



MCHS News

Jan 2018

Opening Doors to Madison County History

Vol. 6 No. 1

715 N Main Street
Edwardsville, IL
62025

**Archival Library
Hours:**

Wed-Fri 9 am - 4 pm
Sunday 1 pm - 4 pm
Group Tours Available

Museum :

The museum is
currently closed for
renovation

Phone:

618-656-7569

Web Address:

madcohistory.org

E-mail:

info@madcohistory.org

About Us:

The MCHS museum complex, consisting of a modern archival library, a museum in the 1836 Weir House and the Helms Collection Center, is owned by the nonprofit Madison County Historical Society and operated jointly with Madison County.

The Madison County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

Edward Coles Emancipation Leader Sunday, Feb. 18, 2 p.m. Madison County Archival Library

Museum Superintendent Jon Parkin will present a program on Edward Coles at the Madison County Archival Library on Sunday, Feb. 18 at 2 p.m..

Many historians believe that if not for Edward Coles, Illinois may not have been a free state. His contributions to Illinois history are remembered in Madison County with a memorial installed on Route 157 by the State of Illinois in 1929 and with a Illinois State Historical Society marker on the grounds of the Manny Jackson Center on North Main Street in Edwardsville. This location was once the site of the Madison County Court House which is significant to the Coles story.

Parkin is a retired history teacher who specializes in early 19th century history. The program is free and open to the public.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

All MCHS memberships renew on the first of the year. If you haven't sent in your renewal yet, please do so as soon as possible. We appreciate saving the expense of sending out multiple renewal notices. Every dollar saved can be used for ongoing projects. If you have already sent in your renewal (and MANY of you have!), we appreciate your timely support!

MCHS CELEBRATES ILLINOIS BICENTENNIAL

On Dec. 3, 1818, Illinois became the twenty-first state in the United States of America. In celebration of the state's 200th anniversary, the *MCHS News* will place an emphasis on early Illinois and Madison County history for our six 2018 issues.

This month's articles, by Museum Superintendent Jon Parkin, explore how land was distributed in the territory, the economic panic of 1819 and early stagecoach routes. Later this year the newsletter will explore the Illinois Centennial Celebration of 1918, Abraham Lincoln in Madison County, the Old Six Mile House in Granite City, and other stories in celebration of the state's Bicentennial anniversary.

EARLY ILLINOIS SETTLEMENT

By Jon Parkin, Museum Superintendent

Throughout history, many societies have rewarded military veterans for their service and sacrifice with land. Probably the best-known example of this practice is that of the Roman empire; legionnaires were granted plots of land, often near the frontiers of newly-conquered regions, as recompense for their service. Numerous benefits accrued from such practices: it culturally and economically knitted the new territory more firmly to the expanding state, provided for a reserve of veteran soldiers near the borders readily available in a time of crisis, and engendered in the pensioners a vested interest in protecting their new homesteads and hearths.

In the early days of our nascent republic, similar methods were employed to quickly occupy and domesticate large swaths of seemingly "untamed wilderness." The federal government accomplished this by providing bounty land warrants to those who served in the American War for Independence, the War of 1812, and the intervening

Continued page 4

COMING SOON!

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18
2 P.M.**

MADISON COUNTY ARCHIVAL LIBRARY

PROGRAM:

EDWARD COLES - EMANCIPATION LEADER

PRESENTER: JON PARKIN

REMINDER

**The Historical Museum
Remains Closed for Renovations**



**The Archival Library is
open regular hours.**

ABOUT US

MCHS BOARD

Gary Denué, Pres
Candace Ladd, V-Pres
Arnold Meyer, Treas
Tallin Curran, Sec.
Norma Asadorian
Mary J. Bade
William Eaton
Mae Grapperhaus
Stephen Hansen
Murray Harbke
Don Huber
Tina Hubert
Jeff Pauk
Cindy Reinhardt
Sue Wolf

STAFF

Jon Parkin
Museum Superintendent
Mary Westerhold
Archival Research Mgr.
LaVerne Bloemker
Archival Research Asst.
Carol Frisse
Archival Research Asst.
Jenn VanBibber
Curator
Mary Z. Rose
Asst. Curator

VOLUNTEERS

There are abundant and varied opportunities for volunteers at either the museum or the archival library. Please call if interested.

MEMBERSHIPS

Several membership levels are available to those interested in supporting the work of preserving Madison County history through an MCHS membership. Memberships run on the calendar year, Jan 1-Dec 31. Applications are available on our web site, at the MCHS Museum or at the Archival Library.

PUBLICATIONS

MCHS NEWS

6 issues annually
Cindy Reinhardt, Editor

ARCHIVAL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

By Mary Westerhold

What's new at the Archival Library? The majority of MCHS collections are acquired through donations. The following are examples of items received in 2017:

Plat of lot owners of the Oaklawn Cemetery dated 1901

Cemetery plats are always a plus for researchers and this cemetery contains many members of the Barnsback family.

Papers from a local attorney who passed away several years ago

The attorney handled many estate settlements and this collection contained several flyers relating to various estate auctions. While not as detailed as auction information from a probate file, it is still interesting for family historians to see the items from an ancestors sale.

Scrapbooks

Scrapbooks contain a wealth of information whether they focus on a family, an event, or a locality. Some of the scrapbooks donated this year include information on railroads in Madison County, general Illinois and Madison County history, and Owens Illinois,

Photos and signs from the first Edwardsville High School Field Hockey team

Included among the items was a "Field Hockey" which was autographed by several members of the first EHS Field Hockey team from the 1974-75 school year. (Among the signatures is that of Archival Library Research Manager Mary Luchtefeld Westerhold.)

MUSEUM SPOTLIGHT

By Jenn VanBibber

Although the museum is closed for renovation, the curatorial staff is still able to work with students.

Dr. Laura Hanson recently brought her SIUE costuming class to the museum. The class came to study vintage clothing for Oscar Wilde's play, "The Importance of Being Earnest." Museum staff pulled appropriate gowns and men's attire from the 1880s to 1910s from the MCHS collections and placed them on display in the library meeting room. Dr. Hanson and her students discussed materials, techniques, and trends during their afternoon working with the collection.

A few wedding dresses were used because of the concrete dates associated with the items. Anna Margaret Dake wore the dress shown below when she married Cyrus Love at her home in Hamel Township on

Sept 30, 1897. The visitors examined the white dress, bows, silk hose, and kid gloves for information to use in their projects. While wedding dresses were not an everyday dress, the style, materials, and construction techniques were all available and employed during the same period as Wilde's work.



*Students studying attire from the MCHS Collection, Oct 2017.
(Van Bibber)*



*Wedding attire of Anna Dake Love. Gift of Beatrice Monaphan in 1973
(Van Bibber)*

A suitcoat and a waist coat worn by former Madison County residents provided information about menswear style and structure. Finely-tailored suits were not limited to the men of the upper class in the latter part of the nineteenth century; a two-piece brown and black striped suffragette suit from 1912 provided a bit of contrast to the fancy gowns and bow-filled dresses.

The curatorial staff enjoyed the visit by Dr. Hanson and her class and look forward to learning something new every time.

MCHS NEWS

RENOVATION PROGRESS

The Society Board as well as the staff at the Archival Library are often asked questions about the progress of the museum renovation. Particularly, there have been questions about why we are currently raising funds for the windows instead of some other aspect of construction.

The answer is easy. It wouldn't be safe to remove windows for renovation after the museum has re-opened, so the windows are next on the construction list. Also, the new HVAC system currently being installed will not work efficiently until the drafty windows are repaired.

A separate schedule showing the various phases of construction is included in this newsletter. As can be seen, the Society is in need of additional funds to complete the renovation. Unfortunately, the needs became immediate before fundraising could begin, but so far, the Society has been able to cover expenses from special funds set aside for that purpose. Those funds have now been depleted.

Information about adopting a window for restoration in memory of your Madison County family is at right.

MEMBERS INCREASE DONATIONS

"Thank you" to all our members who chose to increase their 2018 membership level or make an extra donation to MCHS. With all of the renovation work yet to be completed, the Society is very grateful for the additional funds. Every extra dollar is both needed and appreciated!

MEMORIAL WINDOWS



The Madison County Historical Society (MCHS) is appealing to area residents for assistance in restoring the windows of the 1836 Weir House which serves as the county museum. Donors are asked to consider adopting one or more windows of the Weir House in memory of their Madison County family. Some Madison County families are new, within a generation, and others have been here for decades. All have contributed or are continuing to be a part of the history and heritage of Madison County.

The average cost per window is \$2,400 for a complete restoration and construction of a protective storm window appropriate for the historic building. The building has 31 windows. A list of honored families will be listed on a plaque in the museum when it reopens following restoration.

The 1836 Weir House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and has been the home of the Madison County Historical Museum since 1964. It is owned by the Madison County Historical Society, a 501 (c) (3) organization founded in 1921. For further information, call, 618-656-7569 or visit the MCHS website at madcohistory.org. Donations may be given online or sent to MCHS, 801 N. Main Street, Edwardsville, Illinois, 62025.

We hope you will consider making a special gift to help restore the windows or contribute to the additional work that needs to be done to preserve the historic Weir House.

NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

Nov - Mid Dec 2017 ♦ Thank you for supporting MCHS!

\$250 Edward Coles

Edna Grench
Joseph Helms
Mike & Cindy Reinhardt
Bob & Sandi Schwartz

\$100 James Madison

Tom & Donna Bardon
Bernice Brown
Tallin Curran
W. Scott & Marcia Delicate
Bill Eaton
Ted & Jean Elik
Mike & Susan Featherstun
Stephen & Julia Hansen
Charlotte Johnson
Henry & Shirley Malench
Dan Marshall
Arnold Meyer
Joan & Tom O'Saben
Glenn & Mary Pizzini
Lawrence Schwarz

\$50 Family

Philip & Amy Alfeld

Art & Pam Asadorian
Donna Bissett
James & Debbie Caulk
Robert Clouse & Mary Bade
Gary & Pat Coffey
Toni Crane
Alvin Diebert
Murray & Mary Harbke
David and Rita Jenkins
Richard & Sandra Kinder
Gracie Koeller
Tom LaFaver
Edward & Barb Leardi
Mark & Jean Luchtefeld
Charles McKittrick
Jack & Janette Minner
SJ & Emily Morrison
David Novak
Paul & Mary Ann Peteres
Paul & Barb Pizzini
George & Nolan Provenzano
Don & Kay Reaka
Lesia Rosenthal
Allen & Margie Schmidt
Marlene Shaw
Edward Small

John & Marion Sperling
Charleen & Luther Statler
Stephenson House, Friends of
Kevin & Donna Wendel
Mary Zerlan

\$35 Individual

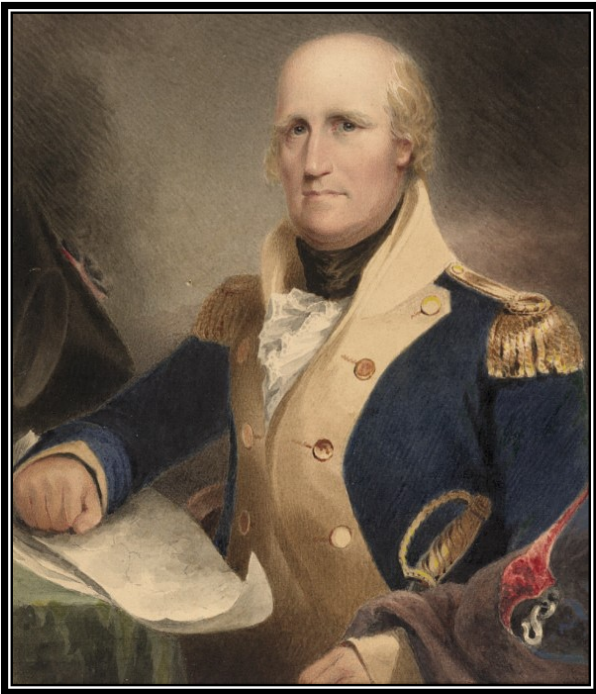
Diane & Melvin Anderson
Dorothy Anderson
Cathy Bagby
Emogene Beck
Thomas Blixen
Gena Boger
Joann Condellone
Sharon Daiber
Charlotte Digue
Arlene Eller
Lynn Engelman
Viva Fischer
Patty Freymuth
Katheryn Genczo
Carolyn Schmidt Golfin
Robert Gusewelle
Don Halbe
Janet Faires Hall
Dallas Harrell

Nancy Hess
Jeanette Kampen
Jim Kelih
Rosalynn Kessler
Robert Mallory
Gloria Mannz
Virginia McCall
Harold Meisenheimer
Phyllis Metcalf
Linda Mizell
Ruth Murray
Susanne Nelson-Helms
Diann Noll
Nick Raftopoulos
Richard Raymond
Joann Southard Reitz
Velma Schmidt
Joan Shaffner
Margaret Simons
Stella Smith
Meg Solon
Beverly Stutz
Sarah Turner
Candy Wentz
Dorothy Zwettler

EARLY ILLINOIS SETTLEMENT (CONT FROM PAGE 1)

Indian wars. These warrants were first offered as an incentive to serve in the military, but later became a reward for service. This process facilitated the rapid settlement and economic development of Illinois during the early federal period.

During the American War for Independence, George Rogers Clark (1752-1818), the oldest brother of William Clark of the Corps of Discovery (Lewis and Clark Expedition), approached the Virginia General Assembly with an audacious plan. He proposed raising a regiment of Virginians, crossing over the Ohio River, and seizing from the British the part of Upper Canada, then-known as the Illinois Country. As a result, among the first American citizens to explore this region were men from Virginia and



George Rogers Clark. (George Rogers Clark National Historical Park, National Parks Service.)

Kentucky. The quality and availability of land instigated a chain migration from those areas, the effects of which are still felt today. (Southern Illinois retains a distinct Southern “flavor” to its culture and speech patterns, whereas northern Illinois – initially shaped by migration through the Erie Canal and across the Great Lakes from New England and states such as New York – exhibits more of a Yankee influence.)

Clark’s activities allowed the *Articles of Confederation* Congress of the United States to claim what eventually became known as the Northwest Territory, at the Treaty of Paris (1783). Today, this territory encompasses all or part of the present-day states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Because of overlapping and competing land claims by a number of the original Thirteen Colonies, Virginia ultimately relinquished control of the territory to the *Articles of Confederation* Congress.

In the early days of the newly-independent United States of America, there were no provisions for how regions such as the Northwest Territory would be settled, administered, and ultimately attain statehood. On top of this,

the *Articles of Confederation* Congress lacked the power to raise revenue through direct taxation. The *Land Ordinance of 1785* established the basis of the Public Land Survey System, which allowed for the federal government to raise revenue through the orderly transfer of land from the public domain into private ownership. Subsequent ordinances and supplements would further refine this process.

The Indiana Territory was created July 4, 1800, out of the Northwest Territory. A little less than nine years later, the Illinois Territory was created, Mar 1, 1809:

[Feb. 3, 1809]

An Act for dividing the Indiana territory into two separate governments.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That from and after the first day of March next all that part of the Indiana Territory which lies west of the Wabash river and a direct line drawn from the said Wabash river and Post Vincennes due north to the territorial line between the United States and Canada, shall, for the purpose of temporary government, constitute a separate territory, and be called Illinois.

From *An Act for the Division of Indiana Territory*, in Carter, *The Territory of Illinois, 1809-1818*,

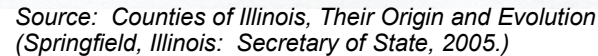
As originally delineated above, the Illinois Territory once shared a border with Canada along the 49th parallel north, however, many scholars today believe that the functional northern border for Illinois never actually reached as far as Canada, despite what the legislative record recorded. Later acts of Congress would clarified the present-day boundaries for the states of Illinois and Wisconsin. Madison County proper would not come into being until 1812, when it was created out of land originally part of St. Clair County. For some time afterwards, it encompassed the northern three-quarters of the territory. (see map at right)

According to the July 10, 1819, edition of the *Edwardsville Spectator*, “The whole of the new settlements on the waters of the Illinois, the Sangamo(n), and the bounty lands within the forks of the Mississippi and Illinois rivers, are within the limits of Madison county.”

It was not long before Illinois’ reputation as a bountiful land in which to settle took shape in the national consciousness. Reports by government agents, travelers, and investors hoping to turn a quick profit, began to circulate.

William Rector, who served as the Surveyor General for Illinois at this time, wrote the Surveyor General of the Northwest Frontier, Jared Mansfield, saying, “Notwithstanding the roughness of this part of the country there is within it a considerable quantity of valuable land. The lands in the bottom between the ponds, is generally high dry and extremely rich and a considerable part of the hills near the bottom is rich, and in many places, there is sufficient quantities to admit of small farms, this quarter is generally well timbered with large and valuable timber and is pretty well watered with Creeks brooks, & some Springs of good waters.”

EARLY ILLINOIS SETTLEMENT



"I know it is the wish of Government and greatly the interest of the inhabitants generally of this country (who are extremely anxious on the Subject particularly the claimants) that the claims of individuals should be surveyed out as soon as possible so that emigrants and others may have an opportunity to purchase of these lands or of that, which will remain to the United States, for these claims are scattered, through the most desirable part of this Territory, and most of the Townships ought to be subdivided before the claims are run out. I was apprised that it would be impossible to get good chain carriers in this Country."

In 1809 Rector wrote to Mansfield saying, “We are now engaged in laying off the balance of those lands that have been surveyed under the authority of the Governors of the Territory. This business we find extremely tedious and troublesome, as they are scattered over so extensive a country, and much time is unavoidably lost in hunting up the Township lines & connecting our surv’eys [surveyors?] with them...”

In a 1819 letter by Rector, he said, "You will also receive herewith a sketch of the surveys which have been made, and are now making, in the State of Illinois, laying partly in the Edwardsville and partly in the Shawanee-town district. The largest portion of rich land will be found in the former, on the branch of *Sangamon* river, a southern branch of the Illinois The lands of Sangamon, from their geographical position, fine quality, and abundance of excellent water, will no doubt sell readily and for a good price."

This facilitated the population of Illinois expanding rapidly after the War of 1812, exceeding 50,000 in 1820 and 150,000 in 1830.

MILITARY LAND GRANTS & SQUATTERS

Virginia were eligible to acquire property from a tract of land bounded by the Little Miami and Scioto rivers on the west and east, whereas a tract of land running through central Ohio was set-aside for U. S. military veterans.) Providing bounty lands for local militia veterans within Illinois became something of a dilemma, however.

The governor of Illinois was authorized to grant up to one-hundred acres of land to any individual enrolled as of 1 August 1790 in one of the militia companies established in Cahokia, Kaskaskia, or Prairie du Rocher. This land was “to be laid out at the expense of the grantees, and in such form and place as the said governor shall direct”. Provisions were made restricting any claims upon land currently inhabited by the Kaskaskia Nation of Indians. Although

MILITARY LAND GRANTS & SQUATTERS



Ninian Edwards, governor of the Illinois Territory, and third governor of the state of Illinois. (Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library, Vol. IV, Public Domain.)

predicated upon the idea that service in the militia was rewarded with one of these small grants, the deplorable state of record-keeping made it difficult to accurately ascertain who was legitimately eligible on that basis. Ultimately, it was determined that proof of residency at the time the law was enacted was sufficient for one to make a claim. Even with this provision in place, it did not prevent land speculators in the guise of “appointed representatives”, as well as squatters, from making claims, under the auspices of militia service allegedly performed fourteen years earlier, following the

establishment of a federal land office at Kaskaskia in 1804.

Squatting on the land evolved into a festering problem, necessitating the federal Congress to enact guidelines – at the height of the War of 1812 – that would create a pathway through pre-emption to legal ownership of the land. (This legislation was prompted by a number of petitions from residents, seeking redress of their situation.) The major provisions contained in the legislation, enacted 5 February 1813, required that anyone making such a claim on property settled illegally needed to petition the land commissioners with evidence of occupation and improvement made before the date of the legislation, *and*, following approval of their request, make a down-payment of 1/20 of the purchase price, or approximately two dollars *per* acre. Provided these two provisions were met, a squatter could establish a pre-emptive claim to the land. Of course, in a cash-strapped society, coming-up with the \$160 needed to establish claim to a quarter-section of land, was a steep proposition. [See sidebar article: “Panic of 1819”.] Up to this point, sufficient land had been set-aside to service the claims of veterans of the American War for Independence, and the sporadic warfare between Native American and pioneers on the frontier that had followed. The Second War for Independence, known today as the War of 1812, generated a large pool of veterans who anticipated being rewarded for their service with land warrants.

There were three districts created to service the needs for bounty land warrants issued to veterans of the War of 1812, one of which was in the Territory of Illinois. This tract, containing more than 5,000,000 acres, was located in north-west Illinois, between the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, and included all or part of the present-day counties of Adams, Brown, Bureau, Calhoun, Fulton, Hancock, Henderson, Henry, Knox, McDonough, Mercer, Peoria, Pike, Schuyler, Stark, and Warren, as well as those parts of Marshall and Putnam that are on the west side of the Illinois River.

Veterans of the War of 1812 were eligible to receive 160 acres in one of these Military Tracts. Many veterans, however, unwilling to uproot their families and relocate to the frontier of Illinois, sold their warrants to speculators – often for a fraction of their face-value. Occupations of claims were often exacerbated by Native Americans, who were reluctant to vacate lands ceded to the American government through treaties and squatters. Following statehood in December 1818, much of the litigation conducted in Illinois was devoted to resolving suits over title to the land, and for eviction. Even with protocols established for the orderly transfer of land from the federal weal into private ownership, the process of surveying the land could not keep up with the demand created by people migrating to Illinois, and the complications of squatting continued to be an irritant. Another quote from a column in the *Edwardsville Spectator* on July 10, 1819, said, “The people of the Sangamo(n) are desirous to have the public lands surveyed, with the hope that it might expedite the sales, and prevent their industry becoming their crimes.”

As additional lands were properly surveyed, they became available for purchase by the general public. A regular feature in newspapers of the day were printed announcements of public lands up for sale, like the one below from the same *Edwardsville Spectator* article.



SALE OF PUBLIC LANDS.

The sale of the 30 townships of land advertised by the President's proclamation, to be sold in Edwardsville on the first Monday of August next, will commence on Monday the 2d of August, at 10 o'clock in the morning, and continue for three weeks. During each week there will be sold ten townships, in the following order, viz : In the first week, townships Nos. 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, in ranges 1 and 2 west. In the second week, townships 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, in ranges 3 and 4 west ; and in the third week, townships Nos. 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, in ranges 5 and 6 west.

PANIC OF 1819

Before there were depressions (e.g. The Great Depression of the 1930s), there were panics. These panics occurred roughly every twenty years. The first peacetime economic correction of the nascent American republic was the Panic of 1819. Precipitated by a return to economic normalcy, following the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812, it was fueled by land speculation throughout the western territories and new states of the United States. Because of a shortage of specie, many banks turned to printing their own scrip as a form of local currency. Ideally, when a bank did so, they would retain sufficient reserves of gold and silver to redeem any of their notes in circulation. Newspapers, such as the *Edwardsville Spectator*, would regularly print lists of banks from which receivers of the Land Offices of Illinois and Missouri could accept notes, as payment for land. The system worked – provided there was not a run on any one institution, forcing it to redeem in specie their notes at face-value.

Initially, the Bank of Edwardsville, a relatively new institution in 1819, was one of the banks considered sound enough that its notes were considered acceptable for purchasing federal lands. (This was not the current Bank of Edwardsville.) Competition, however, for business between lending institutions on the frontier, was fierce. The *St. Louis Enquirer*, through a series of articles, cast aspersions on the solvency of the Bank of Edwardsville, in favor of the Bank of Missouri. These elicited a defense from Illinois boosters in the *Spectator* on May 29, 1819:

"In giving a list of land office money, in which the notes of the Bank of Edwardsville were included, we were under the impression that the same bills were receivable in the Missouri land offices, as in those of Illinois. We have since been informed, that the secretary of the treasury does not give special instructions to the receivers of public monies to take the notes of new banks, until application is made by such banks for orders to that effect ; and that the Bank of Edwardsville has made [no] application to have its notes made receivable in the land offices in Missouri, probably because such a measure would not be of any advantage to it."

A prominent figure in this Battle between the Banks was none other than the future Senator for Missouri, Thomas Hart Benton. Senator Benton was a formidable booster of Saint Louis and Missouri. As the editor of the *St. Louis Enquirer* with a financial interest in the success of the Bank of Missouri, he had a vested-interest in seeing the Bank of Edwardsville fail.



Bank of Edwardsville note, circa 1818.

(MCHS)

STAGECOACH TRAILS

In the early days of settlement, most long distance travel and bulk freight cartage occurred along the natural highways of the time: navigable rivers and streams. Over time, the federal government became committed to the development of a system of roads and canals that would serve to bind the nation together. Bids, such as the one below, would be solicited through the local press, for carrying the mails along sanctioned post roads.

PROPOSALS

For carrying the Mails of the United States on the following Post-roads, will be received at the General Post-Office until Saturday, the 2d day October next [1819], inclusive.

IN ILLINOIS

From Carlyle by Independence, Perryville, Ripley, Edwardsville, Gibraltar and Alton to St. Charles, M. once a week, 120 miles.

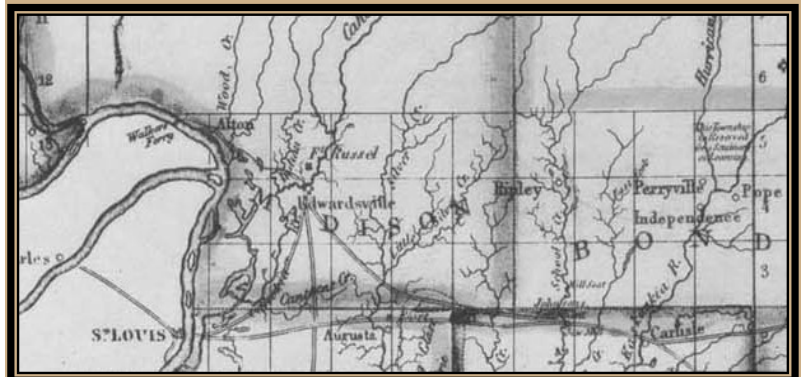
Leave Carlyle every Friday at 6 a.m. and arrive at St. Charles on Sunday by 6 p.m.

Leave St. Charles every Tuesday at 6 a.m. and arrive at Carlyle on Thursday by 6 p.m.

From Edwardsville to St. Louis once a week, 22 miles.

Leave Edwardsville every Tuesday noon and arrive at St. Louis by 6 p.m.

Leave St. Louis every Wednesday at 6 a.m. and arrive at Edwardsville by noon.



Close up of local counties, from the Melish 1819 map of Illinois

In the NOTES section appended to the advertisement, the Post-master retained the ability to "expedite the mails and alter the times for arrival and departure at any time during the continuance of the contract", penalize contractors one dollar "for every thirty minutes delay (unavoidable accidents excepted) in arriving after the times prescribed in any contract", and requiring that only a "free white person shall be employed to convey the mail". Payment for services rendered to the contractor would be quarterly—in the months of May, August, November and February, one month after the expiration of each quarter.

Many of these early post roads followed routes established by migratory animals, or were paths initially blazed by Native Americans and early settlers. These routes channeled human migration through Illinois, and often influenced where communities were established. If one was to map the routes outlined in the proposals published during this era, they would find that often they coincide with many of the roads and highways we still use today.



Madison County Historical Society

Opening Doors to Madison County History

715 N. Main Street
Edwardsville, IL 62025

Address Service Requested

PRSR STD
Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
Paid
Permit #9
Edwardsville, IL
62025

SLEUTHING EARLY BOUNDARIES

Looking for Early Ancestors or

The Importance of Knowing American History, and How Borders Move

By Jon Parkin

Years ago, while researching one of my antedecents, I encountered a conundrum: over three different federal decennial censuses, one of my ancestors on the Malcolm branch of the tree had three different locations listed as to where she had been born. In one census, she was registered as having been born in Virginia. Ten years later, the census-taker recorded the place of her birth as Indiana. And in the census after that, Illinois was listed as the land of her nativity. At first glance, one might think I was looking at three different people, or that the census-takers were sloppy in the execution of their duties. However, if one remembers that the early-federal period in our nation's history was one of rapid territorial expansion, the mystery is easily solved.

The area west of Pennsylvania, bounded by the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to the south and west, and the Great Lakes to the north, was occupied by a small army led by George Rogers Clark in 1778-79. During the latter part of the War for American Independence, this territory was administered as a county of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Because of overlapping and competing land claims by a number of the original Thirteen Colonies, Virginia ultimately relinquished control of the territory to the *Articles of Confederation* Congress, before the end of the Revolution. The Indiana Territory was created 4 July 1800. A little less than nine years later, the Illinois Territory was created, March 1, 1809.

So, as can be seen, through the paper-trail of one of my great-great-grandmothers, one encounters the vibrant nature of the early republic. She was born during the brief period when Illinois was a county of Virginia. Her place of birth remained the same. It is the borders that changed over time.

MARY'S RESEARCH TIP

Probate Files

Probate files can be a treasure trove of information. Digitized microfilm images are available from both Familysearch.org (free) and Ancestry.com (paid subscription). Many files for Madison County are available through the Archival Library. Even when the deceased individual left no will (aka died intestate), much can be learned about the family. Perhaps there was a search for possible heirs which resulted in a listing of known heirs and their locations. Maybe there was an estate sale and the result of the

sale including the price for each item and who purchased it are available. Receipts for bills that were paid by the estate can provide additional clues. For example, a doctor's bill may include a list of medicines, which can help in identifying cause of death. Finally, you could find a receipt for the inscription on a tombstone which includes the actual inscription. This is especially helpful with birth and death dates when the tombstone no longer exists.

Check out one of the probates files for your ancestor and see what you find!