game. The duty of one man was to keep the meat rapidly whirling until it was cooked, ready to serve in the large wooden bowl from which each man helped himself with his sheath knife and fingers. Turkey meat served for bread; and honey, which was usually plentiful, for sweets. Corn soup was considered a luxury. When there were bake pans or a skillet, and flour, the much relished "avingnols" (meat pies) were made. Lotus seed served for coffee; salt and pepper, being limited, were used only on special occasions. Game of all kinds abounded although prairie chicken and quail were not considered edible. The gift of a pound of green tea and a hundred pound bag of flour offered the opportunity to make a feast of pancakes with honey and tea for Sunday breakfast.<sup>1/</sup>

*English*

For clothing Hubbard wore a buckskin hunting shirt or blue capote belted in at the waist with a sash or buckskin belt, in which were carried a knife and sheath, a tomahawk, and a tobacco pouch. The pouch was

1. Hamilton, Hubbard, 51-53, 59.

usually made of otter or mink skin and served also to protect the flint, steel, and punk - used when dry wood was not obtainable - carried for building fires. A calico shirt, breech-cloth, buckskin leggins, nieps, (square pieces of blanket folded over the feet in place of stockings), and moccasins completed the wardrobe. The hair was worn long. In winter a red knit cap would sometimes be used. A blanket was carried and, if necessary, wrapped about the body in Indian fashion.<sup>1/</sup>

During idle time the men would chat, play tricks, or make oars and paddles to replace broken ones, in order to be ready for the return of the brigade to Mackinac in the spring. Hubbard amused himself by hunting and trapping with his half breed comrade, the son of one of the men and his Indian wife.<sup>2/</sup>

Deschamps returned March 20, 1819, bringing with him flour and tobacco. Joyous conversation was kept up until late at night. The men "feasted and smoked and talked and laughed, and a happier party cannot well be imagined." On March 22, the boats were loaded and

1. Hamilton, Hubbard, 55.

2. Ibid., 49, 54.



started back toward Mackinac with Deschamps' fine voice leading the boat song. The progress to Cache Island was slow, only six to ten miles a day, because the river was high, the current swift, the rapids strong, and the boats heavily laden. Hoisting sail, the brigade passed through to Chicago "regardless of the channel." After spending about a week at Chicago, repairing the boats, the traders started out on Lake Michigan, arriving at Mackinac in the middle of May, the first of all the brigades to return.<sup>1/</sup>

The next two winter seasons Hubbard spent in the Michigan region. The summers were passed laboriously sorting and grading furs in the packing house at Mackinac. In the winter of 1821-1822, he was again in Illinois at a "new post further down the river," located "at the mouth of Crooked Creek." Hubbard unfortunately became very sick with the ague. Two Frenchmen were prevailed upon to take him to St. Louis; but before they had traveled far, believing Hubbard to be dead, they left him at a settlers' cabin, where he was kindly cared

1. Hamilton, Hubbard, 59, 67.

for and restored to health. After about ten days he started back, on foot, to his post, thirty-five miles away, arriving in two days. This same season Hubbard entertained John Wood and Tilden - whom Hubbard had good reasons to believe had lost their way - with the best food that the camp afforded.<sup>1/</sup> It is significant that during his first season in Illinois Hubbard makes no mention of white visitors or near by settlers. Even in the winter of 1821-1822 the settler's cabin where he was taken care of in his illness was thirty-five miles away. Apparently there were none nearer. As for Hubbard's first guests, they had evidently come so far into the wilderness that they were riding in a circle in their vain attempt to find their way out.

Now, scarcely one hundred years later, the sufferings, hardships, and endurance of Hubbard and Tanner *Tanner* are hardly conceivable. In place of the heroic and painful portage, we have the comfort of the unlimited transportation facilities of Chicago. But it was the voyageur who pushed into the unknown regions and brought back en-

1. Hamilton, Hubbard, 104, 105, 108-110.

couraging reports. Over the trader's trail were to come backwoodsmen — the hunter-farmer pioneers; who, when even sparse settlement was formed, often moved on to another frontier.<sup>1/</sup>

1. G. Flower, History, 66.

IV. The Farmer.

The wealth of material which resulted from the friendliness and animosity toward the English settlement, makes the region a good one to study for conditions both of the earliest settlers and those who came later and usually stayed longer. On the other hand, consideration must be given the fact that the settlement was in some ways unique because a large number of the emigrants were Englishmen of means and education. Among the many accounts of the settlement on and about English Prairie are those of Morris Birkbeck, the founder of Wanborough; Richard Flower and his son George, the founders of Albion; Elias Pym Fordham, who surveyed the region; and John Woods, who settled near Wanborough on Birk's Prairie. In general, these writers uphold the settlement; the elder Flower sometimes writing in too roseate hues. As to the adverse critics, none are more pessimistic than William Faux who thought that even the flowers had no odor and the birds, no songs.<sup>1/</sup> Adlard Welby, an English gentleman who traveled in his own carriage with a valet, was hardly

1. Faux, in Early Western Travels, 11:254.

less opposed to the Americans and their customs; but his expression has more gentlemanly reserve.

The pioneer's hardships and trials were far from over when he had reached the land of his choice. George Flower's first experiences in the prairie, which was to become his home, were hardly encouraging. Late in the afternoon of a warm summer day, the perspiration rolling down his face, he rode onto the prairie of his search and expectation. Night and no cabin in sight made sleeping in the open necessary. When morning came, the horses, trustingly left untied during the night, had run away. Flower, knowing that a backwoodsman lived near, started out in hopes of finding his cabin. After long hours of weary search he chanced upon a small cornfield with a path running between two rows. He hesitated to make his first appearance in dishabille, for the brambles, brush, dew, and heat had played havoc with the cloth suit and cravat of the Englishman. But necessity overcame the reluctance. To Flower's astonishment he found Mr. Birk, the backwoodsman, calm and self-possessed, seated naked

before his cabin door fanning himself with the branch of a tree, "cooling off" from a trip to the mill at Princeton, Indiana. As a future settler, Flower was not particularly welcome by the backwoodsman; but hospitality, at least, was extended by supper consisting of "two or three slices from a half-smoked haunch, (and) a few pomes of coarse corn bread."

Birk's cabin was about fourteen feet long, twelve feet wide, and only seven feet high, with the earth for a floor. In one corner stood a four-post bedstead, the posts of which, having been driven into the ground by an ax, "were sprouting with buds, branches, and leaves." For kitchen implements, the rim of an old wire sieve furnished with a piece of deerskin punched with holes, served as a corn meal sifter. A skillet and a coffee pot completed the utensils for a family of seven. A three legged stool and a "rickety clap-board" comprised the furniture. An ax stood against the door; a rifle, against the wall.

Mrs. Birk was a square built, squat woman of

about thirty. Her skin was sallow and "smoke-dried;" her legs and feet bare. Two long braids of dark hair appeared to be her only pride. The sons were dressed in buckskin; the wife and three daughters, in flimsy calico "sufficiently soiled and not without rents."

Harris, Birk's neighbor, lived under similar circumstances, with the added luxury of a fiddle, with two strings, which he "kept in scream until a late hour." For the convenience of his guest, Mr. Flower, Birk pulled down a hog skin from a joist for a bed. The whole family slept in the one four-post bed. The bugs decided Flower to sleep out of doors.<sup>1/</sup>

In spite of the many hardships encountered by Flower and his party, the prairie was chosen to be the site for a permanent English settlement. Birkbeck was to remain to attend to the purchase of land while Flower returned to England to increase their funds. According to Flower, Morris Birkbeck finally received fifty-five thousand dollars from the sale of his farm goods in England. Richard Flower, a retired brewer, received twenty-

1. G. Flower, History, 67-71.

three thousand pounds from the sale of his Marden estate.<sup>1/</sup>  
It is evident that both families had considerable money.

Upon his second arrival in Illinois, Flower found that Birkbeck had attended to the purchase of the land. Flower also found that a lasting quarrel had grown up between him and Mr. Birkbeck. George Flower had succeeded in winning and marrying Miss Andrews, who was in Birkbeck's care, traveling with his daughters when they all came to the United States for the first time. It is thought that Birkbeck wished to marry Miss Andrews himself.<sup>2/</sup> As a result of this quarrel, Flower's homecoming was rather inhospitable. He found his rude cabin with a puncheon floor, two doorways cut through, but neither doors nor windows. Water was a quarter of a mile away. Reclining on the floor, the Flower family ate their first meal of crackers, cheese, and tea - with only one or two cups - taken from the provision wagon. Fever and sickness overcame all of them excepting young Mrs. Flower who cared for the others, undergoing many hardships and sorrowing over the death of her baby daughter.<sup>3/</sup>

1. G. Flower, History, 99, 104.

2. Ibid., 109. See also Faux, in Early Western Travels, 11:271 ff. (Flower's story); 275 ff. (Birkbeck's story).

3. G. Flower, History, 110 ff.



The experience of the general emigrant to English Prairie could not have been much worse than that of Flower and his family. The emigrant was temporarily lodged in small log cabins, called the barracks, each cabin having two doors and a window. The first ship-load brought eighty-eight settlers, of whom three were women. All but the women were housed in the barracks and put upon a diet of corn bread and salt pork. Conditions called for a great deal of work, and the circumstances were naturally not those to excite much contentment.<sup>1/</sup> "Horses are to be broken in to work together; waggons, carts, and ploughs to be made, or brought several days journey. Even when they are ordered, there is no certainty of the order being executed: for the Smith has no iron; you buy it, then he has no coal. The Wheelwright is gone a hunting, or is drunk, or attending a lawsuit. The Sadler and collar maker will sell the articles you have ordered to the first comer.- You are sure of nothing; not even when you go for it yourself; except at Harmonie<sup>2/</sup> where business is done, when they have

1. G. Flower, History, 99.

2. New Harmony, Indiana, was a communistic village under the leadership of Rev. Rapp. His followers had been successful in Pennsylvania, selling out at a handsome profit and removing to Indiana. Here, again, thrift made their settlement an industrial and agricultural center. Robert Owen later bought the townsite, but his venture was unsuccessful.

time, with great regularity."<sup>1/</sup> Provisions had to be carried on horses or in wagons twelve miles from the river. At night the provisions had to be covered and guarded in camp against boatmen and hunters. In the first years water was scarce; to begin with, the people stood for two hours in the evening waiting their turn to dip a bucket full. In January, 1820, a drought caused the people of Albion to murmur; the town wells could not meet the demand. Water from George Flower's well was carted into town and sold for twenty-five cents a barrel. This experience awakened the people to the necessity of making wells. The well in Wanborough served as a refrigerator into which meat was lowered in buckets. The flies were thereby kept off, and the result was "better than any safe in this hot climate."<sup>2/</sup> Under these trying conditions it is not to be wondered at that many were discontented, and some left. But the strong-willed remained, and the community grew in numbers.<sup>3/</sup>

1. Fordham, Narrative, 212.
2. On the scarcity of water see G. Flower, History, 131; R. Flower, in Early Western Travels, 10:121; Woods, in ibid., 272.
3. Fordham, Narrative, 212, June 20, 1818, the population is given as "between 40 and 50 persons, besides American settlers;" R. Flower, in Early Western Travels, 10:104, August 16, 1819, gives sixty English families, - four hundred souls - and 150 American families, - seven hundred souls - living in a region seventeen miles wide and from four to six miles from north to south.

Wanborough had sprung up in August, 1818; and Albion, in October of the same year.<sup>1/</sup> Soon after Albion was founded, a double cabin designed for a tavern was built; and another, for a blacksmith shop. As a result, any man could shoe his horse, and get drunk in Albion, especially get drunk. Log cabins sixteen by eighteen feet were contracted for, piece work, at twenty-five to thirty dollars; double cabins, forty to fifty dollars. During the day the men usually worked hard, but in the evening they were quick to gather about the whisky barrel. "Mirth and jollity, threats, loud oaths, imprecations" with rough and tumble fights continued until exhaustion brought quiet. A brick kiln and a market with a stone foundation were next undertaken. In 1819 "log houses, those cabins unplesant to the cleanly habits of Englishmen; the receptacles of the insect tribe are no longer erected." The first brick was laid in the foundation of an inn; a market thirty by sixty feet was nearly completed, and a place of worship begun.<sup>2/</sup>

1. For description of Albion see G. Flower, History, 120, 128-130, 133; R. Flower, in Early Western Travels, 10:107; B. Flower, in ibid., 153; Woods, in ibid., 272.
2. R. Flower, in Early Western Travels, 10:107. Nevertheless, log cabins undoubtedly continued to be built and occupied as homes.

The early communities were endangered by prairie fires, often started only to encircle game but also resulting in injury to the woods and sometimes to the farms. In 1820 the fires were particularly bad. For three days the sun could scarcely be seen at noon, the smoke greatly annoying weak eyes. It was on November 21, 1819, when a recent fire had left a "wide, rusty black appearance" that William Faux came to English Prairie. Before this time he had recorded with relish all unfavorable information on the settlement. It must have been with regret that he gave the opinion of a traveling companion, saying that the Flowers "are very happy and content in their log cabin where balls and good society are often found."<sup>1/</sup> But upon reaching Albion, if not on the hospitable Flower, at least on his neighbors and on the settlement, Faux used his uncensored English. At the tavern he "supped and went to bed in a hog-stye of a room, containing four filthy beds and eight mean persons; the sheets stinking and dirty; the scarcity of water is, I suppose, the cause. The beds lie on boards, not cords, and are so hard that I

1. Faux, in Early Western Travels, 11:177.

could not sleep...all filth, no comfort, and yet this is an English tavern; no whiskey, no milk, and vile tea, in this land of prairies." The village, he declared, contained only one house, and about a dozen log cabins full of "degenerating English mechanics, too idle to work, and above everything but eating, drinking, brawling, and fighting." Into the streets and paths, almost impassable because of roots and stumps, the people threw out "wash and dirty water." Yet there was a good market house combined with a library, which served also for a place of worship. Leaving the village and driving about Flower's "park-like domain," Faux called at an adjoining farm "rented by a dirty, naked-legged French family." He also called at the Hunts. He found them living in "a little one room miserable log-cabin, doing all the labour of the house and land themselves, and without any female... half naked and in rags, (they were) busily greasing a cart ... They appeared only as labourers, but, on being introduced to them by Mr. Flower, their best friend, good sense and breeding shone through their forlorn

situation. We entered the cabin, and took some boiled beef on a board, and sat on their bed and boxes, having no chairs, stools, or tables, and only the mean clothes they then wore; a fire having recently destroyed their first cabin with all its contents." Mr. Hunt, who was deaf and dumb, conversed with ease and rapidity in writing.<sup>1/</sup>

Upon George Flower, Faux quite outdoes himself in praise. Flower's cabin with its six or seven rooms was to be considered as worthy of serving as a model for other builders. Flower himself he found "polite, mild, gentle, and unassuming;" but the trying scenes made him rather "silent and sombre." Faux was evidently much attracted by Mrs. Flower, for of her he writes, "His lady is the happiest and most elegant female I have seen ... gay, graceful, modest, hearty, anticipating kindness (she) makes the guest feel at home and loth to leave." Faux, in fact, was almost entirely delighted with the conditions which he found in Flower's home.<sup>2/</sup>

1. Faux, in Early Western Travels, 11:253, 256.

2. Ibid., 254.

The most palatial residence in the region was, undoubtedly, Park House, constructed for Richard Flower.<sup>1/</sup> The building was fifty by forty feet, with four rooms downstairs and four upstairs, connected by hall passages. All the rooms were papered or plastered. The south front had a well floored porch. There was a brick chimney and a stone hearth. The large windows had blinds. A stone wing constituted the kitchen; and a brick wing, the office. A well, cellar, stable, cow house, and "every other convenience of that sort was appended." A handsome garden was surrounded by a hawthorne hedge; thirty acres had been cleared of underbrush and seeded. It is no wonder that Birk and his wife paid the Flower home a visit out of curiosity.<sup>2/</sup>

Adlard Welby was also among the recipients of the Flowers' hospitality. But before arriving at English Prairie, he stopped at Palmyra, Illinois. After having been mercilessly jolted over a stump road until his temper had been tried beyond control, he became the guest of his guide, whose home Welby was pleased to call

1. For description of Park House, finished before January 18, 1820, see G. Flower, History, 132; R. Flower, in Early Western Travels, 10:126; Adlard Welby, A Visit to North America, in ibid., 12:259.

2. R. Flower, in Early Western Travels, 10:128.

"Marvel Hall." Although his horses had to be contented with an unroofed log structure - assured to be quite safe - Welby was conducted into an almost regally furnished house, with a fine living room, which boasted a marble fireplace and candelabra.<sup>1/</sup> Welby's next lodging house was in Albion, where interested talkers, noisy with whisky, crowded so curiously about the Englishman's coach that he feared for the safety of his baggage. The tavern fare was not conducive to greater pleasantness. The butter was rancid, the small portion of bread, sour; but with the addition of fried beef and poor coffee, sweetened with wild honey, he had to be satisfied. Eggs, milk, sugar, and salt were not obtainable. The scarcity of water necessitated his horses' going thirsty; the community's cattle straying in search of water; and, moreover, from Welby's observation, evidently prevented the settlers from either washing their clothes or themselves. In the tavern the acridly disposed gentleman spent the night. Birkbeck is said to have refused the English traveler's request for water. Be that as it

1. Welby, in Early Western Travels, 12:245.



may, Flower supplied the horses with water and also a pitcher full for Welby's breakfast. Being "much disgusted at the deplorable state of ill health, anxious looks, despair and discontent, depicted in so many faces around," Welby gladly accepted Flower's invitation to call. Upon doing so, he found the comforts that a man of means could attract. His visit was made agreeable by an "elegant repast" and "social converse" from which he "grieved to depart." As to Albion, Welby commented upon the neatness of a market and place of worship under the same roof. Perhaps the gift of water and the hospitality had some influence upon Welby, causing him to favor Flower rather than Birkbeck; for Welby thought that Flower had done more for his community. A roomy boarding house and tavern were half up; the store, pretty well supplied, was run by a couple "who lately lived in a dashing style in London ... the lady brought over her white satin shoes and gay dresses, rich carpets, and everything but what in such a place she would require." The Londoners were accommodating themselves to "hand

out plums, sugar, whisky, ec., with tolerable grace." The village had a wheelwright and many artisans; the latter, however, lacked materials. But Welby was convinced that the settlement would be supplied with the comforts of life before his book was published, although he thought that supplies could be bought cheaper than they could be raised.<sup>1/</sup>

On the whole, conditions in Wanborough were much the same as in Albion. Woods found that Wanborough contained "25 cabins, a tavern, a store or two, and several lodging houses; and several carpenters, bricklayers, brick-makers, smiths, wheelwrights, and sawyers; also a taylor and butcher."<sup>2/</sup> A horse or oxmill was building, and a malt house planned. Cabins, with five acre lots, sold or rented to emigrants, could not be built fast enough. Birkbeck's object was to settle his servants about him; and while they earned enough money to purchase their land, they would be cultivating and thereby improving his. Birkbeck's house was "capacious and convenient, furnished with winter and summer apartments,

1. Welby, in Early Western Travels, 12:249-252, 257, 259.

2. Woods, in ibid., 10:271. "It [Albion] has about 20 cabins, a place of worship, a market-house, two taverns, two stores, a surgeon, several carpenters, brick-makers, bricklayers, wheelwrights, smiths, sawyers, and a shoe-maker." Ibid., 272. For other accounts of Wanborough, see Fordham, Narrative, 212; G. Flower, History, 100.

piazas, and balconies, and a fine library, to which you ascend by an outward gallery. Every comfort is found in this abode of the emperor of the prairies, as he is here called."<sup>1/</sup>

Faux, after leaving Albion, also made an inspection of the Wanborough region. In his opinion, the industry of individual settlers had done more here than in Albion, where all improvement had been made by Flower himself. The humble mechanics of Wanborough lived in log houses, each with a cleared enclosure of a few acres; the farmers had quarter sections. At the tavern Faux met the young Birkbecks and accepted an invitation to return home with them, where he was introduced to the elder Birkbeck, "dressed in the common shooting jacket," just having returned from hunting. Before this first actual meeting with Birkbeck, Faux delighted in recording the opinions of others upon him and the settlement. Birkbeck is described as "dressed up ... in a little mean chip hat, and coarse domestic clothes from Harmony, living in a little log-house, smoking segars, and drinking bad whiskey."

1. Faux, in Early Western Travels, 11:264. For descriptions of Birkbeck's house see also Woods, in ibid., 10:272; Welby, in ibid., 11:253.

All the people in Vincennes and all the people whom Faux had met before, "whether they have or have not visited Birkbeck, think very meanly of both him and his settlement." He is "hearty and sociable" to those who know him, but "careless and improvident, like the rest of his literary fraternity." Now that Faux was graciously received by Birkbeck, (who thought that lack of hospitality would bring the traveler's abuse upon both him and his settlement) the guest could only say that he found his host "enviously happy in the bosom of his family, which consists of four sons and two daughters, mistresses of the lyre and lute and of many other accomplishments."<sup>1/</sup> Having heard that the young ladies had eaten rattlesnake meat, Faux inquired how they liked it. They replied that although it looked "white and delicate and tasted like chicken," the snake was of such prodigious size that the steak was tough and hardly edible. Faux appeared to relish the information. At ten o'clock the elder Birkbeck retired to his room to study "half the night" by the light of a fire built for the purpose.<sup>2/</sup>

1. Welby found the young ladies engaged in "some ornamental-needlework." Early Western Travels, 12:253.

2. Faux, in Early Western Travels, 11:192, 211, 238, 261.

After having slept and breakfasted at the Birkbeck home, Faux went upon a tour of the neighborhood. First he called upon Joseph Hanks, a former banker of Dublin, whose young sons had been dandies. Here the father was a storekeeper and the sons, "cooks, housemaids, carpenters, and drudges for all work." With Dr. Pugsley, the one physician of English Prairie, Faux dined, finding "elegance and comfort, but no servant." When conditions were pleasant, Faux' literary abilities were not advantageously displayed. Conditions such as he found at the Cowlings', where he called later, produced detailed description. He believed the Cowlings to be "fast barbarizing, in a most miserable leg-cabin, not mudded, having only one room, no furniture of any kind, save a miserable, filthy, ragged bed for himself and his brother, who is lamed, and prostrated on the floor, by a plough-share, and who, though unable to move, yet refuses a doctor. Both were more filthy, stinking, ragged and repelling than any English stroller or beggar ever seen; garments rotting off, linen unwashed, face unshaven and unwashed, for, I should think a month. Yet Mr. Cowling is a sensi-

ble, shrewd man, quite a philosopher." His brothers and sisters were expected to join him in this "miserable abode." Instead of digging a well, they carried water five miles. After his call upon the Cowlings, Faux spent the night with Woods, who was settled upon four hundred acres of good land. "An excellent, cleanly supper, good whiskey, segars," and a friendly welcome were extended. In spite of the hospitality, Faux impartially remarked that the room had four beds in it - for nine people- on a dirt floor; and the chimney poured smoke on them. Woods' pretty English niece kept house, Mrs. Woods having died on the journey down the Ohio River. Near by, Faux visited Mr. Bentley and his wife from London; both were cheerful, healthy and happy. In London he had had the gout; and she "the delicate blue devils." But in Illinois, all kinds of drudgery and plowing had cured them both. Faux also found two gay, young London gentlemen, who shifted for themselves with comfort, cleanliness, and satisfaction, although they had never seen a plow before.<sup>1/</sup> Faux saw much that was open to condemnation, upon which he expressed himself quite frankly; but he also saw some pioneers

1. Faux, in Early Western Travels, 11:247, 268.

whose courage in grappling with new conditions pointed forward to ultimate success.

Throughout English Prairie, buildings of all sorts were usually made of logs. The length, width, and height might differ; but a one story, oblong structure of round or hewn logs was the general type. The floor was made of puncheons laid on a few pieces of timber. Ordinarily, the chimney was walled up several feet on the inside, the stones being laid in loam or clay instead of in mortar. The walls were plastered on the inside, sometimes on the outside, to the top of the chimney. The hearth was made of stone or clay. Doors were made of cleft boards nailed or pegged on ledges with wooden hinges. The windows, with a glass of about eight by ten inches, were always sash, sometimes opening on hinges, or sliding backward and forward, being thereby easily removed. Occasionally, the only window was in the door. The front of the cabin often had a cleft board porch. Cabins were frequently made double, ten or twenty feet apart, with a roof over the space between for comfort in hot weather. The best cabins with sawed boards for

ceiling, floor, and doors, cost about \$250 - sawing was expensive. Many of the cabins belonging to the Americans had neither ceiling nor windows; the earth sometimes served as a floor; and the sides were open without any mud plastering. Frequently boxes were built on the cabins or on poles for the black martins. Locks to doors were almost unknown. Wooden bolts were common with the English; the Americans had only a latch string - some not even that.<sup>1/</sup>

Farm buildings were not numerous. Smoke houses were common; and some farmers had log corn cribs, holding about six hundred bushels of corn on the cob, the corn being put in from the top. Cow and pig pens, poultry houses, cart and "waggon lodges" were scarce. Pigs were shut up for fattening, by a rail fence, sometimes with one corner covered over; but were more commonly left to the mercy of the weather, feeding in the woods upon mast. Cattle, too, were usually left abroad even in the winter. There were no storehouses or granaries except the corn cribs. Occasionally, log barns were car-

1. Woods, in Early Western Travels, 10:274, 278, 292.



ried higher for a hay loft. The American stable generally consisted of only a manger cut from a hollow tree with the ends stopped up with wood or clay.<sup>1/</sup> In the early years, the pioneers were too busy sheltering themselves and cultivating enough land to raise food for their large families to have much time for the construction of farm buildings. In English Prairie, moreover, spare time could be put to excellent advantage by the American backwoodsmen, in earning money from the less practical, but more opulent Englishmen.

Hired help of all kinds was difficult to get and consequently, expensive. Wages were such that a servant soon became independent and worked for himself.<sup>2/</sup> Farm laborers were much in demand; a good plowman would receive from ten to twelve dollars a month and board. House maids received from ten to twelve dollars a month and were "in great request," more so because many good servants were lost through marriage. Women who did not

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1. Woods, in Early Western Travels, 10:278-280.

2. "A cabin of rough logs, containing 2 rooms costs 50\$ - Ditto, smoothed by the axe 60\$. A brick house containing 4 rooms 12 feet square with shingled roof 600\$. A Kitchen detached, log built 30\$. Smoke house 20\$. Stable for<sup>4</sup> horses, with loft, 35\$. Corn house 30\$. Barn 100\$. Fencing with split-rails 25 cents per rod. Ditching in the Prairie 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ ; one rail and stakes to do, with hedge planted, perhaps 12 $\frac{1}{2}$  cents more." Fordham, Narrative, 120.

care to do kitchen work or dairy work could earn a dollar a day if good at needlework. All servants soon learned to put on airs. Migrating American service generally proved most dependable although pride and independence were always apparent. English servants complained because they were held to contracts and were not given the western wage; but increasing the wage usually brought satisfaction. The elder Mrs. Flower solved the char-woman problem by hiring help by the hour, and by seeing well to them she usually got a "day's work done in a few hours." The Flowers had the help of two servants, whom they had brought with them, and consequently were comfortable. Faux wrote: "The want of labour is so severely felt that Flower said he would pay English parishes half of the expense of getting their surplus poor here." Through the lack of servants, "respectable families from Kentucky who do not distinguish between Servant and Slave do all their domestic work, except washing, with their own hands." Others indentured negroes for ten or fifteen years. Fordham was even ready to say that he would not oppose slavery because farms could not be run

without servants, and there were "no free labourers except a few so worthless and haughty that they are useless to an English gentleman." Because needs were few, the necessity to labor was lessened; for instance, a backwoodsman could earn enough in one day to keep him for a week; if thrifty, he could save enough in two years to buy a quarter section of land. Therefore, even though labor was the only expense, it was great. Emigrants from the states who would labor were few in number; the "steady and prudent" bringing money with them to buy land of their own. The following incident shows the average workman's disposition. Richard Flower wished to cross the river by ferry, but the man refused to ask his master for the necessary extra help, saying that he had no master. After helping with the work himself, Flower deducted half of the charge, paying one dollar to the ferryman who "leered and looked humbled."<sup>1/</sup>

Because of the lack of laborers, Englishmen were handicapped in carrying on agriculture. The prairies were open for immediate cultivation without clearing, but

1. On the problem of obtaining hired help, see the following: R. Flower, in Early Western Travels, 10:103,105, 123,129; Faux, in ibid., 11:223,254,260,279; Fordham, Narrative, 124,210; G. Flower, History, 163.

the sod was tough to break . Six horses were needed for the first plowing although it could be done with one good yoke of oxen. The first plowing cost five dollars an acre; the second, three or four dollars. June 28, 1818, only a garden was under cultivation at Birkbeck's; but barns, houses, and mills for future crops were being built. In September, 1819, Woods saw hardly twenty acres under cultivation although Birkbeck had a good deal of his land fenced in. Faux said, "Great idleness prevails in the Illinois; little or no produce is yet raised;" vegetables, consequently, being both scarce and expensive. The first grain crop was sufficient for the needs, according to Richard Flower; yet Faux maintained that neither Flower nor Birkbeck sowed anything the first year that came to any use. Birkbeck had planted corn, but being unfenced, the cattle destroyed it. Of the 250 acres under cultivation in the settlement, none were on Birkbeck's or Flower's land. The latter, however, made arrangements to buy provisions. In 1820 Flower's farm was producing good beef, mutton, abundance of poultry, eggs, milk, cream, butter, and cheese; but not until

1821 was there a fine crop of wheat, artificial grasses, and corn. What little had been planted before in the region was mostly corn with wheat or pumpkins between the rows. One vine was said to have yielded a wagon load of "pompions" worth four dollars "in place." Wheat was "thrashed" on the earth and put in a cabin in the chaff, a seemingly "slovenly" method; but perhaps the result was not "gritty" wheat. The Americans grew tobacco, cotton, and flax for home use. Orchards were few and not yet bearing. Corn was for a long time the main and also the most necessary crop.<sup>1/</sup>

The prairies were naturally fine pasture land; few but Flower and Birkbeck made use of hay. In 1819 Flower had about two hundred sheep, but the flock was of indifferent and various wool quality owing to the fact that the sheep had been bought wherever they could be obtained. They were brought in at night to protect them from bears and wolves; nevertheless wolves were, at times, able to scatter the sheep and decrease the flock. The horses, of Spanish origin, were poorly kept and not fit

1. On the conditions of general agriculture, the best account will be found in Woods, in Early Western Travels, 10:260, 282, 295-298, 301, 309, 340, 349. See also R. Flower, in ibid., 102, 140; Hulme, in ibid., 50; Faux, in ibid., 11, 219, 229, 254, 256; Welby, in ibid., 12:259.

for heavy work; yet they remained more expensive than any other stock. Woods bought an eight year old for sixty dollars, but it was a bad bargain. The horse would leap any rail fence like a grey hound. Oxen and cows were plentiful, of various sorts, and generally, fairly good. With a little care and expense, horses and cattle would have improved in quality; but as it was, both were subject to many disorders, a contagious sore-mouth disease having killed some horses. The ownership of cattle could not be disputed unless the animal bore a mark registered, at a fee of twelve and a half cents, with the clerk at the county seat. In order to be able to claim roaming cattle, their ears were cut and notched "in all possible directions and forms." In January, 1820, Flower first put his cattle into a barn for the winter and had a herdsman to look after them. Just as no present day farm yard is complete without a cat and a dog, so the pioneer found cats useful, mice being plentiful. "As to dogs," Woods writes, "we have a numerous collection of every size, sort and colour, lap dogs I believe,

only excepted; and as we have no dog-tax in this country, we much miss that useful thing."<sup>1/</sup> The omission of the lap dog is noteworthy: a pampered creature had no place in pioneer communities.

Domestic manufactures were few and simple. The vicinity depended much upon New Harmony, twenty miles distant, for "flour and all other necessaries."<sup>2/</sup> On the other hand, in most of the American cabins the industrious women manufactured wool, cotton, and flax - carding, spinning, weaving, and sewing the cloth into garments. The men tanned hides and skins in a trough made from a large tree, the inside of which was hollowed out, covering the skins with small pieces of oak bark and water. Woods remarked that he had not seen any good leather of their own manufacture. He himself tried to make his wife a pair of shoes from a ground hog skin, by taking off the hair with lye and tanning the skin in a vat of oak bark.

1. For an account of the animals on the pioneer's farm, see Woods, in Early Western Travels, 10:260,281-283,286,287; R. Flower, in ibid., 100,101,122; Faux, in ibid., 11:254, 258; Welby, in ibid., 12:259.
2. "It is from this hive of industry (New Harmony) that Albion and its vicinity have drawn their supplies, and its contiguity to such neighbors has been of great advantage." R. Flower, in Early Western Travels, 10:100. See also Hulme, in ibid., 50.

Whether he was more successful than the Americans he does not say.<sup>1/</sup>

Recreation found its place in the busy life of the pioneer, often making play of work. Nothing is more characteristic of the frontier community than house-raisings, which were practised by English and Americans alike. The Americans were accustomed to make frolics out of husking corn, reaping grain, and rolling logs. In October and November, the "high day" of corn-husking frolics put the corn in the crib, the work having been helped along with plenty of whisky and concluded with a dance. The women had their picking, sewing, and quilting bees, also with whisky and dancing.<sup>2/</sup> October 2, 1819 the young men of Wanborough kept Catherine Hill Fair<sup>3/</sup> by playing cricket. During the next summer cricket became popular with the Americans because of its novelty; but Catherine Hill Fair in November, 1820, was celebrated by playing trap ball, the cricket players being at the county court in Palmyra. Bee hunts were usual in the

1. Woods, in Early Western Travels, 10:284, 289 ff.

2. Ibid., 300.

3. A large pleasure fair held near Guilford, Surrey, a region from which many of the young men had come.

4. Woods, in Early Western Travels, 10:204, 346.



fall and ordinarily brought good returns, honey selling for seventy-five cents a gallon. Two men out ten days, returning with only four gallons, were considered as having bad luck.<sup>1/</sup> Hunting was always in order, not only for recreation, but also as a means of securing food. Woods gives an interesting account of a squirrel hunt, for a trifling wager, by eight Americans. Divided into two squads of four each, they started at daylight with their rifles, each squad with an attendant to see that all was fair, to hunt until the next day at noon. The winning side killed 152; the other, 141.<sup>2/</sup> Fordham describes the first Fourth of July celebration, held in 1818. The flag was raised the night before and "waved proudly" over the young citizens assembled to celebrate with "festal games." The young men of the "more respectable class" gave a ball, to all the "damsels of the village and the vicinity," which began at three o'clock in the afternoon. A few of the girls were "really handsome," and all were well dressed and appeared happy. An attempt at English country dances was a failure (evidently, most of the girls were Americans) but reels and cotillions were

1. Woods, in Early Western Travels, 10:349, 350.

2. Ibid., 289.

successful. Supper was served out of doors at seven o'clock, and dancing continued until ten. The women met regardless of social position. "The daughter of a proud and poor Virginian stood next the heiress of the brick-layer's fortune: An English adventurer danced with the wife of a member of the legislature; the maker of the laws with the daughter of a lawless hunter: and a major of militia led out the only female servant in the inn, and who was obliged to leave the party to help, not her mistress but the tavern-keeper's wife, to set out the supper table." "Unluckily" some hunters had been treated to rum in the bar room; therefore the young men armed themselves with dirks to keep the "vulgar intruders" out. A large window was smashed, and some insults passed; but the young men being armed, no "mischief" resulted.<sup>1/</sup> Flower records a Christmas party. Thirty-two guests were present and "a more intelligent, sensible collection I have never had under my roof in my own country." Plum pudding, roast beef, mince pies, and turkeys in plenty<sup>2/</sup>

1. Fordham, Narrative, 219.

2. Woods, in Early Western Travels, 10:284, 337, gives the usual menu as follows:- "Breakfast - bacon, beef, eggs, butter, honey, bread, tea and coffee; dinner - pudding, meat or game, water; supper, the same as breakfast. Woods was reconciled to the loss of beer or cider at dinner; both, he thought, would be plentiful in the future. Wine could be had; whisky was plentiful and too much used by many. The Americans refused to eat mutton, rabbit, goose, or duck.

were a part of the festivity; while good musicians and singers among the guests furnished added entertainment. The young people danced, and "the whole party were innocently cheerful and happy during the evening."<sup>1/</sup>

Richard Flower optimistically declared that there was "nothing here like loneliness;" English and American companions were interesting and intelligent. But "for the idle, the drunkard, and the vicious, there is no chance; spirits are cheap, and a short existence is their only portion."<sup>2/</sup> Yet in spite of the opportunities for the ambitious, the young men were, at first, dissatisfied with the country because of lack of amusement and society. Comfortable lodging and good board were difficult to get; washing and the making of clothes were also problems because the men outnumbered the women four to one. In time, the greater part of the young men became reconciled to the country.<sup>3/</sup> With the travelers, the conclusions were sometimes different. When Welby had said all, he frankly concluded that the "place ... is a bad concern;" which many wished to leave but could not because they had

1. R. Flower, in Early Western Travels, 10:123. The party was given January 18, 1820.

2. Ibid., 104 (1819).

3. Woods, in ibid., 336.

spent their all to get there.<sup>1/</sup> And in a way, he, too, was right.

In the summer of 1825, Morris Birkbeck was drowned in the Fox River while returning from New Harmony.<sup>2/</sup> One of his daughters went to Australia; another, to Mexico. George Flower finally became so financially reduced that he opened a tavern in Indiana. Wanborough is no longer on the map. But English Prairie remains the home of prosperous and wealthy farmers, many of whose farms were purchased and cultivated in the pioneer period of Illinois history.<sup>3/</sup>

By 1820, a large number of people had come to English Prairie; the majority arrived as settlers, and most of them became contented and remained. The first settlers, the earliest backwoodsmen, followed in the wake of the Indian from the frontiers of Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia, through the states of Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, and Indiana, into Illinois - some of them being no more settled than the Indian himself.<sup>4/</sup> Living outside of any communities, with the sparsely set-

1. Welby, in Early Western Travels, 10:259.

2. G. Flower, History, 254-256.

3. Ibid., 143-166.

4. Woods, in Early Western Travels, 10:265,310. An example is given of a backwoodsman who had twelve children, no two born in the same house. See also G. Flower, History, 71.

tled forests behind them and the Indians and the wilderness before them, they had to learn to be self-sufficient and consequently became dexterous with the ax and sure with the gun. Their ingeniousness made the grapevine into a well rope, and gourds into bottles, ladles, pans, and funnels.<sup>1/</sup> "Man," said Fordham, "is the only growth needed here," and this need the backwoodsman supplied when it was most felt. Every log cabin swarmed with half naked children; boys of eighteen built huts, married, and raised "hogs and children at about the same expense."<sup>2/</sup> Alternately vigorous and industrious, intoxicated and idle, the more permanent settlers increased their corn patch, doubled their cabin, introduced the loom and the spinning wheel, and planted fruit trees.<sup>3/</sup> They were lax in morals, but with a few deeply impressed principles - carelessly haughty in manner, unaffected, and quick to see the ridiculous.<sup>4/</sup> They were the pioneers who made the later English settlement, with increased but still simple comforts, possible. Then indeed could the sobriety and industry of an intelligent man, with a little money, se-

1. Woods, Early Western Travels, 10:305, 317.

2. Fordham, Narrative, 120.

3. G. Flower, History, 72.

4. Fordham, Narrative, 222.

cure success in establishing a home in the "land of dirt, bad cooking and discomfort of every kind." With Fordham the pioneer could say, "I am not ... either discouraged or yet quite a hottentot. I still prefer sweet butter to grease, milk fresh from the cow to sour and rancid swill; although I like corn and hoe cakes, hominy (that is boiled corn) and mush (hasty pudding made of Indian meal) and stewed pumpkins very well. I change my shirt, when it is convenient, twice a week, and sometimes take off my clothes when I go to bed."<sup>1/</sup> Evidently, fine gentlemen, who wished to live in style, must meet with disappointment; but the sober, industrious man was able to do well and settle his family in a plain way by coming to the prairie of Illinois.<sup>2/</sup>

1. Fordham, Narrative, 204.

2. Woods, in Early Western Travels, 10:321.

### V. Prominent Villages.

Before the backwoodsmen, followed by the English and others, developed rural hamlets on the prairies in southeastern Illinois, busy communities had grown up along the rivers and in the river bottoms. Prairie settlement was retarded by the difficulty of getting water, remoteness from the facilities of river transportation, and the scarcity of wood, which was necessary both for building purposes and fuel. Some of the earlier villages, Cahokia and Kaskaskia, were the results of French exploration and settlement; others the results of an increasing agricultural population and the importance of river ports to emigrants.

The leading port of Illinois, Shawneetown, about nine miles below the mouth of the Wabash, was laid out in 1808; and year by year struggled for existence against the inundation of the Ohio River. In 1810 Schultz found five or six families adroitly making money from the salines a few miles distant. United States law forbade the operators of the saline to charge more than fifty cents a

bushel for salt. But by selling the entire product to silent partners, the salt was resold to the public for two dollars a bushel, thereby netting a handsome profit.<sup>1/</sup>

In 1812 Shawneetown's importance was increased by the establishment of a United States land office. By 1815, the village had grown to the importance of needing a court house. For its building the following taxes were laid:- on each horse, mare, mule, or ass, fifty cents; on all neat cattle above three years, ten cents; on every bond servant or slave, one dollar; on water and wind mills, houses in town, town lots, or "mansions" in the country to the value of two hundred dollars, on each one hundred dollars thereof, thirty cents; ferries on the Ohio, ten dollars; other ferries, five dollars.<sup>2/</sup> The high tax on ferries indicates that ferrying was a lucrative business. Two years later, 1817, from the clerical point of view at least, Shawneetown was a "wretchedly appearing village," with extremely bad roads, the result of recent heavy rains. An attempt to preach in the lodging house met with "decent and solemn attention." Nevertheless, the

1. Schultz, Inland Voyage, 1:199.

2. History of Gallatin, Saline ... Counties, 59.



presence in the grocery store of "a number of wild fellows, swearing and blaspheming at a most horrid rate" was quite sufficient for the Baptist minister to conclude that the report of Shawneetown's being "a most abandoned place" was justified. Although there were some "decent, clever families," none seemed "decidedly religious."<sup>1/</sup> The following year, the village had about thirty houses. The saline, operated by negro slaves, produced the main commercial product. A log bank had just been established, but evidently business was not pressing since the chief cashier had time to go logging.<sup>2/</sup> According to Harris, the village was a busy port. So many horses and passengers crossed the river by ferry that he had to spend the greater part of the morning waiting his turn. Losing patience, he took a skiff over.<sup>3/</sup>

The early newspapers, in advertisements and editorials, accurately characterize the villages in which they were printed. The Illinois Emigrant (1818-1824) was published in Shawneetown. The paper was a weekly edited by Henry Eddy, with James Hall, one of the most prominent

1. Babcock, Peck, 74-76; see also Evans in Early Western Travels, 8:291; Woods, in ibid., 10:255.

2. Fearon, Sketches of America, 258.

3. William Tell Harris, Remarks during a Tour of the United States, 54.

writers in Illinois at the time, as chief contributor.<sup>1/</sup>  
The following extracts show the region's commercial activities. John Cowin offered, in large capitals, the highest cash for any quantity of country produce. Besides butter, cheese, and vegetables, the list included "candle cotton, or soft flax, for wicks, venison hams .. hopps," and "twilled bags."<sup>2/</sup> A later number published an advertisement worthy of quoting:-

"NEW STORE

Carmi, White County, Illinois.

The subscriber has opened a choice assortment of the following Goods, which he has selected with care and attention in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, and which he will sell on reasonable terms, wholesale and retail:

Domestick & imported superfine Cloths and Cassimeres,  
Sattinets, Cassinets, and Kerseys,<sup>3/</sup>  
Pelisse<sup>4/</sup> Cloths, Lion Skins and Coatings,  
Velveteens and vestings

1. For an account of the early newspapers see Franklin W. Scott, "Newspapers and Periodicals of Illinois, 1814-1879," in Illinois State Historical Society, Collections, 6: xxviii, xxix, xxxi, 314, 314n.
2. Illinois Emigrant, Jan. 9, 1819, p.2, c.3.
3. Satinet was a kind of cloth of cotton warp and woolen filling, used chiefly for trousers; cassinette, a cloth of cotton warp, and woof of very fine wool, or wool and silk; kersey, a kind of woolen cloth, usually coarse and ribbed, used especially for hose.
4. The pelisse was a long outer garment for men or women.

Printed Calicoes,  
Furniture ditto,  
Domestick and imported Ginghams and Chambrays -  
plain and twilled,  
Bombazets,<sup>1/</sup>  
White and coloured Flannels,  
Rose and point Blankets,  
Steam-loom and domestick Shirtings,  
Sheeting Muslins and Bedticks,  
Men's and women's worsted and cotton Hose,  
Men's and women's Gloves,  
Waterloo Shawls and silk Handkerchiefs,  
Cambrick, jaconet<sup>2/</sup> and book Muslins,  
Insertions, Trimmings and Ribbons,  
Scots Threads and cotton Balls - white and coloured,  
Mantuas<sup>3/</sup> and Sevantines,  
India Muslins,  
Men's, women's and children's Boots and Shoes,  
Looking-glasses and Jap'd Trays.  
Tortoise, ivory and common Combs,  
Hand Vices,

1. Bombazet was a sort of thin woollen cloth of various colors, plain or twilled.
2. Jaconet was a thin cotton fabric, used for dresses, infants' garments, etc.
3. A mantua was a woman's cloak or mantle, a woman's loose dress.

Mill saw and handsaw Files,  
Pitt and cross-cut Saws,  
German Steel Handsaws,  
Thumb Latches, Hinges and Locks,  
Spades, Shovels, Hoes, Axes, Drying-pans, Pots,  
Tea-kettles, Dutch Ovens, Smoothing-irons, with a great  
variety of Cutlery, Cast, & Hollow Ware,  
Groceries - Hollow Glass Ware, of Bakewell's manu-  
facture - Window Glass,  
School Books and Stationary,  
English Crowley Millinton Steel,  
Juniatta Bar-iron,  
Seives and Riddles,<sup>1/</sup>  
Grind Stones of the best quality,

John Grant.

Carmi, Dec. 31, 1818.

N. B. A liberal allowance shall be made to store-  
keepers.

J. G." <sup>2/</sup>

Saddlery forms the only notable omission from this for-  
midable list. It is hardly to be wondered that Shawnee-

1. Riddle, a seive with coarse meshes.
2. Illinois Emigrant, Jan. 23, 1819, p.1, c.2.

town merchants thought counter advertisement necessary for successful competition. The following week Stanley and Ludlow advertised another New Store opened in Dr. Wilson's Inn. As an inducement "paper on several of the Banks of the State of Ohio" would be accepted in payment of goods purchased.<sup>1/</sup> The hat business formed a trade by itself:-

"New Hat Shop.

The subscriber having commenced the Hatting business four miles west of Shawneetown, takes this method to inform his friends and the publick, that he has on hand a general assortment of the first quality of

Fur and Merino Wool Hats

finished. He also intends to keep an assortment at Mr. Samuel Seaton's, in Shawneetown.

Frederic Maltby.

March 13.

N.B. Old Hats dressed & finished anew with despatch.<sup>2/</sup>  
In those days the newspapers also announced, with due professional dignity, the office of the lawyer; for example,

1. Illinois Emigrant, Jan. 30, 1819, p.3, c.4.
2. Ibid., Mch. 13, 1819, p.3, c.4.

Henry Eddy's office was given as in "the Case-Room of the Printing Establishment of the Illinois Emigrant two doors above Dr. Wilson's Tavern."<sup>1/</sup> Judging from its frequent mention, Dr. Wilson's Tavern was a well known and popular place. Many other notices also found their way into the Emigrant. The justice of the peace of White County entered the description of an "iron gray Filley" which had been recorded on his docket.<sup>2/</sup> A subscriber in the neighborhood of Shawneetown had taken up and killed five hogs for which he offered to pay the owner if he would describe and prove his mark, and pay for the advertisement.<sup>3/</sup> Liberal wages were offered to eight or ten carpenters, four or five joiners, and fifteen or twenty laborers to build a bridge over the Little Wabash River at Carmi.<sup>4/</sup> June 5, the paper apologized for its failure to appear the two preceding weeks, due to the want of paper,<sup>5/</sup> while on June 23, announcement was made that the paper was detained by low water and no newspapers for three weeks would probably be the result.<sup>6/</sup>

1. Illinois Emigrant, Jan. 9, 1819, p.1, c.2.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., Feb. 13, 1819, p.3, c.4.

4. Ibid., Apr. 24, 1819, p.2, c.2.

5. Ibid., June 5, i.e. 12, 1819, p.3, c.1.

6. Ibid., June 23, 1819, p.3, c.1

The Emigrant did not hesitate to print an editorial setting forth the advantages of Shawneetown, as the eastern opening to the state, on the mail route to Kaskaskia and St. Louis, a shipping and trading post, containing a bank, land office, many rich commercial houses, and two or three respectable taverns. The unfavorable inundations of the river were impartially noted.<sup>1/</sup> The taverns advertised their bar, table, and stables:- J. Newel assured the public "that nothing shall be wanting, on his part, to furnish his table, bar, and stable; with as good vegetables, liquors, hay, and oats, as the market can afford - furthermore, (he) will employ no domesticks except such as are faithful, and attentive to the orders of his patrons. N.B. A hint to a certain class of r\*\*\*\*\*s that have been in the habit of visiting said house:- They are requested to pass by - as the house is now kept for the purpose of entertaining the traveller and gentleman." Newel hoped "by treating his guests in a genteel manner, and keeping an orderly and quiet house to merit a share of publick patronage."<sup>2/</sup> Below the

1. Illinois Emigrant, Aug. 28, 1819, p.2, c.2.

2. Ibid., Sept. 18, 1819, p.3, c.4; p.3, c.3.

title "Please Look at This!" a "handsome reward" was offered for information which would lead to the apprehension of a peddler, Michael More, who, with two thousand dollars worth of merchandise, had not been heard of, and was thought to have "eloped with the goods."<sup>1/</sup>

James Hall forcefully upheld Shawneetown as a thriving village. He admitted that the town was annually isolated from the mainland and that in 1815 the water covered all the streets, entered the dwellings, and rose almost to the second floor. Yet he maintained that the village was less "unhealthy" than some others. The arrival of a barge manned by thirty to forty dissolute, lawless boatmen was sure to lead to a riot; but with an increased number of steamboats, necessitating smaller crews, disturbances on the river front would decrease.<sup>2/</sup> To conclude, Shawneetown was a village made and practically maintained by emigrants. The salines afforded a necessary pioneer staple; and while land lasted, the land office brought many transients. But particularly, Shawneetown was the port where a thriving business was carried on with the emigrants who here disembarked from the numerous

1. Illinois Emigrant, Sept. 18, 1819, p.3, c.4.

2. Hall, Letters from the West, 220-229; see also Woods, in Early Western Travels, 10:254-256.



river craft to proceed the rest of the way overland. Ferrying land travelers across the Ohio was also an important source of income. Aside from temporary lodging, emigrants purchased their necessary provisions and supplies at Shawneetown.

The earliest settlements in Illinois were those of the French in the fertile river bottoms, at Kaskaskia and Cahokia. While a large per cent of the population remained French, the fertility of the soil soon attracted American settlers. Kaskaskia, whose site has now been washed away by the changing river channel, was from 1815 to 1820 one of the most populous villages of the territory and state, and until 1819, the capitol. In 1817, Kaskaskia had a population of from eight hundred to a thousand, and is described as being the "only town of consequence" in the state.<sup>1/</sup> In 1818 it was a flourishing village with a good harbor, a land office, printing office, a bank, and 160 houses.<sup>2/</sup> Stock raising was an important industry.<sup>3/</sup> Small pioneer towns, like small towns today, were much alike. Kaskaskia owed much of its prominence to noted men who lived and worked there. Among

1. William Darby, Emigrant's Guide, 213.

2. Edmund Dana, Geographical Sketches of the Western Country, 143.

3. Fearon, Sketches of America, 260. See also Woods, in Early Western Travels, 10:326; David W. Lusk, Eighty Years of Illinois, appendix, 14, 16.

them was Shadrock Bond, the first governor of the state, who moved from a farm in the American Bottom to Kaskaskia in 1814. He was a man of good judgment and common sense although lacking somewhat in education. In a commodious, two story, brick house - elegant for the time - built with broad verandas in southern style; generous and jovial hospitality was extended to many.<sup>1/</sup> Here a foreign traveler, making his first visit to the United States, took tea with Governor Bond and a company of distinguished ladies, who were treated with great respect. The traveler was made welcome by a cordial handshake and agreeable kindness.<sup>2/</sup> In Kaskaskia lived Elias Kent Kane, a New York lawyer, prominent in Illinois politics, and a national senator; here, too, lived Nathaniel Pope, whose wisdom led Congress to fix the northern boundary of the state so as to include Chicago, which meant a port on the Great Lakes. In Kaskaskia, Daniel P. Cook, the son-in-law of Ninian Edwards, the first territorial governor, practised law, strove in politics, and was one of the editors of the Western Intelligencer.<sup>3/</sup> From this small

1. E. B. Washburne, ed., The Edwards Papers, 43; John Reynolds, The Pioneer History of Illinois, 88, 90, 216.
2. Ferdinand Ernst, in Illinois State Historical Society, Transactions 1903, p. 152,
3. Edwards Papers, 43, 164; Reynolds, My Own Times, 202; Woods, in: Early Western Travels, 10:322-326.

four page, four column newspaper one may read foreign news - two or three months old when it was published - the laws, the president's messages, and a little local news. The weekly cost two and a half dollars a year if paid in advance; otherwise, three dollars. In the Intelligencer, Ninian Edwards, quite evidently among the land speculators, offered 1468 acres for rent and also wished plowing done for three dollars an acre;<sup>1/</sup> a blacksmith was promised "doubtless ... liberal encouragement;"<sup>2/</sup> the tailoring of "officers' uniforms and ladies' habits" was advertised.<sup>3/</sup> Occasionally, one reads interesting notices of educational efforts. Rev. Desmoulin opened an academy at Kaskaskia;<sup>4/</sup> while Mr. Sturges advertised a school at Prairie du Rocher where writing, reading, arithmetic, "Grammer," geography, surveying, astronomy, Greek and Latin would be taught.<sup>5/</sup> Religious services were noted; mails complained about; steamboat arrivals commented upon, and general merchandise offered for sale. Notices of imprisonment for debt, of rewards

1. J. H. Burnham, "An Early Illinois Newspaper," in Illinois State Historical Society, Transactions, 1903, pp. 179, 181, 184.
2. Western Intelligencer, May 22, 1816, p.4, c.2.
3. Ibid., Oct. 28, 1819, p.2, c.4.
4. Illinois Intelligencer, Apr. 5, 1815, p.3, c.4.
5. Western Intelligencer, Sept.5, 1816, p.3, c.4. For educational notices see also ibid., Nov.27, 1816, p.3, c.1-2; Nov.6, 1817, p.3, c.3; Dec.9, 1819, p.3, c.4.

for runaway apprentices and slaves - ranging from twenty five cents to one hundred dollars<sup>1/</sup> - and of divorces were common. Long and Dunwoody were apprehended for passing spurious bank notes.<sup>2/</sup> In 1819 and 1820 the little village was at its height.<sup>3/</sup> With the removal of the capitol, the bank, and the newspaper to Vandalia, the new seat of government, Kaskaskia gradually declined until it was no more.

Edwardsville, named in honor of Ninian Edwards, was situated in the heart of a rich farming district. Like the other towns in most respects, it was above all an agricultural center of the Americans. Fearon, after mentioning Kaskaskia as the seat of government, Shawneetown with its salt trade, Cahokia as chiefly inhabited by the French, Prairie du Rocher as situated on a fine prairie, concluded, "There are also three very small places, called Bell Fontaine, L'Aigle, and Edward's Ville."<sup>4/</sup> Situated about twenty miles northeast of St. Louis, Edwardsville in 1818 had sixty or seventy houses, a bank, a jail, a courthouse, a United States land office, and a printing office, issuing weekly the Edwardsville

1. Western Intelligencer, Aug. 21, 1816, p.3, c.3.

2. Ibid., July 9, 1816, p. 3. c.1.

3. Lusk, Eighty Years of Illinois, appendix, 14.

4. Fearon, Sketches of America, 260.

Spectator.<sup>1/</sup> The village was located in a farming region<sup>2/</sup> which produced bountifully corn, wheat, hemp, flax, luscious melons, sweet potatoes, and in fact all vegetables except the Irish potato "as good as any other country." There were apple and, in some places, peach trees, grapes, wild "plumbs," cherries, and berries of all kinds; game abounded; honey was most plentiful. According to Flagg, the people's "principal business is hunting deer, horses hogs and Cattle and raising Corn." The people had come from all parts of the United States and did "the least work I believe of any people in the world." Boots and shoes were expensive; but dry goods were cheap, the merchants being more numerous than anything else. The number of lawyers was large enough "to sink the place."<sup>3/</sup> The newspapers again form an important source of information. They clearly mirror the little village, with all its handicaps, yet full of the prosperity which led to speculation and a consequent grumbling over hard times. The Spectator, the third newspaper in the state, established in 1819, was edited by Hooper Warren assisted by

1. Dana, Geographical Sketches, 143. .
2. Ernst, in Illinois State Historical Society, Transactions, 1903, p. 155.
3. Solon J. Buck, ed., "The Pioneer Letters of Gershom Flagg," in Illinois State Historical Society, Transactions, 1910, pp. 156-165.

George Churchill.<sup>1/</sup> The terms were three dollars a year payable in advance or four dollars at the end of the year. "Advertisements not exceeding a square (were) one dollar for the first insertion and fifty cents for each subsequent insertion," with one fourth off for yearly advertisements. All orders had to be accompanied by cash.<sup>2/</sup> As is usual in new communities, labor was scarce; "the highest price in cash" was offered for breaking.<sup>3/</sup> The sod was so tough that three yoke of oxen or six horses were necessary, and the steel in the plows was so soft that filing had to be done often.<sup>4/</sup> Nevertheless, editorials urged the advisability of farming because the profits on corn and wheat were much surer and safer than the profits of speculation in town lots, land, and store goods.<sup>5/</sup> A shoemaker was wanted at Carlyle where he would meet with the usually promised "liberal encouragement."<sup>6/</sup> A four by six feet map of Illinois, endorsed

1. Scott, "Newspapers and Periodicals," in Illinois State Historical Society, Collections, 6:xxviii, xxix, xxxiv, 166, 314.

2. Edwardsville Spectator, May 29, 1819, p.1, c.1.

3. Ibid., p.3, c.5.

4. Flagg, in Illinois State Historical Society, Transactions, 1910, p. 157.

5. Edwardsville Spectator, Aug. 7, 1819, p.3, c.2-3.

6. Ibid., July 3, 1819, p.3, c.4.

by the governor and other officials, was advertised for fifteen dollars, cash on delivery.<sup>1/</sup> Eastern firms evidently realized the productivity of the American Bottom: Anderson and Bell, commission merchants at Pittsburgh, advertised to transport goods consigned to them for six cents per hundred pounds; they would also make sales at two and a half per cent, note being made that they had on hand "bar iron, nails, window and hollow glass, writing and wrapping paper, etc." that would be sold low for cash.<sup>2/</sup>

The articles advertised indicate admirably what pioneer communities needed and could not make for themselves. The Spectator did not fail to record the people's pleasures, even making note of those against the law. The Fourth of July, always a favorite day for pioneer celebration, was heralded in Edwardsville, 1819, by "discharges of artillery," while "the American Flag waved triumphantly from the top of a lofty liberty pole." At noon a procession formed and marched through the main streets. After the Declaration of Independence had been read on the public square, dinner was served, followed by appropriate

1. Edwardsville Spectator, July 3, 1819, p.3, c.5.

2. Ibid., June 5, 1819, p.3, c.5.

toasts.<sup>1/</sup> More scholarly recreation was not lacking although the funds were evidently none too readily collected. "A Director" gave notice that the books ordered from Boston had arrived, urging at the same time, those whose dues were in arrears to pay up thereby entitling "themselves and families to the use of one of the best collections of books in the country."<sup>2/</sup>

Members of the Singing Society were asked to meet at the court house, Saturday evening, at six o'clock, to organize a singing school for the coming winter. Three dozen of the "most choice selection of Music Books" had recently been received by the standing committee, from Boston.<sup>3/</sup>

But unfortunately pioneer pleasures did not stop here. In a country where the prairie offered a natural track, and where Kentuckians had not failed to bring along their famous blue-grass horses, racing soon became a popular although sometimes also an unlawful pleasure.<sup>4/</sup>

A fine of five dollars was placed upon horse racing within the limits of a corporate town.<sup>5/</sup> The Spectator urged that

1. Edwardsville Spectator, July 10, 1819, p.2, c.4-5

2. Ibid., Aug. 7, 1819, p.3, c.4.

3. Ibid., Oct. 30, 1819, p.3, c.3.

4. Reynolds, My Own Times, 84; see also Ninian W. Edwards, History of Illinois, 160.

5. Edwardsville Spectator, June 26, 1819, p.3, c.4.



if a bad one, it should be repealed.<sup>1/</sup> Horse racing, cock fighting, and gambling were all subject to fines; yet to game for money was both fashionable and honorable. Cards, though especially favored by the French, were played by everyone for amusement; he who did not play cards was "scarcely fit for genteel society."<sup>2/</sup> shooting matches were geat sport with the Americans. A beef would be offered as a prize and a keg of whisky packed along to the match on horseback. Sometimes the men would take along a violin, and the day would end with a "stag dance." Old ladies, who knitted or sewed during the day, would often attend the party in order to sell fermented honey and water. Frolics of all sorts were popular, with the ever present whisky as an important adjunct. The day might close with foot racing, wrestling, jumping - all open to betting - or throwing mall, and pitching quaits.

During the period of financial depression and distress of 1819-1821, Edwardsville opened a bank, there- by increasing the amount of paper currency in the country when money was scarce. According to Reynolds, writing many years later, property had fallen in value to almost

1. Edwardsville Spectator, Aug. 14, 1819, p.3, c.3.

2. Reynolds, My Own Times, 82, 83-86; Robert W. Patterson, Early Society in Southern Illinois, 9, 18.

nothing: cows and calves sold for five dollars, wheat for thirty-five to forty cents a bushel, corn for ten cents. People were in debt and could not pay.<sup>1/</sup> More conservative and more accurate figures give cows as selling for fifteen dollars, wheat thirty-seven and a half to fifty cents; corn, twelve and a half cents to twenty cents; land values had fallen more than one half.<sup>2/</sup> The national depression reached throughout Illinois.<sup>3/</sup> As a consequence, the bank at Edwardsville had its opponents and advocates, both equally ardent. A communication signed "A Farmer" appeared in the Spectator opposing the bank because the result would be speculation, high prices - salt from three to four dollars a bushel, coffee seventy-five cents a pound - and ultimate failure, with the bank notes worthless paper, the farmers deep in debt and forced to accept very low prices for their produce.<sup>4/</sup> Ninian Edwards, in a report to the St. Louis Enquirer, reprinted in the Spectator, upheld the bank, stating that he believed that it was being run prudently and honestly, and that the public money was safe. Edwards himself for-

1. Reynolds, My Own Times, 223.
2. Flagg, in Illinois State Historical Society, Transactions, 1910, p. 167.
3. Woods, in Early Western Travels, 10:342; Edwards Papers, 155.
4. Edwardsville Spectator, Sept. 18, 1819, p.3, c.1-2.

mally resigned from the board of directors, a list of whom, with a characterization of each member<sup>1/</sup>, was published. An idea of the warmth of feeling may be gathered from the following communication published in the Spectator:-

"'The Edwardsville Bank - We have authority' for informing the public that upwards of five thousand shares in this bank have been forfeited for non-payment of the installments which have been called for.' St. Louis Enquirer, Oct. 2.

"(The above 'is wholly and entirely, purely and simply, nakedly and unconditionally, a direct, contemptable, and detestable falsehood, without even as much truth in any part of it as would make a cement for sticking any two words of it together.')

"'What authority? Name it! Name it!! Name !!!'"<sup>2/</sup>  
In spite of opposition, the bank went into operation; government money was lost; the bank became a failure; and Edwards, a large and responsible stockholder, received a lasting setback in national politics.

1. Edwardsville Spectator, Sept. 18, 1819, p.3, c.2-3
2. Ibid., Oct. 30, 1819, p.3, c.1. For further discussion see ibid., Mch. 20, 27, Apr. 17, May 1, 1819.

While paper money was tried and found wanting, the people were clamoring for better communication within the state and with the east. In 1817 the roads were yet "in a state of nature."<sup>1/</sup> Tracks were blazed on the trees; one notch indicating a foot path, two a bridle path, and three, a wagon route.<sup>2/</sup> None indicated comfort. Albion's connection with Vandalia was a path resulting from men on horseback having followed the route of previous riders—a trail non-existent in muddy stretches. Even of such traces there were only three or four in southern Illinois, the settled region.<sup>3/</sup> In the summer dry season these traces were passable enough; in wet seasons, there was too much mud and water. But in summer the flies were so bad on the horses that travel at night became necessary. A white horse would become red with blood from the stings. From June 15 to September 1, to travel in the daytime, a horse had to be covered with a blanket.<sup>4/</sup> Traveling at all times was fraught with "difficulties, danger, privations, and sufferings," over roads that were "narrow, winding horsepaths, sometimes

1. Fearon, Sketches of America, 336.

2. W. T. Harris, Tour of the United States, 54.

3. G. Flower, History, 120.

4. Flagg, in Illinois State Historical Society, Transactions, 1910, p. 158; Ernst, in ibid., 1903, p. 156.

scarcely perceptible, and frequently for miles no path at all, amid tangled brushwood, over fallen timber, rocky glens, mountainous precipices; through swamps and low grounds, overflowed or saturated with water for miles together, and consequently muddy, which the breaking up of the Winter and the continued rain gave a continued supply of; the streams some of them large and rapid, swollen to overflowing, we had to swim on our horses, carrying our saddle-bags on our shoulders."<sup>2/</sup> An attempt to navigate the inland streams usually led to discouragement and the conclusion of the trip by land. Fallen trees had to be cut away or perilously passed under, through a turbulent rapid.<sup>3/</sup> With travel so difficult, the people asked for better communication by petitioning for better and more extended mail service. In 1815, among the petitions was one for a mail route passing once a week between Vincennes and Shawneetown which should go through Princeton and New Harmony.<sup>4/</sup> Requests were made for service between Vincennes and St. Louis,

1. Rev. James Leaton, History of Methodism in Illinois, 113. Leaton quotes Rev. Scripp, Methodist minister in Illinois in 1815.
2. Fordham, Narrative, 138-140.
3. A petition of the inhabitants of Knox, Gibson, and Posey counties, Indiana, to Congress, Dec. 11, 1815, House Files, 14th Congress.

to pass, approximately, through Cahokia and Kaskaskia.<sup>1/</sup>  
The routes actually authorized for the years January 1,  
1820 to December 31, 1823, were as follows:- 1. Shawnee-  
town through Kaskaskia and Cahokia to St. Louis, 183  
miles, once a week; 2. Vincennes to St. Louis, 174 miles;  
3. Vincennes to Shawneetown, 92 miles; 4. Edwardsville  
to St. Louis, 22 miles, once a week. For every thirty  
minutes of avoidable delay the carrier was fined one dol-  
lar. Proposals to carry the mail over these routes had  
to be received at Washington before October 2, 1819, to  
receive consideration.<sup>2/</sup> The Postmaster General had also  
issued proposals for carrying mail in boats from Louis-  
ville to New Orleans; with Shawneetown and the mouth of  
the Ohio - America - the stops to be made in Illinois.<sup>3/</sup>  
An idea of this mail service can be gained from the fact  
that sixteen and a half days from New Orleans to Shawnee-  
town was considered a short passage for the steamboat  
Governor Shelby with full freight.<sup>4/</sup> The James Ross  
had gone from Louisville to New Orleans in less than five  
days, returning to Shawneetown in thirteen days and

1. Rufus Easton to the Postmaster General, Feb. 23, 1816,  
House Files, 14th Congress; petition of the inhabitants  
of St. Louis to Congress, Dec. 5, 1818, ibid., 15th Congress.
2. Edwardsville Spectator, Aug. 14, 1819, p.3, c.4-5.
3. Illinois Emigrant, Apr. 17, 1819, p.3, c.2.
4. Ibid., May 8, 1819, p.2, c.4.

eighteen hours. These trips were considered worthy of notice for their speed.<sup>1/</sup> This splendid outlook for the mail service did not mean that eastern mail would not be delayed for weeks in the season of early spring floods,<sup>2/</sup> and at times of low water, or that postmasters were not still open to rather acrid criticisms on other scores. The following gives proof that the sentiment was sometimes strong. The subscribers of the Illinois Emigrant complained that others borrowed and failed to return their papers; consequently the editor wished to remind the postmaster that he had "sacred charge" of the mail and should be answerable for every newspaper and letter called for within a reasonable time. Postmasters neglected their "POSITIVE DUTIES" when they "permit persons to throng into their offices - be present during the opening and closing of the mails - read, borrow or purloin papers which are sent there for persons who have paid for them."<sup>3/</sup> At all events, mail time was one in which great interest was shown. The rumor that a postal inspector was to be placed in Shawneetown was greeted with pleasure in Ed-

1. Illinois Emigrant, May 22, 1819, p.3, c.2.
2. Flagg, in Illinois State Historical Society, Transactions, 1910, p. 167.
3. Illinois Emigrant, Jan. 30, 1819, p.4, c.1-2.

wardsville, followed by the suggestion that he search buildings, out houses, garrets, and old flour barrels for undelivered mail, and get larger bags for their delivery if necessary.<sup>1/</sup> The Edwardsville postmaster gave notice that the mail closed at eight o'clock Saturday evening, and that failure to have mail in before then meant a delay of one week.<sup>2/</sup>

A United States compilation<sup>3/</sup> gives some very interesting figures on pioneer manufacturing. In general, flour, whisky, lumber, leather and hats formed the main products although combs, cutlery, furniture, guns and pistols, and earthenware were made in some counties. St. Clair County was most prominent in the leather trade, having three tanneries. Monroe County had a "flourishing" hat manufacture, consuming yearly raw materials - wool and fur - costing three hundred dollars. A capital of six hundred dollars was invested; the output was three hundred hats. Annual wages incurred an expense of \$160. The market value of the annual manufactures of Bond County were flour and meal, \$7,617; hats, \$1000; salt, \$1,878; of Monroe County, flour and whisky, \$20,700; leather

1. Edwardsville Spectator, Aug. 14, 1819, p.3, c.3.

2. Ibid., July 24, 1819, p.3, c.5.

3. Digest of Accounts of Manufacturing Establishments ... 1823.



and lumber, \$5,000; leather, \$4,200; whisky, \$11,200. The latter easily holds its place among the foremost manufactures. The largest establishment in the state seems worthy of particular notice. The plant with a capital investment of fifteen thousand dollars was located in Madison County, and turned out flour, whisky, and plank, with an annual market value of \$36,900, consuming in their manufacture 1,350 bushels of wheat, and 4,050 bushels of corn at a cost of \$1,687. The firm employed six men receiving a total of twelve hundred dollars in wages. The establishment could also boast of a contingent expense of eight hundred dollars. Undoubtedly, this grist and saw mill and distillery was a very important manufacturing plant at a time when only 1,007 people in the whole state were engaged in manufactures, 233 in commerce, and 12,395 in agriculture.<sup>1/</sup> In 1910, although the state was still largely agricultural, there were 18,026 manufacturing establishments with an aggregate capital of 1,548,171,000 dollars, employing 561,044 persons (salaried and wage earning) using material costing

1. United States Census for 1820.

1,160,927 dollars, and giving an output worth 1,919,277,000 dollars.<sup>1/</sup>

In the pioneer period the farms produced large crops of maize, wheat, vegetables, and fruits; stock and game thrived. Food was plentiful, usually wholesome although not fancy. They labored hard, gathering their crops without machines; the wheat was mowed with a sickle, tread out with a horse, winnowed with a sheet, and ground at a neighboring water or tread mill. Their surplus grain and pork might be shipped to New Orleans. Their clothes were of home made linsey, dyed with alum, copperas and madder; until later, when manufactured products came in from the East.<sup>2/</sup> Governor Edwards may have dressed in "fine broadcloth, white topped boots, and a gold-laced cloak," and ridden "about the country in a fine carriage, driven by a negro;"<sup>3/</sup> but the ordinary villager or farmer lived in a log house, had a few simple pleasures combined with whisky drinking, and tried to get for his children such instruction as he could, in the most elementary subjects.<sup>4/</sup> Full of energy and ambition the

1. Statesman's Year-Book, 1914, p. 475.

2. Reynolds, My Own Times, 66, 69, 89; Fearon, Sketches of America, 262; Patterson, Early Society, 6-13.

3. S. C. Clarke, "The Prairie State," Atlantic Monthly, 7:581.

4. Reynolds, My Own Times, 92-94; John Melish, Traveller's Manual, 364; Thomas Ford, History of Illinois, 38.

pioneer usually succeeded in making a good, plain living for himself and his numerous family.

A description of the social conditions in the early villages of Illinois can hardly be complete without some mention of Galena, in the lead mining region, and of Chicago, which in less than one hundred years, has grown to be the second largest city in the United States.

Between 1815 and 1820 Galena had its barest beginning.<sup>1/</sup> The Indians had early smelted lead ore in rude furnaces. At one time Captain J. Shaw, who made eight trips with a trading boat between St. Louis and Prairie du Chien and several times visited the Fever River mines, bought seventy tons and "still left much at the furnace." In 1815 about twenty Indian furnaces were operated on the present site of Galena. The product was almost entirely bought by Crench Canadian traders, who are "reported to have rated a peck of ore as worth a peck of corn." Lead, like fur and peltries, served as currency with which to buy goods. In the same year Americans were prevented by the Indians from ascending

1. The paragraph is based upon Thwaites, "Noted on the Early Lead Mining in the Fever (or Galena) River Region," in Wisconsin Historical Collections, 13:285-287; see also Moses M. Strong, "The Indian Wars of Wisconsin," in ibid., 8:250; T. D. Bonner, ed., The Life and Adventures of James P. Backworth, 21-23; House Executive Documents, 19th Congress, 2nd session, II, no. 7.

the river because the natives feared that American cupidity would dispossess them of their holdings. In 1816 Colonel George Davenport, an agent of the American Fur Company, shipped a flat boat cargo of lead which is credited as being the first avowedly shipped from the Fever River mines. Although the region had been granted to the Indians in 1816, in 1819 Captain D. G. Bates found Shull, Van Mètre, and Muir operating at Galena. As a result of the opposition of the French Canadians and Sac and Fox Indians, some American traders had been killed. Nevertheless, 1819 saw a more general movement of Americans into the lead region. In 1819 or 1820 James Johnson of Kentucky, whose operations later became extensive, began mining, carrying the lead to St. Louis. For this time we have also the account of James Beckworth who left St. Louis as a hunter with a party of about one hundred men in six or eight boats. The trip took twenty days. Beckworth remained about eighteen months, at the end of which time he left, having accumulated seven hundred dollars in cash. August 31, 1826,

453 persons were engaged in mining at Galena; while two thousand including "miners, teamsters and laborers of every kind," also farmers with their slaves, who spent their spare time mining, were estimated to be operating across the river in Missouri. The beginning at Galena, like most beginnings, was small; but where the adventurous American sees profit, he is very likely to stay and to receive the reward.

The history of Chicago is a little more imposing. After the Indian Massacre at Fort Dearborn in 1812, the army garrison was withdrawn. Until 1816, the site of Chicago was marked by the charred remains of the fort, a few deserted log cabins, and probably a couple of cabins inhabited by half breeds. In the year, July 4, government troops, under the command of Bradley, arrived to reestablish the fort. Pit sawyers and other workmen had been brought along from Detroit; logs were cut, rolled to the river, rafted, and floated down to the fort site, a constant guard being meanwhile kept against pilfering and begging Indians. Life at the fort resumed much the

same aspect as that before the massacre - the conditions of an isolated station in the wilderness. Mail was brought once or twice a month by a soldier on foot from the nearest station, Fort Wayne, a distance of 180 miles.<sup>1/</sup> The soldiers might have the pleasure of working for the government factors - stores selling goods to the Indians - erecting buildings, packing and beating furs and peltries. For these services the storekeeper was to allow " a daily reasonable allowance for fatigue duty, which has been heretofore fixed at Ten Cents and a gill of whisky per day (when this last can be had)" for the time engaged. The soldiers had little to do, and were usually cheerful in working for the small additional pay.<sup>2/</sup> In June 1816, Elizabeth Baird departed from Detroit on a lake steamer with its familiar load of pork, flour, and butter. At Chicago she was kindly received at the Kinzie home "with all its comforts." The house was a large one-storied log building with an exceptionally high attic. "The front door opened into a wide hall, that hospitably led into the kitchen, which was spacious and bright, made

1. Hamilton, Hubbard, 38; American State Papers, 15:136; Wisconsin Historical Collections, 19:384 ff.
2. Wisconsin Historical Collections, 19:389.

so by a large fireplace. Four rooms opened into the hall, two on each side; the upper story contained four rooms. "The fare of that house was all an epicure of the present day could desire, including game and fish of all sorts; and then the cooking was done by open fire-place, in its best style." The Kinzies had two sons and two daughters besides "men and women retainers (who) seemed to be many." Two of the Kinzie children, a girl of ten and a boy of eight, paddled the guest across the river in a dug out canoe to the fort which was directly opposite. Some distance from the garrison was the home of Mrs. Helm, a log cabin with tarpaulins for a floor and wall hangings. The Kinzies, Beaubien, and the garrison completed the population. The vessel, too early to get a shipment of furs, returned with a ballast of sand and gravel.<sup>1/</sup> In October 1817, Samuel Storrow, of Massachusetts, arrived at Chicago and was kindly entertained by Major Baker and the officers of the garrison who received him "as one arrived from the moon." He found the river choked up with no harbor advantages, but he thought

1. Elizabeth T. Baird, "Reminiscences of Early Days on Mackinac Island," in Wisconsin Historical Collections, 14:25-27

that a "little labor, would admit of a permanent connection between the waters of the Illinois and Michigan." He left Chicago after a visit of two days, but in that time he had seen enough to say that Chicago would be the "future place of deposit for the whole region of the Upper Lakes."<sup>1/</sup> Hubbard, too, leaves a description of Chicago, the surroundings, and the fort in 1819. He accepted an invitation to take breakfast with the Kinzies, where "the neat and well ordered table" brought back memories of his mother and home. Unable to keep back the tears of homesickness, Mrs. Kinzie took him out to wash his eyes. After receiving her comforting sympathy, he returned to the table where the others were waiting.<sup>2/</sup> He described the fort as a stockade of oak pickets, fourteen feet long, enclosing a square of about six hundred feet. There was a block house, a bastion, and a brick magazine. The whitewashed buildings and stockade presented a "neat and pleasing appearance." The officers had quarters outside the pickets in a two story building of hewn logs with a piazza extending along the entire

1. Samuel A. Storrow, "The Northwest in 1817; a Contemporary Letter," in Wisconsin Historical Collections, 6:179-184.

2. Hamilton, Hubbard, 32.



front on a line with the floor of the second story, which was reached by a stairs on the outside. On the first floor were a kitchen, a dining room, and storerooms; the second floor was one large room. The soldiers had similar quarters except that both floors were divided into rooms. In addition, there was a barn, a four acre garden, and well in the enclosure between the stockade and the outer garden wall. Down on the sandy beach were wash houses for laundry work. The settlement consisted of the garrison, the Kinzies, Ouilmette - who probably assisted John Tanner across the portage - and the storehouse of the American Fur Company.<sup>1/</sup> Social conditions were in their infancy. When a limited number of people are made entirely dependent upon one another for social intercourse, they usually make the best of it; sometimes forced association brings out the unpleasant as well as the pleasant side of one's nature. The early garrison made the most of its opportunities, small as they were. In the fall of 1816, William Cox, a discharged soldier, opened school in a small log house back of Kinzie's gar-

1. Hamilton, Hubbard, 34-36.

den; and had for his pupils, John Kinzie, his two sisters and a brother, and three or four children from the fort. In 1820, a sergeant taught school in the fort.<sup>1/</sup> In 1823 the garrison was withdrawn and with it went most of the life of Chicago, not to return until the reoccupation of the fort in 1827, as a result of the Winnebago War. Simple and homely indeed was the life of the people of early Chicago, a dauntless little station in the wilderness, receiving its provisions from Detroit by the Lakes, cattle from overland, and fortnightly mail from its sister station, Fort Wayne.

1. Andreas, History of Chicago from the earliest Period to the Present Time, I:204.

## VI. Health.

In a land where hardships, privations, and dangers are always present, sickness and death are not surprising. In a new country it is not to be marvelled at that men froze to death while crossing the prairie, or drowned while fording a river swollen by spring rains. It is also to be expected that the survival of the fittest - those most strong physically - would tend to operate in pioneer communities, where the facilities to prolong a delicate life are lacking. On the other hand, those who persisted had constitutions hardened by exposure and an active life. But even those so chosen were subject to sickness.

In the summer of 1818, when the first emigrants came to English Prairie, there were no cabins for shelter, no beef nor pork for food, and scarcely enough to live on. Naturally, a considerable amount of sickness resulted to these people who were meeting with both unaccustomed and serious exposure and malnutrition. But when the first obstacles were overcome, the prairie, on

the whole dry, was very healthful.<sup>1/</sup> Woods appears to have believed that there was more sickness among the Americans than among the English and questions whether the fact that the Americans ate only one or two meals a day had any bearing on sickness being more prevalent among them. The English ate three meals a day.

English Prairie was dry, but many settlements were made in the river bottoms subject to inundation when the rivers were high, and often in a region where undrained marshes were numerous. The heavy fogs and stagnant water were almost certain to lead to bilious disorders and intermittent fevers. Probably on no village more than on Shawneetown did the criticism fall of inundations and a sallow, sickly people.<sup>2/</sup> Even James Hall could only say that it was a less unhealthful village than some of the other settlements below the falls of the Ohio.<sup>3/</sup> Edwardsville, evidently, came in for its share of sickness although the Spectator claimed that the town was unjustly represented when called unhealthful. At the time there were only two cases of sickness and

1. R. Flower, in Early Western Travels, 10:89, 100, 121, 129; Woods, in ibid., 273, 342.
2. W. T. Harris, Remarks during a Tour, 54; Woods, in Early Western Travels, 10:254.
3. Hall, Letters from the West, 226.

there had been no deaths in the last four or five months.<sup>1/</sup> Indications are that there was a difference of opinion. Gershom Flagg declared that the principal objection to the country was its unhealthfulness in August and September. He himself had had the ague for two months and intended to move if he continued suffering. Flagg also expressed himself in strong language upon the summer heat.<sup>2/</sup> Fordham gives careful consideration to the subject of health.<sup>3/</sup> Bilious, intermittent fevers were the scourge of the country, and although seldom dangerous, they appeared to be unavoidable. Consumption, however, was almost unknown, and those who had lung trouble showed improvement when they came to Illinois. Because women were always in the house, without the protection of shoes or stockings, and constantly "roasting themselves over large fires," their general health was inferior to that of the men. On the whole, Fordham believed that the people did not live so long a life as that lived in England and that Americans aged earlier. These conditions, he believed due to several causes, but first of all to the universal

1. Edwardsville Spectator, Aug. 21, 1819, p.3, c.2.
2. Flagg, in Illinois State Historical Society, Transactions, 1910, pp. 163, 166.
3. Fordham, Narrative, 200, 201, 230, 232; see also Fearon, Sketches of America, 265.

use of spirituous liquors. Disregard of personal comfort and cleanliness, exposure to bad air,- especially near swamps - and want of good clothing, all tended to sickness and a shorter life. Perhaps health was affected by violent religious enthusiasm, and in some instances by very early marriages. Temperamentally, the pioneer was excitable and adventurous, recklessly indulging in gambling, racing, and fighting. The constant nervous stimuli made him thin, pale, and wrinkled, subject to febrile diseases; restlessly moving about the country tended to wear out his constitution comparatively early in life. Nevertheless, the pioneers were strong and hardy, or they would not have lived at all. As settlements became more permanent, with better houses, better roads, and more general comfort, health improved.

## VII. Religion and Morals.

With the trader, the farmer, the merchant, the mechanic, and the professional man came also the preacher of the gospel. The Catholics were the first denomination to establish themselves in Illinois and continued to form the main religious element in the towns of French settlement; namely, Prairie du Rocher, Cahokia, and Kaskaskia. Besides giving religious teaching, the priest was the community's advisor on all questions. After the services on Sunday, the people danced under the trees, had military drill, raised a house, or conducted a public sale at the church door. They were a naturally peaceful people, disliking quarrelsomeness. Rev. Scripps, a Methodist who preached occasionally at Kaskaskia, claimed that during his first service he was much annoyed by the French Catholics "who crowded the court-house door, with noisy disturbances, while their chapel bell, in immediate contiguity, commenced ringing, and its clattering reverberations filled our room, till Governor Edwards went out and procured silence." The Methodist service was a

novelty to the Catholics; but during the rest of the year the congregation was quiet, respectable, and attentive. Ernst, attending the Catholic church in Kaskaskia, "found a rather large congregation assembled. The young, well dressed minister edified us in the French language with such rare eloquence and such excellent pronunciation that I was greatly surprised because it was quite unexpected to me." Prairie du Rocher was under the guidance of Rev. Donatien Olivier, who was seventy five years old, and nearly blind; the priest at Cahokia was also an aged man.<sup>1/</sup> Usually the priests were educated and well able to maintain intelligent leadership over their tractable people.

The first protestant ministers in Illinois were the circuit riding Methodists and the "Regular" or "Hardshell" and the separating Baptists; but in 1815 the Presbyterians preached in St. Clair County near Shiloh. The early Methodist and Baptist ministers were largely laymen with little education, who through religious zeal felt a "call" to preach the scriptures. Many of them

1. John Shea, History of the Catholic Church in the United States, 3:385; Reynolds, My Own Times, 81, 183; Leaton, History of Methodism, 108, 109; Ernst, in Illinois State Historical Society, Transactions, 1903, p. 152.



were grossly ignorant, but their congregations were usually more so. Preaching from the scripture with a flowery, earnest enthusiasm, they appealed vividly to the emotional people. What the self sacrificing preacher, traveling from village to village, sometimes only from house to house, lacked in information, he made up in loud halooing and violent action so that "the converts in those days were born into the kingdom, and entered it shouting." At times the sermons became unlearned arguments on church doctrine; baptism, faith or justification. In 1815 Jesse Walker<sup>1/</sup> was presiding elder of the Illinois district. "To him Methodism in Illinois and Missouri is doubtless indebted more than to any other single individual; for throughout a large portion of both States he was literally its pioneer." From 1815 to 1820, the districts increased from five to seven; and the membership, from 968 to 2,421. The work was carried on by revival and camp meetings to which the preachers often journeyed many miles. For the regular Sunday services the people gathered from ten to thirty miles around.

1. When Walker became superannuated he settled twelve miles west of Chicago on the Des Plaines River. Here he opened a tavern and held religious service every morning and evening. Leaton, History of Methodism, 63.

The meetings were held outside because even the largest two room cabin could not hold the crowd. Singing of the utmost throat and lung capacity, together with violent emotions displayed by "jerks" were prominent features of the service. At other times, having traveled all day and drenched to the skin, the preacher would spend the night in a one room cabin sixteen feet square, of which space a goodly part was taken up by a loom, spinning wheel, and other apparatus. In this room he must preach to the assembled congregation until ten or twelve o'clock when a hospitable supper of corn cakes, bacon, and occasionally butter and milk would be served. But always, the minister would be given the best that the house could offer, although it might be only a piece of dried and smoked venison, and a platform bed - attached to the wall - which would probably break down with the weight of three people and must mirthfully be fixed up again. Seed corn, brought from Kentucky, and costing a dollar a bushel, would be sacrificed in order to make corn bread and to feed the horse. Better routes could sometimes have been chosen, but the circuit rider felt

that his mission lay with the most destitute because they needed him most. On one occasion Walker came upon a prairie at four o'clock in the afternoon. At five o'clock the rain turned into a storm of icy sleet. Giving free rein to the horse, he arrived at his destination with his clothes so frozen that he had to be helped in dismounting.<sup>1/</sup> Courage and energy, kept up by religious enthusiasm, were necessary attributes of the early ministers of the gospel.

In English Prairie "well intentioned farmers" preached to small assemblies in the neighborhood. In 1818 Albion opened a place of worship where the elder Flower succeeded in assembling forty or fifty persons, who were themselves able to sing well, and to whom Flower delivered a reformed Unitarian service. In connection with the church was a well supplied library which was kept open Sunday afternoons when the people had leisure to read and were "clean in their dress and persons." Flower hoped that the library would "promote moral and intellectual improvement" besides keeping the men away

1. Leaton, History of Methodism, 104, 105, 107-116, 145, 155, 167; see also Reynolds, My Own Times, 193-198; Babcock, Peck, 96, 97, 199, 200; S. R. Beggs, Early History of the West, 140, 151; History of Gallatin Saline ... Counties, 127.

from the "vices of idleness and drinking." As a result of the religious influence, shooting at marks, cricket, and fighting became less common on Sunday. Flower aimed further to have a place for education, a Sunday-school, and Bible Society. In Wanborough Birkbeck conducted services, according to the Church of England, which were well attended.<sup>1/</sup>

Religious training, on the whole, was simple, limited, and often too emotional; but theft, forgery, and perjury were rare, although fighting, the result of a feeling of independence and drinking, was not uncommon. In the older settlements where the people had a house of worship and a clergyman, Sunday was usually observed. In newer, more remote settlements, hunting, "getting up their stock," bee hunts, fishing, breaking young horses, shooting at marks, and racing were still the order of the day. Nevertheless, to an appreciable degree, earnest religious endeavor had inculcated the principles of morality and justice.<sup>2/</sup>

1. R. Flower, in Early Western Travels, 10:107, 108, 127; Woods, in ibid., 318, 319; G. Flower, History, 169, 171, 174-177.

2. Ford, History of Illinois, 39; Reynolds, My Own Times, 78-81.

### VIII. Conclusion.

From the accounts of travelers, from geographical guides, from histories, from the letters and reminiscences of the early settlers themselves, I have tried so to choose and arrange details and incidents as to form a mosaic with a pattern - the life of the pioneer with its adventures, hardships, sufferings, and more or less fulfilled ambitions. The average pioneer lived in a log cabin, and provided for his numerous family by hunting and farming. Comforts were almost unknown to the majority; pleasures few; while whisky drinking was far too common. Transportation facilities were limited and fraught with dangers. Even elementary education was hard to procure; religion was overly emotional. But the Illinois of today owes its beginning to the hardy persevering pioneers of a hundred years ago.

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Faux, William. Memorable days in America: being a journal of a tour to the United States, principally undertaken to ascertain, by positive evidence, the conditions and prospects of British emigrants, including accounts of Mr. Birkbeck's settlement in the Illinois; and intended to shew men and things as they are in America. London, 1823. Reprinted in Thwaites, Early Western Travels, vols. 11, 12. (Cleveland, 1905.)

Faux gives a detailed description of English Prairie in the fall of 1819. The style is inelegant, the arrangement without order, and the author pessimistic; but valuable information on pioneer social conditions is presented with a frankness that is not often found.

Fearon, Henry B. Sketches of America; a narrative of a journey of five thousand miles through the eastern and western states of America, contained in eight reports addressed to the thirty-nine English families by whom the author was deputed, in June 1817, to ascertain whether any and what part of the United States would be suitable for their residence, with remarks on Mr. Birkbeck's "Notes" and "Letters." London, 1818.

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Flint, James. Letters from America, containing observations on the climate ... the manners of the people ... Edinburgh: London, 1822. Reprinted in Thwaites, Early Western Travels, vol. 9. (Cleveland, 1904).

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Ford, Thomas. A history of Illinois from its commencement as a state in 1818, to 1847. Containing a full account of the Black Hawk War, the rise, progress, and fall of Mormonism, the Alton and Lovejoy riots, and other events. Edited by James Shields. Chicago and New York, 1854.

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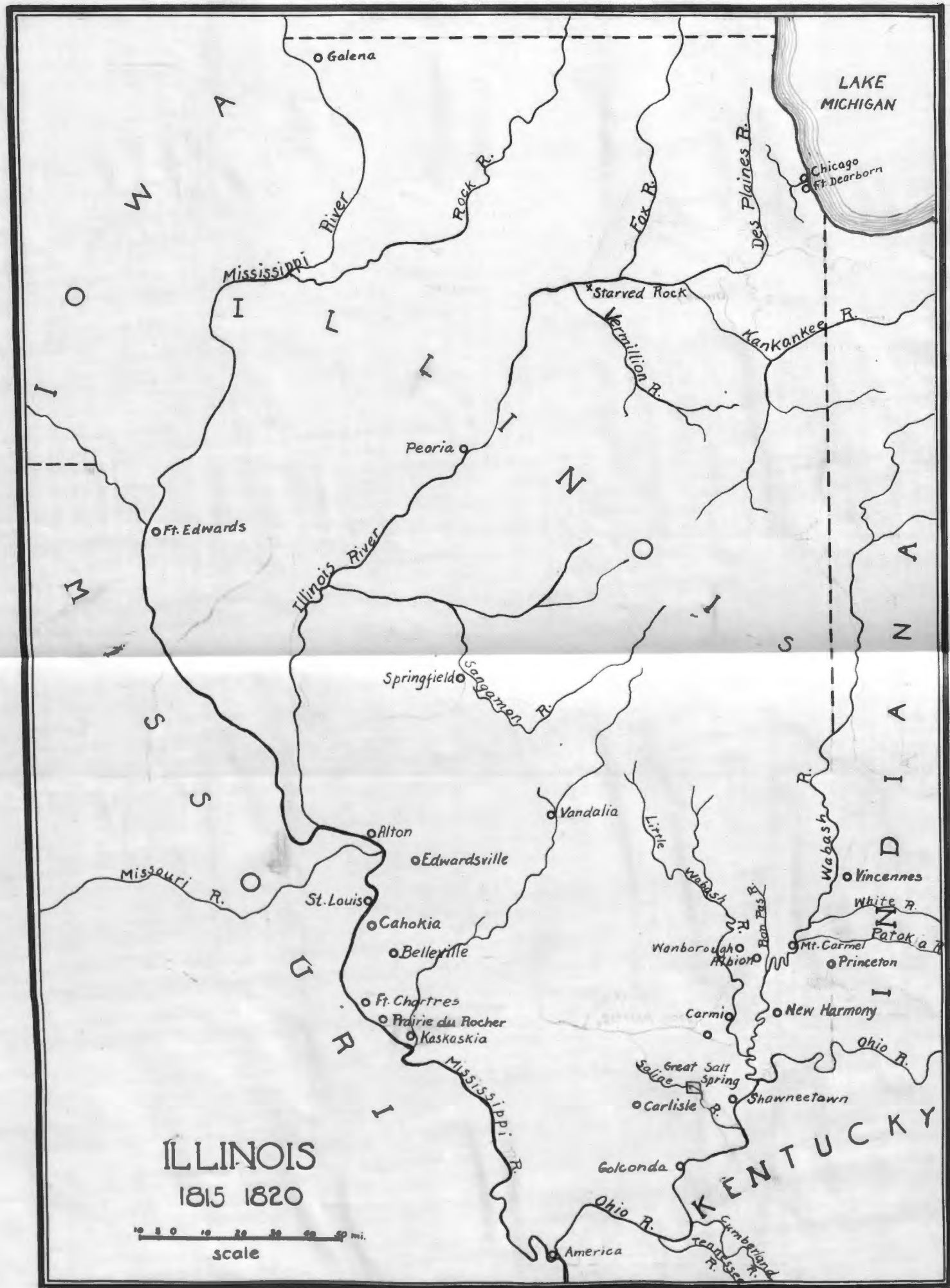
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1815 1820

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