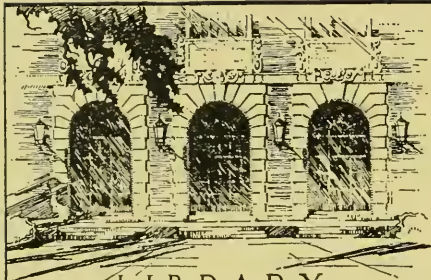


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**OLD
BROWNSVILLE
DAYS**

An Historical Sketch of Early Times
in Jackson County

WILL W. HUSBAND



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OLD BROWNSVILLE DAYS

An Historical Sketch of Early Times
in Jackson County

WILL W. HUSBAND

To the memory of my dear companion of many years, who was a descendant of Jackson county pioneers, and who passed away suddenly, April 15, 1934, this pamphlet is lovingly dedicated.

—THE AUTHOR.

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“OLD BROWNSVILLE DAYS”

CHAPTER I.

IT HAS BEEN one hundred twenty-three years since my maternal grandfather migrated from Virginia to the Illinois country with his father. Grandfather was then ten years old, having been born in 1800. The trip was made by flatboat down the Ohio river to Shawneetown, then an Indian trading post. From there they drove overland to Kaskaskia (“Kaskia,” grandfather called it). Then, in 1815, the family moved to what is now Jackson county and settled near where Brownsville was established the following year. Grandfather said when making the trip to Kaskaskia in 1810 they passed only two clearings along the entire route of one hundred twenty miles.

Grandfather died many years ago at the age of ninety, but I remember him distinctly. He was tall and lean, slightly stooped. He had keen, grey eyes, white hair and beard. Also, well do I remember some of the tales he told of the days when Illinois was young.

The old gentleman used to tell of Doctor Conrad Will, “Father of Jackson county;” of Governor Joseph Duncan, “Father of Free Education in Illinois”, who lived in a “white mansion” at the foot of Big Hill; of Captain William Boon, leader of the Illinois Rangers during the War of 1812, and who settled at Sand Ridge in 1806; of Alexander Jenkins, the young carpenter who became Lieutenant Governor, and of his pretty sister, Diza Jenkins, the “Belle of Brownsville”, who married Joel Manning, efficient and grouchy county clerk; of genial Jesse Griggs, first sheriff of the county, and proprietor of the Brownsville Tavern; of the Logans and other prominent pioneers who lived in the Brownsville community in those golden days of yore.

Nights, when the wind moans through the trees—when the rain beats against the windows and the water drips from the eaves; or on cloudless autumn days, when the distant, tranquil hills appear to be hazy and mysterious, the thought seems to wander here and there like a zephyr and finally comes to rest on those hardy men and women who conquered the wilderness—those men and women who wore clothes of homespun and buckskin and underwent the most severe hardships on the wild Illinois frontier.

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For long, long years their tired bodies have been resting—many in forgotten graves.

And Old Brownsville, which a century ago was said to be the third largest town in Illinois; Old Brownsville, first seat of Jackson county, has vanished! Its site is now a wheat field and there is scarcely a trace left of the town. And Kaskaskia, the scene of Colonel George Rogers Clark's brilliant military triumph in 1778, and which became the first capital of the great State of Illinois, too, has vanished. The waves of the mighty Mississippi now roll over the spot where the lights of "Kaska" used to shine.

Colonel Clark was only twenty-six years old when he won an empire for the new American nation by the capture of Kaskaskia and Vincennes, thereby taking possession of the vast domain from which have been carved the States of Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio. Colonel Clark was grandfather's hero, and he delighted to talk about that officer's campaigns against the Indians.

You see grandfather's father ("Pap," grandfather called him) was one of Clark's boy soldiers when that intrepid leader captured the above mentioned posts during the Revolutionary War. Grandfather had the very rifle his father used in this campaign. It was a long-barreled, heavy, flint-lock gun. In 1782 he again carried it when a member of Colonel William Crawford's ill-fated expedition against the Indians when that officer was captured and burned at the stake by the savages.

How the story of Crawford's awful fate would chill my blood! And little did I think then that my future wife would be a descendant of the heroic Crawford! It has been only within the past few years that I learned that my father-in-law, the late William Crawford McCormick ("Uncle Billy"), was the son of Colonel Crawford's granddaughter, and was named in honor of the Colonel.

The Crawford expedition left Pittsburg in May, 1782, with the object of punishing the Wyandotte Indians on account of depredations against the settlers. The expedition marched westward for ten days, but no Indians were encountered. It was decided to continue the march one more day, then to return to Fort Pitt in the event the enemy was not encountered. In the afternoon of this last day's march, the expedition suddenly found itself surrounded by yelling Indians. It appears that Colonel Crawford marched into a trap, as did General Custer nearly a hundred years later when his com-

mand was massacred in the battle of the Little Big Horn with the Sioux Indians in 1876.

As soon as Col. Crawford realized his predicament, he threw his men into battle formation and heavy fighting continued throughout the day. Fighting ceased at nightfall and was not resumed until next afternoon, the Indians in the meantime having been heavily reinforced. As Crawford had only 500 men, some of whom had been killed and wounded in the engagement, he proceeded to retreat. It was the second day of the retreat that he was taken prisoner by the Indians.

"Pap was taken at the same time," grandfather would say in telling of the death of Crawford. "and witnessed the horrible affair; had he not made his escape, he would have met the same fate." Here is grandfather's account of the tragedy as nearly as it can be remembered by the writer.

"Pap always said that Simon Girty, the white renegade, could have saved Crawford's life, had he so willed, but did not do so because he held a grudge against Crawford. It seems it was because of a love affair. Girty wanted to marry one of the Colonel's daughters, and Crawford would not give his consent. Some years later Girty turned renegade and joined an Indian tribe, over whom he had a powerful influence and led them on many raids against the settlers in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Kentucky.

"Crawford was taken to an Indian village, where he was beaten by the squaws and boys. He was then chained to a post about fifteen feet high. The chain which held him to the post was just long enough to permit the victim to circle the post twice, then he would unwind the chain by walking in the opposite direction.

"A large heap of brush was placed around the post, just beyond the victim's reach, and set on fire. Before the flames got under headway, Colonel Crawford asked Girty to intercede for him, which the renegade refused to do. After the fire began to scorch the unfortunate man, he implored Girty to shoot him and put an end to his misery. Girty was seated on his horse a few feet away, and replied 'Why, Colonel, don't you see I have no gun?' After hours of torture, the victim fell to the ground and his body was finally consumed by the flames. The Indians intended to burn Pap the next night, but he managed to escape through the help of an Indian he had once befriended." The scene of the Crawford tragedy is in Wyandotte county, Ohio, and a monument now marks the spot.

Then there was the story of a sad incident which occurred in the hills

near Brownsville when the pioneer period was drawing to a close, or about the time of the beginning of the Civil War. The story concerned a little girl who was lured to a lonely spot in the woods and killed by a panther. The child had been sent by her mother to borrow a thimble from a neighbor living about half a mile away. She arrived at the neighbor's house safely, lingered a few minutes, then started homeward with the thimble.

Full of life, the girl went skipping and hopping along the path through the forest. It was near the close of a serene day in autumn time, and all nature seemed calm and peaceful. There was nothing in the surroundings to suggest danger, even if the sun was getting low.

But hark! What was that? It sounded just like a baby crying! For a wailing sound had reached the girl's ear. She paused. Again came the sound, seemingly from a clump of brush near the path. She went to investigate, but on reaching the spot, the sound was deeper in the forest. Thus was the panther luring the girl to her death by its human-like cry. Again she followed the sound, unaware of the awful doom awaiting her.

She peered here and there through the underbrush, but no one was there. Then suddenly there was a savage growl in the branches of a nearby tree. Looking upward, the girl was terror-stricken to see a large cat-like creature crouched on a low limb, ready to spring. Its teeth bared, its fierce eyes ablaze, its ears laid back, and the end of its tail weaving to and fro.

Uttering a frightened cry, the girl turned to run. With an angry snarl the animal jumped on her, and as it crushed her to the earth, buried its cruel, sharp fangs into her soft, white throat. There was a sickening crunch, a gasp, a quiver, and the little form was stilled forever. As the warm blood gushed from the torn flesh, it was greedily lapped up by the panther. And that evening while the residents of the community were seated at their supper tables, something too horrifying for words was taking place in their midst. For over yonder in the silent woods, a little girl was being devoured by a ferocious wild beast!

Meanwhile, the girl's parents were wondering why she did not return home and started to investigate the cause of her delay. Upon learning that she had left the neighbor's house a short time after arriving there, an alarm was sounded and a search party organized. This party was out all night, but no trace of the girl was found. The searchers confined their hunt along and near the path, thinking the child may have fallen and injured herself.

Next morning the search was resumed and more ground was covered. Then it was that they discovered evidences of the tragedy a considerable distance from the path. Blood spots, fragments of her flesh and clothes were scattered about. Further search resulted in finding what remained of the unfortunate girl buried under leaves beside a log, where the beast had secreted it. Grandfather said when the search party, all of whom were rugged pioneers, beheld the ghastly sight every man wept unashamed. Hunters scoured the woods for the animal and a few days later a panther was killed some miles distant from the scene of the tragedy which was supposed to have been the one that slaughtered the child. There are doubtless persons still living who remember this sad occurrence.

Yes, indeed, grandfather could tell any number of pioneer-day stories—many from actual experience, and those he had heard told by his father and other old Indian fighters. He served in the Black Hawk war, which ended Indian troubles in Illinois. As a soldier in this campaign he carried the old rifle heretofore mentioned. "Old Trusty," he called it. He enjoyed telling of running a foot-race with Lincoln during the Black Hawk war. "I thought I was a swift runner," he would say, "but shucks, Lincoln could run as fast as a deer and finished the race before I got started." Then, with a chuckle, he would add, "but I got even with him; I beat him shooting at the mark!" Jefferson Davis also participated in this war as an officer in the United States Army. Years later, Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States, and Jefferson Davis President of the Confederate States, when the North and South were engaged in deadly combat over the slavery question.

Grandfather's old rifle—the gun that had blazed at Kaskaskia and Vincennes in 1778 and 1779, as well as at numerous other places—the gun that had made more than one redskin "bite the dust" always fascinated me. It had a deep dent in the stock where an arrow had struck it in some Indian fight. After all these years I remember how the old gentleman used to fondle the historic weapon. "Lad," he would say to me, 'Old Trusty' has been in many a hot scrap and has done its part in taming the wilderness and spreading civilization!"

He had a wonderful memory. Important events made an everlasting impression on his mind; hence, it was an easy matter for him to relate of incidents that had happened many years before, and to give the exact dates of their occurrences. Having listened to his narratives of pioneer days, at an early age I became intensely interested in the history of Illinois, so full

when a fair-sized crowd had assembled, Doctor Will mounted a stump and addressed the men something like this:

"Fellow citizens, I am glad so many of you have turned out as requested. As some of you have come a considerable distance, I will at once state the object of this meeting. It occurs to me that we settlers should take immediate steps to organize a new county. Kaskaskia is too far away for us to go to transact our business. We ought to have a county of our own, and a trading place nearer home. Captain Boon and I have been discussing this matter for some time, and finally decided to call this meeting in order to get an expression from other settlers. By investigation it has been found that we have sufficient population in this region to form a new county." Turning to a man standing beside the stump, he asked:

"Captain Boon, just how many white people live in this region?"

"Nearly twelve hundred." was the reply. "Of course, you understand that this number includes all the settlers living within twenty miles or more of this spot."

"Then there are approximately two hundred families living in this part of the country," stated the doctor. "That should be a sufficient number to answer our purpose. Well, fellow-citizens, what do you think of the idea?"

"The idear is a crackin' good'un!" spoke up one.

"Shore, we need a county all our own," said another.

"Doc, how do we go about gittin' this here new county?" one wanted to know.

"A petition will have to be submitted to the territorial authorities making a demand," explained the doctor.

"What air we goin' to call our new county?" asked a pioneer.

"That is a matter that will have to be settled later."

"Wal, responded the other, Us fellers that fit, bled and died with Old Hickory, want the county called Jackson."

Others wanted to name the new county after their heroes and there was a heated argument for several minutes over this question. Finally, it was left to a vote, and the Jackson men won.

"Three cheers for Old Hickory Andy Jackson!" shouted the Jackson leader. These cheers were given in a hearty manner.

After the excitement had died down, Doctor Will again spoke. "I have the petition already drawn up," he said, "and it is now ready for signatures."

"Say, doc, how about us fellers that caint swing the quill?"

"Make your mark!"

After the petition had thus been signed by those present, Doctor Will addressed the assembled pioneers.

"Fellow Citizens," he said: "We are making history here today. We have demanded a county of our own, to be called Jackson. While this region is now a dense wilderness I look forward to the day when smiling farms and busy cities will dot this land. Illinois is one of the fairest countries I have ever seen and it will soon take its place among the great states of this nation. While it is still a territory, it will be admitted to statehood ere long. Big things are going to be done in this land during the next fifty years, for this wilderness is going to be transformed into a land of plenty. While we who are gathered here will all be gone when that has been accomplished, I am proud that we pioneers of today are the trail-blazers for those who are to follow. I am also proud that our children, grandchildren and their children will enjoy the full fruitage of the hardships through which we must pass in making Illinois the mighty state it is to be! Let us fondly hope that our sacrifices will not have been in vain."

A hush fell over the assemblage, and the men stood leaning on their guns with a far-away look in their eyes. Like statues they stood as they caught the vision which the speaker portrayed, for every true pioneer must have vision.

"Unless I am mistaken," continued Doctor Will, "Jackson county will be a reality before the spring flowers bloom again!"

There was a triumphant note in his voice, and those of the audience who had been in deep reverie galvanized to action.

"Hoo-ray for Doc Will!" yelled one. "Let's give him three cheers, boys!"

"Three cheers for Doc Will!"

"Now, three cheers for Cap Boon!"

"Three cheers for Cap Boon!"

"Three cheers for Jackson county!" shouted Captain Boon.

"Three cheers for Jackson county!" thundered the crowd.

When all was quiet again, Captain Boon explained that he would take the petition to the homes of settlers who were not present, for their signatures. The crowd then dispersed and started toward their cabin homes along the streams and among the hills. In due time the petition was presented to

the authorities at Kaskaskia, and on January 10, 1816, the County of Jackson was created. Until the year 1795 it was included within the boundaries of St. Clair county. In that year Randolph county was organized, and for a period of twenty-one years Jackson county formed a part of Randolph. At the time Jackson county was organized it included what is now the southern part of Perry county. Its present area is 538 square miles. On December 3, 1818, Illinois was admitted to the Union, or almost three years after the organization of Jackson county.

The act under which Jackson county was created specified that the capital should be called Brownsville. Doctor Will offered to donate twenty acres near his salt works on the Big Muddy as a town site. His offer was accepted; thus was Brownsville founded. It was not a favorable location for a town, being off the main trail and difficult to reach. Nevertheless, regardless of this handicap, it was a lively place for years.

Many of the present generation do not know just where Brownsville was situated. By referring to a map of Jackson county, it will be noted that the Big Muddy river swings northwestward at Murphysboro, flowing in that direction some two or three miles, then swerves slightly to the southwest for a considerable distance. It was on this stretch of the river that Brownsville was located, on the north bank of the stream, on the dividing line of sections two and three, Sand Ridge township, about five miles west of Murphysboro. Route 144 now passes within a short distance of the historic spot.

Brownsville was a raw, crude town and the majority of the houses were built of log. Even Doctor Will, who was probably the most prosperous citizen, lived in a log house. But, notwithstanding its crudity, it became one of the largest towns in the state, being exceeded in size only by Kaskaskia and Shawneetown. Of course, it must be remembered that neither of these towns were large. Grandfather estimated that Brownsville had a population of four or five hundred when at its best, about the year 1834.

But the town attracted business from a large territory. It did a large shipping and receiving business by flatboat transportation. Its streets were crowded with pioneers, hunters, trappers and Indians. It had quite a large floating population. Pioneers coming to the county would make Brownsville their headquarters while seeking a favorable place for a home in the wilderness. There were several business houses, carpenter shops, blacksmith and wagon-making shops, also a tannery.

"Doc Will was the mainspring of the town," grandfather said. Doctor Will came to Illinois from Pennsylvania in 1814, locating at Kaskaskia. He

made that place headquarters for several months while looking the country over. It was then he learned of the saline springs on Big Muddy. He bought up a large herd of cattle and drove them to Pennsylvania, returning to Illinois the following year with his family, making a permanent location at the springs, where Brownsville was established the following year. He deepened the springs, then went to Pittsburg in 1816 and purchased thirty cast-iron kettles from a foundry. Each kettle was of sixty gallons capacity and weighed 400 pounds. He brought these kettles by flatboat down the Ohio, up the Mississippi and Big Muddy rivers to Brownsville.

The springs were then equipped with pumps operated by horse-power, which raised the water into the reservoir from which it was distributed to the evaporating kettles placed side by side on a long furnace fired with cordwood. The plant was then ready to make salt, which was done in the following manner: the heated water in the first kettle was ladled into the next one, then into the next, and so on until the salt was scooped out of the last kettle and put out to drip and dry. Grandfather said it required one hundred twenty-five gallons of water to make one bushel of salt. When ready for market, the salt was placed in sacks and shipped to Kaskaskia, St. Louis, New Orleans and other points. Salt was an important item in pioneer days, a product difficult to obtain, hence the Brownsville Salt Factory became famous.

Doctor Conrad Will was a unique character. He was a physician, salt manufacturer, merchant and also conducted a tannery. In addition to these activities, he was also a statesman, serving in the state legislature more than 20 years. He was of a jovial nature and delighted to play jokes on his friends. Doctor Will and James Hall, Jr., were delegates to the Constitutional Convention at Kaskaskia in 1818, in which year Illinois was made a state, and from that time onward he took an active part in the destinies of the new state. His death, while a member of the State Senate, was a severe blow to Brownsville, one from which it never recovered. He passed away June 11, 1834, at the age of 56 years. Many of his descendants and other relatives still live in this county.

Laborers were scarce during the early days of Brownsville and Doctor Will was compelled to bring slaves from Kentucky to operate his salt works. These slaves had to be returned to their owners every thirty days for identification. There were also other slaves in the county at that time, having been brought from the South when their owners migrated to Illinois. Slaves were not permitted in the state, however, after the year 1823.

Grandfather use to laugh over a joke Doctor Will played on him when he was a boy. "One day," he said, "I was in Doc Will's store buying some ammunition. While I was making my purchase, Doc Will came out of his office and seeing I was buying ammunition, he told me he wanted some eagle gizzards for medical purposes; said he would give me a dollar for every eagle gizzard I brought him. I accepted the proposition and went home in high spirits. There were plenty of eagles and I figured I could earn a neat sum of money. Doc told me not to cut the eagles open, as he was afraid I would not do a very good job. Next day I went out and killed two of the big birds, and hurried to Brownsville with them. When I took them to Doc's office he proceeded to cut them open. 'Why, bub,' he said, 'these eagles have no gizzards!' Well, that made me feel disappointed. I had killed lots of eagles but had never cut one open, so did not know they had no gizzards. Doc noticed my disappointment, and gave me a big treat of gum-drops, saying, "Now, bub, you have learned a lesson in natural history." All of Doctor Will's jokes contained a lesson and it was given in such a way as to be remembered."

It was the custom in early days to have log rollings and house and barn raisings, on which occasions the settlers would gather from miles around. The women folk often attended these affairs to assist the housewife. At the end of the day's work there would be a dance or play-party, participated in by old and young. Doctor Will often attended these social events and was always the life of the party, entertaining the guests with "wise cracks", or a comic song or poem. But if occasion demanded, the jovial doctor could also quote the classics as easily as he could those of a humorous vein. Life was harsh on the Illinois frontier a century and more ago, and a social gathering was a great event, one thoroughly enjoyed by those pioneer men and women who felled trees, grubbed stumps, wove cloth and operated the spinning wheel.

CHAPTER III.

Another energetic pioneer was Captain William Boone, who was captain of the mounted rangers during the War of 1812. Captain Boone first settled in Jackson county in 1806, along the bluffs in Degognia township. The following year he moved to what is now Sand Ridge. There his son, Benningsen Boone, was born in the same year, the first white child born in Jackson county. Captain Boone originally came from Kentucky and was a relative of the famous Daniel Boone. Captain Boone has a number of direct descendants living in Jackson county. He and Doctor Will were close friends and both worked unceasingly for the advancement of Jackson county. Captain Boone died in the year 1836 at a landing on the Mississippi river near the present town of Grand Tower, where he operated a wood yard to supply fuel to steamboats. He was a frequent visitor to Old Brownsville and trod the streets of the town that is gone. Captain Boone was the first state senator from Jackson county.

Joseph Duncan, father of the Illinois free school system, located at the foot of Big Hill about the time Jackson county was created. He served several years in the legislature and was elected Governor of Illinois in 1834. It was during his legislature days that he originated the free school bill. Until that time schools were few in the new county, as but few of the pioneers could afford to send their children to subscription schools. The first school in the county was taught in the home of Captain Boone, at Sand Ridge in 1806-1807, Captain Boone paying the teacher's salary.

Alexander Jenkins came to Brownsville with his father in 1817 and learned carpentry. One of his sisters, Diza, married Joel Manning, county clerk; another sister married Doctor Logan and became the mother of the famous General John A. Logan. Alexander Jenkins was elected lieutenant-governor in 1834. Thus, the governor and lieutenant-governor were citizens of Jackson county. It was during the Duncan-Jenkins administration the state capital was moved from Vandalia to Springfield.

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Jesse Griggs, first sheriff of Jackson county, was an early comer, having settled in the county on the Big Muddy in 1804. He also conducted

the Brownsville tavern a number of years, during which time he served as sheriff. In early days, the county officers were appointed instead of being elected, and as Griggs served until about 1836, is evidence he was an efficient officer. He resigned office and moved to Missouri.

A young man named Wilson was sent to Brownsville from Kaskaskia to act as temporary clerk until the official clerk, a gentleman named Humphries, became familiar with the duties of the office. Wilson acted as clerk only a few months. Humphries served until his death in 1820, when Joel Manning was appointed to fill the vacancy. Wilson later became Judge of the Supreme Court of Illinois. Very little is known of Manning. He was said to be of a positive nature and sometimes inclined to be somewhat "grouchy." After serving as county clerk several years, he moved to northern Illinois and died there.

Elections in pioneer days were simple affairs. When election day arrived, the citizens entitled to vote assembled at Brownsville and voted VIVA VOCO for candidates of their choice on national and state tickets. Important issues were also voted on in this manner. As elsewhere stated, county officials were appointed to office. This custom prevailed many years.

Election days and muster days were big events in Brownsville a century ago. For a number of years after the war of 1812, the militia law required every able bodied man to perform military duty and to drill every month of the year. The battalion drills, however, occurred only twice a year. Naturally, the drill ground for Jackson county was at Brownsville. Battalion drill days always attracted great crowds. It was then the old pioneers greeted friends and acquaintances, exchanged stories, swapped horses and dogs; in short, had a good time in general. A barbeque of venison was also one of the attractions of these occasions.

While the barbeque was in preparation the military exercises were conducted. Fifes would shriek and drums would roll, while the men marched and counter marched. Muster days gave the company officers a grand opportunity to swell up with pride, strut and "bawl out" the awkward ones. Then came the feast! After the "inner man" had been properly taken care of, there would be foot races jumping and wrestling contests and various other sports. Sometimes, on these occasions, the pioneers would partake of a little too much hard cider during the excitement, and fights were not uncommon. To take care of this situation, those who were inclined to make a few fistic passages at one another were taken to the

astray pen on the river bank. There the belligerents would be allowed to fight it out, while the spectators sat on the top rails of the pen. Grandfather said no weapons of any kind were used in these fights. The men stood up to one another and fought "fair and square." He said they went at it "hammer and tongs" until one man whipped. Then the fighters would shake hands and be friends. On one such occasion, while the victor was pouring water for the vanquished one to "wash up", the latter remarked "Well, you licked me all right, but your woman can't whip my woman!" Indians would attend these muster day exercises and look on with solemn dignity, grunting "ugh, ugh", instead of laughing at some comical sight.

The pioneer boys had their company of militia. John A. Logan was captain of this boy company. Even at that early day he displayed the military genius which made him famous. Years later, many of Logan's boyhood companions followed him to victory through some of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War. Doctor John Logan, father of the general, came to Brownsville, in 1823, married Elizabeth Jenkins and settled five miles east of Brownsville, now the site of Murphysboro.

At the time Jackson county was organized, all the settlements in Illinois were in the southern part of the state, along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. The central and northern portions of Illinois were occupied by Indians, as was also the interior of southern Illinois. The most formidable tribe was the Kickapoo. The "grand village" of this tribe was not far from the present city of Springfield.

The Kaskaskia tribe was formerly the strongest in Illinois, but after they moved to the Mississippi river about the year 1700, they lost much of their former prowess. Shortly after they made this move, a Catholic mission was founded near the Kaskaskia Indian village, which later became the site of the town of Kaskaskia. Many of the Indians became converted under the teaching of Father Morest, who had charge of the mission. Father Morest, like other pioneers, went through severe hardships and his situation was a most discouraging one. "Our life," he writes, "is passed in roaming through the thick woods, in clambering over hills, in paddling the canoe through lakes and rivers, to catch a poor savage who flies from us and who we cannot tame neither by teaching nor caresses."

Father Morest seems to have been highly successful, however, for he later made the following report: "Christianity has softened the savage natures, and they are now distinguished by their gentle and courteous

manners, so that many of the French have intermarried with their daughters. Moreover, we find in them a spirit of docility and ardor for the practice of Christian virtue. The fervor with which these neophytes frequent the church at the different times of service is admirable. They break off from their occupations and run a long distance to arrive in time. They generally terminate the day by holding assemblies in their homes, where the men and women, forming, as it were, two choirs, recite the rosary and sing spiritual hymns to a late hour of the night."

The Kaskaskia Indians had frequent fights with the Shawnees, who lived along the Wabash river. It was finally mutually agreed to have a fight to settle the matter, the victor to have possession of the hunting grounds. A certain day was appointed in the autumn of 1802 when the battle was to occur. When the day arrived both tribes faced one another near the Big Muddy river in what is now Franklin county. After several hours of severe fighting, the Kaskaskias were forced to retreat. A running fight followed, which continued throughout the day. When they reached what was later known as Six Mile Pond, in the southern part of Perry county, the once formidable Kaskaskia tribe of Indians made what was to be their last stand. A desperate fight ensued at this point, but the tide was against the Kaskaskias. Realizing the seriousness of their situation, a runner was dispatched to the town of Kaskaskia for reinforcements. But before the runner had time to reach town (it was later learned he made the run of more than 20 miles in two hours) the Kaskaskias were again forced to flee. The Shawnees followed them up to within a few miles of Kaskaskia, killing many of the retreating Indians. For years their bones could be seen along the historic Kaskaskia trail. The Kaskaskia tribe never recovered from this severe blow and declined from that time onward. Chief John Du Quoin was the leader of the Kaskaskia tribe in this conflict.

Chief Du Quoin later lived near the present town of Du Quoin, which was named in his honor. When General Lafayette visited Kaskaskia in 1825, a daughter of Chief Du Quoin was introduced to the General, at which time she exhibited a medal which had been presented to her father by General George Washington during the Revolutionary War. Chief Du Quoin was well liked by the citizens of Kaskaskia, which feeling was reciprocated by the Chief. When he died a few years after making his last stand, he was buried in the white cemetery at Kaskaskia. The young brave who made the famous run during the fight, lived at the Indian village on Kinkaid creek until the Indians were removed from Illinois to Indian Territory in the latter 1830's.

CHAPTER IV.

No wheat was raised in Jackson County at the time of its organization. During those early years the majority of the pioneers ate corn bread or "pone". Much of the bread was made of meal made on the premises where the corn was grown, by pounding the corn in a mortar. Here is the way meal was made before any mills were in the county, as told by grandfather:

"You first cut off a block from a big log, standing it on end like a butcher's block, only it had no legs under it. Then a fire was made on top of the block, burning it out dish-shaped until you got it as deep as you wanted it; then the charcoal was scooped out. You then put this corn in the hole and crushed it. A small maul was used for a pestle. This was made out of a pole about six inches in thickness, and for the first foot full sized; then the pole was whittled down so as to make a handle. With that pestle and mortar you then lit in on the corn and crushed it into meal. The meal was then sifted with a hand sieve, the coarse part put back and crushed again."

Pioneers who did not do their own "milling" in the above described manner, were compelled to go to Kaskaskia for their meal. The mill at Kaskaskia, known as Edgar's mill, also made flour, as wheat was raised in that vicinity, it being a much older settlement. If the pioneers wanted flour to make a wedding cake, they could obtain it at the Edgar mill.

Boys generally went to mill astride a horse, using a sack containing two bushels of corn for a saddle. The boys would fish or play games while waiting for their "turn". There would generally be several boys at the mill at the same time from different points in the county. The boys considered a trip to the mill as a pleasant holiday. The mill owner would deduct one-seventh of the corn as toll.

General Edgar obtained possession of the historic Kaskaskia mill in 1795. Before that it had been owned by a Frenchman, but had gone to wreck long before Gen. Edgar purchased it. The former owner, whose name was Paget, was killed by Indians. One day while engaged in operating the mill, a band of Kickapoos attacked the place. A negro escaped through one of the windows and hurried to Kaskaskia to give the alarm,

(the mill being situated on the east side of the Kaskaskia river, opposite the town.) When reinforcements arrived, Paget was found on the floor, his body cut to pieces. He had been scalped, his head cut off and thrown into the hopper.

One of the first mills in Jackson county was operated by John Bower, on Kinkaid creek, about three miles from Brownsville. This was a water mill. About this time, probably 1830, a little wheat was being raised in Jackson county and the mill ground both corn and wheat. It also had an up-and-down saw for sawing lumber. This was hailed as a great improvement. A few years later a mill was built on Beaucoup creek and operated by Dillinger brothers.

Five acres of wheat was considered a big crop and had to be cut with a mowing blade. A man received one dollar per day for supplying the power to operate this harvesting machine, while the binders were paid seventy-five cents per day.

The cost of food did not cause much worry for the residents of Jackson county during Old Brownsville days. Grandfather said when fresh meat was needed, all one had to do was to take his rifle and go a short distance from the clearing and kill a deer or wild turkey. If the appetite demanded something different, there were thousands of wild ducks and geese on the lakes in the bottom. Wild pigeon also served as meat. These were so numerous that they hid the sun when in flight. They were not hunted with a gun, but were killed at night while on roost. They had certain roosting places and hundreds would be found on one tree, hence it was an easy matter to make a big kill. The pioneer produced most of his foodstuff and clothes, depending on wild game for meat.

Brownsville continued to flourish until about 1835, when it began to decline. There were several reasons for this. Doctor Will, its leading citizen, died the previous year and his various enterprises ceased operation. Again, settlers began locating in the northern and western portions of the county and they demanded a more central county seat. While this matter was being discussed, the court house at Brownsville was burned on the night of January 10, 1843, the twenty-seventh anniversary of the birth of the county. But very few records were saved, and for this reason records of pioneer days are few. After the destruction of the court house Doctor Logan offered to donate twenty acres as an inducement to relocate the county seat on his farm, where Murphysboro now stands. His offer was accepted and the new town was started. Many citizens of Brownsville

moved to Murphysboro, some of them wrecking their buildings and taking them along. Other buildings were bought by various persons and removed. Thus, in a few years the town had vanished.

When Brownsville was established in 1816 the population of Jackson county was about 1200; now it has a population of nearly 40,000. At that time not a bushel of wheat was grown in the county. In normal years it now produces approximately 500,000 bushels per annum, and greatly exceeded that figure when the grain was more generally grown. In Old Brownsville Days it is doubtful if the county produced 25,000 bushels of corn; now in normal seasons it yields more than a million bushels. Also, a great abundance of other crops is now produced which were not raised in pioneer days. For instance, in a recent year the total crop value of Jackson county amounted to nearly \$3,000,000!

Jackson county is also rich in natural resources of various kinds. It has long been a producer of an excellent grade of coal, and contains oil and gas. While the oil industry in this locality is now dormant, only a few years ago the Ava field was producing millions of cubic feet of natural gas per day, as well as considerable oil.

A century ago railroads were just coming into being, and there was not a foot of trackage in the entire state of Illinois; today Jackson county is traversed by the Mobile and Ohio, Illinois Central and Missouri Pacific railroads. It is interesting to note that the latter line passes through the site of Old Brownsville.

When Jackson county was being settled, pioneers traveled over dim trails in ox-drawn wagons; now her people ride in luxurious trains, speed in automobiles along concrete highways, or fly over the country in airplanes!

There was only one newspaper in the whole of Illinois Territory when Jackson county was created in 1816—The Illinois Herald, published at Kaskaskia; today there are five papers in Jackson county alone.

One hundred years ago, when Brownsville was the business center of Jackson county, Chicago consisted of only a few huts; today Brownsville is gone and Chicago is the second largest city on the American continent, and as these lines are being written, is entertaining the whole world with its magnificent Century of Progress Exposition!

The telegraph, electric light, telephone and all other modern inventions now used by residents of Jackson county, were undreamed of back in the year 1833. What a change since Brownsville Days!

A century is considered a long span of time when mentioned in connection with the age of a person, yet it is a brief period when considering the age of a state, nation and objects of nature. For instance, many forest trees are yet standing in Jackson county which were full grown long before Old Brownsville Days. This county is still young.

But gone are the Indians! Gone are the pioneers! Gone is Brownsville! The same hills are still there, and the same sun still shines that once smiled on the old town. The same moon sends forth its beams to play on the rippling waves of the same river, just as it did a century and more ago. But no longer does the gentle voice of the pioneer mother, singing sweet and low, float out on the evening air. For the pioneers are gone! Nor do the candle lights gleam at night through the windows of the little cabin homes on Big Muddy, as of yore. For Old Brownsville is no more! Like a wild rose it bloomed and withered away.

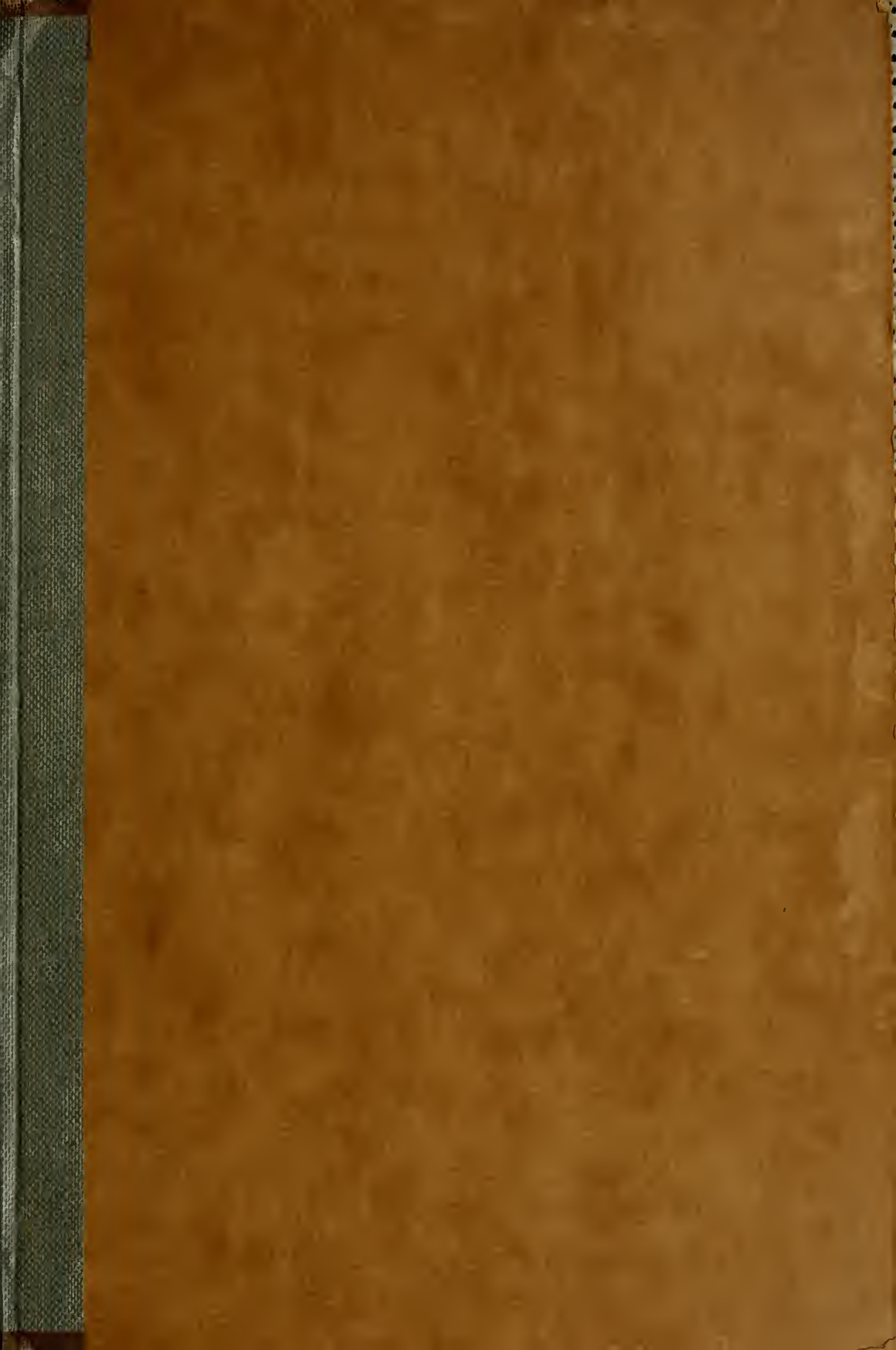
Not without thy thrilling story,
 Old Jackson, Old Jackson,
 Can be written the State's story,
 Old Jackson, Old Jackson,
 On the record of thy years,
 Old Jackson, Old Jackson,
 Gallant John Logan's name appears,
 Old Jackson, Old Jackson,
 Boone, Conrad Will and our tears,
 Old Jackson, Old Jackson,
 Boone, Conrad Will and our tears,
 Old Jackson, Old Jackson.

Brave men and women of Old Brownsville Days, your descendants most lovingly salute you!

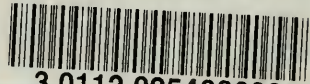
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