# PIONEER LETTERS

OF

# Gershom Flagg

Edited with Introduction and Notes

BY

SOLON J. BUCK

Reprinted from the Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society for 1910

## PIONEER LETTERS OF GERSHOM FLAGG.

Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by Solon J. Buck.

#### INTRODUCTION.

Expansion is the dominant note of American history. As a fire kindled at the edge of a prairie sweeps on and on until it has covered the whole area, so the American people from the very beginnings at Jamestown and Plymouth have pushed westward, ever westward, until in the course of three centuries they have occupied the continent and the frontier has disappeared. The story of this westward movement will someday be told, and It will be more than a composite of the stories of the individuals and families who have taken part in it. A knowledge, nevertheless, of the motives, purposes, and experiences of individual pioneers is essential to an understanding of the movement as a whole; and for that reason, if for no other, it is desirable to preserve and make accessible contemporary letters and journals of men who were in the vanguard of the movement.

Gershom Flagg, the writer of the letters here presented, came of pioneer stock. The first member of the family to feel the call of the West—tradition says that a love affair had something to do with it also—was one Thomas Flegg of Scratby, England, who crossed the ocean and settled in Watertown, Massachusetts, in 1637. Six generations later the pioneer spirit reappeared in two brothers, Ebenezer and Gershom Flagg, both of whom had seen service in the Continental Army during the Revolution. Ebenezer went to Vermont, locating first in Rutland county and then in 1799 in the town of Richmond, Chittenden county, in the foothills of the Green Mountains and not far from Lake Champlain. There he raised a goodly family of five boys and six girls. Gershom, the brother, sought a more distant frontier and in 1789 joined the little colony which Rufus Putnam and Manasseh Cutler with their New England associates had just established at Marietta, Ohio.

Ebenezer Flagg's third son, another Gershom, was born at Orwell, Vermont, November 26, 1792. His early years were spent on the farm with little opportunity for schooling, but later he was enabled to study surveying with a competent engineer in Burlington. During the War of 1812, he joined a company of Vermont militia as drummer and was present at the battle of Plattsburg, across Lake Champlain in New York. Soon after the close of the war he determined to go west, apparently with the idea of securing employment in surveying the public domain, or of purchasing land and developing a farm, or both, as occasion might offer. This was the time when the "Ohio fever" was carrying off thousands of the sons of New England and so young Flagg left Richmond September 23, 1816, with Ohio as his intended destination.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Family Records of the Descendants of Gershom Flagg, of Lancaster, Massachusetts, compiled and published by Norman Gershom Flagg and Lucius C. S. Flagg, 1997.

Turning westward at Troy, New York, he followed the ancient highway up the valley of the Mohawk to Utica. From there to Canandaigua he traveled on the Genessee road, constructed by the state of New York in the last decade of the preceding century. This road ran straight on to Buffalo but Flagg appears to have left it at Canandaigua and made his way northwestwardly to Rochester where he struck another state road constructed about 1809, which he could follow to Lewistown.2 From there his route ran south past the falls to Buffalo, around the end of the lake to Erie, and then south again to Mercer. From Mercer in Pennsylvania to Cadiz in Ohio the road could have been but little more than a trail for all the main roads in that part of the country led to or from Pittsburg. At Cadiz, however, he struck the main highway from Pittsburg to the West and from Cambridge to Lancaster he was on a state road following the line of the famous trace which Ebenezer Zane, under authority of Congress, laid out from Wheeling in Virginia to Maysville in Kentucky in 1797.3 From Lancaster Flagg made his way through Columbus, the new state capital, to Champaign county in the west-central part of Ohio, where he arrived November 8, 1816, forty-six days after leaving Richmond.

Here he remained, in Springfield and in Harmony township, during the ensuing winter and spring; but it was not long before his "Ohio fever began to turn" and he was seized with the "Missouri and Illinois fever"—induced apparently by the hope of being able to secure work as a surveyor by going to St. Louis where the surveyor-general of Illinois and Missouri resided and by the belief that good land could be secured cheaply in the Military Tract in Illinois. On July 1, therefore, he arrived in Cincinnati, with the intention of proceeding at once to St. Louis, but the advice of friends that for reasons of health it was best to arrive in a new country in the fall and the desire for company on the journey induced him to remain in Cincinnati until October. Finally he joined with another Vermonter in the purchase of a flat-boat and on October 19, they started to float down the Ohio. When the mouth of the Mississippi was reached, they put their baggage on a north-bound keel-boat and walked to St. Louis, arriving there the eighteenth of November.

A few days after his arrival in St. Louis, Flagg went prospecting for land in Illinois and made a purchase of 264 acres. Returning to St. Louis, he endeavored to secure a contract for some of the government surveying, but without success, and in the spring of 1818 he established himself on a quarter-section of land six miles north of Edwardsville, in Madison county, Illinois. Renting part of the farm for a number of years, he cultivated the remainder himself and boarded with a neighbor. On September 27, 1827, he was married to Mrs. Jane Paddock Richmond, daughter of Gaius Paddock, who in 1821 had taken up a quarter-section adjoining Flagg's. The rest of Flagg's life, with the exception of visits to relatives in the East in 1838 and 1855, was passed quietly, running his farm and serving as justice of the peace and as postmaster of Paddock's Grove. He died March 2, 1857.

As an illustration of the influence which the emigration of one individual sometimes had on his relatives and friends, it is interesting to note that of the eight brothers and sisters of Gershom Flagg who were younger than himself, five followed him to Illinois, four going directly to Madison county. Of the other three, one died unmarried at the age of twenty-three, the family of another—a sister—moved to Illinois shortly after her death, and the third went as far west as Ohio. To the list might also be added a son of Flagg's oldest brother, who moved to Paw Paw, Illinois, in 1850. The descendants of these brothers and sisters are now scattered all over the United States from Vermont to California and thus the history of this family typifies in a way the spread of the American people across the continent.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Archer B. Hulbert, Pioneer Roads (Historic Highways, XI.-XII.), II., chap. iv.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I., chap. iii. <sup>4</sup> Now in Clark county. <sup>5</sup> See notes 10, 83, 96, 102, 111, 112, of the text.



WILLARD CUTTING FLAGG.

In addition to telling the story of one of the leaders of that great stream of emigrants which flowed from New England to Illinois, these letters are of interest for the illustrations which they contain of social, economic, and political conditions. Unlike so many of the travelers who wrote for publication, Flagg had no motive for distorting the things which he saw and experienced, and his pictures can be relied upon so far as they go. Light is shed also upon a number of incidents of interest in state and local history. All the letters except one are addressed to one of the two older brothers or to the parents of the writer. The first four tell of the journey from Vermont to Ohio and give an account of pioneer agriculture and social conditions in that state in 1816 and 1817; the fifth letter is devoted to Cincinnati and contains an interesting picture of the Queen City of the West in 1817; the next letter contains a similar picture of St. Louis, an account of the journey thither, and information about land in Illinois and Missouri; the seventh letter serves as a resumé of the writer's experiences since he left Vermont and the eighth is devoted to a description of Madison county and of Illinois in the year in which it became a state. The remaining letters, sixteen in all, of dates running from 1819 to 1836, deal with a variety of subjects: agricultural methods and conditions; state and national politics; the slavery controversy in Illinois; murders, robberies, hangings, and duels; the activity of the surveyor-general in feathering the nests of his relatives; Lafayette's visit to the West-in short, they present a picture of society in Illinois at the time when it was a rapidly growing frontier state.

These letters were first gathered together by Willard C. Flagg, the son of Gershom, and extracts from some of them were published in the Alton Weekly Telegraph beginning April 27, 1876. The originals are now the property of Hon. Norman G. Flagg, of Moro, Illinois, grandson of Gershom, and thanks are due to him for permission to copy them and for assistance in preparing them for the press. They are here printed verbatim and literatim with the exception that capitals are supplied occasionally for the first words and periods at the end of sentences. All words or letters supplied and all editorial explanations in the text are enclosed in brackets, the former in Roman type and the latter in italics.

University of Illinois, September, 1911.

# GERSHOM FLAGG'S LETTERS.

To Azariah C. Flagg, November 12, 1816.

Springfield Champaign County<sup>2</sup> Nov 12th 1816

DEAR BROTHER,

I left Richmond's the 23d day of sept. and after traveling Eight Hundred & ninety Eight miles arrived at this place the 8th inst in company with

nine hundred or a thousand when Flagg was there. Henry Howe, Historical Collections of Ohio. (edition of 1857), pp. 80-81, 84, 93.

The town of Richmond, Vermont, in which the farm of Dr. Ebenezer Flagg was located, is in Chittenden county and adjoins the town of Willston in which lies the city of Burlington. The village of Richmond is twelve miles from Burlington and twenty-five from Montpelier.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Azariah Cutting Flagg, second son of Ebenezer and Elizabeth Flagg, was born in Orwell, Vermont, in 1790; served as a printer's apprentice in Burlington from 1801 to 1806; and shortly after crossed Lake Champlain and became the proprietor of the Plattsburg (New York) Republican. He won distinction at the battle of Plattsburg during the War of 1812 and rose rapidly to prominence in New York politics, first as a member of the Albany Regency and later as a leader of the radical or "Barnburner" faction of the Democratic party. He was a member of the legislature in 1824 and 1826, secretary of state from 1826 to 1833, state comptroller from 1833 to 1839 and from 1842 to 1847, and comptroller of the city of New York from 1853 to 1859. He died in New York City in 1873 after fourteen years of total blindness. Flagg Family Records. 48; D. S. Alexander, Political History of the State of New York, I., 294, 325-326, II., 52, 58, 90-92; Ellis H. Roberts. New York (American Commonwealths), II., 546, 583, 598.

<sup>2</sup> Champaign county, Ohio, was formed from Greene and Franklin counties in 1801 and received its name from the rolling character of its surface. Springfield was laid out by James Demint in 1803. In 1817 Clark county was formed from Champaign, Madison and Greene; and Springfield became its seat. Judging from the census returns of 1810 and 1820, the population of the town was probably about <sup>1</sup> Azariah Cutting Flagg, second son of Ebenezer and Elizabeth Flagg, was

the census returns of 1810 and 1820, the population of the town was probably about

Celah Coleman. I shall stay in this vicinity probably til next April and I wish you would forward your papers to me until that time and be sure & write to me as soon as you receive this letter.

In comeing to this place we have had very good luck although since we came into the state of Ohio we have not traveled more than 20 miles a day the roads being very bad—the South East part of the State is very rough it is nothing but one continued range of hills from where we came into the state to Muskingum r[i]ver and from thence we found it very level and so muddy that it was as bad as the hills. We came a round about way I suppose but I think we took the best road. We first came to Troy then to Schenectady up the Mohawk river to Utica through Canandaigua crossed the Gennessee river at Rochester villiage through Lewiston up Niagara River by the falls to Buffalo from thence we had a bad road all the way through Erie, Meadville, Mercer, New Castle & Greersburg in Pennsylvania; through New Lisbon, Cadiz, Cambridge, Zanesville, New Lancaster, Columbus which is the seat of the state Government, Worthington to this place in Ohio,6 which is about 60 miles from the East line of Indiana where we calculate to go next spring if we have our healths.

I find the Country as fertile as I expected. Corn grows with once hoeing and some times with out hoeing at all to 14 feet high and is well filled. Wheat is sowed where the corn is taken off and the ground plowed once over which is sufficient to bring a crop. Hogs & Cattle run in the woods in summers and in the winter are fed on Corn & prairie hay. In this vicinity are some as handsome Cattle as ever I have seen. Some men Milk 40 Cows and own from 100 to 400 head of Cattle but these men are few.

Beef & Pork is four dollar a hundred Wheat 75 cents a bushel and Corn & oats 25 cents a bushel. I am fully of the opinion that a man may live by farming with much less labour here than in the Eastern States but there are many things here which are very inconvenient the roads are very bad

<sup>4</sup> Of these places. Troy, Schenectady. Utica, and Canandaigua had from two to five thousand population each when Flagg passed through them but Rochester, Lewiston, and Buffalo were merely small villages. Troy and Schenectady were old Dutch settlements; Utica, located on the site of Fort Schuyler, received its first permanent settlement in 1786; Canandaigua, the principal town of the Phelps-Gorham purchase was laid out in 1789 and soon became the largest town in western Gorham purchase was laid out in 1789 and soon became the largest town in western New York; Rochester was first settled in 1803; Lewiston, on the site of an old French trading-post, was laid out by the Holland Company in 1798; and Buffalo was surveyed by the same company in 1802. Buffalo was burnt by the English in 1814 and grew but little until after the construction of the Eric canal. Reuben G. Thwaites, Early Western Travels, VIII., 42, 158, XIX., 152, XXIV., 186-188, notes. Erie, the seat of Eric county, was laid out around the old French fort of Presqu'isle on the lake shore shortly after the fort was surrendered to the United States by the British in 1796. It was a port of entry of considerable importance and had a population of about five hundred in 1816. Meadville and Mercer were towns of about the same size, the seats of Crawford and Mercer counties respectively, and New Castle was a village which had grown up on the site of the Delaware Indian town of "Old Kuskuskies" at the forks of the Shenango. Thwaites, Early Western Travels, I., 26, 101, 249, notes; William Darby, Emigrant's Guide (New York, 1818), p. 264.

Greersburg has disappeared from the modern maps and gazetteers of Pennsylvania but it is given in the United States census of 1820 as a village in Beaver county with a population of 146 and Finley's map of Pennsylvania (1833) locates it on a road between New Castle and Georgetown and at or near the present village of Darlington.

of Darlington.

6 New Lisbon, the seat of Columbiana county, Ohio, was laid out in 1802 by Rev. Lewis Kinney and had a population of about five hundred in 1816. The first settlement on the site of Cadiz was in 1799 but the town was not laid out until 1803 or 1804. It had a population of about four hundred in 1816. In 1798 a tavern and ferry were established at the place where Zane's Trace crossed Will's Creek and in 1806 the town of Cambridge was laid out there. It was settled live the property and in 1811 was made the cost of Cambridge was laid out the settled by emigrants from the island of Guernsey and in 1811 was made the seat of Guernsey county. Zanesville, located where Zane's Trace crossed the Muskingum, was laid out by Jonathan Zane and John McIntire in 1799. It was the capital of the state from 1810 to 1812 and its population must have exceeded a thousand when Flagg passed through in 1816. Lancaster was also on Zane's Trace, where it crossed the Hockhocking River. Settlement began there in 1799 and the town was laid out in 1800 as New Lancaster but the "New" was dropped, officially at least, by act of the legislature in 1805. Its population was about six hundred in 1816. In 1812 the legislature of Ohio accepted the proposal of four speculators to locate the capital of the state on the high banks of the Scioto River opposite to the town of Franklinger and other proposary buildings. The ton on condition that they erect a state-house and other necessary buildings. The proprietors at once laid out the town of Columbus and in 1816 the legislature began holding sessions there. The town grew rapidly and is said to have contained three

although there was never better ground for roads there is no Bridges except a few toll ones. I have crossed one Creek 9 times in going 3 miles which in

high water must be impassable.

There is no regulations for educating the youth by common Schools. The inhabitants are from all parts North & East of Kentucky and are the most ignorant people I ever saw. What the New England people call towns and villages they call townships & towns. I have asked many people what township they lived in & they could not tell. If you enquire for any place if it is a town they can sometimes tell if a township you will get no information about it from one half of the people. One great difficulty in finding any place is the great number of towns and townships of the same name. There is of towns and townships 3 by the name of Concord, 6 of Fairfield, 4 of Franklin, 9 of Green, 9 of Jefferson, 11 of Madison, 7 of Salem, 11 of Union, 7 of Washington, 5 of Harrison & 8 of Springfield so that great embaresment is attendant on peoples directing letters; there is many more towns beside those I have mentioned of the same names. You will be careful therefore in sending letters to the State of Ohio to designate the County as well as the town; you will direct your letters to "Springfield Champaign County," if otherwise I may never get them. In speaking of the ignorance of the people in this state you will take notice that I have traveled in that part of the state which is inhabited by people from Pennsylvania, Maryland Virginia & Kentucky. I am pursuaded the people who came from Connecticut who are settled in the north part of the state are more enlightened.8

There is one thing that I knew not before I came into this state that is that almost one fourth of it the North West corner belongs to the Indian and is now in their possession except some tracts about the forts of 6 and 12 miles square.

I saw Ulnsted [?] Chamberlain and Joshua Chamberlain his Father & family at Lewiston in N Y where they all live. I saw Frederick Day at a tavern near Niagara Falls who told me he had a wife & 3 Children & lives

hundred buildings in 1817 and to have had a population of over two thousand in 1818. Worthington was a village of about seventy houses situated on the Scioto sixteen miles above Columbus. It was settled in 1803 by people from Connecticut sixteen miles above Columbus. It was settled in 1803 by people from Connecticut and Massachusetts. Howe. Historical Collections of Ohio, 107-108, 158-162, 168-172, 203-204, 242, 244, 384-390; Samuel R. Brown. Western Gazetteer, (Auburn, New York, 1817), pp. 296-297, 304, 311, 316, 318; Darby, Emigrant's Guide, 227-228; Jacob H. Studer, Columbus. Ohio; its History, Resources, and Progress, chap. i.

The western pioneers displayed a surprising lack of originality in their choice of place names. A modern gazetteer gives, of towns and townships in Ohio: nine by the name of Concord; eight of Fairfield: twenty-three of Franklin; thirteen of Green and six of Greene; twenty-five of Jefferson: twenty-one of Madison; nineteen of Salem, including one city: thirty-one of Union: forty-four of Washington; in

of Salem, including one city; thirty-one of Union; forty-four of Washington, including one city; twenty of Harrison; and eleven of Springfield, including the place from which Flagg was writing, now a city of forty thousand inhabitants. The difficulty with regard to the directing of mail has been obviated by the postal rule which permits but one post-effice of a given name in a state. There is an amusing chapter on "Names of Places" in James Hall, Letters from the West, 193-214.

8 When Connecticut surrendered her claims to lands in the West in 1786, she

When Connecticut surrendered her claims to lands in the West in 1786, she reserved a tract of about three and a quarter million acres on the shore of Lake Erie, which became known as New Connecticut or the Western Reserve. Its settlement was begun at Cleveland in 1796 by Connecticut people and most of the early settlers were from New England. Connecticut surrendered the jurisdiction over it to the United States in 1800 and it was incorporated in Ohio. Howe, Historical Collections of Ohio, 120-123, 559; Andrew C. McLaughlin, The Confederation and the Constitution (American Nation, X.). 112.

The treaty of Greenville, negotiated by General Wayne in 1795 established the first recognized boundary between the Indians and the whites in the Northwest Territory. The line started near the site of Cleveland on Lake Erie; ran up the

Territory. The line started near the site of Cleveland on Lake Erie; ran up the Cuyahoga, across the portage to the Tuscarawas, and down that stream to the crossing point above Fort Laurens; thence westerly across the state to Loramie's Station on a branch of the Great Miami; thence to Fort Recovery; and from there southwardly across the eastern part of the present state of Indiana to the Ohio River opposite the mouth of the Kentucky. The next important cession in Ohio was made by the treaty of Fort Industry in 1805 when the Indians gave up all of the l east of a line drawn due south from about the middle of Sandusky Bay to Greenville line. By the treaty of Detroit in the following year, the triangle of land north of the Maumee and east of a line drawn due north from the mouth of the Au Glaize or Bear Creek was ceded. This was the situation when Flagg was writing in 1816 but two other treaties in September, 1817 and October, 1818 extinguished the claims of the Indians to the rest of Ohio, with the exception of a few small reservations. Bureau of American Ethnology. Reports. XVIII.. part ii, especially maps 49 and 50; Frazer E. Wilson, The Peace of Mad Anthony, chap. iv.

in the vicinity that his Father was dead and his mother and Harry living at Seneca Co N Y. Luther Whitney is in the town of Columbus and is going to commence keeping tavern in a few days he told me.

Tell Mary<sup>10</sup> that I traveled in Company with Eleeta [?] Allen who is Married to Theophilus Randall as far as the town of Murray in Gennessee County

N Y.11 where they expect to live.

What I had almost forgotten to tell you is that I am in Good health & Spirrits and have been since I left Richmond. I have not written to our folks in Richmond yet But shall as soon as I can write the particulars of the Country which I have passed through. But if you have an opportunity write to them & tell them that "I am pretty well as common" I have not written half what I wish [to] write; & have written some things not worth writing But I hope you will Pardon my folly & ignorance & give my love to all your family. Your Brother in Friendship &c.

GERSHOM FLAGG [Addressed:] Capt. A. C. Flagg, Plattsburgh, New York.12 [Written postmark:] Springfield C C Ohio Novr 15th 1816. 2513 [Endorsed:] Missent [Stamped postmark:] Pittsop, Dec 5

To ARTEMAS FLAGG,14 January 8, 1817.

SPRINGFIELD CHAMPAIGN COUNTY Jan. 8th 1817

DEAR BROTHER,

I once more attempt to write to you to let you know that I am in good health hopeing that these lines will find you and the rest of my friends in good health. I wrote to you by mail the 17th Nov. but have not yet received any answer from you. If you have not Recd the letter I wish you to write to me as soon as you Receive this and I will write to you again. I wrote a particular description of the Country and will write it again if you have not received that letter. I have heard from Vermont several times since I left there by people from Waterbury Bolton Montpelier &c15 but have not heard a word about my friends since I left that place. I am informed by people from Vermont and Massachusetts that it is very hard times in Vermont, that Bread is likely to be very scarcee &c.16 I want to hear from you very much I wish you to Write to me as often as you can conveniently and

10 Mary Ann Flagg, fourth child and oldest daughter of Ebenezer and Elizabeth Flagg. was born in Orwell, Vermont, in 1794 and died at Rochelle, Illinois, in 1857. Flagg Family Records, 37.

11 At this time Genesee county embraced a large part of western New York. The township of Murray is now in Orleans county about twenty-five miles west of Rochester and on the line of the Erie Canal.

12 Plattsburg is on Lake Champlain about thirty miles from the Canadian line.

Chittenden counties respectively. Montpelier, the capital of Vermont, is in Washington county. All these places are in the valley of the Winooski or Onion River, which runs into Lake Champlain a short distance from Burlington.

The economic depression in New England during 1816 and 1817 is generally ascribed to the financial and industrial re-organization necessitated by the termination of the War of 1812 and the Napoleonic wars in Europe. The situation was aggravated, however, by an exceptionally cold season in 1816 which brought about a crop failure and an approach to famine conditions. This state of affairs in New England was a considerable factor in promoting emigration to the West. Macmaster, History of the People of the United States, IV., chaps. xxi, xxiii; George Barstow, History of New Hampshire, 392; Arthur C. Boggess, Settlement of Illinois, 1778-1830, p. 120.

<sup>12</sup> Plattsburg is on Lake Champlain about thirty miles from the Canadian line. It is famous as the site of one of the important battles of the War of 1812.

13 These figures were endorsed on letters at the office from which they were sent, to indicate the amount of postage to be collected from the receiver. The rates of postage for a single sheet varied from six to twenty-five cents according to distance and double rates were charged for a letter of two sheets. (John B. MacMaster, History of the People of the United States, V., 533-536.) On most of these letters the date of the postmark is several days later than that of the letter itself; indicating infrequency of mails or delay in getting the letters to the office.

14 Artemas Flagg, the oldest son of Ebenezer and Elizabeth Flagg, was born at Orwell, Vermont, in 1789. In 1799 he removed with his father to Richmond, where he lived as a farmer and blacksmith until his death in 1874. He served in the Vermont militia in the War of 1812, held various local offices, was a member of the legislature in 1836-1837, and was a member of two state conventions for revising the constitution. Flagg Family Records, 41.

15 Waterbury and Bolton are neighboring towns to Richmond in Washington and Chittenden counties respectively. Montpelier, the capital of Vermont, is in Wash-

write every thing which you think worth writing respecting the situation of the Country, the times News &c. for I have a poor chance to know what our and other Governments are about. I see but few News Papers here and those not of the first rate.

The Legislature of this state is now in session at Columbus but their proceedings are not very interesting. The emigration to this Country from New England and New York still continues. There has several families came into this vicinity since I came here and there is in this township a dozen young men from Vermont. There is as many people moving from York state as from Vermont and more to this state, and people are going from here to Indiana and to the Missouri. The whole movement seems to be to the Westward and when they get there they go on beyond the Westward.17 I have seen some families of eight or 9 children on the road some with their horses tired others out of Money &c.18 I believe Many people who come to this Country are greatly disappointed. A Man with a family that comes from Vermont here has to encounter great difficulties. Although Grain is cheap it will take one or two hundred dollars to get here and when he gets here his horses are poor and will not sell for more than half what they cost in vermont. If a man goes on to timbered Land he will have to buy all his provision for at least one year and there are many things which are worth but little in Vermont that cost considerable here. A Plow fit to plow the Prairie Ground will cost \$20. and Rails laid up into a fence on the Prairie cost \$2.25 a hundred. Salt is sold at .75 cents or a dollar a bushel and fifty pounds are called a bushel although it is not more than half a bushel and not more than half as strong as the Rock salt. It is sold at the Works for \$9.00 a barrel. There [are] other things different from what you may have an idea of. 100 pounds is called a hundred weight. They have no gross weight in any thing. Corn is always sold in the ear in this state which makes it better for those who sell. If you wish to know whether I like the Country I must tell you that I do although it is not so good in some respects as I expected but in other respect[s] it is better but as I shall have a chance to know more about it I shall write hereafter. I am as yet at a loss to know whether it is better for a man that has a farm in Vermont to sell and come here that is if he has a good farm. I think if I had a good farm in Vermont and was there myself I should not come here But I would advise every man who wishes to buy a farm especially if he has no family to come here although many things are very inconvenient here. Mechanics of all kinds have a good chance to make money here as Mechanical labour is most intolerable high but a young man to work on a farm will not make one cent more than enough to clothe himself as well as people dress in Vermont.19 But this Country is settled in many places by a people whose wants are few and easely supplied. But as the Country grows

Statements of travelers in the West about this time, as to wages received by mechanics, vary from one to two and a half dollars; ordinary laborers, seventy-five cents to two dollars. Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, consult index.

<sup>17</sup> Referring to Chillicothe in 1819, W. Faux wrote: "Many houses and town lots are deserted for migration further west. The American has always something better in his eye, further west; he therefore lives and dies on hope, a mere gypsy in this particular." Memorable Days, in Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XI., 179.

18 All the travelers during this period comment on the stream of emigration flowing to the West and on the appearance and characteristics of the emigrants. "Old America seems to be breaking up, and moving westward" said Morris Birkbeck. "We are seldom out of sight...of family groups behind and before us." Notes on a Journey (London, 1818), p. 31. "During the eighteen months previous to April, 1816. fifteen thousand waggons passed over the bridge at Cayuga. containing emigrants to the western country" Kingdom. America, 17. "On Sidelonghill [Pa.] we came up with a singular party of travellers,—a man with his wife and ten children...... A little farther onward we passed a young woman, carrying a sucking child in her arms, and leading a very little one by the hand. It is impossible to take particular notice of all the travellers on the way. We could scarcely look before or behind, without seeing some of them. The canterbury pilgrims were not so diversified nor so interesting as these." James Flint, Letters from America, in Thwaites. Early Western Travels, IX., 72. Similar passages can be found in Tilly Buttrick, Voyages, in ibid., VIII., 57: John S. Wright, Letters from the West or A Caution to Emigrants, 1; Benjamin Harding, Tour through the Western Country, 5.

older I expect that Clothing will grow cheaper and also many other things. The weather is warm and pelasant now and has been since I wrote you. We have had no snow. [It] freezes in the night and thaws in the day time. I [am] with Mr Butler and shall stay here til the f[irs]t [?] June I guess.

Your friend

G FLAGG

[Addressed:] Mr. Artemas Flagg, Richmond, Vermont. Entrusted to the Politeness of Mr. Hatch.

[Written postmark:]

III. To ARTEMAS FLAGG, June 1, 1817.

HARMONY CHAMPAIGN Co. OHIO<sup>20</sup> June 1st 1817.

DEAR BROTHER.

In my letter of the 18th inst. [sic] in answer to yours of the 11 April I promised to give you some account of this Country. I shall in this letter confine myself to the State of Ohio. I passed through the S. E. part of the State to Zanesville which lies on the Muskingum River from thence through Columbus to this place, from where I crossed the pennsylvania line to Zanesville the Country is very uneven. We found some of the worst hills to travel up and down that I have ever seen where there was a Road. part of the State abounds with large mines of Coal near or quite at the surface of the Earth. The soil is good for english grain being a red Clay but not so good for Grass or Corn. Generally speaking from the Muskingum to the Scioto River the land is more level the Soil more Rich the timber more Maple and beach which before we came to the Muskingum was mostly Oak and Walnut. Upon the intervales or Bottom as it is called in this country the land is immensely Rich caused by the annual inundations which are common to this Western Country.

This township (What we call towns the people here call townships and Our Villages are called towns) lies upon the head Waters of the little Miami River 70 miles from Cincinnati 50 or 60 from Chillocotha<sup>21</sup> 15 from Urbanna<sup>22</sup> 40 from Columbus 30 from Dayton<sup>23</sup> and 40 miles from the Indian Boundary. More than one fifth of the N. W. Corner of this state is still in possession of the Indians. The Land except what belongs to the Indians is mostly settled that is the best of it. There is a plenty of Land for sale here. There is as many wishing to sell here and go further West as in Vermont but land is very high improved land is from 4 to 25 dollars an acre.

In C[hampaign] C[ounty] the land is very level though sufficiently rolling to permit the Water to run of freely. It lies in small ridges the tops of

<sup>20</sup> Harmony is a township in what is now Clark county. Ohio. It is said to have been settled mainly by people from New England or England. Howe, Historical Collections of Ohio, \$4.

21 Chillicothe, located in the Virginia Military District on the west bank of the Scioto and sixty-six miles from its mouth, was laid out in 1796 by General Nathaniel Massie and General Duncan McArthur. The first settlement was by a Presbyterian congregation from Kentucky under the leadership of Rev. Robert W. Finley and most of the early settlers were southerners. The convention which framed the first constitution of the state met in Chillicothe in 1802 and it was the temporary capital of the state from 1802 to 1810 and from 1812 to 1816. In 1817 it contained three or four thousand inhabitants. Caleb Atwater, History of Ohio (edition of 1838). p. 339; Howe, Historical Collections of Ohio, 433-443. Contemporary descriptions in Brown. Western Gazetteer, 302; Darby, Emigrant's Guide, 227; Flint, Letters from America, in Thwaites, Early Western Travels, IX., 118; Faux, Memorable Days, in ibid., XI., 179.

22 Urbana, the county-seat of Champaign county, Ohio, was laid out in 1805 by Colonel William Ward from Greenbriar, Virginia. The town contained about one hundred houses in 1817. Howe, Historical Collections of Ohio, 81; Brown, Western Gazetteer, 295.

hundred houses in 1817. Howe, Historical Collections of Ohio, 81; Brown, Western Gazetteer, 295.

23 Dayton is located on the Great Miami at the mouth of Mad River. Plans were made for a settlement on the site as early as 1788 but nothing was attempted until after the treaty of Greenville. In 1796 a company composed of General Jonathan Dayton, General Arthur St. Clair, General James Wilkinson, and Colonel Israel Ludlow bought the land from John Cleves Symmes and laid out the town. The title proved to be defective and the population melted away but in 1803 the place was chosen as the seat of Montgomery county and after the War of 1812 it began to grow. In 1817 it contained about 125 houses. Atwater, History of Ohio, 343; Howe, Historical Collections of Ohio, 369-371; Brown, Western Gazetteer, 290; Darby, Emigrant's Guide, 226.

Which are thinly covered with Black White and Burr Oak Hickory and Walnut. The lower ground is Prairie covered with Grass, Shrubs plumb bushes Crab apples thorns different kinds of Lignious plants with a great variety of beautiful flowers. Some of these Prairies are large and level which look like a large body of Water in comparison of levelness. The soil of the land is Red Clay and black mould some poor land and some good. Corn grows best upon the black soil and english grain best upon the higher dryer and more Clayie soil. The soil produces Corn Wheat and most kinds of Veg[et]able &c as well as any Country excep[t] Peas which are said to be buggy, so there is none raised here. Corn grows from 10 to 15 feet high one Ear on a stalk. The ears grow very high. I have seen ears so high that I could not hang my hat upon them when standing upon the ground. Hogs will not waste the Corn when turned into it. It troubles them so much to tear down the Corn that they will not tear down more than they wish to eat up clean. After Corn is planted there is no more done to it except to plow among it and cut up the Weeds. They hill it up not at all. 2 men plant 10 acres a day. Corn is always sold in the ear in th[i]s state. The ground has to be clea[red of] the Cornstock in the Spring before it can be p[loughed] by cutting them dcwn and drawing them togethe[r] with a horse Rake. They are then burnt.

The good thing[s] in this Country are Plenty of Grain which makes large fat horses and Cattle Rich Land ready cleared, some Whiskey plenty of feed for Cattle, Plumbs, Peaches, Mellons, Deer, Wild turkies, Ducks, Rabits, quails, &c &c &c, little more Corn. The bad things are, Want of Stone, Want of timber for building, Bad Water, which will not Wash, overflowing of all the streams which makes it very bad building Bridges especially where the materials are scarce as they are here, Bad Roads, ignorant people, Sick Milk,24 Sick Wheat, a plenty of Ague near the large streams Bad situation as to trade. The price of dry goods I think is about 50 or 62½ per cent dearer here [than] with you. Hardware Groceries and all kinds of heavy Articles are about 100 per cent dearer Rum & Brandy 4 dollars a gallon Iron 14 dollars per 100 pounds there is no grose weight here. I suspect it is different from this upon the Ohio River the prices are current at this place. Swarms of Locusts have lately made their appearance.

I shall stay here two months longer than I told you in my last and wish you to write to me inmediately after receiving this letter and let your letter be a little more replenished with Political, and religious inteligence. You say Roxana Bishop is married—to Whom? You will remember in reading this letter that there is no giving a description of this country which will [be] satisfactory to yourself. Look & see for you[r] self.

G FLAGG

[Addressed:] Artemas Flagg, Richmond, Vermont. To be left at the past office Burlington (Vt.)<sup>25</sup>

[Written postmark:] Springfield Oo June the 6th. 25

IV. To ARTEMAS FLAGG, June, 1817.

HARMONY [MS. torn]

DEAR BROTHER.

I send you an extract from the Laws of the U.S. respecting the sale of Publick Lands,26 Viz.

At the time of application for a quarter section of 160 acres, \$16 must be paid, which holds it for 40 days: at the end of 40 days \$64 more must be

<sup>&</sup>quot;The milk sickness is a disease of a singular character, which prevails in certain places. It first affects animals, especially cows, and from them is communicated to the human system by eating the milk, or the flesh...The prevailing idea is, that it is caused by some poisonous substance eaten by the cattle, but whether vegetable or mineral, remains undetermined." John M. Peck, New Guide for Emigrants, (Bosten, 1836), pp. 86-87. See also [Robert Baird] View of the Valley of the Mississippi, (Philadelphia, H. S. Tanner, 1834), p. 86; John Moses, Illinois, Historical and Statistical, I., 228.

25 Burlington, the metropolis of Vermont, is located in Chittenden county on Lake Champlain. The distance from there to Richmond is about ten miles.

26 The system of public land sales here outlined is that inaugurated by the act of Congress of May 10, 1800, with some modifications by later acts, the most important of which was the act of March 26, 1804 permitting the sale of quarter-section tracts. The first radical change in the system was made by the act of

paid, or another person may purchase the same tract. But if no person applies for it at the end of 40 days, or between that and 90 days, the first \$16 holds it for 90 days. Within 90 days the first instalment 80 dollars must be paid or it reverts to the United States: \$80 second instalment must be paid in two years: \$80 third instalment must be paid in three years; and \$80 fourth instalment must be paid in 4 years from the day of application; without interest if the payments are punctually made, if not draw 6 per cent interest from the date of the purchase. At the end of 5 years if the money is not completely paid the land is advertised and offered at publick sale and if the amount due thereon is not bidden and paid the land reverts to the U. S. and the first purchaser loses what he has paid on it. Whatever the land sells for more than enough to satisfy the claims of the U.S. is paid over to the first purchaser. A discount of 8 per cent is allowed on the 2d, 3d, & 4th installments if paid down which will bring the cost of 160 acres to \$262.40 which is \$1.64 per acre. If the payments are let run on interest to the end of 5 years 160. acres amounts to \$392. which is \$2.45 per acre.

It is to be understood, however, that when a district is first offered for sale it is offered to the highest bider Notice of which sale is given by a Proclamation by the President of the U.S. All that does not sell for over two dollars an acre is offered for sale at the Land office at 2 dollars an acre as above stated. I send you this information that you may no [sic] upon what conditions land can be obtained in this country for the laws are the same respecting all the lands belonging to the U.S. I tho't probable you might not have seen these Laws. There is not much Congress Land27 for sale in this State. There is about a Million and a half of Acres in the District of Cincinnati but ther[e] is a plenty in the Indiana, Illinois and Missouri, condition as above.

You [ask the price at which] land first sold for here and the price at [which it now] sells.28 There is some profit in buying new land in this Country but this is not all. There is much to be made in raising cattle in this country. The cattle are now fat fit for Beef. 4 or 5 hundred head lately left this county for Green Bay which lies upon the West side of Lake Michigan.29 There is most excellent feed for cattle here I have seen a hundred head together and some men in this country own 4 or 5 hundred head and as good cattle as every you see. Some Milk 30 or 40 cows these are New england people. The country people never make any Cheese which makes cheese in this country the same price of Butter. One thing in which I was very much disappointed ought not to be forgotten that is Hogs in this Country are the meanest that I have ever seen. When I first came here I tho't by the looks of the hogs that I had got to the place where roasted pigs run about the lots for they are crumped up and are Brown sandy colourit is true Pork in this country costs nothing and the way it is raised it is good for nothing. I do not believe you ever see half so mean hogs as we have here.

April 24, 1820, which reduced the minimum price to \$1.25, allowed the sale of half-quarter sections, and provided that all sales must be for cash. This made it possible for a settler with one hundred dollars to secure complete title to an eighty acre farm. Payson J. Treat, The National Land System, 94-142.

27 The term "Congress land" was used to distinguish land which was for sale as above, directly by the United States government through its land offices, from various other classes of land which were disposed of in different ways. There was in Ohio at this time, for example, besides Congress land: United States military lands; Virginia military lands; the Western Reserve; the Fire lands; school, college, and university lands: the Ohio Company's purchase; Symmes' purchase; and several other grants, purchases, and donations. Howe, Historical Collections of Ohio, 558-562. There is a map portraying the land situation in Ohio at this time in Treat, The National Land System, 185.

28 The manuscript is torn here and the reading within the brackets is conjectural. A fort was erected by the French at Green Bay as early as 1721 and a settlement grew up in the vicinity. English troops took possession of the fort in 1761 but it was not until after the close of the War of 1812 that the United States made a determined effort to exercise its authority over the posts on the upper lakes. In 1815 a government factor was sent there to open a trading-post and the following year Fort Howard was built on the site of the old French fort. William L. Evans, Military History of Green Bay, in Wisconsin Historical Society, Proceedings, 1899, pp. 128-186.

<sup>1899,</sup> pp. 128-186.

I wrote to you the 17 or 18 Dec last the 10 Jan. the 18 May in answer to yours of the 11 April also 1st June. I have been censured, by those in whose presence I read my letter of the first June, of representing things in a worse light than I ought particularly in my mentioning Sick Wheat and Milk which they say never ought to hender any person from comeing to this country. I think so myself. I did not mention this or any thing else to hender or discourage any one from coming here but to make you cautious where you bought land in case you did come. I have not seen any sick Milk or sick Wheat but I [have] conversed [with several different] gentlemen who tell [me] that s[ick wheat is found in some] oplaces & more particular upon the river Bottoms or intervale. The wheat can be told from other wheat it being of a redish cast. Sick Milk is said to be caused by the cows eating a particular herb or plant but it is not ascertained what this herb is it however grows only in timbered Land.

The climate of this country is not so mild as has been represented. People who have lived in this country however for several years say that this country has grown worse as much as Vermont has. We had three Weeks good sleding last winter. The ground was Frozen from the 10th Jan. to the 10 March. Before and after that time we had cold nights which froze considerable and warm days which thawed the ground again. This is not a comfortable place in the Winter it is not very cold but Rain & Mud and high Creeks in the fall and spring make it worse than it is in the middle of Winter. The time for Pla[n]ting corn here is the month of May if it [is] planted earlyer it is croped by the May frost generally. We had a severe frost the 20 & 21 of May last but it did no injury in this county. If Corn is planted in June it will not get ripe generally. There has been frost here every month the year past. But I fear I shal weary your patience, perhaps you will find some information in a letter from James Butler Esq to Samuel Martin of Richmond dated June 4.

Write to me at Springfield C. C. If I should leave this place before a letter arives it will be sent on to me by James Butler Esqr. with whom I shall have communication. Give my respects to all my acquaintance. My parents and Brothers & Sisters will any or either of them oblige me by writing to me. I have heard nothing as yet from Our Uncle G Flaggs family.31 I remain your

affectionate Brother

GERSHOM FLAGG

[On reverse:] I wish the News Papers & other papers which I left may be preserved.

[Addressed:] Mr. Artemas Flagg, Richmond, Vermont. To be left at the Post-office in Burlington, state of Vermont.

[Written postmark:] Lebanon O, 32 June 16.

V. To Azarian C. Flagg, August 3, 1817.

CINCINNATI August 3d 1817

#### DEAR BROTHER,

I reed your letter of the 6th January on the 8th March but have delayed writing to you (not having any thing in particular to communicate), till the present time. I wrote two letters to Artemas the one in Dec. last and the

Cincinnati. Settlement was begun there in 1796 and the town was laid out in 1802 or 1803. Miami University was located there in 1809. Howe, Historical Collections of Ohio, 500; Brown, Western Gazetteer, 291.

Flagg may have mailed this letter there when on his way to Cincinnati, but, if so, he probably spent a week or two in the neighborhood for he wrote in the next letter that he arrived at Cincinnati the first of July.

<sup>30</sup> Conjectural reading. Gershom Flagg, uncle of the writer of these letters, was born in Lancaster, Massachusetts, in 1758; served in the Continental Army during the Revolution; and was married in 1778 to Editha Hitchcock of Springfield. In 1789 he removed with his family to Marietta, Ohio, where settlement had just been begun by the Ohio Company. He served in the Indian wars of 1791 and 1792 and died as a result of exposure in the latter year. His family remained in Marietta and vicinity, the widow surviving him until 1819. Flagg Family Records, 96-97. See Letter XIV., below.

below. 32 Lebanon, the seat of Warren county, is located thirty miles northeast of

other in Jan. On the 13th May I recd a letter from him informing me that he had not recd any letter from me. I cannot account for their miscarriage. I Recd your Papers very regular during the winter. I have wrote several letters to Artemas since I recd his of the 11th April. I came to this place the 1st of last month.33 Cincinnati is an incorporated City. It is situated on the bank of the Ohio river opposite the mouth of Licking river which has Newport on the East and Covington on the West side of the river both towns being in plain sight of Cincinnati.34 The River Ohio is here about half a mile in width. Cincinnati is 23 miles from the Mouth of the Great Miami river. contained in 1815, 1,100 buildings of different descriptions among which are above 20 of Stone 250 of brick & 800 of Wood. The population in 1815 was There are about 60 Mercantile stores several of which are wholesale. Here are a great share of Mechanics of all kinds. Among the Publick buildings are three Brick Meeting houses one of Wood a large Lancasterian school house built of Brick. Within two weeks after opening the school it is said that upwards of 400 schollars were admited. The building is calculated to accommodate 1000.35 There is an Elegant Brick Court House now building and almost finished. There are two large and elegant Market Houses built of Brick one of which is 300 feet in length.

Here is one Woolen Factory four Cotton factories but not now in operation. A most stupendously large building of Stone is likewise erected immediately on the bank of the River for a steam Mill. It is nine stories high at the Waters edge & is 87 by 62 feet. It drives four pair of Stones besides various other Machinery as Wool carding &c &c. There is also a valuabl Steam Saw Mill driving four saws also an inclined Wheel ox Saw Mill with two

<sup>33</sup> In 1787 Judge John Cleves Symmes purchased from Congress an extensive tract of land between the two Miamis and the following year he sold the land upon which Cincinnati is located to Matthias Denman, who associated with himself as partners Robert Patterson and John Filson. The proprietors, with a number of settlers, arrived on the site in the fall of 1788 and plans were made for laying out a town to be called Losantville (L-os-anti-ville. i. e. the city opposite the mouth of the Licking.) The killing of Filson by the Indians appears to have interfered with the plans and the town was not laid out until a year or two later, when it was named Cincinnati in honor of the military society of that name. Fort Washington was built there by Major Doughty in 1789 and in 1790 Governor St. Clair visited the place and established Hamilton county. The fort served as the starting-point for the disastrous expeditions of Harmar and St. Clair against the Indians in 1790 and 1791 and was occupied by troops until 1804 when the garrison was moved across the Ohio to Newport barracks. Cincinnati was the seat of government of the Northwest Territory from 1800 to 1802 and soon began to grow rapidly. By 1817 it had a population of about eight thousand. Jacob Burnet, Notes on the Early Settlement of the Northwest Territory, 44-49; Howe, Historical Collections of Ohio, 205-215, Charles Clst, Cincinnati in 1811, its early annals and future prospects, 14-29.

Contemporary descriptions of Cincinnati can be found in Daniel Drake, Natural and Statistical View or Picture of Cincinnati and the Miami Country (Cincinnati, 1815); Timethy Flint, Recollections of the last ten years in the valley of the Mississippi. 37-54; Henry B. Fearon. Sketches of America. (3d ed.) 223-231; Birkbeck, Notes on a Journey in America (3d ed.) 80-87; Elias P. Fordham, Personal Narrative, 183-192; Brown, Western Gazetteer, 276-283: Darby, Emigrant's Guide, 226; James Flint, Letters from America, in Thwaites, Early Western Travels, IX., 150-156, 237-242; John Woods, Tw

Guide, 226; James Flint, Letters from America, in Thwaites, Early Western Travels, IX., 150-156, 237-242; John Woods, Two Years' Residence, in ibid., X., 235-238.

34 Newport was laid out in 1791 by General James Taylor and in 1803 the United States arsenal was located there. The settlement across the Licking was known as Kennedy's Ferry until 1815 when the legislature named it Covington in honor of General Covington. Its proprietors were Gano and Carneal. The population of the two places combined was probably not more than five hundred in 1817. Brown. Western Gazetteer, 100-102; Darby, Emigrant's Guide, 202.

35 The principal feature of the Lancastrian system of education, founded by Joseph Lancaster of England, was a method of mutual instruction whereby the more advanced pupils taught those below them. The first schools on this plan in the West were probably those at Wheeling and Cincinnati, both established in 1814. The Lancastrian school of Cincinnati was founded by Rev. Joshua L. Wilson and Dr. Daniel Drake and the building, located at the corner of Walnut and Fourth streets, was considered one of the finest in the West at the time. The school was afterwards merged in the College of Cincinnati, which became Cincinnati University. Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XI., 58, XII., 204, XIV., 66, XIX., 36, notes. Fearon gives an interesting account of the building and of the operation of the school in 1817 in his Sketches of America. (3d ed.) 227-228. Other contemporary accounts are in Brown, Western Gazetteer, 278; Darby, Emigrant's Guide, 225-226; George W. Ogden, Letters from the West, in Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XIX., 35-36.

saws, one Glass Factory.36 The town is Rapidly increasing in Wealth & population. Here is a Branch of the United States Bank<sup>37</sup> and three other banks & two Printing offices. The country around is rich & I think I never saw as fine crops of Wheat in any other place as between the great & little miami's. We have a planty of good ripe apples pairs [sic] plumbs &c with all kinds of Vegetables in Market. Corn is fit to Roast. The weathe[r] is not warmer here than I have experienced in Vermont but I do not think this is a healthy place the Water is very unwholesome. I shall leave this place in a few days and go down the River. I calculate to go directly to St. Louis in the Territory of Missouri at which place I wish you would direct your letter. I desire that you would write to me as soon as you receive this. reason why I have determined on going to St. Louis is because the Land upon the Wabash that belongs to the U.S. is mostly taken up. The greatest part of the State of Indiana is owned by the Indians.38 I intend to go on to the Military Bounty Lands.39 I think probable there may be some of these Lands to be bought cheap in New England & New York. I wish you would write if you know of any to be bought and what they can be bought for. I am told that these Lands are to be laid out in as good a part of the country as any in the U.S. but of this I shall know better when I see it. Land is much higher in this country than I expected and I think if you have plenty of Money you could not perhaps lay it out to better advantage than buying the Patents of those who wish to sell their lands. I have no doubt there are many who will never think of coming to look of [sic] their land because

Detailed statistics of manufacturing in Cincinnati, copied from the Cincinnati Directory of 1819, are in Flint. Letters from America, in Thwaites, Early Western Travels, IX., 233-240. There are also descriptions of the various factories in Brown, Western Gaseiteer, 278-279.

31 In spite of the strong opposition to the United States bank in Ohio, a branch was opened at Cincinnati in the spring of 1817. At the next session of the legislature a resolution was adopted declaring the right of the state to tax the branch and the expediency of doing so. In the face of this hostile demonstration the bank opened another branch at Chillicothe in the spring of 1818 and finally in February, 1819, an act was passed levying an admittedly prohibitive tax of fifty thousand dollars a year on each branch. The state auditor was directed to draw a warrant for the amount and enforce payment. A few weeks after the act was passed the Supreme Court of the United States rendered its decision in the famous case of McCulloch v. Maryland, to the effect that the bank was not subject to state taxation. The Ohio law was mandatory, however, and the auditor proceeded to enforce it. The bank having refused to pay the tax, agents of the state seized the funds of the branch at Chillicothe and turned them over to the state trasurer in spite of write of injunction isseed by the United states courts. A legal tangle ensued and passed an act to outlaw the bank. When the case reached the Supreme Court in 1824 as Osborn et al. v. the Bank of the United States it was decided in favor of the bank and the funds seized were ultimately restored. Herman V. Ames. State Documents on Federal Relations, 93-103; Macmaster, History of the People of the United States, IV. 499-504. V., 413.

32 By 1810 the Indian claims were extinguished to the southern part of Indiana. comprising about one-third of the act of the state. The next casion was in 1816 when the Miamis gave up the triangle between the Maumee and the St. Marys rivers and this was the situation when Flagg wa

they think it is almost out of the world but I am certain the country of the Illinois & Missouri is well situated and will shortly become a Rich country when it is settled and it is now settling very fast.

If you know of any to be bought in your vicinity I wish you would write to me what a quarter Section can be bought for not however that I would reccommend it to you to buy any until I have seen the Land unless you get it very cheap. I am Well at present and have been except 3 or 4 days ever since I left Vermont. I feel myself under the greatest obligation to you for the many favors you have been pleased to bestow upon me and for your offering to forward to me money if I should be in want thereof &c. I have a plenty at present for me. I wish you to write to me often and tel Mary to write for it is a great satisfaction to me to hear from my friends. That you may all be prospered in the world is the anxious wish of your affectionate Brother

GERSHOM FLAGG

A C FLAGG PLATTSBURGH N Y.

[Addressed:] Azariah C. Flagg, Plattsburgh, New York. [Stamped postmark:] Cincinnati (O), Aug 6. 50

VI. To Azariah C. Flagg, December 7, 1817.

St. Louis Dec. 7th 1817

DEAR BROTHER,

your letter of the 14 sept. I Recd at this place the 18 ultimo, the day I arrived at this place having been detained at Cincinnati until the 19 oct. longer than I intended to collect money which was due me at that place. I took water at Cincinnati in a small flat boat with a Roof to it. We floated to the mouth of the Ohio then put our trunks on board a keel boat bound to this place & walked 174 miles the distance from the mouth of the Ohio to this place. From Cincinnati to the mouth is 600 miles making a journey of 774 miles.

This town<sup>41</sup> is in Lat. 38° 39′ situated on a high bank on the west of the Missisipi fifteen miles below the mouth of the Missouri & 40 miles below the mouth of the Illinois River. The shore is lined with lime Stones and many of the houses are built of this material. The country for several miles back of St Louis is Prairie handsome & dry & uncultivated. The town con-

<sup>40</sup> Flat boats with roofs were sometimes called arks or Orleans boats. Thadeus M. Harris in his Journal of a Tour (1803) describes them as "square, and flat-bottomed; about forty feet by fifteen, with sides six feet deep; covered with a roof of thin boards, and accomodated with a fire-place. They will hold from 200 to 500 barrels of flour. They require but four hands to navigate them; carry no sail, and are wafted down by the current." (Thwaites, Early Western Travels, III., 335.) They were put together largely with wooden pins instead of nails and on arrival at their destination, were broken up and the lumber sold. Fordham, Personal Narrative. 79: Estwick Evans, Pedestrious Tour, in Thwaites Early Western Travels VIII. 257

Western Travels, VIII., 257.

Evans describes the keel-boats as "constructed like a whale boat, sharp at both ends; their length is about seventy feet, breadth ten feet, and they are rowed by two oars at each end. These boats will carry about twenty tons, and are worth two hundred dollars. At the stern of the boat is a steering oar, which moves like a pivot, and extends about twelve feet from the stern. These boats move down the river with great velocity.....In going up the river these boats are poled. The poles are about eight feet in length, and the bottom of them enters a socket of iron, which causes the point of the pole to sink immediately. This business is very laborious, and the progress of the boats slow." (Ibid.. 245.) The different varieties of river craft are described in Archer B. Hulbert, Waterways of Western Expansion (Historic Highways, IX.), 100-150.

41 St. Louis was founded by Pierre Laclede Liguest in 1764 as a post for the fur-trade on the upper Mississippi and Missouri rivers. The transfer of the Illinois country to Great Britain in the following year resulted in a considerable migration from the French villages there to the new post across the river a

A St. Louis was founded by Pierre Laclede Liguest in 1764 as a post for the fur-trade on the upper Mississippi and Missouri rivers. The transfer of the Illinois country to Great Britain in the following year resulted in a considerable migration from the French villages there to the new post across the river, a movement which was renewed during the troublous times from 1778 to 1790. In March, 1804; St. Louis was transferred to the United States and soon began to grow rapidly. The town was incorporated in 1809 and by 1818 it had a population of over three thousand. Louis Houck, History of Missouri; J. Thomas Scharf, History of Saint Louis. Contemporary descriptions can be found in Edwin James, Expedition under Maj. S. H. Long, in Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XIV., 108-109; Rufus Babcock, Memoir of John Mason Peck. chap. vii. (Peck arrived in St. Louis December 1, 1817, just thirteen days after Flagg's arrival); Brown, Western Gazetteer, 204; Darby. Emigrant's Guide, 143; Lewis C. Beck, A Gazetteer of the States of Illinois and Missouri, 324-331.

tains about 300\* inhabitants one half French the other Americans. It has been settled a long time but did not thrive until lately it is now flourishing about one hundred houses have been built the past season, several of Brick. Here are two printing offices & two Banks a steam saw mill is building on the bank of the River. The country around is settling very fast & I think this will become a place of great business although it now does not exhibit a very handsome appearance the streets being narrow and the houses inelegant. It contains however about 30 Stores. Every thing sells high. Wheat \$1.00 per bushel Corn fifty cents & oats the same & Potatoes do Beef from 4 to 6 dollar per hundred Pork do. Board from \$3.50 to \$6.00 per week horse keeping \$4 per week. Labour is 20 dollars per month or one doll per day & boarded. Brick ten dollars a thousand & boards sell quick at the enormous sum of from 60 to 75 dollars per thousand feet house rent from 10 to 30 dollars a month town lots sell from 500 to 3000 dollars.

I should have answered your letter before if I had had an opportunity but the mail did not arive for three weeks past until the 28 Nov, at which time I was absent in the Illinois Territory. The mail is very Irregular the country below here being often overflowed. At the same time I recd your letter I recd one from Artemas of the same date of yours. I also recd one from my Mother on the 4 inst. dated oct 8 which stated that Artemas was married &c. It gives me pleasure to hear of your prosperity & I am much pleased with the addition you have made to your Library, I think if I could have an opportunity to peruse your Library it would be time well. spent but at present I have no opportunities of gaining much knowledge of the Sciences except Geography. I am pleased with this Country it is the Richest soil and most handsomely situated of any I have ever seen. I have not seen the Military bounty Lands nor can I get business of surveying at present. The surveyor Genl. informs me that 3½ Million of acres have been surveyed N. W. of the Illinois River & that 1/2 Million is to be surveyed N. [MS. torn] of the Missouri River & 2 Millions between [the] Rivers Arkansas & St Francis. If [you sh]ould purchase any Patents let them [be] in the Illinois Territory for the Missouri is not so good. I know the Laws respecting the Military Bounty lands & you will recollect that when I wrote you on the subject the Pattents were not & could not be issued & I' did not suppose the Land would be drawn so soon as was advertised the 25 sept. which was the reason I wished you to wait until I had seen the Land For I tho't there was not a good chance to purchase before the Patents were issued. I am told by the Surveyors that the Land is Rich handsome & well watered but poorly timbered. I am not anxious about your purchasing any for I do not expect it will be settled soon & if it does not the land will not be so valuable as it otherwise would be.

I am told that one half of the Lands are Prairie and the other timbered. The timbered Land will be very valuable and the Prairie the reverse so that it is like a Lottery you have about an equal chance to draw a great prize & it must be some prize because the Land is to be fit for cultivation. Some say that the Prairie that has no timber upon it will be returned unfit for cultivation to the General Land Office But I think this will not be the case. If you should purchase any you will be good enough to let me know the No &c as soon as convenient.

<sup>\*</sup> Flagg undoubtedly intended to write 3000.

Lagrange This low opinion of the value of prairie land was almost universal among the early pioneers. They were inclined to believe that land upon which trees did not grow could be of little value for agricultural purposes. Thus in 1786 James Monroe, afterwards president of the United States, wrote of the Northwest: "A great part of the territory is miserably poor, especially that near Lakes Michigan and Erie, and that upon the Mississippi and the Illinois consists of extensive plains which have not, from appearances, and will not have, a single bush on them for ages. The districts, therefore, within which these fall will never contain a sufficient number of inhabitants to entitle them to membership in the confederacy." There were, however, certain real obstacles to the occupation of the prairies by the early settlers, most important of which were: lack of water; lack of wood for buildings, fences, and fuel: and difficulties of transportation. It was not until after the coming of the railroads and the opening up of the great coal-beds in

I have Located 264 acres of Land in the Illinois Territory 26 miles from this place & about ten from the Mouth of the Missouri River about half of it is Rich dry Prairie & the Remainder timbered with Oak Hickory Elm Walnut &c. I shall stay in St. Louis this winter & how much longer I know not. I am in good health & Remain your affectionat[e] Brothe[r] My Love to my Sister &c.

GERSHOM FLAGG

A. C. FLAGG

[Addressed:] A. C. Flagg, Plattsburgh, New York. [Stamped postmark:] St. Louis D [illegible]

VII. To Dr. and Mrs. Ebenezer Flagg,45 February 1, 1818.

ST Louis (Mri. Ter.) 1st Feb. 1818

RESPECTED PARENTS.

I have received too much of your kindness to suppose you are indifferent as to my welfare. I have the pleasure to inform you that I am in perfect health & have enjoyed my health since I left you most of the time. I was sick a few days in Cincinnati & again going down the Ohio River But 1 enjoy my health better now, than when I left Vermont. I left Vermont you will recollect the 23d sept. 1816—arrived at Springfield C. C. (0) the 8 of Nov. & as Mr Coleman would not proceede any farther I concluded it would be better not to proceede alone as the season was so far advanced & money not so flush with me as I could have wished. I intended to have proceeded on my Journey in April or may but I could get no one to accompany me & people who had been in this country told me that I ought not to come into it in the Spring if I did they said I should be likely to get Sick. Upon these considerations I agreed to stay in Cincinnati until the last of Sept at which time a young man, formerly from Montpelier Vermont, agreed to go with me. But by some disappointments we did not get off until the 19th of Oct. We bought a flat boat with a covering to it and floated down the River after laying in a sufficient quantity of Provisions. We had a very good pasage But got tossed about some at the falls of the Ohio opposite Louisville about which large boats & Steam Boats cannot pass except in the Spring or fall when the waters rise 30 or 40 feet. It is a very dismal looking place after we pass the mouth of the wabash the banks of the River being generally unsettled & covered with willows, cane breaks, & Prodigious large Cotton wo[o]d, a species of the Poplar. The water overflows for several weeks at the junction of the Ohio & Mississippi Rivers the depth of 15 or 20 feet. When we got to the mouth of the Ohio we put our trunks & chests on board a keel Boat bound to this place and walked on foot ourselves a distance of 174 miles. A great part of the way we had very wet

the state that the immense treeless prairies of northern Illinois were fully taken up. Monroe, Writings, (Hamilton edition), I., 117; Clarence W. Alvord. Illinois—the origins (Military Tract Papers, No. 3), pp. 14-16: Boggess, The Settlement of Illinois, 97, 130-131; Pooley, Settlement of Illinois, 539-543.

Flagg, himself, failed to select the best land available in his locality, according to present day standards, because it was not well timbered.

Ebenezer Flagg was born in Lancaster, Massachusetts, in 1756. He served in the Continental Army during the Revolution and soon afterwards moved to Rutland county, Vermont, where he was married to Elizabeth Cutting of Shoreham. In 1799 he purchased a farm in Richmond, Vermont, and there spent the remainder of his life, farming and practicing medicine. He died in 1828 and his widow died ten years later. Flagg Family Records, 36.

The Ohio River falls about twenty-five feet in the two and a half miles between Louisville and Shippingport. Except in times of high water, it was necessary, until the completion of a canal around the falls in 1830, to unload all large boats at one end and portage the cargoes to the other. Small craft were usually conducted down stream by pilots. The first permanent settlement at Louisville was made in 1778 by a group of pioneers who accompanied George Rogers Clark thus far on his expedition to the Illinois. The town was laid out in 1779 and was incorporated by the Virginia legislature in 1780. The natural advantages of the site produced a rapid development and Louisville is said to have had a population of thirteen hundred in 1811 and over four thousand in 1820. Reuben T. Durrett. The Centenary of Louisville (Filson Club, Publications, No. 8.) Contemporary descriptions can be found in Fearon, Sketches of America. 242-252: Brown. Western Gazetteer, 103-105: Darby, Emigrant's Guide, 207; H. McMurtrie, Sketches of Louisville, (Louisville, 1819.)

muddy walking & some of the way had to wade in the water. We arrived at this place the 18th of Nov. I have travel[e]d since I left Vermont 1794 miles—from Richmond to Springfield C. C. Ohio is 900 from thence to Cincinnati 75 thence to the mouth of the Ohio by water 645 thence to st. Louis 174 miles from Cincinnati to this place by land is about 400 miles which would make it by land 1375 miles & I suppose it is about 1300 miles the nearest Road that can be traveled. It is 1250 miles in a direct line as I calculate from the Lat. & Longitude of the places. This being in Lat. 38° 18' & Lon. 12° 41' W. & Richmond Vt. in Lat. 44° 24' N & Lon. 4° 13' E. from Washington. I have entered 264 a[cres of] Land 25 miles from this place [&] 10 or 12 from [the] mouth of the Missouri River Part Prairie and part timbered land. I have not much to write to you respecting the Country but as I hope to see you in a year or so I will then tell you all you wish to know. I will only say that it is the handsomest and best country that I have ever seen. In places there is Prairies as far as the eye can reach covered with tall grass higher than a mans head.

The Climate is mild we have had but little snow here this winter the River is not frozen but is full of floating Ice. Although the distance between us is lon yet my affections for you & My Brothers & Sisters is stil the same. I hope you will not neglect the education of my two young Brothers as education is the best thing you can give them. 45 Give my love to them and all my Brothers & sisters & friends & may peace & health attend you all.

GERSHOM FLAGG

#### DEAR MOTHER,

With the greatest pleasure I Recd your kind favor of the 8 Oct. on the 1st Dec. It gives me pleasure to hear from my friends so I hope you will write often. I also Recd letters from Artemas & Azariah on [my arr]ival at this place. Both were dated sept 14th but did [not] mention that Artemas was Married which your [letter states] took place two days before the date of the letters.46 You [will] please to give my love to my new sister & tell her as she is now become a connexion she will do me a favor by writing to me especially as my sisters do not. I am placed in such a situation that I have to write more letters than I receive I have to write to several in the state of Ohio respecting this country for althe you say the Ohio feever is abated in Vermont-the Missouri & Illinois feever Rages greatly in Ohio, Kentucky, & Tennessee and carries off thousand[s]. When I got to Ohio my Ohio feever began to turn but I soon caught the Missouri feever which is very catchin and carried me off. I think most probable I shall return if my life & health is spared a year from next spring but it is very uncertain whether I stay in that country. Surely nothing except my friends would tempt me ever to se[e] Vermont again. I hope you will pardon me for not writing sooner as I have been so much engaged that I could not.

G FLAGG

I have enclosed my profile taken by an Italian at Cincinnati. Doct. Ebenezer Flagg, Burlington, Vermont. [Addressed:] [Stamped postmark:] St. Louis, Feb 8. 25

VIII. To Artemas Flagg, September 12, 1818.

Edwardsville Madison County. Illinois Territory, 12 Sept. 1818 DEAR BROTHER.

Your letter of the 31st May mailed June 8. I received, the 23d July which informed me that you were all well at the time. May this continue [to] be your good fortune and may these lines reach you as they leave me in good

<sup>45</sup> Besides the two older brothers to whom most of these letters were addressed, Gershom Flagg had six sisters and two brothers younger than himself. The brothers were ten and five years old respectively at this time. See notes 1, 10, 14, 83, 96, 102, 111, 112.

48 According to the Flagg Family Records (page 41) Artemas Flagg was married September 6, 1817, to Betsey Squires, the daughter of Stephen and Bethia (Bishop)

Squires.

The territory of the present Madison County is said to have been explored about 1799 by Rev. David Badgley and called Goshen. A settlement of that name was started the following year in the southern part of the county. The site of Edwardsville was first occupied by Thomas Kirkpatrick in 1805 and during the

health. As you may wish to know something of the Country in which I live I will write a few lines respecting it. The Territory of Illinois contains nearly all that part of the United States Territory east of the Mississippi and N. W. of the Ohio & Wabash Rivers. The late law of Congress enabling the people to form a Constitution & State Government makes the boundaries on the S. & W. Ohio & Missisippi Rivers on the East by Indiana State N by 42° 30' N. Lat. The conjunction of the Ohio & Missisippi Rivers is in Lat. 37° N so that this Territory is 350 miles in length.48 The face of the Country is very level without any mountains and but few hills. It is not exceeded by levelness [or] richness of soil by any in the United States. The prairies are very large while the timbered land is confined almost wholly to the intervales and low rounds. Where ever the land is high and dry enough for the fire to run in the spring & fall the timber is all destroyed.49 The Soil is of such an alluvial nature that the water courses cut out deep chanels from 6 to 20 feet deep generally. Where this is the case the streams do not

We have all kinds of soil from midling poor to the very best. It produces Corn & Wheat better than any other Country I have seen. It also produces hemp, flax, Mellons, Sweet potatoes. Turnips & all kinds of vegetables except Irish Potatoes as good as any other Country. Cotton is raised sufficient for domestic use a very small piece of ground produces enough for a family.

We have plenty of Apples Peaches &c in places. Grapes & of several kinds and several kinds of Wild plumbs & Cherries in profusion also Dew Berries Black berries Strawberries. The bottom Prairies are covered with Weeds of different kinds and grass about 8 feet high. The high Prairies are also thickly covered with grass but finer & not so tall. The prairies are continually covered (in the summer season) with wild flowers of all colors which gives them a very handsome appearance. These high Prairies are smoother than any intervale & not a stone, log, or anything but grass & weeds to be seen for miles excep[t] where they border the timber there is generally a

Indian troubles which preceded the War of 1812 a block-house known as Kirkpatrick's fort was constructed there. Madison county was laid out in 1812 as embracing all of Illinois Territory north of the present line between Madison and St. Clair counties and Kirkpatrick's place was chosen for the county seat. The town was laid out in 1815 or 1816 and appears to have had sixty or seventy houses when Flagg arrived there in 1818. The county probably had a population of over five thousand at that time. History of Madison County (Edwardsville, Brink, 1882), pp. 44, 71, 332; Moses. Illinois, I., 272, 548; Bluebook, Illinois, 1905, p. 396; Pooley, Settlement of Illinois 319-320; Edmund Dana, Geographical Sketches of the Western Country (Cincinnati 1819), pp. 142-143.

48 The Territory of Illinois was set off from Indiana Territory by act of Congress of February 3, 1809. It embraced all that part of the old Northwest Territory west of the Wabash River and of a line due north from Vincennes to the Canadian boundary. Thus it included nearly all of the present state of Wisconsin and parts of Minnesota and Northern Michigan. As a result of an agitation on the part of the inhabitants, practically all of whom dwelt in the southern one-third of the present state, the territory was advanced to the second stage with an elective legislature by act of Congress of May 21, 1812. After the close of the War of 1812 and the accompanying Indian troubles, the population of the territory increased rapidly and in January, 1818, Nathaniel Pope, its delegate in Congress presented a petition from the legislature for admission to the Union. The enabling act, which was passed by Congress April 18, 1818, fixed the boundaries of the state as given above. The measure as originally introduced provided that the boundary should be a line drawn through the southern end of Lake Michigan. This was in accordance with the plan outlined by the Ordinance of 1787 but the efforts of Mr. Pope induced Congress to fix the boundary forty miles further north.

the boundary should be a line drawn through the southern end of Lake Michigan. This was in accordance with the plan outlined by the Ordinance of 1787 but the efforts of Mr. Pope induced Congress to fix the boundary forty miles further north, a change which has been considered by many as a violation of the Ordinance. Be that as it may, the history of the state would have been very different had it not included the fourteen northern counties and the city of Chicago. Moses, Illinois, 226, 258, 276-281, 529-533; Thomas Ford, History of Illinois, 19-24.

49 The early opinion that the treeless condition of the prairies was due to the poor quality of the soil was soon found to be untenable and was succeeded quite generally by the belief that the prairies were caused or at least perpetuated by the annually recurrent fires. There is a considerable literature on the subject of the origin of the prairies. See, for example, Caleb Atwater. On the Prairies and Barrens of the West, in Silliman's American Journal of Science, I., 116-125, (1819); R. W. Wells. On the Origin of the Prairies, in ibid., 331-337; John D. Caton, The Origin of the Prairies, in his Miscellanies. (also published separately). Many of the travelers discussed the question as Faux, Memorable Days, in Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XI., 280-281; James, Account of an Expedition under Maj. S. H. Long, in ibid., XV., 166-167; Edmund Flagg, The Far West, in ibid., XXVI., 342-346.

thicket of plumb bushes, hazel grape vines, &c &c. The Roots of the grass are very tough it generally requires 3 yoke of Oxen or six horses to plough up the prairies & the plough must be kept at a keen edge by filing often, the steel not being hardened, but this is all that is to be done excep[t] fencing to raise a crop. After one year the ground is mellow and requires but a light team to plough it. The Timber in this Country is very different from any you have seen. The most Common timber is White, Black, Spanish, post, Chincopin, Pin, and Burrh Oak, Walnut Black & White, Basswood, Cherry Button wood Ash, Elm, Sassafras, Sumach, Elder, Honey locust, Mulberry, Crab Apple Thorn of different kinds Red-bud, Pecon, Hackberry Maple, Cotton Wood, Pawpaw which bears a fruit larger than an apple. The timber is not so good as I have seen, generally, the fire kills & checks the growth every year. When the fire gets into high thick grass it goes faster than a horse can Run & burns the Prairie smooth.

The situation of this Territory is good for trade having the advantage of Water carriage on all sides the Missisipi on the West the Ohio & Wabash S. E. & the Kaskaskia and Illinois in the interior of the Territory. Illinois which is about 400 miles in length heads near Lake Michigan. A branch of the Illinois heads within 4 miles of the head of Chicago a short River which empties into Lake michgon [sic]. In freshe[t]s boats pass this portage the waters being connected They are made shallow for the purpose. I have seen them at St. Louis landing.<sup>51</sup> I think there will be a canall cut to connect the waters of Illinois & Chicago at no distant period. From information the expense would not be great. One hundred thousand acres of Land is appropriated for this purpose.<sup>52</sup> This done we have a water communication from almost any part of the Territory to the states of Indiana Ohio & Pensylvania on either side of those stat[e]s. Also with New York by the way of Lake Erie & an easy Communication with the Ocean by New Orleans. One steam Boat Run from St. Louis to Louisville Kentucky the last season and another from St. Louis, to New Orleans.<sup>53</sup> One of them came up to St. Louis the 1st January last and returned but the Ice generally covers

There are contemporary descriptions of the flora of Illinois in Fordham, Personal Narrative, 119; and Woods, Two Years' Residence, in Thwaites, Early Western Travels, X., 281-292. On the flora of Madison county, see History of Madison County (1882), pp. 64-65.

The branch of the Illinois referred to is the Des Plaines. This passage was recently introduced as evidence of the navigability of the Des Plaines River in the early days in an important lawsuit in which the United States government is endeavoring to prove that fact. For other evidences of the existence at times

The branch of the Illinois referred to is the Des Plaines. This passage was recently introduced as evidence of the navigability of the Des Plaines River in the early days in an important lawsuit in which the United States government is endeavoring to prove that fact. For other evidences of the existence at times of a continuous waterway from the Illinois to Lake Michigan, see Timothy Flint, Recollections of the last ten Years. 102; Ebenezer Childs, Recollections of Wisconsin, in Wisconsin Historical Collections, IV., 163; John H. Fonda, Early Wisconsin, in ibid., V., 216.

Flagg was mistaken in his statement that one hundred thousand acres of land

The idea of a canal to connect the waters of Lake Michigan and the Illinois River is said to have been first suggested by Joliet in 1673. Secretary Gallatin included it in his report on roads and canals of 1808 and in 1816 the Indians were induced to cede the land through which such a canal would pass. In 1822 Congress authorized the construction of the canal by the state and donated ninety feet of land on each side. Five years later Congress passed another act donating the alternate sections on each side of the proposed route for five miles in width, amounting in all to nearly 225,000 acres. For a time a controversy raged as to whether a canal or a railroad should be constructed but finally in 1836 work was begun on the canal. The project became involved in the extensive internal improvement system of 1837 and construction was suspended during the ensuing financial depression. Finally, however, the canal was completed from La Salle on the Illinois River to Lake Michigan and its great utility was quickly demonstrated. In 1882 the state ceded the canal to the United States government and in 1900 the Chicago Sanitary District completed the construction of a drainage canal along the route at a cost of about thirty-five million dollars. At the present time there is a strong movement under way in favor of the construction of a deep waterway or ship-canal by the state and the United States government. Thus the Illinois-Michigan water route has been an almost constant factor in the history of the state. Moses, Illinois, I., 461-468, II., 1339-1343; Boggess, Settlement of Illinois, 110, 141-142.

had been appropriated for the canal at the time when he was writing.

53 The first steamboat on the western waters was the New Orleans, which made
the trip down the Ohio and Mississippi in 1811. In 1815 the Enterprise made the
first trip up the rivers to Louisville and on August 2, 1817, the General Pike was
the first steamboat to reach St. Louis. Flagg is said to have helped to paint this
boat during the winter of 1817-1818, which he spent in St. Louis. George H.
Preble, History of Steam Navigation 66-72; Moses, Illinois, I., 389; Babcock,

the River in January & Febuary That is, drifting ice, for the Missisipi was not shut over last winter at St louis tho' it sometimes is. The Missouri was frozen over last winter. There are 8 or 10 steam boats on the Ohio and Missisipi Rivers and more building there was two built in Cincinnati last summer, & one at the Rising Sun<sup>54</sup> and one at New Albany<sup>55</sup> below the falls of Ohio. The Trade from St. Louis to Orleans is very considerable there are in St. Louis between 40 & 50 mercantile Stores.

We have a great plenty of Deer, Turkies, Wolves, Opossoms Prairie hens, Eagles, Turky Buzzards, Swans, Geese, ducks, Brant, sand hill Cranes, Parokites & with many other small Animals & birds. Gray squirrels are as thick here as I have ever seen stripeid [sic] ones in Vermont.<sup>56</sup> There is more honey here in this Territory I suppose than in any other place in the world, I have heard the Hunters say that they have found 8 or 10 swarms in a day on the St. Gama<sup>57</sup> & Illinois Rivers where there are no settlements (Truly this must be the Land of Milk & honey.) The Climate is not so hot as might be expected there is almost a continual breeze blowing from the large prairies like the breezes on large Lakes & ponds. The country is so open that it is considerable cold in Winter the ground freezes very hard There being generally but little snow. The past summer has been very hot more than common I am told. The Thermometer on the hottest day stood at 98°. I learn from the News Papers that the Weather has been very hot in different parts of the United States.

The Stock of this Country consists principally of horses horned Cattle & hogs. Sheep will do very well here if they can be kept from the Wolves but this cannot well be done in the newsettled parts the wolves are so very numerous. Hogs will live & get fat in the Woods and Prairies. I have seen some as fat upon Hickorynuts, Acorns, Pecons & Walnuts, as ever I did those that were fat[t]ed upon Corn. All that prevents this country being as full of Wild hogs as of Deer is the Wolves which kill the pigs when the sows are not shut up til the pigs are a few weeks old. There are places in this Territory where Cattle & horses will live all winter & be in good order without feeding, that is upon the Rivers. Most of the people cut no hay for their Cattle & horses but this is a foolish way of theirs they either have to feed out their Corn or their Cattle get very poor. Cattle & horses do very well in this Country they get very fat by the middle of June. They do not gain much after this being so harrassed by swarms of flies which prevent their feeding any in the heat of the day. They are so bad upon horses that it is almost impossible to travel from the 15 June til the 1st Sept unles a horse is covered with blankets. Where ever a fly lights upon a horse a drop of blood starts. I have seen white horses red with blood that these flies had drawn out of him. As the Country becomes settled these flies disappear.

Memoir of John Mason Peck, 81; Boggess. Settlement of Illinois, 123; Flagg Family Records, 51; History of Madison County, Illinois (1882), pp. 86-87. There is a list of steamboats on the western waters from 1812 to 1819 in H. McMurtrie's Sketches of Louisville (Louisville, 1819), pp. 200-204.

54 Rising Sun, Indiana, is on the Ohio River about thirty-six miles by water from Cincinnati. It was founded in 1814 by John James from Maryland and is said to have contained thirty or forty houses in 1817. It is now the seat of Ohio county. Brown, Western Gazetteer, 52; Thwaites. Early Western Travels, XXIV., 142, note.

55 New Albany, Indiana, is on the Ohio River about five miles below Louisville. It was laid out in 1813 by three Scribner brothers from New York. Brown in his Western Gazetteer (page 63) speaks of the place in 1817 as having been "puffed throughout the Union; but has not yet realized the anticipations of the proprietors." It is said, however, to have had a hundred and fifty houses and a population of a thousand in 1819 and it is now a manufacturing city with a population of over twenty-five thousand. Thwaites, Early Western Travels, X., 44, note.

population of over twenty-five thousand. Thwaites, Early Western Travels, X., 44. note.

56 There are contemporary accounts of the fauna of Illinois in Fordham, Personal Narrative, 119; and Woods. Two Years' Residence, in Thwaites. Early Western Travels, X., 281-292. On the fauna of Madison county, see History of Madison County (1882), pp. 65-67.

57 By St. Gama the writer means the Sangamon. The Sangamon country had the reputation of possessing exceptional advantages for settlers and was filled in rapidly during the twenties, Springfield being laid out in 1823. Moses, Illinois, I., 385, 430.

It appears from the returns to the secretary that there is in this Territory upwards of 40,000 Inhabitants.58 The Convention which met the first mondy [sic] in August have formed a Constitution but it is not yet published as soon as it is I will send you a Copy. 50 The Gov. is to be Chosen for 4 years as also the senate the members of the lower house are chosen once in two years the Legeslature to set biennally. I have delayed writing for several days to hear whether Simeon Manuel was in St. Louis but can hear nothing of him. P. P. Enos formerly of Woodstock Vermont<sup>60</sup> now lives in St. Louis and he tells me he knows no such man there.

William S. Wait Son of Thomas B Wait of Boston Mass. was in this Territory last March and bought 2500 Acres of Land & told me he should return to this Country to live. 61 . . . Jason Chamberlin from Burlington lives

sourrowed from that of New York. It can be found conveniently in Moses, Illinois, 1., 533-544. On the convention, see, ibid., 282-284; W. H. Brown, Early history of Illinois, 86-88.

Woodstock, the seat of Windsor county, is located about half way between Montpelier and the Massachusetts line and ten miles from the Connecticut River. Pascal Paoli Enos was born at Windsor, Connecticut, in 1770. He graduated from Dartmouth college in 1794, served in the Vermont legislature in 1804, and was married at Woodstock in 1815 to Salome, daughter of Gaius Paddock. The same year he moved with the Paddocks to Cincinnati and the next year they went on to St. Louis, settling first at St. Charles and then, in 1817, at St. Louis. In 1821 they moved to Madison county, Illinois, where Gaius Paddock purchased a quarter-section adjoining that of Gershom Flagg. A few years later—1827—Flagg was married to Mrs. Jane Paddock Richmond, oldest daughter of Gaius Paddock, and thus became a brother-in-law of Enos. In 1823. Enos was appointed receiver of public monies for the new land office to be established in the Sangamon country, He moved there at once and became one of the four proprietors of the city of Springfield. (See note 115.) He died at Springfield in 1832. John C. Power, History of the Early Settlers of Sangamon County, 289; History of Madison County (1882), p. 478.

Thomas Baker Wait, born in 1762 of Welsh parents, was a printer, publisher and bookseller with headquarters in Portland and Boston. William Smith Wait, his son, was born in Portland in 1789 and joined with his father in the publishing husiness. In June, 1817, he started for the West, reached St. Louis January 3, 1818; made an entry of land in Ripley township, Bond county, Illinois, on February 17, 1818; and was back in Boston by the middle of July. Two years later he was married to Sarah Newhall and started at once for Illinois where they commenced farming on his land in Bond county. From 1824 to 1835 Wait was again in the service of the publishing house, traveling

census to be taken between April 1, and June 1, 1818. Three days later another act was passed providing for a supplementary census in each county of all persons who should move into the county between June 1, and December 1. The enabling act, passed by Congress April 18, 1818, conditioned the admission of the proposed state upon this enumeration showing a population of at least forty thousand, and the marshals are said to have resorted to various devices for swelling their rolls. The returns were finally made to foot up to forty thousand but it is probable that the actual population at the time did not exceed thirty-five thousand. Some questions were raised in Congress as to the accuracy of the returns but the state was admitted and two years later the federal census showed it to have a population of 55.162. Laws of Illinois Territory, 6th session (Reprint), 42-45; Moses, Illinois, 282; William H. Brown, Early History of Illinois (Fergus Historical Series, No. 14), p. 86.

The original schedules of the census of 1818, containing the names of heads of families, and other information, are in the office of the secretary of state at Springfield. Together with the schedules of a state census taken in 1820, they make up a large folio volume. So far as is known, not even the aggregates by counties of the census of 1818 have ever been published but the State Historical Library is planning to publish the schedules entire.

The accordance with the terms of the enabling act, a convention composed of twenty-three members met at Kaskaskia, August 3, 1818 and proceeded to frame a constitution for the embryo state. The resulting instrument, which is said to have been put together by Elias Kent Kane, was modeled largely on those of Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana, with the peculiar feature of the council of revision borrowed from that of New York. It can be found conveniently in Moses. Illinois, I, 533-544. On the convention, see, ibid., 282-284; W. H. Brown, Early history of Illinois, 86-88.

Woodstock, the seat of Windsor county

24

at Cape Gerardeau<sup>62</sup> a small Town on the West Bank of Missisipi about 120 miles below St. Louis. I saw his wife when I was coming up the River but he was gone to Arkansaw on business. Charles Peck who once lived with Moses Spencer now lives 18 miles from the Mouth of the Missouri at St. Charles a small town on the North side of the Missouri, his Brother a blacksmith lives at the same place.

You mention that Stephen Hallock had gone to Darby Creek Ohio. I have also heard that Gideon wright was there. I have been there myself. That part of the country is entirely level very Rich and in the spring covered with water. Darby Creek is a Branch of the Scioto River.64

The 26 April I Recd a letter from you dated 6 July 1817 and post marked Hubbardton<sup>65</sup> July 9th having been 9 months & 17 days on the way having been mislaid as I suppose. You have been very particular in you[r] letters which has given me much satisfaction but you still complain of you[r] inability to write I wish you would not try to excuse your self from wr[i]ting on that head but write as often as you can get time for I have money enough to pay the Postage and it never goes more freely than to hear from my friends and nothing gives me more satisfaction than reading your Letters.

I have not been able to get any employment in surveying The Lands haveing been principally surveyed in the winter of 1816-7. There was then upwards of 80 Companies employed upwards of 4 months. They surveyed the Military Bounty Lands and most of the other Lands where the Indian title was extinguished, 3½ Millions of Acres of Bounty lands were survd between the Missisipi and Illinois Rivers. There is now considerable surveying to be done but the Surveyor General, Rector, has so many connections that are Surveyors that it is not possible for a stranger to get any Contract of any Government Gives 3 dollars a mile for surveying all publick lands. Some who are not Surveyors (but favorites) make Contracts for surveying and then hire it done. I was offered 25 dollars a month last winter to go with another surveyor but did not choose to go under a man who did not know as much as I did myself.66

\*\*Hubbardton is a post-village in a town of the same name in Rutland county, Vermont.

\*\*General Rector\*\* Surveyor-general of Illinois, Missouri, and Arkansas from 1814 to 1824, was born in Farquier county, Virginia. The family, which was a large one, settled in Kaskaskia in 1806 but soon after removed to St. Louis. The nepotism displayed by Rector in the awarding of contracts for surveying finally got him into trouble with the authorities at Washington. On January 17, 1823, the House of Representatives called on the secretary of the treasury for information about contracts for surveying, whether the surveys were actually made by the contractors, whether they were faithfully executed, and the price paid per mile. The papers sent in throw little light on the matter but on February 25, the Senate called specifically for copies of contracts made by Rector since January 1, 1819; and of the ninety-eight contracts in the list sent in, seventeen were with men who bore the name of Rector. (American State Papers, Public Lands, III. 618-620, IV., 19-25.) On January 25, 1823, while the surveyor-general was in Washington, endeavoring to prevent the loss of his position, Joshua Barton, attorney-general of Missouri, published in the Missouri Republican an assertion "That the surveyor-general indulged in the practice of giving out the largest and best con-

The first settler at Cape Girardeau was a French trader named Louis Lorimier, who established himself there under authority of a grant made by Baron de Carondelet in 1793. Americans soon began to settle in the surrounding country and in 1805 the seat of justice of the district was located on Lorimier's land. He laid out the town the same year and it grew rapidly for a few years until checked by a controversy over land titles and the removal of the county-seat to Jackson in 1814. The village was described in 1820 as comprising about twenty log cabins, several of which were in ruins. Houck. History of Missouri, consult index; James. Expedition under Maj. S. H. Long, in Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XVII., 39; Darby, Emigrant's Guide, 142.

Some in 1769. The place grew rapidly after the American occupation and is described as containing a hundred houses and having a population of a thousand in 1818. Some of the sessions of the territorial legislature were held there. Houck, History of Missouri, II., 79-88; Brown. Western Gazetteer, 204; Flint, Recollections of the Last Ten Years. 120-126; James. Expedition under Maj. S. H. Long, in Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XIV., 126-127.

He Darby Creek country lies east of Champaign county and between it and Columbus. The stream is about a hundred miles long and flows southeasterly through Union. Madison, Franklin, and Pickaway counties to the Scioto a mile above Circleville.

Hubbardton is a post-village in a town of the same name in Rutland county, Vermont.

I Entered 420 Acres of Land near this place and about 25 mils from St. Louis and 10 or 12 from the Conjunction of the Missisippi and Missouri Rivers and 18 or 20 from the Mouth of Illinois nearly in Lat. 38° 30' North. I now own only 160 acres haveing sold the remainder for \$285. dollars being double what I gave for it. The quarter Section which I now own or is on the trail which leads from Edwardsville to fort Clark which is at the south end of Illinois Lake a dilation of the Illinois River 210 miles from its mouth following its meanderings. This fort was built in the time of the Late War. This with the forts at Chicago and fox River which empties into green bay, Macinau, Prairie des Chien, and fort Edwards on the Missisippi below the mouth of Rock River<sup>69</sup> serve to regulate the Indian trade and protect the Frontiers from the savages. The United States have also garisons upon Red River, Arkansaw, and Missouri Rivers.

Frontiers from the savages. The United States have also garisons upon Red River, Arkansaw, and Missouri Rivers.

tracts for surveying to his family connections and personal friends, who sub-let the mand, without incurring any particular labor, responsibility, or risk, were theme and, without incurring any particular labor, responsibility, or risk, were theme and, without incurring any particular labor, responsibility, or risk, were theme and, without incurring any particular labor, responsibility, or risk, were theme and the contracts at a said that Thomas Rector admitted the truth of the charges but declared that the publication was offensive and demanded satisfaction. The duel was fought on "Bloody Island" in the Mississippi River and Barton was killed. Thomas Rector was indicted for murder by the grand Jury of St. Clair county, and overnor close issued a regulation of the threat and the county of the county and misery somewhere in Illinois in 1826. John Revnolds, Pioneer History of Illinois, (Chicago, 1887), pp. 353-354, 360; Scharf, History of Saint Louis, I. 98; Houck, History of Missouri, III., 255-256. Reynolds is in error in his statement that Rector was appointed surveyor-general in 1816. It was in 1814. (Thomas Donaldson, The Public Donain, 1711). There are several volumes of manuscripts bearing on this case in the Grand County of the county

The people of This Territory are from all parts of the United States & dothe least work I believe of any people in the world. Their principal business is hunting deer, horses hogs and Cattle and raising Corn. They have no pasture but turn every thing out to run at large and when they want to use a horse or oxen they will have to travel half a dozen miles to find them through grass and weeds higher than a man can reach when on horse back and the grass and vines are so rough that nothing but their Leather hunting shirts and trowsers will stand any Chance at all.

These kind of People as soon as the settlements become thick Clear out and go further into the new Country. The method of Raising Corn here is to plough the ground once then furrow it both ways and plant the Corn 4 feet each way and plough between it 3 or 4 times in the Summer but never hoe it at all. Wheat is generally sowed among the Corn and ploughed in sometime in August or first sept. There are no barns in this Country people stack all their Wheat and thresh it out with horses on the ground. We have not many good mills in this Country.

The price of Corn last harvest was 331/3 cents in the spring 50 cents in the summer 75 cents Potatoes are from 50 to 100 cents a bushel oats 50 cents Wheat one dollar Beef from 3½ to 5 dollars per hundred Pork from 4 to 7 dollars a hundred. Dry goods are geting very Cheap the country is full of them we have more merchants than any thing else. Boots and Shoes sell the highest here of any place I was ever in Iron is 75 dollars a hundred salt 3 dollars a bushel Butter from  $12\frac{1}{2}$  to 50 cents a pound Cheese generally brings 25 cents and very little to be had at that price, for there is none made except by Eastern people. The price of improved farms here is from 5 to 12 dollars an acre.

As soon as you Receive this I wish you to write to me. As soon as I can make it any way convenient I int[end to] come and see you all for I bel[ieve] you [MS. torn a]nd the rest of the young men [in the] vicinity [can] not leave your mothers long [enough] to come [here].

I think I shall go by the way of New Orleans and New York or Boston It being the easiest and cheapest route to go from here to Vermont. Give my love to all my friends. By your letter, I learn that you are all [MS. torn]married I expect in about 10 or 15 years when you have about a dozen Children each you will begin to think about moving to the westward. seen more old, than young men moveing. If you have any Idea of ever seeing the Western Country you never will have a better time than the present

trading post and missionary station during the French regime. It was occupied by the British in 1763 but was not turned over to the United States until 1796. At the beginning of the War of 1812 the British siezed the post but it was reoccupied by the Americans in 1815. Reuben G. Thwaites, Story of Mackinac, in his How George Clark Won the Northwest.

Prairie du Chien is supposed to have been founded by Pierre Antaya, a French trader, in 1781. It, too, was captured by a British expedition in 1814 but United States troops reoccupied the place in 1816 and constructed Fort Crawford. (Wisconsin Historical Collections, IX., XI., XIX., consult indexes.) Fort Edwards, also, was constructed shortly after the close of the War of 1812. Its location was near the present site of Warsaw in Hancock county, a hundred miles below the mouth of Rock River and opposite the mouth of the Des Moines. It was occupied for a few years as a government trading-post subordinate to the one at Prairie du Chien. (Ibid., VI., 190, 274, XIX., 386.) Flagg is in error in speaking of Fort Clark as in commission in 1818. All the rest of these forts, however, were either constructed or reoccupied at the close of the War of 1812 to facilitate the government's plan of controlling the Indians and regulating the trade with them by a system of governmental trading factories, one of which was located at each of the posts. On the Indian trade of this period, see ibid., XIX., pp. xvii-xx, 375-488.

Thus Daniel M. Parkinson who settled in Madison county in May, 1817, wrote: "The surrounding country, however, was quite sparsely settled, and destitute of any energy or enterprise among the people; their labors and attention being chiefly confined to the hunting of game, which then abounded, and tilling a small patch of corn for bread, relying on game for the remaining supplies of the table. The inhabitants were of the most generous and hospitable character, and were principally from the Southern States; harmony and the utmost good feeling prevailed throughout t

but if you are contented there you can live as well there as here. I send you my best wishes my respects to my Parents and remain your affectionat[e] Brothe[r] for ever

GERSHOM FLAGG

A FLAGG

[Addressed:] Artemas Flagg, Hinesburg, Vermont.<sup>71</sup> [Written postmark:] Edwardsville Sept 19. Double 50

IX. To John Johnson, February 6, 1819.

EDWARDSVILLE (ILLINOIS) 6th Feb 1819

DEAR SIR.

I with pleasure embrace this opportunity to inform you that I am well, together with some other things which from your natural sociability, may not, perhaps, be altogether uninteresting. When I left Vermont my intention was to have traveled to the Wabash & no further; but when I got near the western part of the State of Ohio the young man who was in company with me refused to go any further; and rather than proceed alone I concluded to Winter there and did not leave Cincinnati (at which place I stayed three months) until Oct. 1817. While in the State of Ohio I gained such information from Travelers as convinced me that I should be more likely to get into the employment of surveying in this Country than Indiana. I, therefore, formed a resolution to go to St Louis where the Surveyor General of both Territories keeps his Office. I took water at Cincinnati in a family Boat accompanied by a young man formerly from Vermont and floated down the River to the Mississippi, which I must here observe is the most dismal looking place that I ever saw. For several miles above the conjunction of these Rivers there are no settlements,—the land is low and covered with heavy timber & the shores are lined with Willows. The point of land between the two Rivers is covered with water fifteen feet in depth for several week in Where the two Rivers meet the Ohio appears as large as the Mississippi.<sup>72</sup> From the Mouth of the Ohio we traveled on foot to St. Louis 170 miles up the Mississippi. I could get no employment surveying the greater part of the land to which the Indian Title was extinguished having been surveyed in the winter of 1816-17. Upwards of eighty Companies of Surveyors were employed for more than four months. Of what now remains to be surveyed there is not much chance for a stranger to get a contract; for one who has been employed is prefered to one who has not; and there are more surveyors, I believe in these two Territories, than all the rest of the United States, and to add to this the Surveyor General has three or four Brothers with 15 or 20 other connection all surveyors. I have 160 Acres of Land in this County ten miles east of the mouth of the Missouri River and have been farming almost a year. The prospect of the farmer is as good here as in any other Country. The Soil is as good as any in the United States for any kind of Grain and produces very good Cotton. 50 bushels of Wheat is said to have been taken off of one Acre of Ground in one season. The price of Wheat is one dollar per. bushel, Corn & oats 50 cents each, sweet & Irish potatoes from 50 cents to a dollar. Pork from 5 to 6 dollars. Beef from 4 to 6 dollars per hundred pounds, Butter & Cheese from 20 cents to 50 cents a pound & scarce.

The principal objection I have to this Country is its unhealthiness the months of Aug. & Sept. are generally very Sickly. I was taken sick with

The town of Hinesburg is in Chittenden county, just southeast of Richmond. The opinion was quite prevalent in the West in the early days that the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers would some day be the site of a great commercial city and several attempts were made to establish one there. By act of January 9, 1818, the territorial legislature incorporated a company as "The City and Bank of Cairo." The promoters of this organization constructed an elaborate plat of the proposed city but no settlement resulted and the land reverted to the United States. Again in 1837 an organization known as "The Cairo City and Canal Company" attempted to boom the place but without success and Cairo was not incorporated as a city until 1858. John M. Lansden, History of the City of Cairo; Moses, Illinois, I., 262.

the feever & ague the 15 Sept. which lasted me nearly two months.<sup>73</sup> try it one season more and if I do not have my health better than I have the season past I shall sell my property and leave the Country. past has been very hot and dry in the month of August the Thermometr stood at 98°. We have had but very little Rain or snow the past fall. have not seen a single flake of snow since the 5th of January nor but very little ice. For three weeks past there has scarcely been a frost and the Bees (which are very plenty) have been daily at work. [Wild?] Geese have been flying to the north for ten days in la[rge number]s. Grass has grown 3 or 4 inches, the Birds are singing and in [truth?] every thing looks like spring John Messenger<sup>74</sup> lives in St. Clair County near Belville<sup>75</sup> in this state 15 miles east of St Louis. He was a member of the convention which formed the Constitution of this State. He is very much esteemed by the I understand he is now surveying 20 or 30 miles north of this, I have not seen him but soon shall.

I have understood that you were appointed the surveyor to run the line between Canada and the united States. My Brother wrote that you was then absent on that business which was the reason I did not write to you immediately after my arrival at St. Louis. From the length of the line to be run together with the difficulty of finding it; particularly that part which follows the high lands as described by the Treaty, I think it will require a considerable length of time. I much regret not having had an opportunity to go with you as I should have thereby gained much practical knowledge. I wish to know what progress you have made in that arduous task. I have seen an extract from a Montreal paper which says that the Fort built at Rouse's point is North of 45° N. Lat. I wish to know if you have run the line as far as that—and which side the Fort is on &c.76 I should be very much gratified if

<sup>&</sup>quot;3 Illinois had the reputation at this time of being an unhealthy place, largely on account of the prevalence of the disease known as the fever and ague. This, however, seems to have been a common complaint in newly settled countries where the land was not well drained. Faux, Memorable Days, in Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XI., 246, XII.. 16; Adlard Welby, Visit to North America, in ibid., 211. Richard Flower defended the English settlement in Illinois from the charge of unhealthfulness in his Letters from Illinois, in ibid., X., 142-143.

14 John Messenger was prominent in Illinois from 1809 to 1833 as a politician and surveyor. He was born in 1771 in Massachusetts, removed to Vermont in 1783, to Kentucky in 1799, and to Illinois in 1802. He located in St. Clair county, where he is said to have taught the first school in 1804. In 1808 he represented St. Clair county in the legislature of Indiana Territory and the following year was commissioned county surveyor by Governor Edwards. He was clerk of the first territorial assembly of Illinois in 1812. member of the constitutional convention of 1818 and Speaker of the House in the first General Assembly of the state. In 1821 he published A Manual or Hand-book intended for Convenience in Practical Surveying, in 1823 he was one of the commissioners appointed by Governor Coles to select the seminary lands, and in 1833 he was one of the surveyors of the northern boundary of the state. He died on his farm near Belleville in 1846. Illinois Historical Collections, IV., 47-50, 227; Moses, Illinois, I., 291. II., 993.

15 St. Clair was the first county laid off in the Illinois country after the Northwest Territory was established. When erected by Governor St. Clair in 1790, it embraced all the western part of Illinois, the eastern part being in Knox county with its seat at Vincennes. In 1795 the territory south of a line a little below the settlement of New Design was laid off as Randolph county but no further counties were established until 1812. (Bluebook, Illinois, 1

was incorporated in 1819. History of St. Clair County (Philadelphia, Brink, 1881), pp. 183-185.

To one of the boundary commissions established by the treaty of Ghent of 1814 was delegated the duty of determining the boundary between the United States and Canada from the source of the St. Croix River to the point where the forty-fifth parallel intersects the St. Lawrence. The work of surveying was begun under the direction of the commission in 1817, with John Johnson of Burlington, Vermont as chief-surveyor for the United States. There were several disputed points with regard to the boundary east of the Connecticut River but it was supposed that from there to the St. Lawrence all that would be necessary would be to resurvey an old line which had been marked in 1774. This part of the survey was made in 1818 by Mr. Johnson for the United States and Mr. Odell for Great Britain and it developed that the true forty-fifth parallel is three-quarters of a mile south of the old line where it crosses the northern end of Lake Champlain. Between the two lines is Rouse's Point where fortifications regarded as of great strategic value had

you would write to me as often as your avocations will permit and in particular I wish you to write to me as soon as you receive this. If [MS. torn] sman Cummings is in Burlington give him my [MS. torn] please. The reason I have not written to him [is I have ?] seen no place where I that he could do better [than in] Burlington.

With much respect and friendship to yourself, family, and friends and

wishing you all prosperity

I remain your humble servant

GERSHOM FLAGG

J JOHNSON ESOR.

[Addressed:] John Johnson, Esqr, Burlington, Vermont. pr. Mail. [Written postmark:] Edwardsville Ill, Feby 11. 25 [Endorsed:] Gershom Flagg's letter, 6 Feby, 1819.

X. To Azariah C. Flagg, June 12, 1819.

EDWARDSVILLE (ILL.) June 12th 1819

DEAR BROTHER.

I Recd a letter from you by Messrs. Sweatland & Walworth last october but was then sick with the ague and did not answer it until winter. I wrote to have you send your Paper to this place instead of St. Louis. I have not heard a word from you since the letter above mentioned and have not Recd any paper of yours of later date than 28 November. I am anxious to hear from you and wish you would write more frequent. I have been very healthy the winter and spring past we have had a very warm winter without snow, late snowy spring with a great deal of Rain but it is now very dry and warm. I am at present at work on my land I have planted fifteen acres of Corn and let out ten acres more ground (so I expect to raise my own hommony).

We have a News Paper published in Edwardsville which has very lately commenced, by the title of "Edwardsville Spectator." There is also a Bank<sup>78</sup> and Lawyers enough to sink the place.<sup>79</sup> The country is settling with extraordinary rapidity. Thirteen months ago there was not a family north of here and there is now perhaps two hundred some a hundred and twenty miles north of this. They settle on united States land And as soon as it is offered for sale they will probably have to leave it or pay a high price for it. Land which was bought two or three years ago for two dollars an acre is now selling at 10 and 12. We have a fine country of Land and a plenty of it. The harvest is great but the laborers are few. I send My best wishes for you all, tell Mary to write to me and do not forget to write your self.

I Remain your affectionate Brother

GERSHOM FLAGG

A C FLAGG

[Addressed:] A. C. Flagg, Plattsburgh, New York. [Stamped postmark:] Edwardsville, Illinois, June 26.

County (1882), pp. 181-196.

just been constructed by the United States at a cost of over a million dollars. The commission failed to reach an agreement and the northeastern boundary dispute was not settled until 1842 when by the Webster-Ashburton treaty the line of the old survey was adopted instead of the true forty-fifth parallel. John B. Moore, History and Digest of International Arbitrations, I., chap. iii; George P. Garrison, Westward Extension (American Nation, XVII.), 74-83.

The Edwardsville Spectator was started in 1819 under the editorship of Hooper Warren. it being the third paper established in the state. It is notable especially for the part which it played in the campaign of 1823-1824 against the proposed constitutional convention to admit slavery into Illinois. Ninian Edwards is supposed to have had a controlling influence over the paper. It changed hands in 1825 and was discontinued the following year. Franklin W. Scott. Newspapers and Periodicals of Illinois (Illinois Historical Collections, VI.), pp. xlviii-1, 166.

The bank of Edwardsville was incorporated by act of the legislature of January 9, 1818 and was established the following year. The act of incorporation provided that one-third of the stock of three hundred thousand dollars might be taken by the state. The bank was made a depository for the money received at the land office at Edwardsville and when it failed in September, 1821, it was owing the United States government \$46,202.43. History of Madison County (1882), p. 339; Annals of Congress, 18 Congress, 1 Session, p. 2719. See also note 94 below.

There is a chapter on the lawyers of Edwardsville in the History of Madison County (1882), pp. 181-196.

## XI. To ARTEMAS FLAGG. October 6, 15, 1820.

EDWARDSVILLE, ILLINOIS, October 6th 1820

#### DEAR BROTHER.

I Recd your letter of the 20th Aug. by yesterday's Mail and embrace the earliest opportunity to inform you that I am in good hea[l]th and have been since I last wrote to you. We have had a very remarkable dry summer there are streams 40 miles in length which have entirely stopped running—two thirds of the wells and springs have dryed and the grass is not more than half its usual length. We have had good crops of Wheat and Corn is very Money is becoming very scarce. Wheat now sells at 50 cts pr bushel and Corn at 25 Beef and pork are also very low and the price of land has fell nearly one half within 18 months. The people are as is usual complain-Hard Times!!\* But in reality we have no ground for ing of hard Times! saying the times are hard. We have had good crops of Cotton &c & if the people would get in the habit of Raising their own food. & clothing themselves with their own manufactures instead of sending off all the money in circulation to purchase those things money would soon grow plenty and be in circulation. The People of the United States have been for a long time blind to their own interest But begin to be awakened by the Cry of hard

For myself I live as I always have upon my earnings and not upon my credit or speculation and have therefore little to loose & little to fear from hard times.

If you should wish to hear some large stories about the western Country read on. I raised about 5 or 6 waggon loads of watermellons this year many of which weighed 25 pounds each and I weighed one that weighed 29 ½ pounds. We had plenty of Melons of all kinds from the middle of July to the end of September. We feed our hogs great part of the time upon Melons, Squashes. & Pumpkins & cucumbers &c &c. The hogs now live upon Acorns which here grow as large as hens eggs almost.

Oct. 15

I began this letter several days ago but not having time to finish it at the time I have delayed sending it to the post office till the present time. 38 Townships of Land have been offered for sale the two last weeks in this district and only 1200 acres were sold. Several towns in this state have been very sickly this season especially those situated contiguous to Rivers or mill-Ponds. The waters are very low and in many places covered with a green poison looking skum. The fogs arising from this stagnated waters makes the air very unwholesome.

The weather has been considerable hotter here t[his summer?] than it was ever known to be before. The mercury in Thermometer rose to 100 degrees in the shade. Such heat as this several days in succession you will suppose made us think of the place we read of. For my part I thought it was getting to be pretty warm times. Steel or Iron lying in the sun became too hot to be handled. In Short, but in truth, it was as hot as Hell. For the want of room I must close my letter by requesting you to give my love to all those who may take the trouble to enquire about me especially my Parents, Brothers. Sisters, your Wife and two Great Boys. And do if you please write oftener and oblige your sincerely affectionate Brother

[In margin:] Flour sells from \$3.25 to \$5.00 per Barrel Whisky from 31 to 62 ½ cents pr Gallon by the Barrel.

GERSHOM FLAGG

[Addressed:] Artemas Flagg, Hinesburgh, Vermont. [Written postmark:] Edwardsville, Oct 18. 25

<sup>\*</sup> The crisis of 1819 was followed by several years of depression, especially in the West. See Frederick J. Turner. Rise of the New West (American Nation, XIII.), chap. ix., Ford, History of Illinois, 43-44.

#### XII. To Azarian C. Flagg. December 10, 1820.

EDWARDSVILLE, ILLINOIS, Decemr 10th 1820

DEAR BROTHER.

I have not for a long time received any information from you either by letters or newspapers. I think it has been two months since I recd a paper. It is a pleasure to me to hear from my friends and especially my Brothers and Sisters. I hope you will take this into consideration and write to me as often as two or three times a year at least.

I have enjoyed good health since I last wrote to you and have done considerabl[e] work. Since the first of April last I have ploughed or broke up upwards of one hundred acres of New Prairie with the help of four yoke of Oxen and a man to drive them and have fenced in or enclosed 40 acres and built a log house &c. We have had scarcely any rain since last April the Streams, Springs & Wells two third of them became dry the weather was extreemely hot the Thermometer rose to 100 degrees in the shade. This fall we have had two snow storms the snow fell in Nov. 8 inches deep and lay on several days the snow is now gone but the weather has become cold and the ground is hard frozen and the Mississippi is full of floating ice. For this country this is called Hard Times. You may gather some Ideas of the circulation of cash here and of the great chang[e] of times from the annexed prices:

Prices curent in the vicinities of St. Louis & Edwardsville:

	1819	1820
Beef pr. lb	from 4 to 6 cents	from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ cents
Pork "	2 6	2 3
Flour pr. Barrel	·· \$8. \$12.	" \$3.25 to \$5.
Corn pr bushel	from 33 to 59 cents	$12^{1}$ to $20$ cents
Wheat do	" \$100 [i.e. \$1.00]	$37\frac{1}{2}$ to $50$ cent[s]

Cows which sold last year for 25 dollars will not fetch more than \$15 and oxen which Sold one year ago for 120 d[ollars] now sell for eighty only.

The price of land has fallen more than one half—A bad time for Speculators—there are many here who paid out all the money they had in first instalments on land and depended on selling it before the other payments become due And as the price of land is now reduced no body will buy it at the former price. It will of course revert to the United States unless Congress does something for their relief.<sup>51</sup>

[In margin:] You will please to give my love to Mary and your Wife &c &c &c

GERSHOM FLAGG

[Addressed:] A. C. Flagg, Plattsburgh, New York. [Written postmark:] Edwardsville, Decr 13. 25

XIII. To Aktemas Flagg. March 31, 1821.

EDWARDSVILLE MADISON, Co. (IL's.) March 31st 1821

DEAR BROTHER.

Your letter of the 3d December was Recd in January but the waters have been so high since that time that the Mail does not arive oftener than once in 3 or four weeks which is the reason I have defered writing until the present time and now have an opportunity to send you this by Pascal P. Enos Esqr

Many of the travelers give information about prices current in the West. Consult the index to Thwaites' Early Western Travels. Tables of prices convenient for comparison with the above can be found: for Illinois in November. 1817. in Fordham. Personal Narrative. 118-119; for Ohio in July. 1818. in Thomas Hulme. Journal of a Tour in the West. in Thwaites. Early Western Travels. N. 74-75; for Kentucky in December, 1818, in Flint, Letters from America, in ibid., 18... 139-140.

state of public land was reduced and the credit system abolished in 1820 (see note 26) but by that time purchasers were over twenty-two million dollars in arrears and it was evident that something ought to be done for their relief. Several measures extending the period of payment had already been enacted and finally on March 2, 1821. Congress passed a relief act which remitted the accrued interest on land debts and allowed former purchasers to relinquish part of their claims and apply the payments made to the purchase of the remainder. Turner. Rise of the New West (American Nation, XIV.). 141-143; Treat, The National Land System, chaps. v., vi.

formerly of Vermont and Brother to Roger Enos. I have been particularly acquainted with him ever since I arrived at St. Louis and should you be so fortunate as to see him he can furnish all the information you wish of this Country. I have lived in the same house with him and wish you to treat him as my friend and write to me when he returns if not before. We have had a very severe winter and considerable snow and this spring we have had several severe storms. Two men have been found dead in the Prairie supposed to have chilled to death by the cold weather and snow. I was one of the Jurors who examined the body of one of the men who was found dead and it appeared that after being out in the open Prairie for about 24 hours great part of which time it either Rained or snowed accompanied with a very Cold Wind he fell from his horse so benum[b]ed with cold that he never strugled but went to sleep for the last time. I began to plough the first day of March but have only ploughed 16 acres the ground having been frozen for several days past until yesterday.

We have pretty tight times here. Most of the People are in debt for Land and many otherwise more than they can posably [sic] pay. Our wise Legislator [sic] have taken the matter into serious consideration and made a Bank without any Specie to Redeem their notes and have stopt all Executions until the first of November next and after that time if the creditor will not endorse on the back of the Execution that he will receive the amount in State Paper The Execution is stopped for three years longer. This money is to be loaned out (The capital Stock of which is three hundred thousand dollars) to individuals by their giving real estate in security. are to be given for one year but to be renewed every year on paying ten per cent so that it will be ten years before the borrower finishes paying.82

Corn now sells at 12½ cents per Bushel Pork at 2½ and 3 dollars Wheat 50 cents Whiskey at 25 cents per gallon by the Barrel flour is 3 and 3½ dollars per Barrel.

Lewis Curtis of Burlington has set up his business in St. Charles on the Missouri River 20 miles from St Louis and 30 from here. Although Money is very scarce in this country there was 26 thousand dollars taken in the Land office at this place during the sale in Jan. Last and that mostly Specie. I have Recd a letter from Elizas a few days ago dated June 8th You will please to give my respects to all my friends and acquaintance. I have enjoyed [good ?] health since I wrote you last and re[main] your most affectionate Brothe[r]

GERSHOM FLAGG

MR ARTEMAS FLAGG, RICHMOND VERMONT [Addressed:] Mr Artemas Flagg, Richmond, Vermont. pr. P. P. Enos, Esq.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Both the state law and the state bank law were enacted over the objections of the council of revision by the second general assembly, in session during the winter of 1820-1821. The bank was established at Vandalia, the new capital, with branches at Edwardsville, Brownsville, Shawneetown, and Palmyra. It was based solely upon the credit of the state and was allowed to issue notes and loan them to the people upon personal socurity up to one hundred dellars for each individual to the people upon personal security up to one hundred dollars for each individual and upon security of mortgages in larger sums. These notes were made receivable for all taxes, costs, and fees and for the salaries of all public officers. The bank was very popular at first and the total capital of three hundred thousand dollars was quickly put into circulation. Soon, however, the notes began to depreciate and it was not long before they were worth only thirty cents on a dollar. In addition some of the branches were mismanaged and all in all it was a costly experiment for the state. The affairs of the institution were finally wound up by an act of 1831. Illinois Historical Collections, IV., pp. xxvii.-xxviii, and passin; C. H. Garnett. State Banks of Issue. (University of Illinois, 1898); Ford, History of Illinois, 45-48; Moses, Illinois, 301-303; Elihu B. Washburne, ed., The Edwards Papers, 270-271, 420.

Si Eliza Wait Flagg, eighth child of Ebenezer and Elizabeth Flagg, was born in Richmond. Vermont, in 1802. In 1825 she was married to Oramel Bliss of Essex, Vermont, who died in 1833. In 1836 the widow with three children moved to Illinois and occupied a log cabin on the farm of her brother in Madison county. She and upon security of mortgages in larger sums. These notes were made receivable

nois and occupied a log cabin on the farm of her brother in Madison county. She taught a district school for a while, was married in 1838 to Heman Liscum of Vermont, and died in 1841. After her death the three children were taken into the household of her brother Gershom Flagg. Flagg Family Records, 73.

XIV. To Doctor Ebenezer Flagg, August 7, 1821.81

EDWARDSVILLE (ILLINOIS) August 7th 1821

HONORED FATHER

Last fall a man by the name of Browning informed me that there was a person by the name of Flagg, living near Marietta (Ohio) with whom he was acquainted. I immediately addressed him by letter, and yesterday received the following answer...

Not doubting that you will be very glad to hear the intelligence contained in the above Letter I have taken the first opportunity of communicating it to you and have sent you a true copy of the Letter so that you might have all the information which I possess on the subject. I shall write to him in a few days.

I enjoy my usual good health: it is some sickly in this country as is usual at this season of the year. We have had a very wet spring & summer so far which has been very detrimental to crops, a great deal of Wheat was not worth reaping this year and Corn does not look very well. At present the weather is very hot. Times here are much as they are in other parts of the United States I suppose. Money is scarce and provisions plenty. I rent out my Land and live with the people who Rent it. I have bought corn this year about a hundred bushels at  $12\frac{1}{2}$  cent per bushel. Wheat sells at  $37\frac{1}{2}$  cents per bushel. Salt at \$1.00 per bushel. I wish you or Artemas would write to me as soon as you receive this, it has been some time since I have heard from you.

Lewis Curtis of Burlington is at St. Charles near the mouth of the Missouri. I have not seen him.

You will please to give my love to my Mother, Brothers, & Sisters and my fellow traveller Selah Coleman, I wish he would write to me. I wish to know how he likes that country after seeing Ohio.

That this may find you in good health & spirit and that the remainder of your days may be blest with peace and content is the anxious wish of your affectionate Son

GERSHOM FLAGG

DOCTOR EBENEZER FLAGG, BURLINGTON, VERMONT.

XV. To Mrs. Elizabeth Flagg, October 4, 1821.

EDWARDSVILLE, ILLINOIS October 4th 1821

DEAR MOTHER.

Yours of the 9th August I received the 25 of September by Mail—on the 14 of sept. I received by Mr. Enos a letter from Azariah dated July 28—one from Artemas dated July 29 and one from John Johnson Esqr of Burlington dated Aug. 3d none of which I have been able to answer having been taken sick the day before I received the first letters and although I was only sick for 4 or 5 days I have felt too weak until the present time to write a letter; and although I received yours the last I feel in duty bound to answer it first. We have had a very sickly season here but in proportion to the sickness there has been but very few deaths. The weather has now become cool and people are getting well very fast. You seem to be very anxious to have me return to Vermont and it is very natural for a Mother to feel great anxiety about her children but I presume you are willing to have me stay in this country could you be pursuaded that I can do better here than with

The original of this letter was formerly in the collection but is now in the posession of Mr. Lucius C. S. Flagg of Omaha, Nebraska, who has kindly furnished a copy of it for use here. The part omitted is a copy of a letter written by Captain James Flagg (grandfather of Lucius C. S. Flagg), in which he tells about the family of his father Gershom Flagg. (See note 31.) Captain James Flagg was born in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1779 and ten years later was taken by his parents to Marietta, the newly-formed settlement of the Ohio Company at the mouth of the Muskingum River. He made his home at Cornersville, a settlement four miles from Marietta, and died there in 1854. He was a farmer and blacksmith but he also had business interests in Marietta. In the War of 1812 he served as the captain of a company of Ohio militia. Flagg Family Records, 98-100.

you and I think this is much the best country for me but I intend to return and see you as soon as I possibly can but cannot, as you request, tell you at what time it will be. The length of the Journey I do not dread neither do I begrudge the money which I shall have to spend If I could get enough in "These hard times" but you very well know it is a great deal of trouble to get started on such a Journey but I am determened to make you a visit as soon as I can and until I do I will write to you or some of my brothers and sisters often, so that you can hear from me. I have a little news to write of things that have taken place here. There has been one Indian and one White man hung in this state the summer past both for Murder.85 time in July a Robbery was committed in an adjoining county. The house of a Mr. Dickson was broken open in the dead of a dark rainy night and his chests and trunks broken open and twelve hundred dollars being all the The next morning the neighbors being money he had taken from him. alarmed took the track of the robbers (which on account of the great rain appeared fresh in the road and high grass and weeds) and followed on for several miles until the[y] found the horses of Major S. B Whiteside Sheriff of this County and Major Robert Sinclair Both of whom have heretofore been considered citizen of the highest respectability. They were immediately apprehended and after tedious examination of 3 days there appearing from the positive testimony of the persons Robbed, and the testimony of the pursuers and others and very strong circumstantial evidence that they were two of the persons engaged in the Robbery they were bound to appear before the Circuit Court or forfeit the sum of four thousand dollars each &c &c.86

A young man has also lately been prosecuted for attempting to injure a Ladys character in this County and a verdict of 3000 dollars damages awarded by the Jury. Two of the friends of the Lady after having heard what had been done and said by this young man respecting the Lady (her husband be-

So The white man referred to was Timothy Bennett, who killed Alphonso C. Stuart in a duel in Belleville in 1819. The duel is said to have been intended as a sham to make sport of Bennett but he secretly slipped a ball in his gun. He broke jail and escaped at the time but was taken in Missouri in 1821 and brought back to Belleville. He was tried before Judge Reynolds at a special term of the circuit court and was convicted and executed. Daniel P. Cook was the prosecuting attorney in the trial and Thomas H. Benton, the attorney for the defense. James Affleck, The Stuart-Bennett Duel. in Illinois State Historical Society. Transactions, 1901, pp. 96-100: History of St. Clair County (1881), pp. 84-85, 98. 186-187. There is an account of this case in John Reynolds, My Own Times (chap. xlvii.) in which the names are given incorrectly.

\*\*The Whiteside family was prominent in early Illinois history and especially in the Indian campaigns during the War of 1812 and in the Black Hawk War. Originally from the frontiers of North Carolina, they came to Illinois from Kentucky in 1783. William Whiteside, the leader of the family, established himself at Whiteside's Station in what is now Monroe county. (John Reynolds, Pioneer History of Illinois, 2d edition, 185-190.) The Whiteside who was involved in this robbery was William B. or Bolin, as he was called, a son of the founder of Whiteside's Station. He was sheriff of Madison county from 1818 to 1822. (History of Madison County, 1882. pp. 132-140.) The History of Greene County (Chicago, Donnelley, 1879, pp. 266-267) gives the following account of this affair. An elderly Englishman named Dixon, who lived in the southern part of Greene county, was believed to have a considerable sum of money in his house. One night he was visited by a number of armed men who secured twelve hundred dollars from him by threat of violence and then fied. Two of them he recognized as Robert Sinclair and William B. Whiteside. The alarm was raised and some of the robbers were overtaken near Alton. White

ing absent on a Journey) took it upon themselves to avenge her wrongs and took the young man into the woods and tied him up and gave him a severe whipping. They were prossecuted [sic] by him before the same court and Jury and he recovered 3000 dollars damages.

We have had a very wet season and our crops are not as good as usual. Corn however will not be more than a shilling a bushel I think this winter. Tell Artemas that I shall write to him ere long. Give my love to all my friends. Write to me oftener, if convenient. My health is now very good and that you may enjoy health and peace of mind is the anxious wish of your affectionate son

GERSHOM FLAGG

MRS. ELIZABETH FLAGG

[Addressed:] Doctor Ebenezer Flagg, Burlington, Vermont. [Written postmark:] Edwardsville Ill, Oct. 9.

XVI. To Azariah C. Flagg, December 21, 1821.87

EDWARDSVILLE ILLINOIS Dec 21 1821

DEAR BROTHER

Your letter per Mr Enos of 28th July I received the 14th September. I was taken sick with the bilious fever about the same time and although the fever only lasted a few days my health has been such that I have not been able to do any work since but my health is growing better very fast since the cold weather commenced. Our winter is very cold thus far. . .

I now own 270 acres of land which I have paid for. On one quarter section I have two log houses near each other and 65 acres well fenced in three fields 26 acres of which is under good cultivation as a plough field and the remainder occupied as a pasture it being in the Prairie. I have three yoke of good oxen and a good plough. I have ploughed considerable for people lately and have now contracted to brake up 90 acres more of New Prairie next spring. I get about \$4 an acre for ploughing.

I have rented my place this year for my board and live with the family who rented it...

[Gershom Flagg]

A LETTER TO A C FLAGG PLATTSBURGH

XVII. To ARTEMAS FLAGG, June 9, 1822.

Edwardsville June 9th 1822

DEAR BROTHER,

Your letter of the 13th of April I recd a few days since but have been so much engaged that I have not had time to answer it until now. My health is very good which is the most that I have to communicate at present but as you will expect somthing more I will write a few lines respecting things which have come within my observation. We have had a very rainy spring which has caused the streames to overflow their banks and in some instances Bridges have been carried away. The weather for a week past has been very hot yesterday the Thermometer rose to 98°. The wet and heat has caused the grass to grow very fast and in great aboundance. Our natural pastures are now covered as it were with droves of Cattle and horses which have already fattened on the spontaneous productions of the earth. I have seen Corn in silk this day but not our common sort the seed was brot from the Mandan Nation of Indians who reside 12 hundred miles up the Missouri.88

They were in the agricultural rather than the nomadic stage, fived in fortified villages, and were always friendly to the whites. In 1837 the tribe was almost wiped out by a visitation of small-pox. Frederick W. Hodge. Handbook of American Indians, (Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 30) I., pp. 796-799.

The corn of the Mandans was noted by Bradbury as grown to its full height—about three feet—on June 24, 1810. He described it in his Travels, in Thwaites, Early Western Travels. V., 158. Maximilian, who visited the Mandans in 1833, also wrote of their "very fine maize" and of his attempts to domesticate some of it in Europe after his return. Travels, in ibid., XXIII., 241, 275.

st From a copy in the hand-writing of Willard C. Flagg, Gershom's son who gathered the letters together. The original has probably been lost or destroyed.

The Mandan Indians were first visited by the Sieur de Verendrye in 1738. When Lewis and Clark wintered among them in 1804-1805, they numbered about two thousand and were located on the most northern bend of the Missouri River. They were in the agricultural rather than the nomadic stag

We have our share of hard times here and have worse times coming. say worse because our Legislature have introduced a sort of paper currency which, tho' it may yield a temporary relief will, eventually, prove a great disadvantage to this State that is in my humble opinion and als[o] in the opinion of many others. Brother I am full in the belief that we are carelessly suffering our government to waste the public Monies in giving high salaries, creating new offices for the sake of providing for their friends, &c. The people of the United States ought not to sleep while their Representatives are voting to themselves 8. dollars pr. day and giving such salaries to their officers as cause hundreds of applicants for one office. As times grow hard and money scarce and our revenue is declining why should not our representatives in congress reduce their pay to 6 dollars pr day Reduce the salaries of the different officers of Government and make such other retrenchments as will cause our revenue to equal the expenses of Government. Most surely we ought not to run into debt in times of peace for if we do what shall we do in case of war. I am afraid our Governmental officers are growing corrupt and we the sovreign People ought to look to it or we shall go down the broad road where all other Nations have gone who possessed a happy government

I should be very glad if you would write something respecting the opinion of the people in your state as respects our government.

With sincerety I remain your most affectionate Brother

GERSHOM FLAGG

MR ARTEMAS FLAGG

XVIII. To ARTEMAS FLAGG, July 20, 1823.

EDWARDSVILLE (ILLINOIS) July 20th 1823

DEAR BROTHER,

I have delayed writing to you for a much longer time than usual for which I hope you will not retaliate as long as I am willing to confess my I have been very busily employed for several months but not so much so as to forget the ties which bind the whole family of Mankind. I have enjoyed uninterrupted health for more than a year. It is a general time of hea[l]th in this vicinity at present although a sickly season has been expected owing to the great rains in the spring and fore part of summer. The Rivers have been very high much damage done to Bridges Mills &c &c.

Our wheat harvest has been very good and corn looks very well and our prospects as to health are better this season than I have known since I have lived in the State.

A Duel was fought on the Island, in the Mississippi, oppocite [sic] to St. Louis on the 30th June, between Thomas C. Rector and Joshua Barton Esq. District Atorney for the state of Missouri. The latter fell & expired immediately the other was untouched both belonged to St Louis.89 On the 10th of the present month an affray happened between Russel Botsford and Col. James Kelly, Cashier of the State Bank of Illinois both citizens of Vandalia<sup>90</sup> in which place the scene was acted. I will relate the circumstances

The island where the Rector-Barton duel was fought was known as "Bloody Island" on account of the many duels which took place there. It was formed about 1800 by the current of the river cutting through a neck of land on the Illinois side and there appears to have been some doubt as to whether it was in the jurisdiction of Illinois or of Missouri. It is now the third ward of the city of East St. Louis. Scharf, History of Saint Louis, II., 1849-1856; Houck, History of Missouri, III., 75-79; Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XXVI., 115, note.

90 By act of March 3, 1819, Congress granted four sections of land, to be selected by the state of Illinois as a site for a capital city. The legislature passed an act, March 30, 1819, establishing a commission of five members which was instructed to select a site on the Kaskaskia River near the third principal meridian, to have

<sup>89</sup> For an account of this duel and of the Rector family, see note 66. Joshua Barton was a brother of David Barton, one of the first United States Senators from Missouri. He was born in Tennessee about 1788 and located in St. Louis in 1812, where he studied law in the office of Rufus Easton. In 1817 he served as a second to Charles Lucas in his duel with Thomas H. Benton. He was appointed secretary of state in 1821 but resigned to become United States district attorney for Missouri, which position he held until his death. Scharf, History of Saint Louis, II., 1461; Houck, History of Missouri, III., 17, 77, 256.

The island where the Rector-Barton duel was fought was known as "Bloody Tolors" or account of the many duels which took place there. It was formed about

to select a site on the Kaskaskia River near the third principal meridian, to have the town surveyed, to choose a name for it, to sell part of the lots at auction, and

as I have heard them and the causes which led to it. About three months since the State Bank of (Illis) at Vandalia was broken open and 6 or 7 thousand dollars in Spiece [sic] taken out by some unknown person. Cashier Mr. Kelly with others mistrusted that Mr. Moss Botsford had some knowledge of the affair and took him into the woods tied him & Col. Kelly whipped him severely to make him confess his sins, and tell where the money was &[c] &[c] which, by the bye, is a court of inquiry very often instituted in this state—But no discovery was made. Russel Botsford was the Brother of the one that was whipped and as a Brother perhaps had expressed his disaprobation of the conduct of Kelly but this is only supposition with me but at any rate on the 10th inst. while Russel Botsford was sitting in a Store reading Col. Kelly came to the gable end of the Store with a Pistol in one hand and horse whip in the other and there walked back & forth for half an hour. When mr. Botsford came out and met him at the corner of the store when kelly commenced whipping him holding the Pistol in one hand & whip in the other. Botsford drawed out his Spanish knife knocked the Pistol out of his hand & gave him a mortal stab near the heart. After a little scuffle in which Botsford gave him a couppl [sic] nore [sic] Wounds and disabled his arm which held the Pistol both fell over a stump— Botsford sprang up and run & Kelly after him a few rods when kelly fell dead on the ground.91

On the 18 inst Col Parkison of this county was shot through the arm by one of his neighbors & the same day Messrs. Mitchel and Waddle citizens of St. Louis met on the Island before mentioned and after exchanging two or three shots the latter was shot through the boddy and his death is expected. Their quarrel was co[mmenc]ed at a gambling table by one's gi[ving the] other the lie or something to that effect.

Some other little skirmishes have taken place in consequence of the extraordinary and unparaleled procedings of our Legislature of which no doubt you have heard before now. A great party (but not a majority I think) are making use of every means to introduce slavery into this State.<sup>92</sup> I have not time or paper to write more enough has been written to convince you that we are a great and magnanimous people.

> Yours in haste forever Gershom Flagg

P. S. Waddle is dead.

A FLAGG

[Addressed:] Mr. Artemas Flagg, Richmond, Vermont. [Stamped postmark:] Edwardsville, Illinois, July 26. 25

venir of vanadia, 3-19.

31 A somewhat different account of this affair is given in Ross, Historical Souvenir of Vandalia, 21. Bottsford was tried before Judge Reynolds in 1824 and was acquitted. Sidney Breese was the presecuting attorney and Edward Bates of St. Louis the lawyer for the defense. About twelve years later a negro discovered some boxes containing three thousand dollars in silver in an old stable in Vandalia. This was part of the stolen money and was restored to the bank. Ibid. and Reynolds, My Own Times, 222.

to contract for the erection of a state-house. The selection was made and the town laid out in June, 1819, and the legislature began holding its sessions there in December, 1820. Vandalia, as the town was named, grew slowly until 1837 when it had a population of about twenty-five hundred. Beginning in 1833, a strong agitation developed for the removal of the capital and finally, after much controversy between rival claimants, a law was passed in 1837 providing for its removal to Springfield. The last session in Vandalia was that of 1838-1839 and after that the town declined almost to extinction but was resuscitated by the construction of the Illinois Central railroad through it in 1852. Robert W. Ross, Historical Souvenir of Vandalia, 9-19.

When the constitution of 1818 was framed, there was a considerable party in favor of making Illinois a slave state but it was evident that any attempt in that direction would be likely to interfere with the speedy admission of the state into the Union and so the constitution contained a clause prohibiting the future introduction of slaves. It was not long, however, before a movement was on foot to change the constitution so as to admit slaves and this was the principal issue in the state election of 1822. Edward Coles, the free-state candidate, was elected by a small plurality but the party in favor of the change secured a majority of both houses of the general assembly. The only way to bring about the desired change was by calling a convention to revise the constitution and in order to do that it was necessary for a resolution to be adopted by two-thirds of each house for

XIX. To ARTEMAS FLAGG, January 25, 1824.

EDWARDSVILLE (ILLINOIS) 25th Jan. 1824

DEAR BROTHER,

I have not heard from you for several months and while reflecting upon your negligence in writing, I happened to think of my own remissness in writing also-and instead of unbraiding you I will begin with excusing my self for not writing oftener. If I have any excuse for my negligence it will be found in my being very much engaged in my own business together with the singular situation of affairs in this state which occupies much of the attention of every man who has the future prosperity of the state in view. I have ordered Mr Warren to send the Edwardsville Spectator to John Johnson Esq. of Burlington Vermont. This paper will give you a very good idea of what is going on here if you can get a peep at it, which you can, I make no doubt, if mr. Johnson receives it. We have had a very extraordinary wet summer-dry pleasant fall-& so far warm pleasant winter we have had no snow of consequence and very few days but what we could have ploughed if occasion required. The bees have been flying nearly every day this month and the grass has began to grow in the low lands. Pork & Beef are selling from \$1.50 to \$2.00 pr. hundred, Wheat from 50 to 75 cents and Corn from 20 to 25 cents pr. bushel.

For news—there is a man to be hung on the 12 day of next month at Edwardsville for murder. 93 There was about 8 thousand quarter sections of non resident lands sold at Vandalia in Dec. last, for taxex [sic] which if not redeemed within one year will belong to the purchasers. The sums they were sold for would not exceed 5 dollars upon an average and this sum was received in illinois State Bank paper which is worth only 30 cents to the dollar which will bring the price of the land if not redeemed at less than one cent pr. acre. We have had an uncommonly healthy fall in this state more so than since I have lived in the State. I see by the papers that our Brother Azariah is elected a member of the N. Y. Legislature again. hope if he has any thing to do with the election of the next President of the U. States that John Q. Adams may be the first man and William H Crawford the last man of all the Candidates which will be supported by him. seen and felt too much of the bad management of the Secretary of the Treasury in this western country not to wish any other candidate elected before him who has suffered immense sums of money to be deposited in banks whose credit was so poor that Individuals dare not and would not trust their money in those banks.<sup>94</sup> I think that a majority of the people of Illinois are in

submitting the question to the people. The slavery party was able to muster exactly enough votes in the Senate but the two-thirds was secured in the House only by reopening a contested election case, unseating the man who had previously been declared elected, and seating his opponent. The resolution was thus carried in February, 1823, and then the question of a convention was before the people. It was understood that the real issue was as to whether Illinois should or should not become a slave-state and after an exciting campaign, which lasted a year and a half, the people decided against a convention by vote of 6,640 to 4,972. N. Dwight Harris, Negro Servitude in Illinois; William H. Brown, Early Movement in Illinois for the Legalization of Slavery (Fergus Historical Series, No. 4.)

\*\*3 This was Eliphalet Green who shot and killed a fellow-laborer. William Wright, at Abel Moore's distillery on Wood River in Madison county. The shooting took place on Christmas Eve. 1823; Green was indicted January 13, 1824; tried the next day; sentenced on the fifteenth, and hanged February 12. John Reynolds presided at the trial and is said to have pronounced sentence in a very informal manner. While awaiting execution Green was converted by Rev. J. M. Peck and was baptised in a creek through a hole cut in the ice. History of Madison County (1882), pp. 159-160; Reynolds, My Own Times, chap. xlvii; Ford, History of Illinois, 83-84; Babcock, Memoir of John Mason Peck, 189-191.

\*\*Among the western banks, the failure of which during or shortly after the crisis of 1819 involved a loss of public funds, was the bank of Edwardsville, Illinois. (See note 78.) Ninian Edwards, United States Senator from Illinois had been a director of this bank and had been instrumental in having it chosen as the depository for the money taken in at the Edwardsville land office. In the fall of 1819, however, he announced his intention of severing all connection with the bank and later he claimed that Secretary Crawford had been notified of this fact bu

favor of Mr. Adams for our next President. Mr. Clay I think would be the next man on the list & the next Mr. Calhoun but Mr. Crawford has but few friends here. I am anxious to hear from you all & hope you will not fail writing as soon as you receive this. I wish you to give my most friendly respects to John Johnson Esqr. of Burlington and enquire of him whether he received a letter which I wrote to him in August last and also if he receives the *Spectator*, which I send him weekly.

My respects to all those who may take the trouble to enquire after me and especially to my friends and let me know how you are all doing as soon as possible and tell your wife if she does not write to me I'll punish her for her neglect as soon as I see her. Eliza & Rowana<sup>56</sup> have written very frequently as well as yourself for which I give you all many thanks. I am much pleased with Eliza's letters and hope she will continue to write to me often and wish you would all do the same. I wish to know what Mary is doing; I think she must have become a Nunn, for I have not heard a word from her this two years.

Receive with this my most sincere wishes and anxious desire for the happiness of all my friends, from your

Friend & Affectionate Brother

Gershom Flagg

ARTEMAS FLAGG RICHMOND VERMONT

[Addressed:] Mr. Artemas Flagg, Richmond, Vermont. [Stamped postmark:] Edwardsville, Illinois, Jan. 28. 25

XX. To Artemas Flagg, July 20, 1825.

EDWARDSVILLE (ILL.) July 20th 1825

DEAR BROTHER,

I have not written to you for a long time because I intended before this time to have seen you at your own house but my circumstances are such that I have not been able to accomplish my intentions as yet. I shall not set any time again to see you but as soon as I can shall come and make you a visit. I have been looking every mail to hear from you but not receiving any letter I suppose you expected me there and have therefore neglected writing on that account. Being very anxious to hear from you I hope you will write as soon as you receive this. We have had a very remarkable year so far; the month of Jan. was entirely dry warm weather the ground was hardly frozen at all and we had neither snow or rain during the month. Crops are now 3 or four weeks earlier than usual Cherries were ripe by the middle of May and people commenced harvesting wheat before the 20 June.

with mismanagement of the public funds, especially in connection with the banks. The House appointed a committee to investigate the matter and Edwards resigned his mission and returned to Washington to substantiate the charges but the committee reported that "nothing has been proved to impeach the integrity of the Secretary, or to bring into doubt the general correctness and ability of his administration of the public finances." Annals of Congress, 18 Congress, 1 Session, pp. 2431-2455; American State Papers, Finance, V., 1-145; John Quincy Adams, Memoirs, VI., 296 et seq.; Thomas H. Benton, Thirty Years' View, I., chap. xiv.; Edwards, History of Illinois, chap. viii.

95 At the time when this was written the candidacy of General Jackson had not attracted much attention. Calhoun dropped out of the race and contented himself.

Flagg, was born in Richmond. Vermont, in 1804. She was married in Vermont in 1826 to Harley H. Pierce and in 1838 they moved to Edwardsville, Illinois, with their family of five daughters. Pierce died in 1843 and the widow afterwards married Calvin Hodgman of Omphghent township, Madison county, Illinois. She died in 1863. Flagg Family Records, 78.

attracted much attention. Calhoun dropped out of the race and contented himself with the vice-presidency. In the election, which took place in November, 1824, the total vote in Illinois was but 4707 as compared with 11,834 votes for Congressmen and 11,612 votes on the convention question at the election the preceding August. The presidential electors were chosen by districts in Illinois and two of them voted for Jackson and one for Adams. The determination of the popular vote is complicated by the fact that one candidate who received 629 votes in the first district did not announce his preference until after the election when he declared that, had he been elected, he should have voted for Jackson. It was understood, however, that he was opposed to Adams. Of the remainder of the votes cast, 1541 were for Adams, 1273 for Jackson, 1046 for Clay, and 218 for Crawford. When the election came before the House of Representatives, Daniel P. Cook cast the vote of Illinois for Adams. Edwards, History of Illinois, 261-265.

\*\*Roana Flagg, ninth child and youngest daughter of Ebenezer and Elizabeth

I saw ripe blackberries the 19 day of June and Corn now is generally ten feet high. For a few days past it has been very hot and the ground is now very dry indeed. Our political squables and quarrels have subsided very much and I am in hopes we shall have better times in this State hereafter. It appears that a majority of the people are opposed to the introduction of Slavery and I think the question is now at rest forever. I[n] my last letter to Eliza I enclosed a three dollar bill for many [sic]. I believe it was on a vermont bank. I have not recd any answer to the letter which makes me suspicious that she did not receive the letter.

Property is now very low here. Corn is worth only about 72½ cents pr. bushel Beef about \$1.50 pr Cwt Wheat 50 cents cows are worth from 5 to 7 dollars Oxen from 20 to 40 dollars a yoke horses all prices from 10 to 80 dollars. Goods have risen some since the speculations in Cotton. Boats are very plenty now on the Mississippi the first Steam Boat came to St Louis the year I came there but now sometimes they have 3 or 4 there at a time. They travel up the current of the Mississippi at the rate of about 100 miles per day and some times more.

I wish to know "how wags the world wi' ye."

Lafayette came up the mississippi as far as St. Louis got his dinner and the next day dined at Kaskaskia in this state almost a hundred miles from the former place. From thence he went up the Ohio and Cumberland rivers as far as Nashvill[e] in Tennessee<sup>98</sup> thenc[e] back to Shawneetown<sup>99</sup> and so up the Ohio like a whirligig and like to have given his last whirl when the steam boat sunk but fortunately at that time two steam boats on the way to Orleans saw the situation of the Nations guest and volunteered their service to help him out of the scrape.100 You will learn by this circumstance that

Tennessee, 118-120, 134, 179, 200.

Shawneetown, located on the Ohio about ten miles below the mouth of the Wabash, was at this time the principal town of southeastern Illinois. The town was laid out in 1808 on the site of an old Shawnee Indian village and the land office for eastern Illinois was located there in 1812. The salt works on Saline creek nearby contributed to its prosperity as did also the stream of emigrants from the South to Illinois and Missouri which crossed the Ohio at this point. Moses, Illinois, I., 271-272; Boggess, Settlement of Illinois, 125. Judge James Hall, who was a resident of Shawneetown for a number of years, gives an interesting sketch of the place about the time of Lafayette's visit in his Letters from the West, 215-233. When Lafayette arrived in America in 1824 the legislature of Illinois appointed a committee to invite him to visit the state. To the address drawn up by this committee Governor Coles added a personal invitation, for he had made the committee Governor Coles added a personal invitation, for he had made the acquaintance of the general in France in 1817. (Illinois Historical Collections, IV., 70-71.) In the spring of 1825 Lafayette came up the Mississippi River on a steamboat to St. Louis where he was met by Governor Coles and escorted to Kaskaskia. There the governor delivered an address of welcome which was responded to by the general. Then followed a reception at the residence of John Edgar, a dinner at Sweet's tavern, and a ball at the home of William Morrison. Governor Coles accompanied his guest to Nashville on a steamboat chartered by the state and afterwards the party stopped at Shawneetown, where an address of welcome

and afterwards the party stopped at Shawneetown, where an address of welcome was delivered by Judge James Hall. Lafayette's secretary. A. Levasseur, gives an account of the visit to Illinois and of the wreck of the steamboat on the Ohio in his Lafayette in America (New York, 1829). See also Ellen M. Henrotin, The visit of the Marquis de Lafayette to Illinois in 1825, in Illinois State Historical Society. Transactions, 1907, pp. 79-84. The account of the visit in Reynolds, My Own Times (chap. lix.) is inaccurate.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Kaskaskia, for over half a century the metropolis of the upper Mississippi Valley, was founded in 1700 by Jesuit missionaries who followed the Kaskaskia Indians from their former habitat on the Illinois River. At that time the site was on the right bank of the Kaskaskia River and about ten miles from its mouth. In 1765 the village was transferred to the British and in 1778 it was taken possession of by George Rogers Clark in the service of Virginia. A considerable number of the French inhabitants deserted the place for the new settlements across the river but American settlers soon began to come in and take their places. When Randolph county was established in 1795 Kaskaskia became its seat and from 1809 to 1821 it was the capital of the territory and state. During this period the town flourished moderately but with the removal of the capital to Vandalia it began to decline again. Following the flood of 1844, the county-seat was removed to decline again. Following the flood of 1844, the county-seat was removed to Chester and during a subsequent inundation the Mississippi jumped across to the Kaskaskia just above the town, so that all there is left of old Kaskaskia today is a number of houses on an island in the Mississippi River. Clarence W. Alvord, The Old Kaskaskia Records, 35-38; History of Randolph, Monroe, and Perry Counties, (Philadelphia, 1883); Moses, Illinois, I., 268-270.

Solution 1806. The Tennessee legislature met there from 1812 to 1816 and from 1826 on but it was not made the permanent capital until 1843. James Phelan, History of Tennessee, 118-120, 134, 179, 200.

Steam boats are very plenty on the Ohio river some times I am told there are twenty at a time at Louisville. I am informed also by a Gentleman who had traveled from N. York to Vermont [in] Steam boats on North river and lake C[ham]plain that the Boats on the Ohio & Mississippi r[i]vers are equal if not superior to the boats on north river. New boats are building in great numbers in different places on the Ohio River. You will perceive that I have been scribbling along 'till I have but sufficient room to mention that I remain in good health your most affectionate Brother and friend Gershom Flagg

A FLAGG

[Addressed:] Artemas Flagg, Hinesburgh, Vermont. [Stamped postmark:] Edwardsville, Illinois, July [illegible]. 25

XXI. To ARTEMAS FLAGG, August 16, 1825.

EDWARDSVILLE (ILLINOIS) Aug. 16th 1825

DEAR BROTHER.

Your letter of the 18 June and Eliza's of the 12 I have received and am very glad to hear that you are all in good health. I am very well pleased with the names of your Children and hope I shall be well pleased with them if I can ever be so fortunate as to see them. 101 We have the hottest weather here that I ever experienced before. We have had no rain of any consequence for several weeks. The sun pours down his scorching rays from day to day without any cessation and the ground has become so heated that there does not seem to be moisture enough in it to produce any dew. I attempted to walk bare foot two days ago upon hard ground which was exposed to the sun but found I could not bear the heat. Iron exposed to the sun becomes so much heated that a person cannot hold it in his hand a minute. Corn and grass are drying up very fast and apples that are lying upon the ground are half baked by the sun. Crops of Corn will be poor I think this year although 5 weeks ago there was never a better prospect and farmers were calculating that corn would not be more than  $6\frac{1}{4}$  cents pr bushel. But notwithstanding the great heat this state was never more healthy. You make a particular request that I should write respecting my property and for the sake of gratifying you on that head I will give you a very particular account of the same. I have 275 acres Land 60 acres fenced into 5 fields and under good cultivation an Orchard of 530 apple trees 100 Peach trees twelve Cherry trees & 3 pear trees also a well and several log buildings. I rent all my farm except the Orchard of 13 acres to a man who lives on the place and gives me 390 bushe[ls] Corn and 50 bushels wheat pr. annum. I board with a family half a mile from my farm at \$1.25 pr. week including washing. I have four yoke of good oxen 4 Chains yokes &c 3 good ploughs two wooden Carts two sleds one large Grindstone two axes 4 augers shovel, hoe, &c &c—a Surveyors Compass and two Chains and Mathematical instruments worth 60 dollars. I purchased last June about 15 hundred acres of valuable land for the taxes which amounted to \$103 dollar. The owners have two years from that time to redeem the same by paying the amount with 100 per cent.

I owe \$56 dollars and have due to me \$110 from good men and have \$34 in cash on hand. I have twelve shirts six pair Pantaloons 6 vests ten cravats & handkerchiefs two roundabouts 4 pair stocking two pair shoes one Coat in Short I suppose my whole property to be worth about \$1500 in cash and now I suppose I have been particular enough on that subject at any rate I do not wish any one to see this letter except yourself.

If you will give me as good an account of your own affairs together with those of my Sisters I shall not complain of you. You and my sisters write that they are married but neither of you tell me any thing about the men

<sup>101</sup> Artemas Flagg had four children at this time: Lucius Harrington, born in 1818; Azariah Cutting, 1820; Mary Jane. 1822: and Caroline Elizabeth. 1823. A fifth, Gershom Hannibal. was born in October, 1825. Flagg Family Records, 42.

they have married except their names. 102 I should like to know somthing further if you please. I have not time to write more at present haveing been Summoned as a witness at Court to day therefore excuse the haste of your affectionate Brother and friend

GERSHOM FLAGG

ARTEMAS FLAGG

XXII. To Artemas Flagg. August 2, 1830.

EDWARDSVILLE MADISON Co. (ILL.) Aug 2d 1830

DEAR BROTHER.

Your letter of June 21 I received a few days since. I enclose a deed to you which I think will answer the purpose intended but I do not understand what your laws are now respecting conveyances but presume this will be a good and sufficient title to my share of the land and no more. I am in great haste and cannot write as much as I should be glad to do as this is the day of our State Elections. 103 With respect to the trade you mention that Buel<sup>104</sup> can make with N. B. Haswell it would be buying a pig in a poke to buy land in the Bounty tract without seeing it. The land is generally good but there is a great quantity of Prairie and some whole townships destitute of timber. If I knew the numbers of the land I could tell much better about such a trade as I could give a very near guess as to whether it is well situate[d] for farming by the map. If you have Vanzandt's map of the Military bounty lands in Illinois you can see the Prairie and timber marked on the map. We consider the land generally that lies from 4 to ten miles from the large rivers to be the best for farming & for health. The land near the water courses is richer but not considered heathy and after you get some distance from water courses the Prairies are much too large. A belt of timber accompanies all water courses but between the head waters of streams it is generally open level Prairie. The Bounty tract is setling [sic] very fast and the Imigration to the state is more now than it has been since I came here. Instead of one I think we shall have three Representatives in Congress after the next Election of members. 106 We have had a very dry season. Money is scarce Provision cheap and plenty. We have much old corn on hand & worth only 15 cents pr bushel oats 17 cents wheat will not sell for 50 cents pr bushel. I have old Corn Oats & wheat now on hand. People ar[e] giving 25 pr. cent interest for money to buy land with notwithstanding land is so plenty here. We may well suppose that when money will fetch 25 pr cent interest and some times more that those who have it will let it out as they have the land for security in addition to a note and this money of course goes into the general land office and from thence to feed the big fish at Washington at the rate of 8 dollars pr. day for their great and

For Gershom Flagg's oldest sister, Mary Ann, see note 10. The second sister, Semanthy, born in 1796, was married in 1822 to Enoch Hoadley at Hartland, Vermont. She died in 1849. Her oldest son had moved to Rochelle, Ogle county, Illinois the year before and the rest of the family followed soon after her death. Keziah, born in 1789, died unmarried in 1821. Lucy Douglas, born in 1800, was married in 1823 to William Buell of Essex, Vermont. Ten years later they moved to Madison county, Illinois, by way of the lakes, settling afterwards in Macoupin and finally in Shelby county, where she died in 1867 and he in 1871. For Eliza and Roana, see notes 83 and 96. Flagg Family Records, 37, 56, 63.

103 In the state election of 1830 the rival candidates for the office of governor were John Reynolds and William Kinney. Kinney was an ultra-Jackson man but Reynolds was cautious about committing himself and secured votes from both Jackson and anti-Jackson forces. The outcome was the election of Reynolds with a majority of nearly four thousand in a total poll of twenty-two thousand. Moses, Illinois, 352-355; Illinois Historical Collections, IV., pp. xix-xx; Reynolds, My Own Times, chap. Ixviii.

104 Probably Flagg's brother-in-law, William Buell. See note 102.

105 Nicholas Biddle Van Zandt, at one time a clerk in the general land office, wrote a book entitled, A full description of the soil, water, timber, and prairies of each lot, or quarter section of the military lands between the Mississippi and the Illinois Rivers (Washington, Force, 1818). The copies of this book seen, however, do not contain a map.

do not contain a map.

The population of Illinois increased from 55,162 in 1820 to 157,445 in 1830. Under the apportionment act following the census of 1830 the state was entitled to three representatives in Congress and the districts were laid out by an act of the legislature of February 13, 1831. The first election thereunder was August 6, 1832. Moses. *Illinois*, I., 549, II., 1195.

persevering efforts in the cause of Retrenchment & Reform and as we are to have no money appropriated for internal improvements107 the Money which is continually drawn from our western states to be spent elswhere will leave us soon without money entirely. Suppose for instance the whole state of Vermont & Newhampshire were now owned by the U. S and offered for sale at \$1.25 pr. acre would not every man who had money either lay it out in land or lend it at a high interest to those who wanted a home and supposing all the money thus taken in was transported to other states and say for instance that one hundred thousand dollars of this money was squandered extra because divirs foreign minister had the misfortune to be so wofully blinded as even to think that J. Q. Adams was a better man for President than the Hero of two wars108 and then be told it was unconstitutional to appropriate any money to improve your navigation Roads &c &c and thereby prevent in som measure your prosperity I think some Ethan. Allen<sup>109</sup> or Missouri Barton<sup>110</sup> would rise up amongst you & tell you who was who & what was what.

G FLAGG

[On margin:] We are all well. [Addressed:] Mr. Artemas Flagg, Richmond, Vermont. [Stamped postmark:] Edwardsville, Illinois, Aug. 6.

XXIII. To Mrs. Elizabeth Flagg, January 9, 1831.

EDWARDSVILLE MADISON COUNTY ILLINOIS January 9th 1831

DEAR MOTHER,

It has been a long time since I have written to you or received a letter from you. I have however often heard from you as I suppose you have from me. My health at present is not very good I believe I have done too much hard work since I have been in this country I am not able to endure as much fatigue as formerly.

Willard arrived here the 16th of October last and is now in good health but was not well when he arrived here and for a number of days afterwards.111 He came down the Ohio River in a steam boat when the water was very low and the boat struck sand bars and all hands and passingers had to

Willard Parker Flagg, tenth child and fourth son of Ebenezer and Elizabeth Flagg, was born at Richmond, Vermont, in 1898. He went to Illinois in 1830 and in 1838 became one of the two original pioneers at a point in Ogle county where Rochelle was later located. He became an ardent abolitionist and was an agent of the Underground Railway. In 1839 he was married to Mrs. Lucy Cochran Lake, who died in 1855. In 1857 he married Mrs. Maria Sitterly. He died at Rochelle in 1877. Flagg Family Records, 86.

President Jackson's veto of the Maysville road bill. May 27, 1830, was practically the death-blow to the proposed system of national internal improvements. The National Republicans—later Whigs—under the leadership of John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay were strongly in favor of internal improvements to be constructed at the expense of the nation but Jackson took the position that appropriations for such purposes were unconstitutional. Flagg was later a member of the Whig party. William McDonald, Jacksonian Democracy (American Nation. XV), chap. viii; Benton, Thirty Years' View, I., chaps. x, lii; Flagg Family Records, 52.

108 A reference, doubtless, to General William Henry Harrison, Minister to Columbia, whom Jackson recalled four days after he became president. He had been at his post but a few weeks and his recall involved the expense of a new outfit for his successor. James Parton. Life of Andrew Jackson, III., 210; H. Montgomery, Life of William H. Harrison, 287-288. J. Q. Adams comments on this example of Jackson's "economy" in his Memoirs, VIII., 112.

109 Ethan Allen was the leader and hero of the "Green Mountain Boys" in the Revolution. He is noted especially for his surprise and capture of Fort Ticonderoga on May 10, 1775. He is said to have demanded its surrender "in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress." Claude H. Van Tyne, The American Revolution (American Nation, IX.), 40.

100 David Barton was born in Tennessee, where he was admitted to the bar in 1810. He moved to St. Louis in 1811 and soon became prominent as a lawyer and judge. He was the presiding officer of the constitutional convention of 1820 and was elected one of the first Senators from Missouri, serving from 1821 to 1831, when his support of Adams against Jackson cost him his place. He died in 1837. During the great debate in the Senate on Foote's resolution to instruct a committee to inquire into the expediency of limiting the sales of public lands, Barton delivered a long speech in reply to one by his colleague, Se 107 President Jackson's veto of the Maysville road bill. May 27, 1830, was pract-

get out into the water to haul the boat over the barrs. In doing this Willard by being in the water at that time rather cold and hard lifting &c catched a very violent cold which lasted some time but he is now very well and hearty and I believe is very well pleased with the country as far as he has seen it which is very little has not been away from home at all scarcely. He received a letter from Wait<sup>112</sup> not long since.

We have a son nea[r]ly 16 months old who is large and very healthy and I named him Willard Cutting113 his uncle willard has learnt him to dance very well since he came here.

We have a very hard winter so far for this country the snow is now 8 or 10 inches deep and has been for some days and the weather guite cold. The Mississippi River is frozen over in places. The past season has been more unhealthy than usual and the crops not as good. The fall was extreemly dry as also the latter part of the summer. I had a large quantity of apples the last fall and made above twenty five barrels Cider but have sold so many apples that we have very few left. I sold my winter apples at 50 cents pr bushel Wheat is now selling here at from 40 to 50 cents pr. bushel Pork from 2½ to 3 dollars pr hundred and beef the sam[e MS. torn] much if it was [MS. torn] you but at presen[t MS. torn] saas as I can aff[MS. torn]visiting Vermont [MS. torn] be very glad if you would write to me [and] inform me how you are.

your affectionate son Gersho[M]

MRS. ELIZABETH FLAGG

[Addressed:] Mrs. Elizabeth Flagg, Richmond, Vermont. [Stamped postmark:] Edwardsville, Illinois, Jan 14. Paid 25

112 Thomas Wait Flagg, eleventh child and fifth son of Ebenezer and Elizabeth Flagg, was born in Richmond, Vermont, in 1813. He moved to Rochester, New York, where he edited a paper as early as 1838. Later he lived in Coshocton, Ohio and edited the Coshocton Democrat. He was also a lawyer, being admitted to the bar in 1841. He married Catherine Conley in 1839 and died in 1863. Flagg Family

caned and was president of the state Farmers' Association. The objects of this movement were the organization of farmers for their mutual advantage, and the regulation of railroads by the state. Flagg made speeches and wrote articles on the railroad question which attracted attention in the East as well as in Illinois. The movement led to the formation of an "Independent Reform" party in 1874 and Flagg, who was always a hard-money man, strove, but without success, to keep this organization from adopting the Greenback planks.

In addition to his political and agricultural activities, Flagg was deeply interested in western history and gathered together a considerable library on the subject together with a large number of manuscripts and newspaper clippings relating to the history of Illinois and of Madison county. To him is due the credit for the collection and preservation of these letters written by his father. These books and manuscripts are now in the possession of his son, Hon. Norman G. Flagg. Willard C. Flagg was married February 13, 1856 to Sarah Smith of St. Louis. He died in the prime of life, March 30, 1878, and his widow survived him until February 16, 1905. Their three children living are, Mrs. Isabel Hatch of Springfield, Illinois; Mrs. Mary W. Gillham of Wanda. Madison county, Illinois; and Norman Gershom Flagg of Moro, Madison county, Illinois. Flagg Family Records, 52-55; Solon J. Puck, Agricultural Organization in Illinois, in Illinois State Historical Society. Journal, III., 10-23, (April, 1910) and Independent Parties in the Western States, in Turner Essays in American History, 137-164; Jonathan Periam, The Groundswell, a History of the Farmer's Movement, 383-388.

and edited the Coshocton Democrat. He was also a lawyer, being admitted to the bar in 1841. He married Catherine Conley in 1839 and died in 1863. Flagg Family Records, 91.

113 Willard Cutting Flagg was the only son of Gershom and Jane (Paddock) Flagg. He was born September 16, 1829, prepared for college in St. Louis, and graduated from Yale in 1854. Returning to Illinois, he took charge of his father's farm in Madison county and made a specialty of horticulture. He was secretary of the State Horticultural Association from 1861 to 1869 and was afterwards its president. He played a prominent part in the establishment of the Illinois Industrial University, now the University of Illinois, and was on its board of trustees from the start until his death in 1878. In politics, Flagg was a Republican and in 1860 President Lincoln appointed him collector of internal revenue for the twelfth district of Illinois, a position which he held until 1869. He was also enrolling officer for Madison county during the war, by appointment of Governor Yates, and was state Senator from 1869 to 1873. During the decade of the seventies he was called and was president of the State Farmers' Association. The objects of this movement were the organization of farmers for their mutual advantage, and the regulation of railroads by the state. Flagg made speeches and wrote articles on

## XXIV. To ARTEMAS FLAGG, July 24, 1836.

EDWARDSVILLE MADISON COUNTY (ILLINOIS) July 24th 1836

DEAR BROTHER,

My wife is asleep Brother Willard has gone to alton<sup>114</sup> and the children and hired men have gone to meeting and it being sunday and raining I thot' it might be well to write to you as I must be doing somthing for Idleness, you know is the root of all evil. Those who do not get their living by the Swett of the face make God a liar you know. I presume you would like to know how we are all coming on. In the first place then I have the pleasure to inform you that we are all in good hea[1]th and have so much work to do that we have no time to commit any othere sin. I own one thousand and eighty three acres of Land about two hundred and forty of it is good timbered land and the other is Prairie land. I live about 10 miles a little north of east from the mouth of the Missouri River and about 30 miles from the mouth of the Illinois River and 12 miles East of the town of Alton on the Missisippi River and twenty six miles from St. Louis in Missouri on the Road from st Louis to Springfield Chicago Galena and all the upper part of this state.115 The 4 horse Mail stage passes here every day in the week

The town of Alton, located on the bluffs of the Mississippi about twenty-five miles above St. Louis, was laid out in 1818 by Rufus Easton. The place languished for a while on account of a controversy over land-titles but it grew rapidly in the thirties, being incorporated as a town in 1833 and as a city in 1837. Edmund Flagg, a distant relative of Gershom Flagg, visited Alton just about the time this letter was written and gives an interesting description of the place in his Far West. (Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XXVI., 118-125.) In the following year, 1837, occurred the anti-abolition riots in Alton in which Elijah P. Lovejoy was killed. Moses, Illinois, I., 272; History of Madison County (1882), 374-389; Peck, Gazetteer of Illinois (1837), pp. 146-150.

115 The first settlements on the site of Springfield were made by a number of squatters in 1819 and 1820. When Sangamon county was laid out in 1821 the commissioners selected a place near the cornfield of John Kelley, one of these squatters, for the county seat and two years later a land office was opened there

The town of Chicago was platted by the commissioners for the Illinois and Michigan canal in 1829. Although there was some speculation in lots at the time, no considerable settlement followed and it had a population of only two or three hundred in 1832. From 1833 to 1837, however, the town grew with unparalleled rapidity and was incorporated as a city in the latter year with a population of over four thousand. This growth was the result of the development of steam navigation on the lakes tops of merchandise and a vast number of emigrants being landed

on the lakes, tons of merchandise and a vast number of emigrants being landed at the port during these years. Pooley, Settlement of Illinois, chap. x; Peck, Gazetteer of Illinois (1837), pp. 179-181. See also notes 52 and 69 on the Illinois and Michigan canal and on Fort Dearborn.

The town of Galena, located on Fever River near the northwest corner of the state of Illinois, was a product of the lead mines in the vicinity. These mines had been worked to some extent by the French in the eighteenth century but operations by American miners were inconsiderable until about 1819. Within a few years there were several hundred miners in the settlement but the town was

operations by American miners were inconsiderable until about 1819. Within a few years there were several hundred miners in the settlement but the town was not laid out until 1828 and titles were not given for the lots until 1838. Its population fluctuated considerably but was probably about nine hundred in 1830 and about twelve hundred in 1836. Pooley, Settlement of Illinois, chap. ix.; Peck, Gazetteer of Illinois (1837), p. 208.

The road referred to was a development of the Edwardsville and Fort Clark trail. (See note 68.) Mitchell's map of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois (1835) shows a stage road from St. Louis through Edwardsville, Carlinville, Macoupin Point in Montgomery county, and Springfield, to Peoria; thence northward across Rock River at Dixon's Ferry to Gratiot's Grove in Wisconsin and southwestward to Galena. This map also shows a road from Peoria to just below the mouth of the Kankakee This map also shows a road from Peoria to just below the mouth of the Kankakee where it crosses the Illinois and then proceeds along the northwest side of the Illinois and Des Plaines Rivers and across to Chicago. Mitchell's map of Illinois of the same date, however, shows the road from Peoria to Chicago as crossing the Illinois at Ottawa and then running eastward along the bank of the river.

squatters, for the county seat and two years later a land office was opened there with Thomas Cox as register and Pascal P. Enos as receiver. These two with Elijah Iles and John Taylor bought out the improvements of the squatters, entered four quarter-sections, and became the proprietors of Springfield, or Calhoun, as it was called for a few years. The town grew rapidly and is said to have had a population of a thousand in 1830 and fourteen hundred in 1834. It was incorporated as a town in 1832 and as a city under a special charter in 1840. In 1837, the efforts of Lincoln, Douglas, Edward Baker, and other representatives from the Sangamon country secured the choice of Springfield as the permanent In 1004, the efforts of Lincoln, Douglas, Edward Baker, and other representatives from the Sangamon country secured the choice of Springfield as the permanent capital of the state and the legislature began holding sessions there in 1839. Moses, Illinois, I., 430-432; Zimri Enos, Description of Springfield, in Illinois State Historical Society, Transactions, 1909, pp. 190-208. There are descriptions of Springfield, about the time this letter was written, in Peck, Gazetteer of Illinois (1837), pp. 296-297; Flagg, Far West, in Thwaites, Early Western Travels, XXVI., 318-319.

except sundays.116 I have four hundred and fifty five acres well fenced in mostly with White oak and black Walnut Rails nine rails high. It is divided into about a dozen different fields and lots the largest field contains 330 acres. I have on my farm 4 log houses or Cabbins as we call them here besides the ones which I occupy myself—4 good wells well walled up with stone the water good and plenty of it—About five hundred bearing apple trees one half of which are of the very best kind of fruit. I sold about 500 bushels of Winter apples last fall for 50 cents a bushel in the Orchard and a few days ago I sold my early apples 68 bushels, at one dollar pr bushel in the Orchard. I have current bushes in plenty. We made 275 gallons of Currant wine this year and have about 30 Gallons of last years wine on hand. It is worth \$1.50 pr. Gallon. I have 12 head of horses upwards of 50 head of Cattle 30 sheep 29 head of hogs about 400 bushels of old Corn on hand and 70 acres now growing. I have 8 or 10 tons of last years hay on hand and 50 acres of timothy and red top this year one half of which is now cut made and well stacked without any rain on it since it was mowed. The hay is most excellent. We have 32 acres of Oats 10 acres of which are not yet Cut.

Myself and those that I have rented land to have 100 acres of Corn all in one field. I think it would do your soul good to look at it. If it does as well as it did last year we shall raise five thousand bushels at least. We milk 11 Cows make a cheese every day and are selling the cheese at 2 or 3 weeks old at 12½ cents a pound. I sold last fall one hundred dollars worth of apples the produce of less than one acre of land and with that 100 dol. purchased 80 acres of excellent land. This month the apples on a half acre in orchard has produced me 75 dollars. Sister Eliza writes to willard that she is determined to come to this country as soon as she can get anybody to come with her. Would it not be well for you to come and take a look at this state[?]

I would come to Vermont this summer if I possibly could leave home but do not know how I can. I am now in debt about 800 dollars and to raise money to pay this requires that I should be here. I should like to hear from you soon. I should like very much to know whether that Old sarpent called the Devil is drove out of Vermont or whether he is still roving up and down the country seeking whose Chickens he can catch [a]nd devour. I see or read and hear that there [is] great uneasiness by our religious friend[s in] the East about the cause of Religion in the valley of the Missipi &c &c.<sup>117</sup> I do not see but the cause fl[o]urishes as well here as in other places the people here contribute freely for the support of Preachers both in money and good living which you know is the main thing. Those who renounce the world the flesh and the devil ought to be satisfied if they and their wives

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup> The mail route from Edwardsville through Springfield to Peoria is said to have been established in 1822 and there was one from Peoria to Galena as early as 1830. Scott. Newspapers and Periodicals of Illinois, p. xxx; Boggess, Settlement of Illinois, 158.

of Illinois, 158.

The concern about the religious welfare of the people of the Mississippi Valley led to the organization of numerous home missionary societies, bible societies and Sunday school unions in the eastern states and most of these bodies sent agents or missionaries to the West. In the summer of 1812 John F. Shermerhorn and Samuel J. Mills made a missionary tour through the valley under the patronage of the Massachusetts and Connecticut missionary societies: in 1817 John Mason Peck arrived in St. Louis as agent of the Baptist Mission Board: and in a few years there were a considerable number of missionaries in the West. The letters and reports of many of these missionaries have been preserved in the archives of the organizations in the East and form a valuable source for the social history of the Mississippi Valley. Shermerhorn and Mills, A Correct View of that part of the United States which lies West of the Allegany Mountains with regard to Religion and Morals (Hartford, 1814); Babcock, Memoir of John Mason Peck.

can live upon the best and have nothing to do. Tell Mother that I intend to come and see her next summer if not before<sup>118</sup> and give my love and respects to all our friends.

Yours Truly GERSHOM FLAGG

ARTEMAS FLAGG

[Addressed:] Artemas Flagg, Esqr., Richmond, Vermont. [Written postmark:] Edwardsville III, Aug 2nd 25

<sup>118</sup> Flagg finally made his long contemplated visit to Vermont in 1838. His grandson, Hon. Norman G. Flagg, possesses a series of five letters which he wrote to his wife in Illinois while on this trip to the East.

