

PAST AND PRESENT
OF THE
CITY OF QUINCY
AND
ADAMS COUNTY,
ILLINOIS

BY

HON. WILLIAM H. COLLINS

AND

MR. CICERO F. PERRY

Including the late Colonel John Tillson's History of Quincy, together
with Biographical Sketches of Many of its Leading and
Prominent Citizens and Illustrious Dead.

ILLUSTRATED



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HISTORY OF ADAMS COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

In the dawn of its history Adams county is seen in common with other portions of Illinois, thinly populated by tribes of savages. The first Europeans to visit this wilderness were the envoys of religion and commerce. More than two hundred and thirty years ago Father Marquette and Louis Joliet, the latter a Quebec-born fur trader, crossed Wisconsin by the Fox and Wisconsin rivers and descended the majestic Mississippi, passing along the borders of Adams county and it is quite probable they made a brief halt at or near where the beautiful Gem City now stands. In corroboration of this, Marquette mentions in his journal of that voyage the bluffs upon the eastern bank of the river, with a rude sketch of the same.

From that time until 1811 the history of the country which now comprises Adams county is not recorded. There is a slight rumor to the effect that one Bauvet, a French trader, located on the bluffs of Quincy, but was soon afterwards killed by the Indians. A legend comes down from the same shadowy source that there was an Indian village on the bluffs near Quincy, and that Indians made frequent camps south of this point. Evidences still remain, however, of a permanent occupation by members of the Sauk tribe near the banks of Bear creek. In 1813 Gen. Howard, with two regiments of mounted rangers from Illinois and Missouri, on an expedition to the north part of the territory, passed this point and found the remnants of some rough stone chimneys and a few wigwam poles along the shore near the bluffs. The legendary stories of the existence of this savage village of the Sauk tribe, which flourished here in the olden time, relate that its uncivilized inhabitants, on hearing of the approach of Gen. Howard and his two regiments of mounted rangers, fled from their homes and left the village to the tender mercies of the palefaces. Gen. Howard's rangers, upon their arrival at the place, burned the village and passed on.

From this time for a period of about six years neither legend, romance nor record chronicles anything of the future Adams county.

Willard Keyes, one of the pioneers of Adams county, says in his lecture before the New England Society: "We floated past the model city (Quincy) on the 10th of May, 1819, unconscious of our future destiny in its eventful history."

Justus I. Perigo, who resided on what is now the eastern portion of Fall Creek township, was doubtless the first actual settler in Adams county, as he was here in 1820. The coming of Asa Tyrer, in the summer of 1820, searching for his land, and also of John Wood in 1821, who came to find land for a man named Flynn, and his subsequent settlement, with his partner, Willard Keyes, are fully described in the history of Quincy. The immigration to the county in the next few years following was not very rapid, most of those who came settling in the Bear creek and Rock creek sections, and some few in and near Quincy. More than one-half the land comprising the military tract was land granted to the soldiers of 1812; and was not subject to entry, and as none could be purchased except what was known as the bounty lands the settlement was much retarded on that account.

As part of the Northwest Territory, in 1790 all of Illinois south of what is now Peoria was made the county of St. Clair, with Cahokia as the county seat. In 1812 the northern portion of St. Clair, above St. Louis, was created Madison county, with Edwardsville as the county seat, the county extending to the Wisconsin line. Illinois was admitted to the Union as a state April 18, 1818. On the 31st of January, 1821, all of Madison county between the Illinois and Mississippi rivers was detached and made Pike county, with Cole's Grove, now Gilead, in Calhoun county, as the county seat.

On the 14th day of September, 1824, John Wood inserted the following notice in the Edwardsville Spectator: A petition will be presented to the General Assembly of the State of Illinois, at its next session, praying for the estab-

lishment of a new county, to be formed from the county of Pike and the parts attached, the southern boundary of which shall be between towns three and four, south of the base line.

Aug. 17 (12t) (Signed) JOHN WOOD.

The notice having been published twelve times, as required by the law then in force relating to the formation of new counties, the General Assembly took prompt action in considering the matter presented in the petition of Mr. Wood, and at the following session passed a bill which was approved on the 18th of January, 1825, of which the following is a copy :

The County of Adams was formed out of the counties of Pike and Fulton and the attached parts, by an act of the Legislature, approved Jan. 18, 1825, Act: Be it enacted, that all that tract of country within the following boundaries, to-wit: beginning-at the place where the township line between townships three south and four south touches the Mississippi river, thence east on said line to the range line between ranges four and five west, thence north on said range line to the northeast corner of township two north, range five west, thence west on said township line to the Mississippi river, and thence down said river to the place of beginning, shall constitute a county, to be called the county of Adams.

The same act appointed a committee consisting of Seymore Kellog of Morgan county, Joel Wright of Montgomery county and David Dutton of Pike county to select a permanent seat of justice for the new county. They were directed to meet at the house of Ebenezer Harkness, in said county, on the first Monday of the next April or within seven days thereafter; and after taking the oath before a justice of the peace, to locate the seat of justice for the future accommodation and convenience of the people ; to proceed to fix the seat of justice. They were to forthwith make a copy of their proceedings and file the same in the office of the recorder of Pike county. The history of their action in this matter and the origin of the names of the county and the county seat are recorded elsewhere. It is sufficient to say that a majority of the committee met April 30, 1825, and officially announced that the north-west quarter of section 2, town 2 south., range 9 west of 4th principal meridian, was the county seat of Adams county, and named the designated place Quincy.

On the 2d of July, 1825, in pursuance of an order of the judge of the Circuit Court, the first election for county officers was held at the cabin of Willard Keyes; about forty votes were cast, and Levi Wells, Peter Journey and Willard Keyes were elected county commissioners.

Peter Journey, a Jerseyman by birth, resided at the lower end of the bluffs, some ten miles south of Quincy, in what is now Fall Creek town-

ship; Willard Keyes of Quincy lived at what is now the foot of Vermont street, and Levi Wells resided near what is now the village of Payson. The county had at this time an estimated population of about seventy.

The first County Court of Adams county was duly organized at the house of Willard Keyes. In Quincy on Monday, July 4, 1825. Messrs. Journey, Keyes and Wells, all being present, and Earl Pierce was appointed a special constable for the court, and Henry H. Snow was appointed clerk, having Earl Pierce and Levi Hudley as his bondsmen. Ira Pierce was deputed to take the census of the county, and other matters of regular business were considered.

The county of Adams was one of the first to adopt township organization. On Tuesday, December 6, 1849, an order was made by the County Commissioners' Court appointing Thomas Enlow, Augustus E. Bowles and William Berry commissioners to divide the county into towns, as provided by an act of the Legislature, providing for the township organization of any county, after having so determined by a majority vote being cast in its favor at any general election. The report of these commissioners was filed in the County Court on the 8th day of March, 1850. They divided the county, according to provisions of the act in force April 16, 1849, into twenty towns and "laid the same off by metes and bounds," adopting a name for each in accordance with the expressed wish of the inhabitants of said town respectively, selecting a name when the inhabitants of any town failed to agree:

The first meeting of the Board of Supervisors, under the law provided for township organization, was held on the third day of June, 1850, "through the call of the county clerk, by the approval of many of the Board of Supervisors." This meeting was held in the court room in the old court house, which stood on Fifth street, between Maine and Hampshire, in Quincy. W. H. Tandy was elected chairman of the board for that session.

Adams county lies on the western border of the state, and is bounded on the north by Hancock county, on the east by Brown and Pike counties. on the south by Pike county, and it is separated from Missouri on the west by the Mississippi river. It embraces an area of eight hundred and thirty-eight square miles, or a little more than twenty-three townships, divided for purposes of local government into twenty-two towns. It is well watered, thorough surface drainage being afforded by numerous creeks flowing into the great river which forms its western boundary. Mention has been made of Bear creek, which drains the northern portion of the county; McGee's creek drains the eastern and central, and

McDonald's, or Homan's creek, Hadley creek and Mill creek intersect the southern southwestern portion. These streams, together with abundant, fine, fresh water springs, furnish a plentiful supply of water for the stock growers. The uplands of the county are nearly equally divided into timber and prairie, the timber portions being mainly restricted to the broken lands in the vicinity of the streams. The general elevation of the prairie region above the level of the Mississippi, at low water, is from two hundred to two hundred and eighty feet. Except for about two miles in the vicinity of Quincy, where the bluffs approach near to the river bank, a belt of alluvial bottom land from one to five miles in width extends the whole length of the county; from north to south, along the western border. By means of drainage and the erection of levees to prevent overflow from the river, they have been made the finest farm lands in the country. The destruction of native forests in Adams county has been very great, but there still remains small portions of these former extensive tracts, containing nearly one hundred species of native forest trees, oak, hickory, ash, elm, walnut, maple, sycamore, red bud, hawthorn and others.

The climate of Adams county is pleasant and healthful, and perpetual breezes blow over the cultivated lands, modifying the summer heat. The seasons come with great regularity, favoring agriculture, and the rainfall is abundant and seasonable, averaging about 38 to 40 inches. The fluctuations in temperature are often great and sudden, especially in the transition seasons, but the vital statistics show that the climate is remarkably healthful, while the crop reports bear witness to its high fitness for agricultural development and the growth of great and valuable supplies of breadstuffs. New methods of scientific farming, the use of modern machinery, the extension of careful under-draining and the intelligence of hundreds of skilled farmers, are developing valuable agricultural properties.

The population of the county at the last census, 1900, was nearly 70,000.

The equalized assessed valuation of lands in the county for the year 1904 was \$3,705,923; of city, town and village lots, \$3,426,690; of personal property, \$3,184,810; of railroads, \$11,-178,420 (C., B. & Q.; A. & St. L.; Wabash., and O.K.C.&E.).

The total state tax; for this county in the same years, \$56,897.75; county tax, \$77,527.15; school tax was \$168,059.44; road and bridge tax, \$33,-696.48 ; other taxes, sufficient: to make a total for the county, including cities and villages, \$605,-828.06.

The finances of Adams county are on the securest of foundations. At the present time the county has no bonded indebtedness.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE GEOLOGY OF ADAMS COUNTY.

By William A. Redenbaugh, Ph. D.

To the ordinary reader a purely geological description is like so much Greek. For this reason the author has decided to depart from the usual custom of describing formations and strata with their complicated classifications and confusing nomenclature. Instead, suppose we take a stroll along the bluffs of Quincy. If we visit the quarries in the lower part of the city and look up at the cliffs above us we see, capping the bluff, a layer of clay about sixty feet thick. This rests upon a foundation of solid rock, consisting of limestone with layers of flint or chert in it. If we observe closely we see that the upper twelve or fifteen feet of rock is very cherty and the layers of limestone between the layers of chert are thin, while the lower portion contains less chert and makes excellent building stone.

Geologists have named the lower formation Burlington limestone, the upper thin bedded rock the Keokuk limestone, and the clay surmounting the rock, the loess. As we go toward the north we can trace these layers along the bluffs, and we find opposite the steamboat landing the Keokuk limestone is of such quality that it can be profitably quarried. As we go farther north the Keokuk formation grows thicker, and north of the city is extensively quarried. The thin-bedded cherty layers are overlaid by thicker and more regular beds of bluish-gray limestones, which may be seen to good advantage along some of the small streams northeast of Quincy. The foundation limestone of Gov. Wood's mansion is of this rock, obtained from a quarry about three miles northeast of Quincy. In this quarry the limestone is seen to be overlaid by brown shale containing geodes or "nigger heads." Where the geode beds are well developed the geodes appear as siliceous nodules of various sizes, some of them a foot or more in diameter. Some of them are solid spheres of crystalline quartz covered externally with a thin coating of chalcedony. Others are hollow and have their inner faces covered with beautiful crystals of quartz, calcite or dolomite, or with the mammillary form of chalcedony. Crystals of arragonite, iron pyrites and zinc blende are also occasionally found in these geodes, and the finest cabinet specimens of the crystallized minerals above mentioned to be found in the state are obtained from this bed. The shales and shaly limestones in which