

HISTORICAL

... AND ...

DESCRIPTIVE

REVIEW OF ILLINOIS

VOLUME I.

The Southern Section

“EGYPT”

Her Principal Towns and
Their Progressive Men.

St. Louis--Chicago:
JOHN LETHEM.

PREFACE.

Every American citizen must be proud of the state of Illinois and every reader of the world's history those more so among generations yet unborn, will in scanning the New World's progress dwell with especial pleasure upon those pages which will speak of Illinois and her people.

In the Greek confederacy the state of Attica, of which Athens was the capital, was the leader, and its people were eminently proud of their record. So did a Roman take just pride in being one and equally so with an inhabitant of Rome or Athens must a citizen of Illinois feel happy that he is a resident of this state, be he so by birth or by adoption.

The unlimited resources of Illinois were nature's gift and the people of the state have shown a wonderful intelligence and a most admirable energy in seeing and developing them. By the proper application of it and by the exercise of a degree of ambition not surpassed by any people in human history have they risen to this commanding position.

When our Republic was fifty years old the Red Indian's wigwam and the Buffalo herd were the standard features of the state. Now she is the third state in the American Union in population—3,826,351—and wealth, and the plow, the chisel and the spade, deftly guided by human civilization have made her the granary and market for the world, reared cities and edifices rivaling the Pantheon or Coliseum and forming great works, which have wrought good in the economy of life commensurate with that of the Suez canal or the Applan way.

While in art she has not had the opportunity of accumulating treasures for hundreds of years, in building she is more pretentious than any state. The name of her metropolis (Chicago) is respected in the commerce of the entire world and as a political, educational and social factor the people of Illinois exert an influence second to no state in national affairs.

In war, as in material progress, she stands likewise in the front. The two heroes of the civil war, Lincoln and Grant were her sons and from the confines of the state, would the government have accepted volunteers, would have been furnished all the soldiers asked for during the first two years of the war.

Illinois will never rest till she enjoys the title of the first state of the Union, in commerce, agriculture, manufactures, politics, finance, education, art and religion.

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Borders, by whose death three years ago the city sustained a severe loss. For some years business has been conducted under the style of J. J. Borders & Son, the latter is now sole owner and President of the Bank, the old firm name being retained; the other officers are Mr. A. Crozier, Cashier and Mr. Wm. Watson, Ass't Cashier. The paid up capital stock is \$25,000 with a large surplus and heavy individual liability; with its ample resources and conducted upon the leading principles of sound banking with a conservative yet liberal policy there is scarcely any limit to its sphere of usefulness. In addition to a general banking business, receiving deposits, making collections, buying and selling exchange and loaning upon approved collateral at low rates of interest, J. J. Borders & Son make a special feature of real estate business. They are themselves large property holders, having several thousand acres of fine farming lands as well as city property, and both as agents buy, sell and lease, and in the latter capacity look after properties for non-residents, collect rents, pay taxes etc., etc. Mr. W. R. Borders, who is a native Spartan, learned banking under his father's guidance and through experience and natural financial ability is a recognized authority in his profession. He is an active energetic man of many interests—owner of the Maple Valley Stock Farm where he raises fancy stock of all kinds and has a fine stud of pacing and trotting horses, he was one of the original promoters of the discovery of natural gas at Sparta and is now the owner of three gas wells; he is also largely interested in and is manager of The Little Bonanza Fan Mill Company, engaged in this town in the manufacture of a recently patented fan mill which is admitted superior to anything hitherto in the market and finally, is now organizing a building association, to be known as the Southern Illinois Improvement and Loan Association, incorporated with an authorized capital of one million dollars. In promoting this company, Mr. Borders has had the co-operation of one of the best known authorities on building associations in the State of Illinois, and adopting all those features of existing associations which have proved most satisfactory under the tests of time and practical working and eliminating those which have been found objectionable in any way, they have formulated an organization which will certainly be a model of its kind. Though a busy man Mr. Borders, does not neglect social relations and is a member of the Masonic order at Sparta and of the Tancredre Commandery No. 50 of Belleville.

CENTRALIA & CHESTER, R. R., CO.—Nothing has contributed more to the prosperity of this live little town than the organization of the Centralia and Chester R. R. Co., which took place seven years ago. The enterprise was conceived and carried out by Sparta business men with the co-operation of Eastern capitalists, their desire being to establish a belt line, placing this section in communication with important points by direct connection with the principal lines. The road, which is at present operating forty-seven miles was built to Centralia in the first place, and is now being extended to Evansville on the South. The equipment is first-class in every respect, good bed and modern stock, and by reason of its prompt, reliable service and the general efficiency of its management it enjoys a wide popularity with the traveling public and shippers. The officers of the Company, which is bonded for \$600,000, are as follows:—President, T. B. Needles of Nashville, Illinois, ex-United States Marshal; Secretary, S. L. Dwight; General Manager, R. Rosborough, a well-known local capitalist and mine-owner; General Freight and Passenger Agent, E. A. Burrill and Auditor, B. Stillson. The Sparta offices are the headquarters of the Company, and the shops are also located here; they give employment to 35 to 40 men. The gentlemen upon whom the active burden of the business management falls, have an intimate familiarity with the details of successful railroad operation, and throughout their administration of affairs has shown a discriminating judgement in anticipating the public re-

quirements. To their progressive methods the Company owes much, and by the success of the road the town of Sparta has been materially advanced in commercial development and reputation.

SPARTA WOOLEN MILLS, Jas. L. McClurken, Proprietor.—In reviewing the commercial resources of any city, her manufacturing enterprises naturally occupy the position of greatest prominence and are brought under the writer's earliest consideration. The Sparta Woolen Mills were one of the first industries to be established in this section, having been started by Mr. M. McClurken, father of the present proprietor, in 1850; they have been under James McClurken's management since 1891. The building in which the business is now located is not that in which it was first carried on, but the original Sparta Mills are now used by Mr. McClurken senior, as a wool warehouse; the present building was erected a few years ago. It is a three story brick, about 80x160 area and has been planned to permit interior arrangement with the greatest economy of space and facility of operation. The equipment consists of what is technically known as one "set", or a "system" of carding, twisting and spinning machinery, which has a capacity for turning out about 200 lbs. of yarn daily, and eight power-looms of various widths for the production of woollen goods. All the machinery is driven by a steam engine of 30 horse power; from twenty to twenty-five hands are employed in the mill. Mr. McClurken fully maintains the old established business connections, and has at the same time developed and widely extended his trade. In its present eminently successful position, the mill adds materially to the reputation of the city.

JACOB SNYDER, Meats.—Among the institutions of this thriving town, mention should be made of the business which Mr. Jacob Snyder established twenty-two years ago, and is still carrying on with undiminished popularity. Mr. Snyder kills all his own beef, employs two men steady, has steam sausage machinery, driven by a two horse power engine which is kept running all the time. Mr. Snyder was born in Ohio, but has been resident in Sparta for twenty two years; he cheerfully bears his share in fostering the best interests of the city, and has established a record of efficient public service as a member of the Board of Alderman, being elected to that position on four separate occasions.

J. & S. H. ALEXANDER, Druggists and Pharmacists.—A careful review of Sparta discloses the existence of houses, as complete in their several lines as similar establishments in larger cities. This Pharmacy was established twenty-five years ago by T. F. Alexander, and purchased from him, some two or three years later, by his brother Mr. J. Alexander, one of the present owners. After conducting the business alone for a short time Mr. Alexander admitted his cousin Mr. S. H. Alexander to partnership; in 1876 business was commenced under the style of J. & S. H. Alexander. Both gentlemen are registered pharmacists, Mr. J. Alexander having studied under his brother and in turn instructed his cousin, who later attended the Chicago College of Pharmacy. The store is 25x50 in extent, and displays an elaborate stock, which embraces everything to be found in a first-class drug-store, besides holiday books and de luxe editions of popular authors. They have unexcelled facilities and conduct their business in a progressive and enterprising manner, and in the prescription department exercise scrupulous accuracy and care.

WM. M. BROWN, Staple and Fancy Groceries.—This business, which was established ten years ago, has become one of the mercantile landmarks of the community. The store is centrally located on Market Street and occupies commodious premises 25x90 in extent; a heavy stock of groceries as well as queensware, glass, and woodenware is carried. The proprietor gives the business his personal supervision and has two assistants. Mr. Brown is a native