

# **SCRAP BOOK**

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**Amos Williams**

**and**

**Early Danville, Illinois**

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PRESS OF  
RECORDING & STATISTICAL CORP.  
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AMOS WILLIAMS

1797—1857





## Preface

"It's only human nature to cherish memories. As the years speed by incidents of the past acquire new significance. Somehow the average person finds recollections interesting. Most of us like to "live in the past" at times--to talk over again the days that are gone."--Commercial-News.

In presenting this little sketch of the life of Amos Williams, and in trying to picture the times and conditions under which he lived, we ask our readers not to think of it as a real book but to try to imagine themselves before a heap of old papers trying to select old letters and bits of information suitable for a scrapbook. Trying to find what will show how people fixed their homes in "the long ago." Also how they worked and how the schools were run and business managed. Among the papers we find two interesting lists of names. One is a subscription to raise funds for the building of a rail fence and good gates for the old "grave yard." The other is for raising money to build the old Red Bridge across the Vermilion River, which was built in the year 1857. These lists have names of many of our early Danville citizens. If they do not contain names of some who still live or who had loved ones living here in those old days, we beg that no one will feel hurt by the absent names, they may have been on other lists or in other enterprises. Each person cannot be in every thing.

One fact is important and that is that these personal subscriptions show that public work was not always paid for by taxes. It may be a question as to which way was really best.

There is one more thing to mention, and it is that in copying from old manuscripts, we have followed the original form in the use of spelling, capitals, punctuation, and paragraphs. Also remember that this is not a book, only a scrap book.

It is with the hope of throwing some light on the early days of Danville, and a more complete idea of the varied accomplishments of Amos Williams that we attempt this little memorial to him.

His Woodbury Grandchildren.

The librarian of the Chicago Historical Society after looking over the old papers said, "I have not ceased to ponder upon these interesting waifs of a byegone time which, fragile as they are, nevertheless serve as links to bind together the old and the new."

Sketch of the life of Amos Williams, pioneer,

as told to

Miss Ruth Sandeson

by

His Woodbury Grandchildren

It is a good many years back to 1826 and 1827 when Vermilion County and Danville, Illinois were brought into being. There were no electric lights then, no automobiles, no good roads, no matches, no coal oil lamps, and no fine office furniture. Amos Williams, Vermilion County's outstanding pioneer, did much of his almost perfect writing at a little candle stand about two feet square with a candle on it. It is safe to say that he did not sit up all night! Like most pioneers he was in the habit of retiring at nine and rising at four. He built the wood fires and brought water from the fine, big spring in the hillside to use in preparing breakfast. When the hot fires had warmed the rooms and the sun appeared with its golden light, he was ready to write--if there was writing to be done.

### Red Tape

The accumulation of letters and papers occurred then, as now, but it was not so rapid in early days when paper was not so cheap and mails were not as convenient. The papers and letters were generally folded to the same size, labelled

and ready to be laid away for future reference. Then Amos Williams cut a strip of "red tape" and wrapped it around the package and neatly tied it. There were no rubber bands then as there are now. The rubber bands slip on quickly and are very convenient but they have their faults. They sometimes "go dead" and let the papers fall apart. They, also, sometimes stick to the paper and cause the ruin of an important word. The red tape of Amos Williams' time lasted well and served well. As it was so much used people finally made a joke of it, saying, "It is all done up in red tape" or "It's according to red tape."

### A Bushel of Letters

After the death of Amos Williams the court appointed Dr. W. W. R. Woodbury to administer the Williams' estate. One of the first things to be done was to vacate the old Williams home number 10 South Clark Street. That made necessary the sorting of the papers and letters that had accumulated in some thirty years. It was no small task. The first post office had been in the Williams' home and there was the accumulation of public as well as the private correspondence. Dr. Woodbury destroyed about a wagon load of papers. They were not loose, crumpled up papers but neatly, accurately folded and closely packed. Much of the correspondence had been penned before 1840 when envelopes came into use. The address was written on the back of the letter and the letter was sealed or else sent without much regard for secrecy. Dr. Woodbury packed about a bushel of letters in a box with the idea that they might be of interest to someone. That bushel of letters sat around in the Woodbury home for over fifty years. No body seemed to get interested enough to look them over and no one wished to throw them away without looking at them.

When the Doctors' son, Amos Gardner, hurt his foot and a great snow fall lay on the ground for days he was shut in the house with nothing to do. He decided to take a look at those old papers and see if they were really worth shelter-

ing any longer. So he started. The first ones did not interest him very much. He and his sister Flo tossed several into the bright, winter grate fire. Before long they found a letter from Lincoln. That aroused more interest and they wondered how many documents of interest they had already burned. The sorting continued. It soon became evident that the papers covered many different subjects such as land, mills, legislation, politics, prospective railroads, family affairs. Each subject was put in a separate pile. The number of piles increased. The tables and chairs overflowed. The floor had hardly walking space. There were not only hundreds but thousands of letters. After having them around for weeks, Amos Gardner Woodbury bought a big office letter file case and put the letters in it "just so"--like his grandfather Williams.

In the meantime he wrote to Historical Societies and to the University of Illinois in regard to the letters. He found that old letters were of interest and even, in some cases, of benefit. His health had begun to fail and the letters and records remained in their new place for a few years. Then his sister, Flo Woodbury, wrote the University of Illinois. Some of the letters and records and the filing case became part of the historical collection of that institution in 1922. The old papers, which were sold for three hundred dollars, were worth much more from a historical standpoint. The owners, however, wished to be sure they would be preserved. Some documents and relics of local interest have been put into the hands of the local Daughter of American Revolution Chapter, Danville Public Library.

However, material relating especially to Danville and to the Williams family was kept with the thought that a history of Danville might yet be written. That never seemed to be accomplished and now this effort is being made to give a sketch of the life of Amos Williams and his work, to show some of the letters, to quote old rules, and to collect scraps from the colorful pioneer cloth woven with threads that have made our nation strong. Thus there can be established a memorial to one of Danvilles' most helpful citizens.

## Amos Williams, Pioneer Citizen

It is over a hundred years since Amos Williams came to Illinois. It was 1821. He was twenty four years old and came from Pennsylvania. A man of considerable education and very careful training, he could have done well in an eastern state among other people of education and advantages. But he chose to come west to a new land where he most surely did his full share in the laying of the foundations of Illinois. He helped to organize two counties, Edgar and Vermilion; he was a member of the first commissioners court in each county; he wrote down the first laws of both counties; he started their bookkeeping of accounts; he taught in their first schools, surveyed their land, and helped lay out their towns. But it is in Vermilion County and particularly at Danville that he spent the greater portion of his life. He was a little man but strong and able to stand hardships. A friend of his in commenting on his size said, "He is, oh, so little. About like a cake of soap after a hard days washing."

The first name on the Williams' records of which there are at present any available records is that of Enoch Williams, grandfather of Amos Williams. Enoch was born September twentieth, 1731. That was just four months before the birth of George Washington. Both of these men were in the war of the American Revolution Washington as General and Enoch Williams a private soldier. His name is so recorded on the Pennsylvania files.

The Williams' records give the names of six children born to Enoch Williams and his wife, Hannah. The first child was Catherine, born February twenty-second, 1754. The fourth child was Benjamin Williams, born May fifth, 1760. When Benjamin was nineteen years of age he and Anna Ross were united in marriage. The marriage certificate of this couple, signed by Joseph Powel, the minister, on October 18, 1779 is still preserved.

Whether Benjamin and Anna had any children or not, is not known. Anna died in August 1796 and Benjamin's mother, Hannah, had died in April

of the same year. Benjamin was then thirty years old and he may have been lonely. At any rate he married a girl of twenty and three children were born to them. Amos was born June fifteenth, 1797 then later Eli and Mary.

In those days many boys were trained to a trade or profession that would be followed alone or with very little help. So Amos was sent to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania to learn the printer's trade with George Harper. The original contract says that the master, Harper, was to teach the said apprentice in the art, trade and mystery of a Printer" and should provide for the said apprentice "sufficient meat, drink, physic, washing, lodging and six months day schooling during said term." His brother, Eli, became a silversmith. Some little spoons and cuff buttons of his making still exist. Eli as well as Amos came west after learning his trade. Amos had become very proficient as a printer. He went to work for a Dutch newspaper and learned to speak the language very fluently. He remained in the East until he was twenty one.

Then he decided to see the world a little. He journeyed southward and westward. His diary recounts the land conditions, water, something about trade and particularly mentions where he "fed" and "lay." The following is typical: "22-fed at Hager on timber ridge (house only midling) and lodged at Higgins (midling house). 23-breakfast at Springfield Pipus house (pretty good) fed at Criss uptown the meanest place in the United States and lay at Bramfields a trifling place." By following the names Wheeling, Zanesville, Cincinnati, Lexington one can trace rather definitely the route westward of this adventurous lad. He went as far westward as Little Rock, Arkansas then turned eastward again and came to Illinois which he said was the best spot in all his travels. He reached Clark County about 1821 and remained there awhile. Then he went further north through Vincennes and Terre Haute, Indiana, and over close to where the town of Paris was later located. He helped organize Edgar County in 1823, surveyed for the county and taught school there for 1822, 23, 24. Sometime in 1826 he visited Vandalia, which had become the capitol

of Illinois in 1820. All these experiences and travels gave him a splendid practical education for his life's work in what was to be known as Vermilion County. He came here in 1826 and helped organize Vermilion County. At that time it included Champaign, Ford, Iroquois and the present Vermilion County. He became clerk of the Commissioner's court of Vermilion County which held its first meeting at Butler's Point, near the present village of Catlin. They met at the Asa Elliott cabin which was, also, the first meeting place of the Circuit Court of Vermilion County. He held that position for about twenty five years. He wrote "a handsome, bold and easy hand", according to comments in the letters of his friends. Our early county records are fine specimens of penmanship and correctness of form.

On March 21, 1826, Amos Williams married Miss Martha Ann Shaw, daughter of Smith and Elizabeth Shaw of Paris, Illinois. They went to housekeeping at Butler's Point in a little cabin one half of which Amos used part of the time for a school house. It was in this little cabin that Maria Louisa was born on February 22, 1827. Martha Ann was a friendly, kindly woman--much loved. She could read and write but her education was rather limited owing to lack of opportunity in a new county. She was the second child in a family of fifteen brothers and sisters and was skilled in all household arts. She could spin and weave, as could nearly all women in those days. There is still preserved a wonderful white bed spread she made before her marriage. She raised the cotton in Crawford County, carded, spun and wove it into cloth. Then she worked out a design upon it, using pewter plates in tracing the outline. In the center of the spread is a large American eagle with out-spread wings. Other girls, so her letters say, were making similar spreads. This patriotic turn of mind is evidenced in many things the people wrote and did.

In 1827 Amos led the movement to change the county seat to the site of the Piankeshaw Indian Village. Amos Williams built the first house and brought his wife and baby here during the spring of 1827. He conducted the first sale of town lots in April and then about the middle of the month took his wife and seven weeks old



daughter to Paris to stay with the Shaw family while he and another man started to Pennsylvania after Mother Williams and her daughter Mary. The journey was made in a two horse covered wagon and lasted about eight weeks. On reaching Danville, Mother Williams and Mary became members of the Amos Williams household presided over by the young mother when she and the baby were brought back from Paris. In addition to their own family, they boarded Dan Beckwith and took in visitors and travellers besides.

This region which centered around the site of the Piankeshaw village was Vermilion County, Illinois. Amos Williams had been appointed first post master of Vermilion County in the year 1826. The first letters to this locality came in that year and were addressed to Vermilion Court House. Some of them went to Vermilion County, Indiana. So as Postmaster, Amos Williams led another movement to name this locality Danville, in honor of Dan Beckwith who had given twenty acres of land for the location of the town.

People were interested in Vermilion because of the Salines. Long before 1819 when the white men were establishing claims the Indians and later the French traders had made salt at the Salt Licks, so called from the fact that the animals came here to "lick" the salt. The legislature, having passed a law giving any person who discovered salines exclusive right to manufacture salt, had many conflicting claims on its hands. Barron, General Harrison's interpreter, seems to have had the first claim. Then Truman Blackman made application in his own name and it was several years before the difficulties were adjusted. In the meantime Mr. and Mrs. Seymour Treat had become the first permanent settlers in Vermilion County.

In 1824 Major John W. Vance came from Ohio and the Salines became a thriving business. Kettles were brought by water from Louisville, Kentucky and then taken across from the mouth of Stony Creek in the Vermilion River east of Danville to the Salt Works--located about five miles west of Danville. It has been marked at Possum Trot by the D. A. R. with an historic and worn salt kettle. Looking from the rise of the

land to the Vermilion River one gets a good picture of the oxen toiling across the intervening miles from Stony Creek to drag the wagons with the large heavy salt kettles. There is an old tradition told by the Indians that there would never be any bad storms in Danville because of the basin in which it is located, although one hundred feet above the river--all roads leading away from Danville go up hill. There have been severe storms here but far less damaging ones than those same winds carried elsewhere. The rivers and their branches around and through Danville made many trails center here. Even across the present Vermilion Street just north of "Uncle Joe" Cannon's home was a bridge over Jarrett's branch--a stream which ran into Stony Creek about three blocks south of the present bridge at Williams Street. The Salines, good water, communication, good wells, and timber made Danville a growing place until the late 1830's and 1840's when new salt fields lessened Vermilion County's importance.

Amos Williams, Danville's first post master, carried on his duties in one room of his home. It was a typical pioneer cabin located 10 South Clark Street, a short thoroughfare running from Main Street south to the river bluff. Rattlesnakes were common and it is recorded that even sales of lots were delayed while the men drove them away from the horses' heels. Clark Street is now more like an alley. It is on the south side of Main Street between Franklin and Walnut streets. The building looked south over the bluff. An excellent spring was close by. The north portion was the post office, the lobby was in the central part and the southern half was the home.

Post master Williams did not find those duties very heavy. Generally he did not have over one pouch of mail about twice a week. Mail was carried on horseback or by means of coaches.

The leading event of the village was the arrival of the stage from Vincennes via Palestine, Marshall, Paris and Georgetown. Across the Vermilion River from the hill top in the present South Danville came the driver who blew loud and long on the familiar horn. Winding down the hill,

crossing the stream, using the ferry in high waters and slowly climbing the steep north road he pulled into west Main Street. A short rest for the horses, then on with a flourish and rush the driver proudly turned into Clark street to unload the mail sack.

There were rules, and strict ones, regulating the mail. In fine weather the mail was carried on top of the old Concord stage coach. The passengers inside paid at the rate of six cents a mile. The stage tavern meals cost the travellers about thirty seven and a half cents. In a Travelers Guide Book published in 1843 is the following: "Emigrants and travelers will find it to their interest always to be a little skeptical relative to statements of stage drivers and agents for stage coach lines, to make some allowances in their own calculations for delays, difficulties, and expenses, and above all, to feel perfectly patient and on good terms with themselves, the officers and the world generally, if they do not move just as rapidly or fare quite as well as they desire, for they sometimes have breakdowns and runaways."

The following letter is a copy to the Assistant Postmaster General, C. R. Gardner, at Washington D. C.:

Danville, Vermillion County, Illinois  
February 13, 1835

Sir\_\_\_\_\_

The mail from Covington, Ind. to Danville, Ill. failed to arrive here on Tuesday the 3rd inst. by which one entire trip was lost--which failure according to the best information I can obtain was occasioned by the running of ice in the Wabash River; so as to render the same impassable.

I am Sir very respectfully  
Your most obt servt  
A. Williams  
P. M.

The drivers had regulations concerning such cases.

In a paper dated 1844 one of the seven listed rules is: "In case of high water or ice or any other obstruction rendering it impossible for a driver to proceed he shall get a certificate of a Postmaster which shall be sent to the Contractor, and if he fail to do this he shall be charged with whatever fine the Postmaster General shall assess the Contractor."

Amos Williams was postmaster for eighteen consecutive years, 1826 to 1844. After the next postmaster, James Craven, was appointed by President Van Buren the Post office was moved a little farther north to the northwest corner of Walnut and Main street. Farther down Walnut street toward the river bluffs was the home of Enoch Kingsbury, the first pastor of the Presbyterian Church. The court house, school, hotel, and trading post were near. It is all historical ground where the social and political life of the community was carried on. Danville was many years in advance of Chicago. Those in the north did all their land office business here and the officer in Chicago kept all his papers in an old two story white hat.

The first court house, a log structure twenty by thirty feet, was sold to this county by William Reed in 1828 for two hundred dollars. It was located where the present Woodbury Drug Company has its store on 14 West Main Street just west of Redden Square. In 1831 this log court house was sold to Hezekiah Cunningham for three hundred and fifty dollars and a new one was completed in 1833 on the location of the present court house. After this second building was burned, 1872, the court house had temporary quarters in Lincoln Hall--the site of the present Woodbury Drug Company. Then the new court house was put up on the present day site.

Although not supported by public taxation the first school was held in the building known as Haworth's Smoke House. It was in this ten foot by twelve building made of logs and without a floor that Dr. Norton Beckwith taught his twelve scholars. It was located on the northwest corner of the present public--or Redden Square number 5 West Main Street. Next to it and more directly on the present square was a strongly built structure which could be used as a stockade

if the Indians ever went on a rampage. This was known as Haworth's house. For awhile he used it for a hotel and part of it for his merchandise. Hubbard used the other part as a trading post. Later Hubbard's own building was completed, located where the Palmer National Bank is now established at number 2 East Main street. Hubbard's store was Danville's first frame building. The lumber had been cut at Denmark--a village where the bridge over Lake Vermilion is located. The first hotel was a two story log house containing four rooms. The proprietor, Solomon Gilbert, had his tavern at the foot of Gilbert street where the Lorado Taft monument is now placed.

The first newspaper was established here in 1832 by Amos Williams and Bryant. Papers in those days were a large sheet, printed on both sides and folded. It was a slow process to assemble the type. As life with the pioneers was serious their papers included many lines of advice and long essays to both the young and old. Advertisements are set in the same type as the news. Many references are to arrivals of goods, rates, patent medicines (since doctors were scarce) and brief notices of sales. This first paper, "The Weekly Inquirer" struggled till 1839. Danville at this time had a population of about 700, fourteen stores, three groceries, three taverns and a postoffice.

The first public school house in Danville set aside by the commissioners for educational purposes was a small log cabin about twelve by fifteen feet covered with clapboard and "mudded over." It had one door and two small windows each about two feet square which admitted but little light. The large old fashioned fire place served to warm and partly light the room. It was at this institution of learning, situated east and south of South street between Vermilion and Hazel streets not far from the railroad bridge across the Vermilion River, that Dr. Norton Beckwith taught school. Later Wright's mill was erected west of the school. All around hazel brush grew until in the 1880's. Later there was another school located at what is now 124 Franklin street, erected by Amos Williams at his own expense and on his own ground. This building was used not only as a school but also

as a place for public worship, for all kinds of speaking, and entertainment of an instructive nature. In fact Amos Williams was interested in the education of the masses. Later the erection of the Red Seminary on Pine Street near Main and the Union Seminary on the corner of Vermilion and Seminary Streets gave more advanced instruction. But the early education in Danville was confined to the three "Rs."

The first national seal used in Vermilion County was made in York, Pennsylvania in 1826. It weighs about a quarter of a pound, is about two inches in diameter and looks somewhat like an old scale weight. On its face is engraved "Amos Williams, Notary Public." Inside the circle is a "cut" of a plow, a steamboat and three sheaves of wheat. It was used as seals are now, to emboss the papers.

No other man held so many positions, nor held them so many years in Vermilion County, as did Amos Williams. As county agent he conducted the first officially advertised sale of lots in Danville on April tenth and eleventh, 1827. Thus April 10, 1827 is Danville's birthday. He made subsequent sales, both public and private, for many years. He was Postmaster, Recorder of Deeds, Judge of Probate Court, Notary Public, Register of Saline Lands, Master in Chancery, Clerk of County Commissioners Court, Agent of Vermilion County and he was a Bureau of Information for all. Parties seeking lands, hunting stray animals, asking about taxes, having problems in merchandising or of milling talked with or wrote to him. In a "broadside" put out May 10, 1840, called "A Few Hints to the Citizens of Vermilion County" a certain Jacksonian Democrat criticized and declaimed against the offices being concentrated in the hands of one man, a Whig. He lists the name of Amos Williams seven times with the seven offices he held and so dedicated it with bitter and pointed sarcasm. He says, "It may be possible that the Williamses of Vermilion are a numerous, wealthy, aristocratic and Whigabus family, and have had the advantages of a classical education and that the balance of her citizens are Jackson men who cannot write and spell well; consequently, none others capable; if so what a fortunate circumstance for the benighted inhabitants of Vermilion that she enjoys the



services of so useful a family, as the Williamses, who not only can read the law, but have the exclusive arthority of administrating it.

"I tremble at the result when reflecting upon the deplorable condition in which they (the citizens) would be placed, in case some hereditary disease should disenable this family from the performance of the duties of their respective offices. We could get no more papers, the Courts of Justice would be closed, old maids and bachelors would go about the streets moaning for license, etc.

"Expositor", as he signed himself was making a great plea to the voters to give the other party some offices.

It was customary in those days as it is now to get recommendations concerning appointments. The following letter to Hon. James O. Wattles, New Harmony, not only is typical of other letters in the Williams' collection but shows the paper and ink in a good state of preservation. Not a word of the letter has faded.

Albion Jan. 25, 1826

Dear Sir,

Believing that in a new county the several offices of Judge of Probate, Notary Public, Recorder, and Clerk ought to unite in the same person, and being informed that Mr. Amos Williams has been elected Judge of Probate for the new county of Vermilion and will probably receive also the office of Notary Public and recorder, should you think it advisable to appoint him Clerk of the Circuit Court for said county I have no hesitation in saying that at the same time you confer a favor on a gentleman well deserving it--you are gratifying the wishes of the people in the county of Vermilion.

With respect I remain yours

T. C. Cone

Amos Williams was active in many things apart from his official duties. He was foremost

in church and school matters, giving both time and money. His home was the headquarters for the itinerant preacher. No charge was ever brought against him for incompetency or fidelity to office. As a surveyor he was much interested in roads. He surveyed for the roads from Paris to Springfield and the road from Paris to the Salt Works. He spent much time and thousands of dollars in erecting mills and mill dams. He personally conducted grist mills, saw mills, and a mill for carding wool, all located near Danville. He invented a mill wheel and carried on a correspondence with Abraham Lincoln trying to obtain a patent for it. He left a large correspondence showing his interest in steam engines.

In 1837 he was the secretary of the meetings that joined with Lafayette, Indiana, in arousing interest in what was later the Northern Cross railroad, now known as the Wabash. He saw the roadbeds prepared and the abutments constructed where the Wabash now crosses the Vermilion. The panic followed; but he lived almost twenty years longer to see the schemes carried out and the engine come over these same abutments into Danville. His aid never faltered. In 1856, only a year before his death, he gave two hundred dollars to provide a depot grounds for the Wabash railroad.

He was a student and had a large library. A practical printer himself having served his six years apprenticeship in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, he always encouraged the local newspaper. He was agent for the American Bible Society and helped distribute its literature, on Sunday carrying the tracts around in his tall hat.

He conducted an extensive correspondence with the state officials and members of the legislature relating to public matters. Letters from Abraham Lincoln, Judge David Davis, Lyman Trumbull and other brilliant minds of the time are in various collections. These recall his association and broad outlook on his country. Occupying the position he did and being so familiar with the location of lands in the county, it was natural that he should locate and buy several tracts. Several of these holdings were later cut across the street named for him, namely--Williams street.



Amos and his wife Martha had eight children, Martha died when the last was only five days old. She left six children for Amos to raise. He did his best for the children and never married again. Three of their children died young, Benjamin Franklin Williams, first son, at the age of nine; little Sarah, four months old; and little Samuel of the Old Testament and Paul of the New. Little Sammy lost his mother when only five days old and she was only thirty six. The oldest was Maria Louisa, sixteen years old. Maria called little Sammy her own and did her best to raise him with the help of an aunt. But he lived only nine months.

The other five children lived to grow up and marry and have homes of their own. The two sons were Amos Smith and Enoch Alexander. The first daughter, Maria Louisa became the wife of Dr. W. W. R. Woodbury, a physician and druggist of Danville. Charlotte became the wife of Dr. James H. Faris, a young physician who came from Virginia to practice medicine in Danville. He died toward the close of the Civil War after serving as a physician to one of the regiments of the Union Army. The youngest of Amos' daughters was Mary. She married Dr. C. V. Baldwin who practiced dentistry in Danville for some years and later moved to Los Angeles, California. Grandchildren, and great great grandchildren are now (1934) living. All can trace back a definite line to Enoch of Revolutionary fame.

But the Amos Williams household sheltered other children. After Amos went East and brought his mother and young sister Mary back to Danville it was not long until Dan W. Beckwith and Mary were united in marriage. They put up a cabin of their own and two children, Melissa and Hiram, were born. The father Dan died December 25, 1825 leaving his widow and her two children to the care of her brother Amos. The two children continued in his care until they were grown. The mother married again but Hiram, who studied law under Abraham Lincoln, was cared for by Amos Williams. He saw Hiram started on his law career and inspired him in his historical work.

At the age of sixty, Amos Williams closed an active life devoted to public service. He died late Friday night or early Saturday morning on

November 14. The records in the paper call it Friday night. The customary funeral notices were printed on heavy white paper and distributed to places of business and to friends. The notice says, "Yourself and family are respectfully solicited to attend the funeral of Amos Williams Esq. from his late residence on Monday at 2 o'clock P. M. Danville, Nov. 16, 1857." As a man whose life was spent in politics one wonders if the word "solicited" is entirely out of place!

The obituary in the Vermilion County Press, of which James D. Kilpatrick was editor, written on Wednesday, November 18, 1857 shows how his contemporaries regarded Amos Williams.

"Amos Williams is no more. On Friday night he closed a long, lingering and painful sickness in death, and gathering up his feet, was gathered to his fathers. His career has been one of long duration amongst us.----- While he held office--and he held nearly every one in the county--he was considered as an oracle of business, and up to the day of his death he enjoyed the favor and the confidence of the community. Several years ago, having occasion to lay aside official cares, he commenced building mills, and erected two near this place which have greatly added to its prosperity----- He had lived long enough to see that country, which when he first cast his lot in it, was wild, savage and unsettled, bloom with the fruits of industry and thicken with population. Truly in his case, had the "waste places been made glad, and the desert to blossom as the rose"-----

"In all his intercourse he has been kind and obliging, and by an uniform gentleness of deportment, won the esteem of all who became acquainted with him, and now that he is no more, he will dwell long in the memory of those with whom he lived. During the last two or three years of his life, he has been gradually declining, and his departure was not unlooked for, His name is familiar in every household in the country, and he has closed a long and useful career, followed with kindly recollections and the prayers of a people he has been instrumental in rendering happy and prosperous. Peace to his ashes."

Home of Danville Post-office for eighteen years.  
Drawn by Mary Williams, daughter  
of the post master.

This was the first house built in Danville, Illinois. It was the home of Amos Williams, number 10 South Clark street. Here Mr. Williams, then a sturdy villager of 30, welcomed the town-folk, who sat on splint-bottomed chairs around a big fireplace, read their mail, swapped gossip and made predictions of the weather. The post office was the gathering place for the pioneer settlement and the center of social life. It was originally a log house--later covered with weather boards. The center room was the lobby and the post office was kept in the north room.

Mr. Williams lived here from 1827 to 1857. Here is where he brought his wife and little daughter, Maria, then only six years old and the youngest child in the new settlement.





## Williams-Woodbury Collection-1922

An extensive collection, of several thousand pieces, of the papers of Amos Williams and his son-in-law, W. W. Woodbury, 1820-1865. The collection illustrates Illinois politics, local business, post-office and land-agent business at Danville, Illinois. The papers were carefully arranged and preserved by the late Amos G. Woodbury of Danville and were acquired by the Survey from his executrix, Miss Flo Woodbury

Taken from Illinois Historical Survey, U. of I.

A. G. Woodbury arranged Amos Williams old letters under the following subjects:

Before Coming to Edgar County

Edgar County 1821-1826

Post Office--Contractors and Mail Carriers

Arrival and Departure--Mail Routes

Letters of Inquiry and Complaint

Receipts and Statements

Delay of Mail--address Letters

from Postmasters East and West

from Postmasters North and South

Washington and Official

Printed Forms

Building Carpenter--Lumber

Advertising

Agreements--Notices and Indentures

Books--Legal and Miscellaneous

Roads--Road Tax

Circulars and Handbills

County Seat (Danville) location of

Court House Construction-1832

Court--Fines and Receipts

Bankruptcy

Letters and Enquiries

List of Cases, Causes and Fees

Costs

Churches--Religious

Doctors, Drugs, etc.

Cattle, Horses, Estrays

Danville--First Plat survey ect., lots, Houses  
and rentals

Dry goods--groceries etc.

Elections

Political and Legislation  
Ferry--roads and travel  
Farming--seek, meat, Wolf Scalps, tools, plowing  
leases  
Hardware, materials, labor  
Land--deeding, enquiries, instructions, descrip-  
tions, certificates, receipts, applications  
Licenses--taverns  
Money--Ills. State Bank and State Papers, letters  
and men about receipts and orders  
Mills--saw, woolen grist  
Newspapers--Eastern, bills, receipts, subscrip-  
tions; Western, bills, receipts,  
subscriptions  
Pensions, Indians and soldiers  
Railroads, Canals  
Schools, Teachers, Officials  
School lands  
Sheriffs  
Taxes--Instructions  
Steam Engine--Hydraulic Ram  
Water Wheel Patent  
Notable letters--early members of legislature and  
other officials

#### Illinois Legislators and Lawyers that Corre- sponded with Amos Williams

W. B. Archer, legislator; J. J. Brown, Jas.  
Clyman, legislators; Lyle T. Dickey, judge; Wm.  
Fithian, legislator; O. B. Ficklin, Harlan Jacob,  
Harlan Justice, Ed Hannigan, Chas. Ives, legis-  
lators; Gen. G. W. Smith, Isaac P. Walker, legis-  
lators; Jno. H. Murphy, legislator.

The University of Illinois bought the original  
copy of the above.

#### Notable People Who Corresponded With Amos Williams

E. D. Baker, Col. Civil War--Senator of  
Oregon, Sidney Breeze, Judge Supreme Court Ills.  
Thompson Campbell, Sec. State Ills.--John Carr,  
Congressman Ills.--David Davis, Vice Pres. Judge  
U. S. Supr. Ct. Sen. Ills.--Jos. Duncan, Gen. in  
War 1812, Gov. Ills., Congressman--Levi Davis,  
Auditor State Ills.--A. P. Field, Sec. State Ills.

E. K. Kane, Senator Ills.--S. W. Kearney, Gen.  
Mex. War, Gov. California. Amos Kendell, Post-  
master Genl. U. S.--A. F. Hubbard, Cand. Gov.  
Ills. W. B. Ogden, Chicago Atty.--John Reynolds,  
Gov. Ills.--Jas. Shields, Auditor of Ill.-----  
Trumbull Lyman, Senator Ills. Judge of Supr.  
Court Ill. John D. Whiteside Treasurer Ills.--  
C. A. Wickliff, Postmaster General.

Danville, Ill., Sept. 14th, 1934

### In Regard to Amos Williams' Indenture

It must not be forgotten that in the days of Amos Williams, there were no free schools. Parents had to pay for the education of their children or let them grow up in ignorance. This may have led to the practice of having a boy apprenticed for a term of years to learn a calling. There was no disgrace attached to such a practice, but it was not over complimentary to parents to be unable to pay for fitting their sons with a way of self support.

In our time the poorest boy may receive an education such as was undreamed of by Amos Williams, if the boy can be provided with food and shelter and clothes. It was thought that a boy must be taught a trade or some way by which to make a living. Now that has been changed somewhat. If a boy has a good education he is supposed to be able to secure a job or position.

Machinery and wholesale production have made individual action less productive than it was once. There is one drawback to the new way though. The factory doors may close any time and leave the workers without any way to live.

I do not know whether our mother would have wished it known publically that her father was apprenticed to learn the printer's trade or not. His father must have been fifty years old or more when Amos was sent to learn the trade.

There is one other thing I would like to say. The little bunch of letters relating more especially to the Williams family, was kept with the great quantity of letters by the time our

brother A. G. Woodbury undertook his investigation of them all.

Madie Woodbury

Among all of Grandpa Williams' papers this is the oldest, from 1812 to 1934 makes it 122 years old. The original is in the D. A. R. Museum, in the Public Library.

THIS INDENTURE Witnesseth, That Amos Williams, by  
and with the consent of his father Benjamin  
Williams, Esq. of Warren township, Franklin  
County, and State of Pennsylvania hath bound and  
put himself, and by these presents doth bind and  
put himself an Apprentice to Geo. K. Harper,  
Chambersburg in the County and state of aforesaid  
after the winner of an Apprentice, to dwell and  
serve the said Geo. K. Harper from the day and  
date hereof, and during, and until the end and  
term of six years thence ensuing, and fully to  
be complete and ended: During all which term the  
said Apprentice his said master faithfully shall  
serve, and that honestly and obediently in all  
things, as a dutiful Apprentice ought to do: And  
the said Geo. K. Harper shall teach, or cause to  
be taught and instructed, the said Apprentice in  
the art, trade and mystery of a Printer and shall  
and will provide for the said Apprentice, suffi-  
cient meat, drink, physic, washing, lodging, and  
six months day schooling, during the said term:



And at the expiration thereof shall and will give the said Apprentice, one genteel suit of clothes, exclusive of his common wearing apparel.

And for the true performance of all and singular the covenants and agreements aforesaid, the parties bind themselves each unto the other, firmly by these presents. In witness whereof the said parties have hereunto interchangeably set their hands and seals this sixteenth day of January annoque domini, one thousand eight hundred and twelve.

Sealed and Delivered  
in Presence of

Amos Williams (SEAL)

Benj. Williams  
William D. Bell

Geo. K. Harper (SEAL)  
Amos Williams

#### How Grandpa Williams Lived

Grandpa Williams got up early every morning, built the wood fires (they did not know coal could be used), went down the hillside to the wonderful spring and got enough water for breakfast and filled the teakettle and hung it on the crane in the fireplace as there were no cook stoves then.

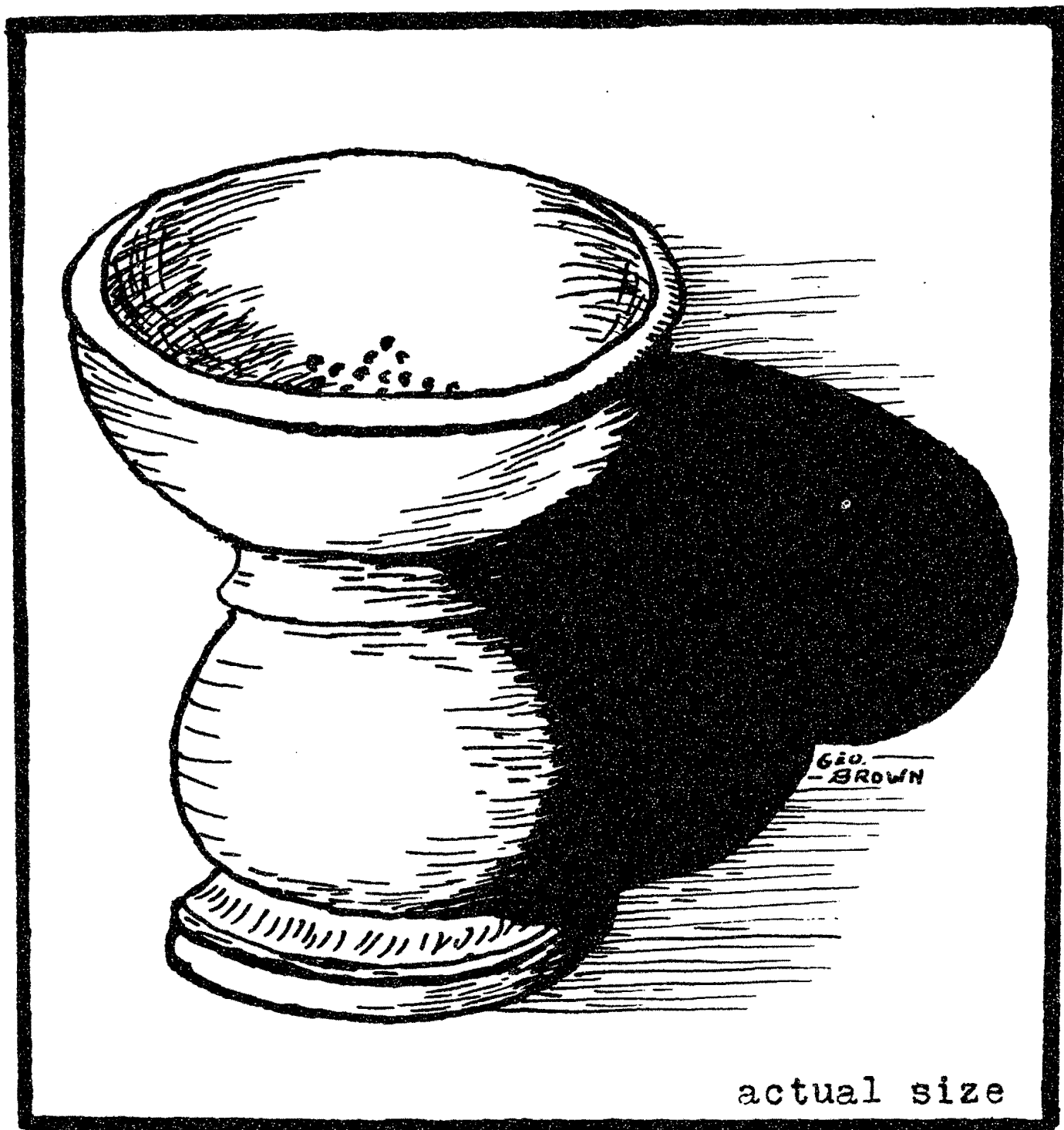
In the summertime they had no screens in the doors or windows. The houses were kept dark so as to keep out as many flies and mosquitos as possible. That is one reason why they had tall canopy, or four-poster beds--they could easily drape them with mosquito-netting. At the dinner table they would use "shoo-fly brushes", made of tissue or any kind of paper they could get and fastening it on a long stick, someone was delegated to stand by and "shoo the flies" off the table. Some used little peach branches. Many people built a little shed for a summer kitchen

and had a covered porch between it and the house--this was called the "dog-trot". The "dog-trot" made the house-wife a lot of extra steps but the home was cooler and they did not have nearly so many flies.

Both post office and home were dimly lighted as there was no glass in the windows, only greased paper. Early mornings and at night when it was dark tallow candles were used. Each family had its own set of candle molds. Betty lamps were also used. Betty lamps had a disagreeable odor, as our Mother said, "They smelled to heaven."

Many mornings Grandpa Williams was out of ink and had to get ink powder and make ink before starting his daily work. He walked out through the sitting room, across the lobby and on into the post office which was kept in his own home for over twenty years (in what was called the north room). Some mornings Mr. Williams would go to the kitchen where they were busy with household tasks and say, "Girls, mind the post office while I go up to the McCormick house and see if anyone new has come in. I also have to attend to some business over at the court house." And away he would go leaving the girls to carry on the business of the morning.

The old letters of this time show a good quality of paper. The sheets were large, unruled, thick and tough, seven and one-half by twelve inches, more like fools cap paper though it had no glaze. The letters were written with a goose-quill pen (steel pens had not been invented), the slit in the pen holds the ink so it was necessary to cut a small slit in the goose quill and he always sharpened his knife before he made a pen. Quill pens were in use from the 6th century, 1848. Then the blotter or sander as it was called--, this resembles a salt shaker with a flaring top. The sander was made of wood. The sand was shaken on the writing and then poured back into the sander again. At this time there were no envelopes, they were not used until 1840, and no stamps were used. The letters were folded lengthwise twice and one end inserted in the other and sealed with red sealing wax. The



### SANDER OR BLOTTER

Used in the early days instead of paper blotters. It is filled with sand and the sand is sprinkled over the writing, absorbing the moisture. The extra sand is put back in the wooden container.



address was written on the blank side of the letter and it would have in one corner, "fee so much." The postmaster had the privilege of sending and receiving mail free--maybe that is the reason he had so much. Many wealthy people had seal rings with their crest or coat of arms embossed and used them to stamp the seal. If the seal was broken they could immediately tell that the letter had been opened.

Now the business of the day was over and in these days they believed in "early to bed and early to rise." So Grandpa said, "Mary, we are going to have a cold night to-night so get the bed warmer and warm the beds." Mary goes to the south side of the large fire place and gets something resembling a long-handled brass skillet or a corn-popper with a lid. The handle is ornamental and about thirty inches long. Mary places first a layer of ashes and then a layer of red hot coals and then ashes. Fastening the lid down tight she followed Charlotte, who was carrying the candle, up the stairs, and slipped the bed warmer between the covers and warmed all the beds. Grandpa Williams banked the fires good because if they went out they must strike a flint to light them or go to a neighbors and borrow "a coal" which neighbors often had to do.

Mother picks up the candle-snuffers and snuffs out the lights. Quiet was about to reign--a voice rang out, "I can't get my boots off and I can't find the bootjack." Charlotte went to the fireplace and lighted a taper and lit the candles again. They all hunted and finally found it under the new kitchen chair Leander Rutledge had made. They hauled and pulled but the boots seemed to have become a part of him, finally they came off and Grandpa said the first thing he must do in the morning was to rub them with Neat's Foot Oil.

Mother said, "Amos there's your night cap under your pillow, don't forget to put it on." -

An old story is told of Amos Williams' wife. She kept a stack of hand-made night caps in the old glass knobbed drawer and whenever a man came from a distance she always gave him a night cap to take home to his wife.

Philadelphia, May 16, 1820

Mr. A. Williams

Bot of Wm. Davenport

1 surveying compass, 2 levels half degrees and or ounces wt outs	"50.00
1 case instruments, chain and protractor	10.00
1 spair needle	<u>2.00</u>
	\$62.00

Witness present)  
Thomas Stokely )

Received payment

Wm. Davenport

---

The above is the first notice of any purchase made by Amos Williams. It is the bill for his surveying tools. The tools were used to lay out the town lots in Danville, Illinois. The price amounted to \$62.00.

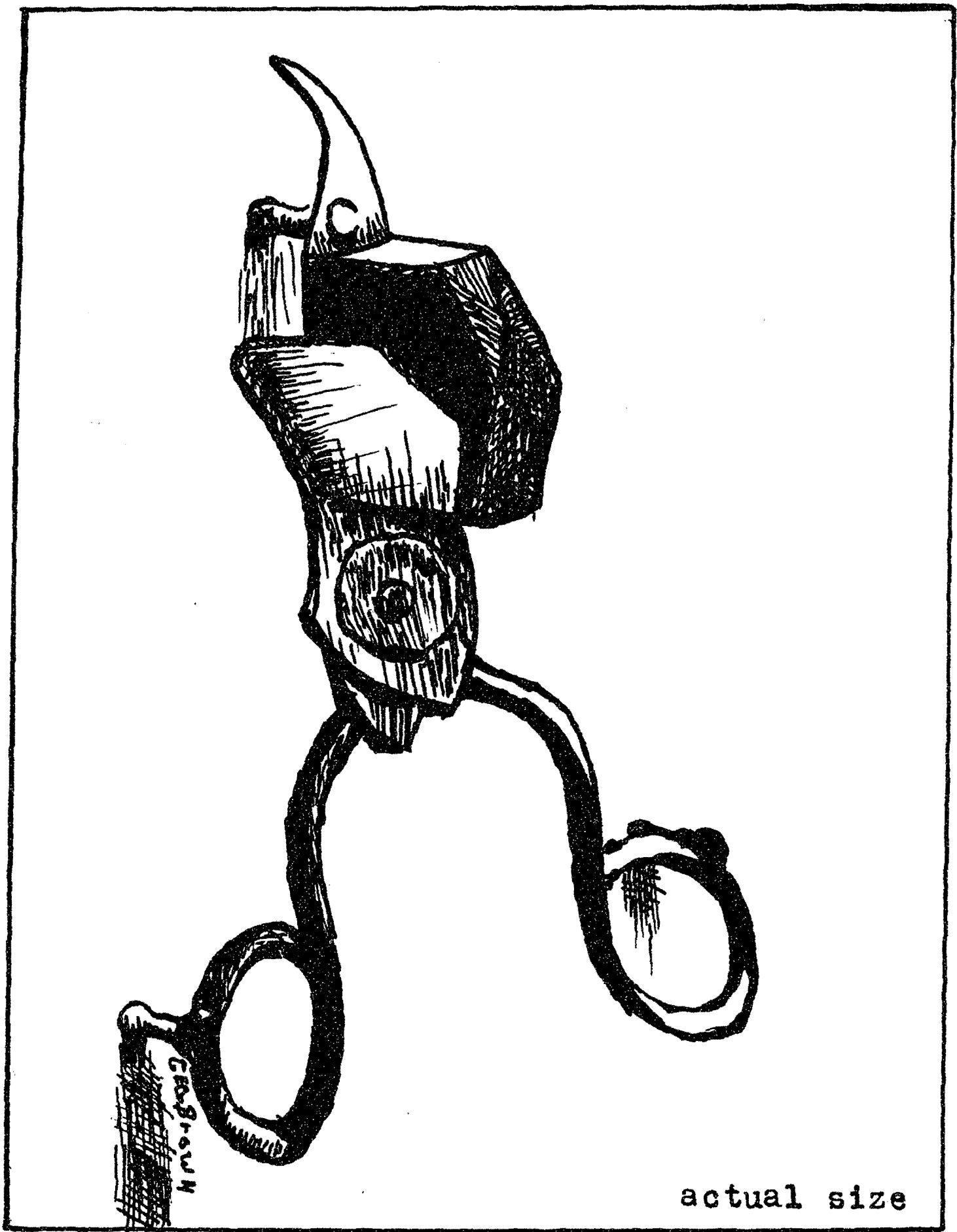
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Little Cove Pa  
June 18th 1822

Dear Brother:

Being at home at this time I embrace with pleasure this opportunity to inform you that I am still a spared monument of Divine merce and goodness. I had a very severe attack of the billious fever last winter but through the mercy of God I recovered and am now enjoying my normal health. I can only add that I am still carrying on my business in Woodstock as usual and that it pleases God to bestow upon me so much of the things of this life as is necessary to make me comfortable with which we ought no doubt to be content. I have however not yet quite abandoned the hope of being able to do better (as the common phrase is amongst men). I have had no letter from you since August last and should be glad you would write as soon as you find it convenient. I remain affectionately yours

Eli Williams



### CANDLE SNUFFER

When one blows out a candle the wick still burns and smoulders and causes a disagreeable odor. When snuffed out with a snuffer its life is "snuffed out" completely.





Hagerstown May 19. 1833

Mr. Williams,

Sir, I duly recd yours by Elixia  
which you mention you are satisfied of his  
being released; if I have no objections.  
In answer to which, I inform you, that as you  
are satisfied, you conditions of your giving up  
his freedom, I have no hesitation in declaring  
I am satisfied also. I presume as we can  
confide in each others word; that nothing more  
will be necessary.

With sentiments of Esteem,

Yours Wm

Arthur Johnson

This letter is written to Mr. Williams,  
father of Eli and Amos, from Arthur Johnson.  
Mr. Johnson gives Eli release from his ob-  
ligations to him. Eli learned the trade of a  
silversmith.



Grantlin County Pennsylvania June 14<sup>th</sup> 1821

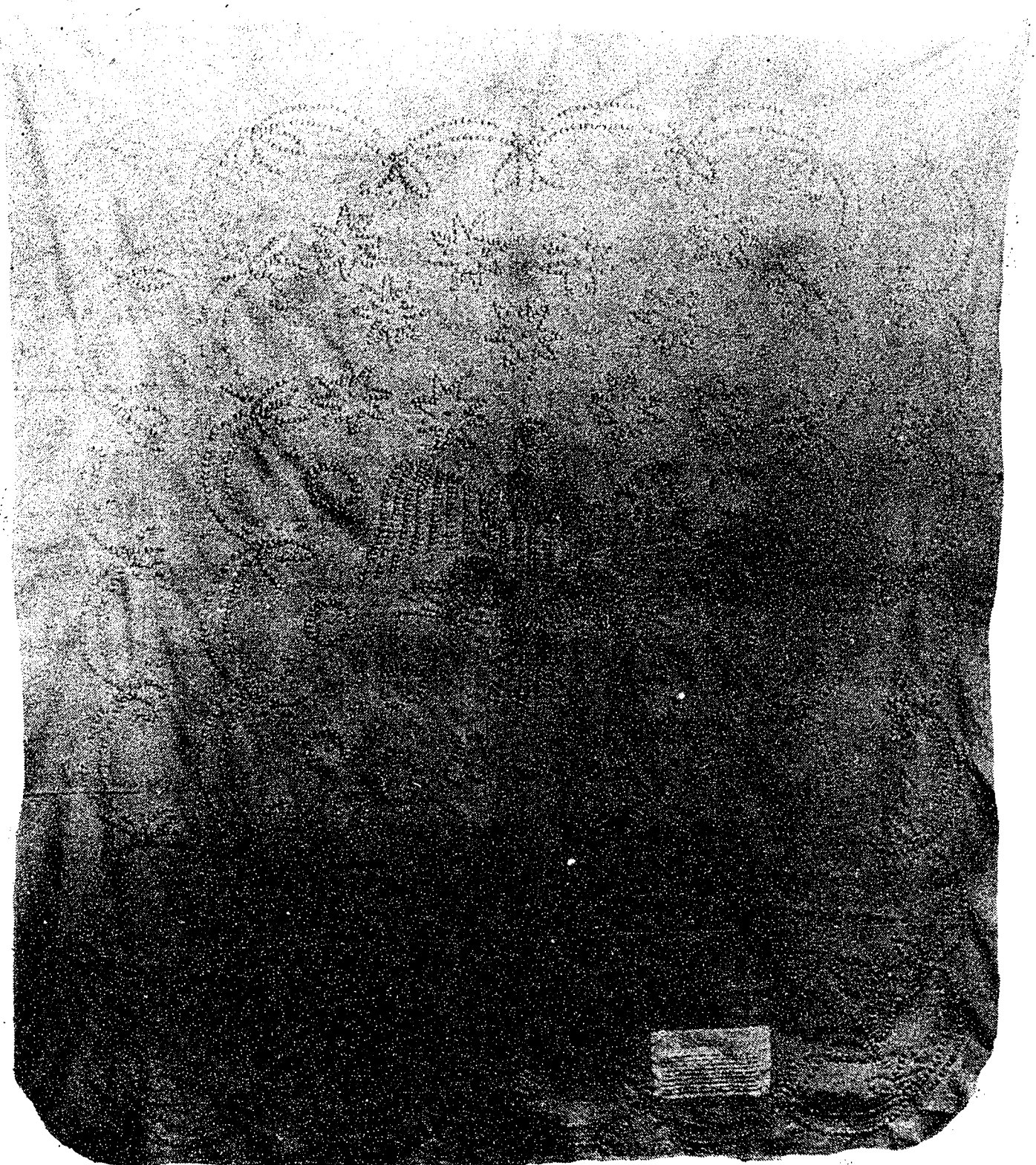
Dear Son

I take this way to inform you that we received your letter bearing date March twenty<sup>1821</sup> second 1821 at about period about the 15<sup>th</sup> of May - with thanks to you we received it. it is all we can expect - I have recovered more than I thought I ever should but I think that I shall never be the same man for strength and activity - we are happy to hear that you have your health since you left us it is the greatest riches and you should thank the giver - I have nothing strange or that would be of use to you your mother and sister is in a reasonable state of health thanks be to God for his mercies - Hoping you may receive these lines in health - Mr Thomas Stokely was - with me last winter overnight his son is dead last fall - not long after you went past there - I have heard from Eli not long since he was well then by David Stuby that I saw him at Woodstock in May - Please to remember me to all our friends - I should be glad to have a line from you on the receipt of this letter - I have not bin at Marsersburg since my illness but expect to put this letter in the post office tomorrow God willing - I have rode very little - but I am about home - I have my flesh as heretofore but not my strength I well ad none but remains your affectionate father ---

To Mr Amos Williams

Beny Williams





### Hand Made Bed Spread

This spread was made in Crawford County, Illinois in the year eighteen and twenty-three by Miss Martha Ann Shaw. She was then sixteen years old. She raised the cotton, carded, spun and wove it into cloth and then made the spread and worked the designs upon it. In those days, pewter plates were used in tracing designs, one plate resting on the cloth and the edge of another plate served as chalk to mark the outline. Miss Martha Ann Shaw became Mrs. Amos Williams, and was the mother of Mrs. Maria Louisa Williams Woodbury and the grandmother of the Missess Woodbury of 515 Vermilion St. Danville, Illinois.



Mr. Amos Williams  
Terre Haute  
Vigo County, Indiana

Eli learned the trade of a silversmith.

---

Franklin County Pennsylvania  
June 18th 1822

Dear Son:

We received your letter bearing date at Terre Haute May 12 with thanks we received it, it came to hand yesterday we were happy to hear that you were yet spared and in a reasonable state of health which we are very thankful for--we have wrote two letters that we think you never received one to Terre Haute and the last to Arkansas in answer to yours dated December the first 1821 which we received in due season--you still have been short in your letters as to your own prosperity in that country only that you mention in the last times are dull we have nothing strange to inform you of we are in a reasonable state of health thanks be to God for his mercies to us but wearing ought fast after the way of all flesh, hoping and trusting in God that you may receive these lines in good health and so we concluded by subscribing our selves your affectionate father and mother.

Benj. and Sarah Williams

To Mr. Amos Williams

Please to give our best respects to all our relations in that place and inform them the contents of this letter as far as it respects them and oblige  
yours-

Benj and Sarah Williams

Terre Haute  
Vigo County, Indiana

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Illinois Edgar Co  
Paris 16 Feby 1825

Hon James O Wattles

Sir though but partially acquainted with you, permit me as a Countryman and friend to congratulate you upon the Honorable appointment of Judge of the fifth Circuit of this State. Not only as the choice of our Representatives but the choice of a free and enlightened people, over whom you are destined to provide. Allow me to recommend to your favorable notice Mr Amos Williams as a suitable person to fill the office of Clerk of the Circuit Court for this County. Mr. Williams is a young man of good character and correct Deportment Writes a fair Handsome hand has a pretty good knowledge of the duties incumbent upon the clerk of the C Court and has been bred to business. Mr. Williams has served since the first organization of this County as Clerk of the Commissioners Court to universel satisfaction of the greatest assiduity to business and a desire to please would insure one of the good will of all men Mr Williams would be sure to obtain it, his only fault (if it is a fault) is being over anxious to perform his duty and to be correct it may not be improper to State that in my opinion the appointment of Mr Williams would be in accordance with the wishes to a large majority of the people of this county. I am Sir with respect your obedient servant.

Charles Ives

To Hon. James O. Wattles  
Albion, Illinois  
Edwards County

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This is a letter recommending Amos Williams to the position as Clerk of the Circuit Court in which Ives says his only fault is being over-anxious to please.

---



Illinois. Edgar Co. Paris 16 Feb 1824

Dear James O. Miller

Though but partially acquainted with you. permit me as a Countryman and friend to congratulate you upon the Honourable appointment of Judge of the fifth Circuit of this State. Not only as the choice of our Representatives but the choice of a free and enlightened people over whom you are destined to preside. Allow me to recommend to your favourable notice Mr. Amos Williams as a suitable person to fill the office of Clerk of the Circuit Court for this County. Mr. Williams is a young Man of good Character and correct Deportment. Writes a fair Hand some Land has a pretty good Knowledge of the Duties incumbent upon the Clerk of the Court and has been bred to Business. Mr. Williams has served since the first Organization of this County as Clerk of the Commissioners Court to universal Satisfaction. If the greatest assiduity to Business and a desire to please would insure the good will of all Men Mr. Williams would be sure to obtain it. His only fault if it is a fault is being over anxious to perform his duty and to be correct. It may not be improper to state that in my Opinion the appointment of Mr. Williams would be in accordance with the wishes of a Large Majority of the people of this County I am Sir with Respect your Obedt Servt

Charles Jones



Albion Jan. 25. 1826

Dear Sir, Believing that in a new county  
the several offices of Judge of Probate  
Notary Public Recorder and Clerk ought  
to unite in the same person, and  
being informed that Mr. Amos Williams  
has been elected Judge of Probate for  
the new county of Terwilliam and will  
probably unite also the offices of Notary  
Public & Recorder. Should you think it  
advisable to appoint him Clerk of the  
Circuit Court for said county, I have  
no hesitation in saying that at the  
same time you confer a favor on  
a gentleman well deserving it you  
are gratifying the wishes of the people  
in the county of Terwilliam.

30 With respect I remain your servt. J. C. Cone



Albion Jan 25 1826

Hon. James O Wattles  
New Harmony

Dear Sir, Believing that in a new county the several offices of Judge of Probate, Notary Publick Recorder and Clerk ought to unite in the same person, and being informed that Mr. Amos Williams has been elected Judge of Probate for the new county of Vermillion and will probably receive also the office of notary publick and Recorder should you think it advisable to apoint him Clerk of the Circuit Court for said County, I have no hesitation in saying that at the same time you confer a favor upon a gentleman well deserving it you are gratifying the wishes of the people in the county of Vermillion. With respect I remain yours etc.

T. C. Cone

Another letter recommending Amos Williams as Clerk of the Circuit Court, in which they think it is better for one man to hold all the offices.

---

Little Cove Pa.  
June 4th 1825

Dear Brother

Yours of the 14th April came to hand in eighteen days from Terra Haute, and we were all pleased to hear that you were well, and it found us all in the enjoyment of our usual health except our father who was gradually sinking since the parilytic stroke in February, and we now have to communicate to you the mournful intelligence of his death. he bid adieu to all subluniary things on the 26th of May--He has left a will and has appointed you and myself his executors and it was his wish that you would come in as soon as possible after his decease and tend to settling up the business of the estate and to taking care of what was left--you will please to write immediately on the receipt of this and let us know what time we may look for you and if you cannot come you will instruct us how you wish us to proceed, I conclude wishing that these lines may find you well and that we may see you here as soon as it is possible for you to come.

Mr. Amos Williams

Eli Williams

Franklin County and  
State of Pa.  
January 30 1826

Dear Son

I once more think it my duty to inform you of my health and welfare stating to you that I enjoy a reasonable state of health at present with all the rest of my family and thank be to God for his mercies and hoping at the receival of these few lins will find you in the same state of health and further is that I received your letter that you wrote to me on the first of december and I received it on the sixth of this Jan. and I was very much enjoyed to hear from you again and further to inform you about our business is that their nothing done as yet on the account of Eli becoming unwilling to do any thing in setteling the estate and he has gone away to Virginia which has prevented an administration to take place owing to the confide in Peter Cook to become an administrator on our estate and I have spoke to him and he has agreed to go on and further you requested me to write my mind to you fully in respect to coming out to your country and that is almost more that I am abel to do at this time but hoping that I will be more abel to express my mind fully in my next letter but at the same time I feel desirous to come to your country and feel very thank full for your kind affections that I perceive that you have for your mother and with respect to the division of the land is as you left it--and your Uncle Lewis Williams he has been confined to bed all winter with the rheumatick pains and appear to be in a low state of health at present and further you requested my situation in perticular and that is as good as you could reasonable expect at this time and further you requested me to know whether I deemed it really necessary to come in I deem it necessary and have ever since the death of your Father but as you write that is almost out of your power I will still trye to be resind in my lonely situation your sister Mary sends her love and best respects to you and in her young opinion wishes to come to live with you and further I request you to write to me immediately after you receive these few lines as I am still desirous to hear from you I remain your affectionate Mother praying for your prosperity both temporal and eternal.

Sarah Williams

This is the letter Amos Williams wrote to his mother and sister and in which he informally announces his wedding.

Paris, Edgar County Illinois  
March 22nd 1826

Dear Mother & Sister,

It is with much pleasure I take my pen to inform you that yours of the 30th of January was received last which I was really gratifying to hear of your health. Since I wrote to you last I have removed to the county seat of Vermilion County, (which is 35 miles north of Paris) where I have received the appointment of Clerk of the Circuit Court Owing to my removal together with several other circumstances has rendered it out of my power heretofore to return to my native country, which if it had not been for circumstances beyond my control, it would have been a great pleasure to me to have returned--There is no circumstance has given me more concern than that of the death of my father, and the idea of your being left alone, when it was out of my power to render you that assistance which I am well assured your situation demands--it would be very desirable if in your power to arrange the business of the estate in such a manner that final settlement when I come could be made as the distance is so great--I wish you to write to me as soon as you can after you receive this--If I thought a complete settlement of the estate could take place I would endeavor to leave here on the first of June next for your country--on which I wish you to inform me particularly together with any other information you may deem important--

I cannot conclude without informing you that I was married yesterday evening to Martha Ann Shaw oldest daughter of Esq. Shaw of this county--Cousin Hannah Curtis and family are all well, and wish to be remembered to you--I will now conclude after informing you that I am of opinion that my prospect for doing well in this country is full as good or better than they have heretofore been.

Remember me to all my acquaintances and relations.

Your affectionate son

S and M Williams

A Williams

Dear Son

April 1826

It is with much pleasure I take my pen in hand to inform you that yours of the 7 day of April last was duly received by me which I am happy to acknowledge was very gratifying to hear from you again--with thanks I can inform you that I have reasonable health at present with all the rest of my family--and thank be to god for his mercies. and hoping at the receival of these few lines will find you and your companion in the same state of health--and further to inform you is that with my and your brother Eli requestes Peter Cook has become Administrator of the estate and had sale of the personal property on the 20 of laste march The sale amounted to about \$500 dollars on the same day he rented the farm at public for fifty dollars for the term of one year and reserved for my accommodation the two lower rooms of the stone house and a previledge in the garden springhouse and seller and some other previledges which together render me tolerable comfortable still at the same time I must inform you that I have a great desire to come to your Country and feel resind to go with you at any time you can make it convenient to come in for me and wish you to inform me in your next letter when you can come to our Contry--and further to inform you about the sale of the real Estate is that it will not be sole till you come in and help to attend to it or else send in your resignation as Excutor The credit of the sale was six months which will be due on 20th of september next your Uncle Lewis Williams he is still in the same situation he was laste winter when I wrote to you--I was very much gratified to see in your letter that you had taken to yourselve a companion together my greatest desires to you both are that you may always be a happy Union--Write to me again before long Mary joins in with me and send her love and best respects to you and your new wedded companion I remain your well wishing Mother praying for your prosperity both temporal and eternal.

To Amos Williams

From Sarah Williams



The Shaws of Paris came from North Carolina. The father, Smith Shaw, was born January 20, 1784 in Guilford county, North Carolina. The mother, Elizabeth McMinn was born July 20, 1788 in Guilford county North Carolina. Smith Shaw and Elizabeth McMinn were married February 12, 1805 in Wilson county, Tennessee.

The following are their fifteen children, brothers and sisters-in-law of Amos Williams:

- First, James Dyer Shaw
- Second, Martha Ann Shaw, later Mrs. Amos Williams. She was born Oct. 9, 1807 in Christian county, Kentucky.
- Third, Charlotte Frances Shaw, later Mrs. A. L. Risley, wife of the minister.
- Fourth, Julia Hester Shaw, called Hettie, later Mrs. Alexander, then the wife of Dr. Wm. Fithian by his third marriage.
- Fifth, William Newton Shaw.
- Sixth, Elvis Perry Shaw.
- Seventh, Harvey Smith Shaw.
- Eighth, Mary Jane Shaw, Mrs. Albert Crawford.
- Ninth and tenth were twins, Cornelia, Mrs. Sam Newlin, and Joretta, who died.
- Eleventh, Albert Fardances Shaw.
- Twelfth, Amanda Elizabeth Shaw, later Mrs. Smith.
- Thirteenth, Daniel McMinn Shaw.
- Fourteenth, Alfred Marian Shaw.
- Fifteenth, Orlandor Corydan Shaw.

---

Edgar Cty 12th January 1827

Dear Son, I got home before sun set the day I left your house. I found them all well, but mutch disapointed when I told them the situation of your family. we will al be anxious to hear from you by the mail. there is no news here of importanse. Barry B moved out of your house last monday, Doctor Faris moved in the same day. Mr. Cammel moved out of the school house the same day, --Misses Allexander had a fine daughter last

Sabeth night, both is like to do well--Charlotte wants her Mother to know that she thinks they are doing very well without her, and if she is of any use them to stay there,--We have the deepest snow here that we have had since I have lived here. Dont fail to write by the mail as we are anxious to hear how you are all doing,--Excuse bad writing my pen is very bad.

Smith Shaw

This letter was written to Amos Williams, son-in-law of Smith Shaw. It is the first correspondence received from his father-in-law.

---

June the 22nd 1827

Dear Mother and Brother

These lines comes to inform you of my situation. I have been sick two weeks next Saturday one week confined to my bed and am getting weaker and frailer fast which calls for your assistance as I have refused all meadison until I see you or am with you. My complaint is supposed to be feavours and ague what other complaint I dont know. I have not eaten for one week as much as I would in one day if I had been in health.

Remains your affectionate daughter and sister.  
Mary Williams

To Sarah and Amos Williams

Letter written by Mary Williams to her mother and brother while she was visiting in Union, Illinois. Mary Williams later became the wife of Dan Beckwith.

---

Mount Linneus Va.  
June 27th 1832

Dear Sir after my best respect to you I will procede on to inform you that your relations are all injouing good health at this present time I have nothing particularly strange to write to you But health is particular good through our Cuntry Grain is tolerable scarce with us but plenty to do Us untill harvest this summer is the coldest that ever i experienced in my life I can tell you that

your old Uncle Arther Burn was with us last winter and the people was all well than in that part of the Cuntry I will inform you that it is in our newspapers that the Indians has broke out in the Illinois and kills and skelps as tha go but it is to be hoped that it is not so it is said that tha have had several hard battles on Black rock Creek tha say that laste week in Virmillion County the savages killed and took prisners thirty familYES but I hope that you are well and not disturbd by the savages and I want you to write immediately to me whether it is so or not--and I want to know of you what for a chance you will give me to come and write in the office under you for one year or two or perhaps more we here that Squire Acleb Morgan is killed and skalped And I want you to write to me as soon as possible about the indians and about the others too direct your letter to Mount Linneus Monogolia County Virginia and so I ad no more at present but remain your loveing friend untill Death.

From John Draggoo

To Amos Williams

This man incidentally asks for a position in Amos Williams office.

---

Paris May 16th 1833

Dear Children, through Gods helping we are all in tolérable health at this time and hope these few lines may find you all in good health--in this I send you a Fifty dollar bill as pay for your school house lot, from Mr. Blackburn he gave me beside one dollar in silver, which I will send you when opportunity offers without I am otherwise instructed by you, if the fifty one dollars will satisfy you for the lot he desires you to send him a deed, if not he says he is willing to give you five dollars out of the fifty one and that you and him quit even, he thinks he says, that his expense in getting the fence repaired and paying the taxes makes it (including the five dollars in money) a hard bargain on his side. I wish the difficulty respecting the lot between you and him, was settled amicably. If you feel disposed to accept of either proposition, and was to ask me which was the best I would say keep the

fifty one dollars and let him have the lot, for this reason, the lot cant be rented and as soon as they can they will have all the rails taken away without there was somebody on it that would take care of it, fifty dollars laid on forty acres of land well selected would increase in value much faster than the lot. Mistress Tompson says that she was sorry that her daughter has returned she wished her to stay with you one year but is not willing to have her bound, if you want her in that way, write to us immediately as the old lady wants to know. Please to write to us by the return mail and let us know how you all do. I also send you five dollars which puts me out of debt on act. of the rent of your house, it is now vacant,--give our respects to all the connection and except of our best wishes to yourselves.

S and E Shaw

Do tell the girls that Harvy tennery is married to a Miss Millburn.

S and E Shaw were the mother and father of Mrs. Amos Williams.

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This is a description of one of the first stoves used in this county.

Nov 20th 1833 Lower Alton

Dear friends, through mercy we enjoy tolerably good health, after some difficulty we obtained a house in this town, where we will, probably stay until spring, and then we shall try to get a house in middle or upper Town. We have obtained one of Stanley,s rotary Cooking Stoves, as we wished to save the escpence of burning much wood as it sells for two dollars a cord here. We have found this stove to be a great convenience in cooking as it ~~has~~ connected with it every aparatus required in cooking as you have not seen any stoves of this description I will give you a brief description of it, accompanied with a small book of directions. The one we purchased is what is called the 4 boiler stove. in the largest boiler water is het for washing and other purposes in the 2nd boiler which is composed of a tin boiler and steamer meat potatoes and eggs or apples can be cooked. in the 3 there is a large

coffee pot in the 4 a large tea cettle. there is an iron pan also for browning coffee and heating flatirons, in front of the stove there is a shains hearth, which can be drawn back and there is a large grid iron for baking or broiling meat which can be covered with a shut iron reflector. This is superb for broiling beef stake and chicken. Back of the body of the stove containing the fire there is a large reflector. Vastly preferable to the one I obtained for Martha from Eugene, as it has several conveniences belonging to it that the one has not. There is also 4 griddles which cover the places for the diferent vessels when not in use, that answer very nice for frying flitters pancakes and there are used also to put bread upon to bake when the large tin canopy is used. this canopy has a top that can be lifted in order to see if the bread is doing well. this canopy is as large as the rim of the stove and is placed over it which serves as a reflector in baking. This stove requires very little wood compared with a fire place and makes a house comfortable indeed. With this stove Martha could in ordinary health cook for 3 times the number of your family, and Maria with a little instruction could with care cook for all your family. Indeed I can give you but an imperfect description of this stove. Charlotte says she would not take the world for hers if she could not get another. It almost does every thing itself. If you would desire one of these stoves I can obtain one for you from Cincinnati where they are manufactured as the agent of Mr Whipple is here selling stoves. I paid 50 for mine without the pipe and Mr. Roff the agent says that he can afford them as cheap there. the stove can be shipped to Perryville and conveyed to Danville. And I can pay the agent here for the stove as soon as it is received there and I am notified of it. You could so place this stove on your hearth that if required you can burn wood in your chimney place but for this you will have no use as it makes a room much more comfortable than a fire. You could cose your door next the River and this would still make your stove heat the greater. In wood and a cook the cost of which is considerable in the course of a year you would save the price of a stove and you can cook either with wood or coal. I would be glad to receive a Epistle from you as soon as possible. Give our respects to all who may inquire after us. if Dr. Alexander or any of

the citizens would desire a stove I can obtain one for them. I have some money that I could send to you and Col Moores if I thought it would go safe by mail. With the greatest respect we are yours.

Amos and Martha Williams      A. L. and C. Risley

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Know all men by these presents that I John B. Page of the County of Vermilion and state of Illinois for and in consideration of the sum of thirty seven dollars and eighty cents to me in hand paid by Amos Williams have this day sold and delivered to the said Amos Williams one cooking stove with all things appertaining to the same which said stove is now in the house of Amos Williams and in the possession of the said John B. Page, the title of which I engage to warrant and defend unto the said Amos Williams and to his heirs and assigns forever.

Given under my hand and seal at Danville, Illinois this 27th day of December A. D. 1837.

M. Lesley

John B. Page (Seal)

William C. Remington

---

They finally bought the stove and this is the receipt, given four years after the transaction was begun. In the meantime the price of the stove declined from fifty to thirty seven dollars and eighty cents.

---

Cincinnati Oct 5th 1837

J B Trent

Bought of Geo Conclin

17 Quire Record Book-----	\$8 50
Sealing Wax-----	25
	<u>\$8 75</u>

Recd Payment Geo Conclin

---

By W. S. Erasus

Cin Oct 5th 1837

Mr. J B Trent

Bought of Smith & McMillin

1 11 Plate Stove-----\$16.00  
weight 341 lbs.

Recd payment

Smith and McMillin  
C M Cmith

---

Amos Williams

To Jabel B Trent Dr.

For halling 1 stove 341 lbs @  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per lb-----\$8.52  
For purchasing one Record Book  
and transportation-----~~\$1.00~~  
\$9.52

By 51 lbs flour @ 3 per lb-----\$1.53  
By Recording Deed-----~~\$1.00~~  
December 8, 1837, Danville 2.53

Received of Amos Williams the sum of Six Dollars  
and Ninety nine Being in full for the above bill.

Jabel B. Trent

---

The above is the bill paid by Amos Williams for  
the delivery of a stove purchased by himself.

---

Chicago Aug 19 1836

Amos Williams Esq.

Dear Sir yours to Uncle Thomas and myself giving  
a list of the votes was most gladly welcome you  
have achieved a most glorious triumph over the  
collar--would to god that such could be the case  
through out the union. I have intended visiting  
your place before this but our business has been  
such as to require my constant attention at home  
and my partner E. K. Hubbard has now gone to  
N. Y. for Goods therefore I cannot go untill his  
return say 1st of October. Judge McRobert has  
written me I had better redeem the Gellespie Farm  
will you have the goodness to inform me by return  
mail how much it will require and wither it can

be done without my being present, in short wither it can be attended to by a mere letter. if it can will you attend to it and should there not be sufficient time to send you the money after receipt of your answer to this will you be as good as to pay it in for me or procure it and I will send the amount by 1st mail advice on my own risk your attention to this will very much oblige me. We have not just got the returns from the different parts of this districk but from what we can learn I presum that we have for Congress Bengamen Mills for State Senator Stepenson of Galena for Representative Hamlin. Please present my compliments to your family and remember me to old acquaintances with great esteem, your friend,

G. S. Hubbard

P. S. Chicago is flourishing beond contemplation. Uncle Tommy says he gets better coffee than he did last fall. The old fellow sweats over the hot brick this weather finely.

---

October 10-1838

Warrentown and Little Cove

Deare Cozen I take this way to inform you that we are all well at present and I hope that these few lines will find you in good health I would like to come out to your parte of the country all though I do not know whether ever I will get out to see you or not--give my respects to Amos and his famley. When I think of the many days we spent together as play mates I cannot help but feele desirous of heareing from you and your famley tharefore I concluded that I would send you these few lines that you mite here from us all our friends is in tolerabel good health at present I wish to inform you that the last events that I heard of Eli was laste Spring he lefte Hagerstown in the stage for your country as soone as this letter reaches you I hope that you will send me a letter and in form me how you and your famley are and like wise Amos and his famley and I hope that you will inform whether Eli ever arrived at your abode we are all well except Maryann and hanah. Hanah was married laste winter to David Culker I wrote a letter to Amos laste winter and received no answer probably the letter got lost.

Mrs. Mary Beckwith

Benjamin Williams

Direct your letter to Mercersburg



Paris ill edgar county August the 30

Dear Son and daughter--I take my pen to write you a few lines and can inform you that we are all well and hope you are all enjoying good health dear Son I write to ask one favor of you and that is to borrow 15 or 20 dollars to asiste in bearing my expenses to Arkansas as I have made up my mind to start in about a week to see James and take him his children provided my friends help me in money matters a little if you can asiste me send it it a few days by mail if you think best if not write and let me know my object in going is to take these little boys to their father for I know I cant manage so many boys much longer. I think traveling will be good for my health and Pery is going with me my warmest love to you all and remains your affectionate mother until death.

Elizabeth Shaw(mother of Martha)  
To Amos and Martha Williams

---

Mother Shaw raised her own fifteen children then cared for her children's children.

---

Paris february 7th 1841

Dear Husband

We got safeley to mothers the next day after we left home and found mother beter contrary to our expectation she is still on the mend we are all in usuel health and as soon as we can with saftey we will bee at home.

your affecnate wife

my love to Maria and all my Dear Children

Martha A Williams

please hand the within to the Doctor Fithian as soon as read

To Amos Williams from wife.

---

Danville, Ill. Apl. 29th 1841

Dear Mother--

Yours of the 26th instant came to hand last mail, which I hasten to answer--and am very happy to hear of your health and general welfare--and I am very happy to have it in my power to inform you that myself and family are all in reasonable health at this time, for which we all desire to be truly thankful to the Father of all our mercies and from whom every perfect gift cometh down.

Brother Risley is teaching school at Perrysville--Charlotte and children are still residing in Danville and are all reasonable well--Brother Fithian and family are in tolerable good health I think likely you will receive a letter from Hetty this or next mail--

Martha thinks she is doing as well as could be expected She thinks she will be confined about the middle of May, at which time she would be pleased to have you come up if you can.

We are still "striving to enter in at the strait gate", and if our hearts deceive us not we are still making some progress in the Divine life--We know and feel that this is not our abiding place and desire that if our earthly house was dissolved we may have a building in the heaven whose maker and builder is God. The shortness of time and the length of a never ending eternity is more and more impressed on our minds; and the fading and transition nature of all things here below admonish us day by day to prepare to meet our God in peace and be enabled to give an account of our stewardship here below with joy and not with grief, so that we may receive the welcome plaudit of "well done thou good and faithful servant enter into the joy of thy Lord and with all the redeemed of the Lord be forever shut in to sing his praise where relations friends and acquaintances may recount their sufferings o'er and where parting shall be no more."

We desire you to remember us in your prayers that we may ever prove faithful and be enabled to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour by a holy life walk and conversation and be kept by grace till the great day for which all other

days were made. It is also our desire that the Lord will enable us to pray for you that you may be sustained by his omnipotent power and that your pathway may shine more and more until the perfect day that you may be enabled to bring up your charge in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and that when you come forth to the resurrection of life you may come forth rejoicing bringing your sheaves with you.

We wish to be remembered to all our relations friends and acquaintances and will be rejoiced to hear of their health and welfare both temporal and spiritual. We are yours with great respect.

Mrs. Elizabeth Shaw  
Paris, Illinois

Amos and Martha Williams

---

Danville, Illinois May 2nd 1841  
7 o'clock evening

Dear Mother

Since writing the foregoing Hetty has been and now is very unwell--The Dr. and Hetty are desirous for you and Harvey to come up as soon as you can--Our Mary has been sick and is now getting better. We will look for you here without fail.

We are yours affectionately

A. & M. A. Williams

---

The Doctor and Hetty means Doctor and Mrs. Fithian.

---

Following this page is a letter written by one of the six young men instructed in a business course by Amos Williams. Note the similarity of penmanship.

Newport Ind.  
April 21<sup>st</sup> 1842

Dear Sir

Yours of the 13<sup>th</sup> Instant, has been duly received, in answer to which I must say that my engagements here will prevent me from visiting you during the Session of your Court, though I should be pleased to do so were I otherwise situated. I am engaged in the only school in Town, & the term will not expire for nearly 3 months. And by taking charge of the fall I have the occupancy of a comfortable dwelling free of rent, for the time being.

Health is generally good.

Yours sincerely  
Melvin P. Scurry

To Amos Williams Esq

Danville Ill  
Oct 10 1842

Sir

You will please purchase for me one dollars worth of wrapping twine suitable for Post Office use, also 4 cast iron trunk rollers, also 4 cast iron trunk rollers of a smaller size than the above for trunnell bead, also 200 large clarified quills and also five dollars worth of common janes suitable for childrens winter ware.

\$10 sent

Amos Williams

You will please purchase for me casnett enough for one pair pants of good strong quality also enough of cloth for a vest. trimming for pants and vest and if the money holds out one silk handkerchief.

\$5 sent by Mr. Stites

October 10, 1842

John H. Sconce

Paris February the 5-1843

Dear Sister--I take my pen after so long a delay to inform you of our health we are all well Crawford and family are well we have heard nothing from Harvy since I was up there as you wished to know how I got home I arrived here safe just before dark but verry much fatigued from riding through the mud. Mother would like to hear from you and would like better to see you. She has been verry uneasy about sister Julia and would like to hear from her. Tell Maria that the cross-eyed man from the north arm was here this morning and Cornelia and Manda quarreled about him until meeting time and he sacked both of them you will have to excuse my bad pen and writing nothing more but remains your affectionate Brother until death.

To Marthy Williams

From A. F. Shaw

---

Bloomington Ill

Dear Brother, I have some clothes to make and I cannot get any silk to make them, and have concluded to send to Danville. Inclosed is one dollar which I wish you to buy out in silk thread. Purchased by the ounce, black, or blue black of a good quality, and send by the stage. We are all tolerably well.

Yours in the bonds of Christ  
A. L. Risley

---

Griggsville Ill Feb 26 1844

Dear brother Williams when I recd your letter announcing the death of Sister Martha I thought I would answer it the first opportunity, but it being inconvenient at the time, it has hitherto been delayed. You may be assuared that the news of this death of your beloved wife was sad intelligence to us, We do most heartily sympathise with you, and your children in this bereavement. We feel that we have lost one of our best earthly friends, and that the Lord has by this dispensation of providence depended on attachment to earth and has increased your ties to Heaven. I have no doubt but that the Lord can sanctify this severe affliction to your good and to the good of others and I hope he will do so. As

the Lord is too wise to err, so also, is he too good to be unkind, too holy to do rong. And although we cannot now comprehend, the dealings of God towards us still we should endeavor to be strong in faith and not to staggor at the promises of God through unbelief. I have no doubt but your afflictions will work out to you an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, for by them God weans our affections from earth, that we may set them uppon things in heaven. The state of religion here is tolerably prosperous; and we feel much encouraged and hope that the Lord will revive his work on the circuit abundantly this conference year. We are quite comfortably situated in this place, we have a good house, and are in the midst of kind and obliging friends and are tolerably well provided for in temporalities and if the harvest is favorable we will do well I think as to quarterage though owing to the crops having, in a measure failed in this circuit the past year, our people are hard run for money, but I believe they have a disposition to support their preachers. Give our respects to the Dr and Hettie, and pray for us, that the Lord may bring us to the enjoyment of a better world than this. Charlotte wishes to be remembered to all her friends.

A. L. Risley

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#### Seymour Treats order on Baileys

Messrs. A. & D. Bailey

Please let the bearer A. Williams have four hundred feet of Sheeting and suitable scantling for eleven pair of rafters and charge the same to my account

And much oblige yours etc

August 4, 1829

Seymour Treat

---

Saltfork Apr. 5th 1847

Unckle Amos Williams

I am informed your team will go to Paris to-morrow and return empty. Can you bring me from Paris 100 choice apple trees? If you can

please get Mr. Crawford to select them. I want grafted froot and the trees with tall boddies and as large as he may think will be safe to transplant. I have one Bushel Cloverseed, one Bushel of white Beans and perhaps one or two Bushels Timothy seed at Mr. Leseures at Georgetown. Will you bring them up? Request Mr. Leseure to send up his bill to his Brother in Danville and I will pay it there.

Inclosed please receive 15\$ for apple trees if that should not be enough I will send the money to Crawford.

W. Fithian

\$15 paid back to Fithian May 12, 1847 by A. Williams.

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Dr. Fithian, Rev. A. L. Risley, and Mr. Crawford were all brothers-in-law of Amos Williams through the same Shaw family of Paris, Illinois. They all called Mr. Williams Uncle Amos, as did all of the villagers. Even our mother nearly always spoke of him as "your Uncle Amos", instead of saying your grandfather, and his wife was called "Aunt Martha" by all, tho she was only thirty seven years old when she died.

---

Mackinaw Grove July 12th 1848  
Dear Brother Williams

One of my neighbors has just stopped at my house and informs me that he will start for Danville tomorrow morning; and I take the opportunity to send for the remainder of brother Goddards plunder; it has been out of my power to go myself on purpose, and this is the first opportunity I have had to (please take the excuse) Father Goddards health is so poor; he has lost another son since I saw you;--My health and the health of my family is good; Brother Addison's little girl promises fair to be a smart woman, she is a good chile,

The cause of religion is nomant at this time pray for us, I often think of you and never shall

Washington, Dec. 8 1848

Dear Sir:

Your letter of Nov. 27 was here for me when I arrived in yesterday - I also received the one addressed me at Springfield, but seeing I could do nothing in the matter then & then, and being very busy with the Presidential election, I threw it by, and forgot it - I shall do better now. Herewith I send you a document of "Information" which you can examine, and then if you think fit, to file a caveat, you can send me a description and drawing of your "invention" or "improvement" together with \$20 in money, and I will file it for you - Nothing can be done, by caveat, or by examining the models here, <sup>as you request</sup> without having a description of your invention - You perceive the reason of this -

Yours as ever  
A. Lincoln

This letter was written by A. Lincoln in 1848 from Washington D. C. while he was the only Whig congressman from Illinois. It is addressed to Amos Williams and is a reply to the letters asking about information as to patents for a water wheel. Amos Williams as clerk of the county at Danville was a long time acquaintance of A. Lincoln. This letter had been sent in the old style without an envelope. It was indorsed with "A. Lincoln M. C.", his frank giving it free delivery.



I forget the kindness you bestowed to my deceased brother in his sickness and to me during my stay with you; my faith is unshaken, His grace being sufficient

You will please send that property by the bearer, brother Joseph McNaught,--He will pay you for your trouble of the care of property. I must close by subscribing myself your till death.

Amos Williams

W. M. Bartholomew

Received of Amos Williams three Bedsteads, Five, Chairs, some clothing. Being the residue of the property belonging to the estate of Addison Goddard dec--as mentioned within  
Danville Ill  
June 14, 1848

Joseph McNaught

---

Chicago Aug 16th 1850

Dear Bro Williams, I was glad to hear by your letter that you were all well.

I cannot find the receipts you speak of, though I think I have them, and I will make a more thorough examination. I know I received from you several tax rects. in our settlement, but cannot at present find them. My rent will be due the last of next mo I wish you would pay the tax on the lot and if I do not get to Danville next month as I anticipate I will send you an order for the money. If the cholera abates and I can get a house I expect to bring Charlotte and some of the children to visit Danville and Paris. We have all been well in the midst of the Cholera, they have died all around us; still we have escaped so far, through the mercy of God.

I desire to be at Bloomington at the session of the Ill. Cong. I have just learned that the case of Parker against Hozt was decided in favor of Hozt. but the judge granted a new trial on the ground that the jury did not follow his instructions, the case will be tried at Springfield this fall or winter. It is believed that Hozt will gain the suit as much new testimony will be introduced at the new trial. I have a two horse car-

riage that I do not need, I would like to sell or exchange for a horse If you would like to have a family carriage, I think mine would suit you, and I would dispose of it cheap or exchange it for a horse.

This is a very expensive place to live we could spend all of our salary, and more also, and then not live very high

Asahel L. Risley

A. L. Risley married one of Amos Williams sisters-in-law, Charlotte Shaw of Paris, Illinois. Remember there were fifteen children in this family.

---

Edward G. Miner about making Register officers, written to Clerk of County Commissioners Courts in Vermilion County, Illinois.

Dear Sir:

Believing a REGISTER, containing the names of the officers of our State and counties, and other information, ought to be compiled for the use of the public, I have concluded to undertake the task provided the necessary information can be obtain through the assistance of the several County Clerks. Will you fill the blanks on the first page with the information desired of your county and tear the same from this page and enclose it to me by mail, without delay? By so doing you will confer a favor and be entitled to a copy of the Register, without charge.

Respectfully,

Edward G. Miner

---

Newport Ia May 30th 1833

Dear Sir--Mr. Robert G. Roberts visits your place with a view of taking a contract for some of the inside work of your Court House--which we have understood would be let out about the 1st of June. I was the contractor for the building and the finishing of our C. house Mr. Roberts done all



This is the Old McCormick House where Lincoln stopped in Danville, Ill., while riding the Circuit. It stood on north side of Main Street between Franklin and Walnut Street. The building was torn down just after this picture was taken.



This is the Barnum building in which Lincoln and Lamon had their Law Office in the 1850's in Danville, Illinois. It stood where the First National Bank now stands.



the wood work of every description--it has been pronounced by judges to be as neat and substantial as any work of the kind in our State. I can say myself without hesitation that he will do it according to contract and without delay provided he should become a contractor--he will also be able to give Mr. Colletts of Eugene, and as many other good citizens for security as may be necessary for his faithful performance--I know that the citizens of your County rely much on your judgement & exertions in the completion of your Public Buildings--for this reason I have addressed you and any assistance you may render Mr. R will be recd as a favor and gratefully remembered by your frd & obt svt. S. B. Gardner

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This shows how much Vermilion County Illinois relied on Amos Williams' judgment and how his reputation had spread.

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New Port Ia 6th June--1833

Dr Sir--Mr Penal Beale of this place informs me that he has been to your place for the purpose of contracting for a job of painting on your C House. With regard to Mr. Beales ability to execute that kind of business; I can say that he completed all the painting on our C. H. in a neat handsome style which was highly satisfactory to our Commrs. and citizens--He is a man of the strictest morals and propriety of conduct--and I can well assure you that the work will be done (should he get it) to the entire satisfaction of all the parties concerned and agreeable to the time specified. if the materials are furnished Many of your county men have seen our C H. where his work will show for itself--Mr. Canaday from George town might be enquired of for information; should interest yourself for Mr. Beale in this matter he will fulfil your highest expectations--

Your friend & obt svt. Stephen B.  
Gardner

A Williams Esq.

---

Notice the abbreviation "Ia." which stood for Indiana until Iowa was admitted into the Union, after which time Indiana became Ind.

Received of A. Williams the sum of fifty cents being in full for two hundred rails made by Andrew Kiser and myself.

August 24, 1833

George H. Skiles

---

Treasurer's Office  
Danville, Ills.  
March 6, 1837

Received of the County Commissioners of Vermilion County Illinois, by the hand of Amos Williams, the sum of three dollars for a fine assessed by Esq. Bailey against some person unknown on the body of Smith.

\$3

J. Alexander, Treasurer of  
Vermilion County Ill.

---

Received, Dec. 12, 1828 of A. Williams the sum of three dollars twelve and a half cents in full for ten cords of wood including halling cutting and cording--Andrew Pettijohn-----

---

Cythiana Ky 4 August 1836

Dear Sir

You will greatly oblige me by informing me whether there is a Mr Harrison Oliver formerly of this vicinity lives in your place or County--if you should not know such an individual if you will give this letter to Davice Yarnal when he enquires at your office for letters he perhaps may know him or his circumstances.

Excuse this privilege. I have taken it for the reason that I have no acquaintances in your place and moreover because there is no one more likely than the Post Master to know the citizens of the city.

Respectfully

Jno. M. January

---

All such inquiries as the above had to be answered by the post master.

Springfield, Illinois  
November the 17 1842

Sir I arived here yesterday and on enquiry find it necessary that all the exertion that can be used should be don to obtain signers to the remonstrance against the division of the County and be sent on as soon as they can be obtained with the remonstrances that has not yet been handed in Mr. Canady and Mr. Norris agree to wait their coming before the petision is presented Mr. Frazer will please give all the assistance he can I have not yet learned what will be the fate of the bank and have made no arangements with the money I shall no in a few days what I can do

To Amos Williams  
Danville, Illinois

Yours with respect

Isaac Sandusky

---

Isaac Sodowsky (the original spelling of the name Sandusky) took Billy Woodbury with him to Cincinnati about 1843. They brought back, overland by wagon and team of horses for Dr. Wm. Fithian, the first mower used in Vermilion County, Illinois.

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Springfield Apr 15 1843

Amos Williams

Dear Sir:

I send you herewith as requested a copy the law in refference to fire proof offices--all right drive ahead.

All well--my respects to yourself and friends.  
M. Mobley

April 15-1843

An act to authorize county commissioners courts to erect fire-proof offices for the preservation of County Records.

Sec. 1 Be it enacted by the people of the

State of Illinois represented in the General Assembly, that the county commissioners courts of the several counties in this state, are hereby authorized and required whenever the finances of any county in this state shall justify such expenditure to cause to be erected a fire proof recorder office on some suitable lot at their respective seats, and pay for the same in the same manner as court houses and jails are paid for. Provided that if the county com. court of any county as aforesaid shall be of opinion that any one of the rooms unappropriated in their court houses respectively can be made fire proof. that shall be required and authorized as aforesaid to cause such improvements or addition to be made to any such room as will render the same fire proof in which said fire proof buildings or room, the record and office of county recorder shall be kept.

Sec. 2 The provisions of the foregoing section of this act may at the discretion of the county com. court of any county in this state be deemed to apply to offices of clerks of county com. and circuit courts respectively.

Approved feb 24 1843

Sam Hackilton  
Speaker of the House of  
Representatives

Thomas Ford

John Moore  
Speaker of the Senate

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Copied from the Commercial-News of 1932

An authority on postal matters states that except for a short period during the war years, the present postal rate of three cents an ounce on first class matter is the highest since the act of March, 1885. However, it is only one-eighth of that charged at one time to send a letter 450 miles. That was in 1792, and under this act the charge was 25 cents per sheet. For the purpose of postage every sheet was considered a letter. A letter consisting of ten sheets would call for \$2.50 postage. The rate for shorter distance was six cents for thirty miles or less and increased with distance. The first



postage stamps were used in 1840, and envelopes were introduced at the same time.

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The following is an extract from an old letter by W. R. Jewell, former Post Master and editor of Commercial-News.

"Honorable Amos Williams was a famous old time goose quill scribe, a great moral and physical power in the early formation of this County; and though he is dead he yet speaketh."

July, 1911

W. R. Jewell

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Coffeen says--"It would be difficult to imagine what the county would have done without the able and indispensable services of Amos Williams. A man of great order, and most excellent business qualifications, having full confidence of the people, it seems that he was intrusted with the official and business affairs of the county in general."

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#### What Mrs. Angeline Draper Told About Amos Williams

There is still living in our city one dear little woman who knew Amos Williams. She says it is still clear as a picture seeing Uncle Amos walk around the neighborhood on Sunday morning distributing "tracts" from his high hat. He was a very religious man. Our mother said he could always "fill the pulpit" when the minister was absent. Some place in this scrap book you will find one of his old-fashioned religious letters.

He had two complete sets of commentaries and many many religious books and encyclopedias which have found a permanent home in Booker T. Washington school in Tuskegee.

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Mrs. Draper also told us the following story:

One lovely spring morning Uncle Amos came

3	Baxter's Saints Rest	75	—	2 25
6	Alline & Baxter	50	—	3 00
3	Fletcher's appeal	50		1 50
2	Disciplines	25		50
1	Doz Secret prayer	6 $\frac{1}{4}$		75
1	Almanac	6 $\frac{1}{4}$	—	6 $\frac{1}{4}$

4  $\overline{) 8.06\frac{1}{4}}$   
 2 01 $\frac{1}{2}$

15000 pages Tracts —  
 2 vols L. S. —

$\overline{) 6.04\frac{3}{4}}$   
 10.00  
 36

Wm Fletcher	75	—	56 $\frac{1}{4}$
Memoir of Corroppo	50	—	37 $\frac{1}{2}$
Wm Rogers	37	—	28
Wm Phayer	25		18 $\frac{3}{4}$
6 Fletcher's Address	6 $\frac{1}{4}$		28
1 Minutes of Conference	18 $\frac{3}{4}$	—	14
Future Rewards and punishments			9
			$\overline{) 18.22\frac{1}{4}}$

Wesley's Sermons	—	{ 3.75
New Testament	—	
Carriage & Box	—	1.08
		$\overline{) 23.05\frac{1}{4}}$

Rec'd payment in full for the Above bill of Book and  
 Carriage Apr 22 2, 1841 — J. Hall

This bill includes "tracts" that Amos Williams carried around in his old  
 "two-story" hat on Sunday mornings and gave to the villagers.

## Rare Chance for Speculation IN MILL PROPERTY.

**F**OR SALE—A large GRIST MILL AND CARDING MILL, situated on the Vermilion river, within half a mile south-west of Danville, together with the tract of land adjoining the mill, and on which the latter is situated, consisting of twenty-five acres of good timber, and embracing a superior quality and inexhaustible quantity of

### COAL,

which is easy of access and within three-quarters of a mile of the Great Western Railroad.

I will also dispose of at private sale, my SAW MILL, situated on the North Fork, two miles north-west of Danville, with the privilege to the purchaser of a choice of buying from

**80 to 200 Acres of good Timber Land,** adjoining. This timber consists principally of walnut, sugar, and white oak.

Both of these mills are comparatively new, and in good running order, and will be sold for cash or on time, of one, two, three or four years, and at such rates as cannot fail to prove a profitable investment to the purchaser. For further information, inquire in person or by letter of AMOS WILLIAMS, Danville, Ills.

The undersigned would have it particularly understood, that his own inability to superintend the operations of these mills is his principle reason for making the above disposition of them.

Danville, Dec. 3, 1856.

A. W.

## Attention, the Universe.

**J**UST all persons owing me for Stoves, Tinware and Hardware, to distinctly understand that I want my money within the next four weeks, and all persons will take notice after that date they may look for "Moses," in the shape of a constable. My affairs must be settled, and soon is up.

IRAD ABDILL.

Corryville, Sept. 17, 1856.

## Extremely Low Prices

N. B. WOOL, HIDES, and PRODUCE taken in exchange for Goods.

J. W. BOOKER & CO.

May 14, 1857

## Tin Ware.

### W. H. BROWN & SON,

**A**RE manufacturing a superior quality of all kind of Tin Ware. A large assortment on hand. Prices reasonable at wholesale and retail.

## House Guttering and Spouting.

We are thankful for past favors, and ready to attend to any future orders.

## House Roofing.

Experienced workmen on this kind of work, of which we will warrant.

## Sheet Iron Ware.

Any and all articles of Sheet Iron on hand, to made to order.

## Stoves!

A large supply of Cook Stoves, of various patterns which in quality and price cannot be excelled in any market. If any doubts our word about selling as cheap as they do at the River, all we have to say is, let them go and get their prices, and see if our word is not TRUTH, to the letter.

W. H. BROWN & SON.

August 8, 1855,

38-11.

## Copartnership Notice.

**T**HE undersigned has this day associated with him in the mercantile business Mr. I. GALE, formerly of Louisville, Ky., and business will in future be conducted under the name and firm of E. P. Martin & Co.

E. P. MARTIN.

September 5, 1856.

39-12

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Under date of December 24, 1856, from the "Danville Prairie State" newspaper is the following advertisement to sell mills, coal, and good timberland (now in Harrison Park). Amos Williams was in poor health was the reason he ascribed for selling the land. He died the next November, 1857.

The other advertisements are well worth reading.



home and placed a bag of gold on the table and said to his daughters, "Girls, get ready, we are going to move out to the cabin and put in the mill-race for the saw mill. This was on a farm where Harrison Park is now located. The west side of the park belonged to Maria Louisa Woodbury, our Mother. The evergreen trees were planted by Dr. Woodbury preparatory to having a wind break for a pear orchard. It is said that Dan Beckwith lived in a cabin across the river from Amos and the famous spring on the west of Harrison Park was where he got water. This ground was bought for one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre and was never out of the Williams family until it was given to the city by John Harrison and his mother.

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In regard to the "broad-side" or "hand-bill."

It has been said that Republics are ungrateful. It does seem so at times. Amos Williams helped to establish Edgar and Vermilion Counties and surveyed their trackless wild lands, and helped to create two towns, Danville and before that Paris. He gave the best years of his life in public service and no fault seemed to be found with his work. He was sought and trusted by the people in general. Then some unknown person attacked him, apparently for no other cause than that he had been permitted to hold too many public offices. The person did not complain of neglect or wrong action in any of these offices, only just asked the people why they let him have so many of the "public plumbs." It is easier to fill an office after its work has been all mapped out so it followed that some of the offices were lost to Amos. But no blame seems to have been attached to him and nothing but friendly feeling seems to have been given to Amos Williams.

Madie Woodbury

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The following article is what Professor Pease of the University of Illinois said was called a "broad-side." It was never found out who wrote it.

## THE BROAD-SIDE

### A FEW HINTS TO THE CITIZENS OF VERMILION COUNTY. Dedicated To

AMOS WILLIAMS, Esq., Post Master,  
AMOS WILLIAMS, Esq., Clerk of the Circuit Court,  
AMOS WILLIAMS, Esq., Clerk of the County Commissioners' Court,  
AMOS WILLIAMS, Esq., County Recorder,  
AMOS WILLIAMS, Esq., Register of Saline Lands,  
AMOS WILLIAMS, Esq., Master in Chancery,  
AMOS WILLIAMS, Esq., Notary Public,

The following essay, being exclusively upon official matters, I can conceive of no characters to whom I can more appropriately dedicate it, than to those enjoying the honors and emoluments of office.

I have, therefore, (being a Jackson man,) taken the responsibility to dedicate it to the officers of Vermilion County, as before named in their several respective official capacities; they being seven eminent political patrons of high places.

I am a man somewhat advanced in years. My passport bears date in the eighteenth century--in days when this country was very thinly inhabited, and at a time when it was no ways difficult to make a selection of names to an extent sufficient to accommodate the wants of this then thinly inhabited continent; so that each and every individual could be readily identified. It is true that it sometimes became necessary in order to make the distinction between father and son, to attach the Sen. and Jun. but never, never, did it so happen in my recollection, that the inhabitants of even a neighborhood, much less of an entire county, bore the same name, as is apparently the fact in Vermilion,--else why does it so happen that gentlemen of the same name, to wit: Amos Williamses, exclusively enjoy the honors and emoluments of her offices?

It may be possible that the Williamses of

Vermilion, are a numerous, wealthy, aristocratic and whigabus family, and have had the advantages of a classical education, and that the balance of her citizens are Jackson men, who cannot write and spell well; consequently, none others capable: if so, what a fortunate circumstance for the benighted inhabitants of Vermilion, that she enjoys the services of so useful a family, as the Williamses, who not only can read the LAW, but have the exclusive authority of administering it. What great and lasting obligations ought the citizens of Vermilion to feel themselves under to this numerous and useful family of Esq. Williams.

I tremble at the result when reflecting upon the deplorable condition in which they (the citizens) would be placed, in case come hereditary disease should disenable this family from the performance of the duties of their respective offices. We could get no more papers, consequently "all the head men of Boston might be dead, and we never should know it." The Courts of Justice would be closed, murder, rapine and treason ensue; old maids and bachelors go about the streets, moaning for license, etc., etc. O my God!-----what a thought, every avenue of intelligence, order, happiness and convenience would be forever closed. "No balm in Gilead, no physician there."--The plebian would no more be presented with the right hand, as a token of brotherly love and friendship. All courtesy, all information, all order, all LAW would cease to be. Oh Vermilion! I weep for thee, in anticipation of thy dreadful doom; should the silver cord be loosed, the golden bowl be broken at the fountain, the wheel broken at the cistern. But may Him who rules over and governs the destinies of nations, ward and defend us from this dreadful catastrophe. Rather lightning and tempest, plague, pestilence and famine, battle and murder, sudden death, sedition, privy conspiracy and rebellion, false doctrine, heresy and schism be upon us."

But let us pray in their behalf for a guardian angel's protection; so that this fair domain may not become a wild waste; dreary and desolate, so that anarchy and confusion may not ensue, for lack of competent authority and administration of the LAW.

Since the commencement of this article, I have been advised that this family of the Williamses, migrated to this county previous to its organization, for the express and definite purpose of administering LAW and justice within its borders; and have maintained that exclusive right and privilege from time immemorial, to the present day; perhaps under the right of pre-emption to Squatters. It may be all right,--we will read the LAW. Blue laws of Vermilion, Chapter 1st, Section last--"I, Amos, am Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the ending." We surrender the point, and acknowledge the corn.

"Wha'll be King but Charlie?"  
Seven persons and one King; have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

Now, seeing that the government is irrevocable established by the LAW. We have nothing to do but render peaceable submission, like true and lawful vassals, and set ourselves diligently to work, in order to be enabled to pay tribute to our rightful Lords. To ascertain the extent of industry necessary to be made use of, we must make a computation of the expenses of government, which is done by adding together the annual salary of each officer of the cabinet, as follows:

Amos Williams, Esq. Post Master,	\$1,000
Amos Williams, Esq. Clerk of Circuit Court,	900
Amos Williams, Esq. Clerk of Co. Com.Court,	800
Amos Williams, Esq. County Recorder,	1,000
Amos Williams, Esq. Register of Saline Lands,	100
Amos Williams, Esq. Master in Chancery,	100
Amos Williams, Esq. Notary Public,	<u>100</u>
	\$4,000

Here we find the result, amounting to the round sum of Four Thousand Dollars; which must be paid in Benton Mint Drops, or their equivalent, and no grumbling at that, for if we have the cheek to complain of excessive charges, we can commute on no other terms, only to lend a listening ear to the reading of a chapter of the LAW.

Four thousand dollars, loaned out at 12 per cent interest, in sums of one hundred dollars, and real estate pledged in mortgage as security, amounts, including writing and recording said



mortgage deed, to the sum of \$4,560, a very comfortable income for one family, composed of only seven members.

Besides there are many perquisites contingent to all these offices, especially in the Post Office department. The most prominent one, after that of the franking privilege, is this; all Democratic papers, condemned by the Post Master as being unworthy of public inspection, and in his view entitled to the following subscription, "not taken out--don't send any more," became the private property of the Post Master, which he can make use of, and save his cobs to smoke bacon. This is not all,--there is a political capital, of an immense amount, invested in the hands of this cabinet, which is traded upon to a great profit, so that the firm of Whigabuses, are enabled to make an annual dividend of 104 per cent which all we boys of Vermilion know "are not high."

Those who are not so intimately acquainted with the financial condition of this Government, as myself, may be ready to make this inquiry, to wit; whether the expenses of Court does not require a considerable part of the salaries of its members for its maintainance. My reply to this inquiry is, that their retinue is small, and that none of them dress in livery, and that the foreign ministers, diplomated to this court, negotiate in a public office, somewhat remote from the palace, so that the Court is at but little expense on this score--and levees are not being countenanced in this youthful stage of the government, its expenses are very limited.

The family of the Court possesses an extensive domain, which is tenanted out, and furnishes every article of family consumption; so that not a single dollar is required for the maintainance of Court.

So you see, fellow citizens of Vermilion, that all this large amount of yours the people's money, paid for the salaries of your county officers, that not one single dollar of it returns back into your pockets. I have often times thought it passing strange, that the sovereigns of this county, closed their eyes in such a deathless sleep, on this impolitic defect in

their Government.

There are a numerous quantity of worthy citizens upon whom Providence has not so bounteously lavished her riches as she has done upon the several Williamses, and who possess talents adequate to perform the duties of all their offices; and in case they were given to seven different individuals, who were not rolling in wealth, the receipts of their offices would be required for the maintainance of their families; consequently every dollar of it would return back into the pockets of the citizens, from whence it came, which would be a great relief to this burdensome tax.

In addition to the foregoing objections urged against the principle of investing all the public offices of the county in the hands of one family,--there is another, which, in my view, is a very serious one, and is this; should the said family determine on emigrating to Texas or elsewhere, and as it is not an uncommon circumstance for every branch of a family to emigrate together, and which undoubtedly would be the fact in this instance, as this family apparently are very closely united by the bands of union; then all our County offices would be vacated at one and the same time, which would occasion an utter derangement in our judicial affairs, as would require considerable length of time to systematize them again, and it is not to be expected that seven pillars could be at one and the same time raised from the quarry; considering the rude and imperfect state of nature in which they would be found.

But in case the offices were to be distributed to seven different and distinct families, entirely disunited both in pecuniary and fraternal interest, the above circumstance would not naturally occur,--consequently not more than one vacancy would occur by death or emigration at a time, which would cause but a trifling inconvenience to the public weal, for there would be those still remaining in public office who would be as ready to give, as the new occupant would be to receive instructions.

Fellow Citizens!--If in the foregoing you see no GHOST, I will raise one in my next com-

munication. I now subscribe myself,

Your faithful advocate,

EXPOSITOR

Danville, Vermilion Co, Ill., May 10, 1840

N.B. When the "Grinding is law" and Dr. Risley goes south "to save souls" he can obtain a copy of this.

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We found a "Benton mint drop" among our brother A. G. Woodbury's old coins. On the obverse side was a man's head, on the reverse side, the words, "Bentonian Current Mint Drop", 1837. Senator Benton of Missouri may have used this coin as we now use campaign buttons.

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#### DIED

At his late residence in Danville, Ill, Amos Williams, Esq. on the morning of Nov. 14th 1857, in the 62nd year of his age.

He was born on the 15th of June, 1797, in Franklin county, Pennsylvania. In early manhood he made this, the State of his adoption. He first settled in Edgar county, and from a school teacher, became by election, Clerk of that county. This office he filled until Vermilion county was set off, when he became one of its first settlers in 1826. He first located at Butler's Point, where the first Circuit court was held in this county. He assisted in surveying the county and in laying off the County Seat, and built the first house in it where he has ever since resided.

He was elected County Clerk, Clerk of the Commissioners Court, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Judge of Probate, County Recorder, Register of Saline Lands, Master in Chancery, and was also appointed Postmaster and Notary Public. All these offices he held uninterruptedly from the organization of this County till 1843, and some of them till 1849, a period of 23 years. As a County officer he was remarkably faithful and

attentive to his business, scrupulously and exact and correct in his transactions, kind and obliging to all who sought instruction,--Hence he was deservedly and universally popular among the people, and for many years it was the prevailing opinion that no one was qualified to do county business well but Amos Williams.

No charge was ever brought against him for either the want of competency or fidelity in the discharge of any of the duties of his offices.

The best reason urged why they should be taken from him and conferred on others was, that such honors and profits should not be enjoyed by any one so long. No defalcation, mal-administration, or neglect of duty were ever plead.

The influence of his correct business habits will be felt in this, and other counties long after he is forgotten.

Mr. Williams thoroughly trained in his offices six or more young men to the very best business habits; every one of whom obtained important offices in other counties, and all of them who are still living are yet occupying important posts. And so much did they resemble him in penmanship and business, that if any were to examine the Records of some counties in this and the adjoining States, they would verily suppose that it was the work of the old clerk of Vermilion county.

As a Christian he was uniform and consistent, and many a widow can testify of his active charity. For almost a score of years he was a devoted member of the Methodist Episcopal church.

As a neighbor he was kind and obliging. As a parent, tender and indulgent.

His example and influence were always good, his advice and counsel salutary--comparatively safe and happy are those who follow them.

Amos Williams was especially anxious for the education of the masses. He built and owned the only school house that was in Danville for a great many years. It was used as a place of pub-

lic worship by all denominations, and also for public speaking, lyceums, and all entertainments of an instructive or educational character, and we are not aware that he ever received a dollar for the use of it. He assisted largely in building our churches, Seminaries and the G. W. R. R., now the G. W. and W. R.

After losing his offices and the excellent companion of his riper years, he engaged in other pursuits for which he was neither by nature or education so well qualified. These were often sources of much trouble and vexation to him and disturbed the equanimity of his naturally peaceful mind.

His last long and lingering illness he endured with great patience, but it was very evident that for years his mind sympathised and pined away gradually with his body, viewing the time of future as near at hand, he hailed his death and died in hope of a glorious future. His eventful life closed November 14, 1857, and he died loved, lamented, and honored beyond the ordinary measure allotted to human beings.

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Taken from the Vermilion County Republican. G. Price Smith was the editor. November 14, 1857.

This shows how much Amos Williams was loved and respected by his fellow citizens.

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The following is the obituary of Amos Williams' wife's sister.

Mrs. Charlotte F. Risley died March 31, 1872, in Lebanon, Ills., in the sixty-third year of her age. Mrs. Charlotte F. Risley wife of the Rev. A. L. Risley, superannuate of the Southern Illinois Conference.

Such is the brief record of one who, for nearly forty years, was the faithful companion of a minister of the Methodist Church, going cheerfully with him through all the vicissitudes of an itinerant life, and bearing all its hardships with unflinching patience. Her parents, Smith and Elizabeth Shaw, removed from the South early in the present century to St. Charles, Mo., where,

on the 22nd of November, 1809, she was born. They finally settled in Paris, Ills., where her aged mother still resides, and from whence, nearly thirty-five years ago, her father, whose memory is blessed went up to join the redeemed. In that place, on the 1st of January, 1833, she was married to Rev. A. L. Risley, then of the Ills. Conference, with whom she lived in very happy union, and commenced the life of active usefulness in the Church, which terminated only in her death. In personal appearance she was unusually attractive; and her fine, well balanced mind, her clear, calm judgment, her charity, her hospitality, her ever-ready sympathy, her sweet unruffled temper, gained for her everywhere friends whose affectionate remembrance, while life shall last, will cling to her. With the young she was particularly a favorite; time had not touched the youthful tenderness and sympathy of her nature nor dimmed its bright vivacity, and young hearts instinctively turned to her with confidence and affection. Her charities were like herself, modest and unostentatious; but the poor and afflicted always found a friend in her, and the needy never were turned away empty from her door. An affectionate, devoted wife, wise in counsel, prompt to act, "the heart of her husband safely trusted in her;" a loving, tender, mother, she made home the dearest spot on earth to her children by her unselfish goodness and love, and their mother the embodiment to them of all that was pure and good. Heaven has another meaning, now that she is there. She was a faithful, consistent Christian, and of her labors abundant for Christ and the Church everywhere: her record is on high. Deeply religious from early childhood, the work of grace in her but deepened and widened with time, till at last her peace flowed like a river, and merged calmly and triumphantly into the infinite ocean of eternal rest. Her last illness was of short duration, but she awaited death with cheerful composure; her work was done, her loved ones in the hands of God, and with "Jesus loves me," on her lips, she entered into the joy of her Lord. Her bereaved husband and children, several of whom survive her, mourn a loss irreparable in this world, but they are comforted that "blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

This is a copy of a newspaper clipping from an old scrap book of our mothers'. How different from the funeral notices of today.

In the old days funeral announcements were not left to news papers as they are now for papers did not circulate fast enough. Cards were written or printed and delivered to friends by private messengers. Following are three, those of Amos Williams, and two of his daughters.

#### FUNERAL INVITATION

You are respectfully invited to attend the funeral of Mrs. Charlotte E. Faris, consort of Dr. J. H. Faris, from the residence of her husband, This Afternoon at 4 o'clock.

Funeral services at the M. E. Church.  
Danville, May 12st, 1856

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#### FUNERAL NOTICE

Yourselves and Family are respectfully solicited to attend the funeral of  
AMOS WILLIAMS, ESQ.,  
from his late residence, on Monday, at 2 o'clock, P. M.

Danville, Nov. 16, 1857

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#### FUNERAL NOTICE

Sept. 13th, 1867

Died, on the 11th instant,  
Mrs. Mary J. Baldwin.

Funeral services at the Methodist Church, at 1½ o'clock, P. M., thence her burial at Spring Hill cemetery.

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Danville April 4/58  
Mariah Williams and Co:  
To J. D. Kilpatrick Dr. For 300 funeral tickets. \$3.00

Recd. payment  
J. D. Kilpatrick

## The History of Dan W. Beckwith

Dan W. Beckwith was born in 1795 in the present Bedford county, Pennsylvania. His father was among those settling in the Wyoming valley and his mother was a survivor of the Wyoming massacre. Dan was one of a family of four brothers and two sisters. Three of his brothers lived in Vermilion county at an early date. Jefferson H., called Hiram; Norton, the doctor; Sebastian and George M. George and Dan left New York and reached Fort Harrison (Harrison Purchase) in the summer of 1816. In 1818 the two brothers were living with Johnathan May's family at the time Illinois was admitted into the Union. From there they went to the salt works in Illinois. George was a citizen of the county until 1834, when he moved to a farm on the Kankakee a mile below the mouth of Rock Creek.

Dan W. died at Danville in December, 1835. He is described as being a man fully six feet two inches in height, broad square shoulders and muscular, weighing about one hundred and ninety pounds. He was an expert axeman and a pioneer. His first mercantile venture was an armful of goods suitable for Indian barter which he kept in a place excavated in the side of a hill at Denmark, as early as the year 1821. He built a log hut on the brow of the hill, a little southwest of the Danville Red Seminary. His next store was just west of the elm tree at the west end of Main street. Dan W. was county surveyor from the time of the organization of the county until his death.

Dan Beckwith had a little log cabin on the bluff of the Vermilion, near the present highway bridge, or rather on the edge of the hill east of the highway. Here he kept store, in addition to his official duties as constable and county surveyor. The store contained a small assortment of such articles as were suitable for barter with the Indians, who were the principal customers. We called it, "The Saddle-bags Store", because the supplies were brought up from Terre Haute in saddle-bags, that indispensable accompaniment of every rider in those days, before highways were provided for the use of vehicles.



Dan Beckwith was also major of the Vermilion County militia and was elected captain in the Black Hawk War.

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Taken from the "History of Vermilion County," by H. W. Beckwith.

Dan Beckwith's sword is in the D. A. R. room at the public library.

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Letter written to Charles M. Woodbury from G. W. Palmer, of Bremerton, Washington in 1930.

"As I am one of the very few, possibly half-dozen, who can go back eighty years in their knowledge of Danville, I want to add my mite to your records. I took my first breakfast Monday, March 23, 1846, on the site now occupied by the Yellow Taxi Cab Company, 219 West Main Street.

Ralph McCormack was an early settler in the same month, just one block east. My special reason, or urge, for writing this is a mistake or what I think is a mistake, I find running through the published history. The statement was made several times that Dan Beckwith lived in a dug-out on the hill overlooking Denmark. Now that may be true. John Purser, now living in Everett, Washington, remembers seeing the remains of a cabin in that location, but he has no history of it.

But the real home of Mr. Beckwith was on the hill directly north of the west end of the present golf ground (now Harrison Park), that is, across the creek.

Amos Williams built a saw mill on the stream there, with log and brush dam. This had been some years before I saw it. My father went to Oregon, with his first family of children, in 1851. He came back in January, 1853, and in March we moved into the farm where John Tincher's home is now. Sometime that summer I went with father to the mill after lumber. The north end of the dam had been washed out and Mr. Williams had several men at work repairing it. That is my clearest recollection of Mr. Williams, although I

probably saw him many times afterward.

My father pointed out to me the spot on the hill where Dan Beckwith's home was. In after years when I was old enough to roam the woods alone, I looked for any signs of the cabin. The excavation was about half filled by the wash from the higher ground, but there were two logs at a front corner in position, badly decayed but still holding their shape, so that I could see the exact location. The storms of seventy years have most likely obliterated every sign of a habitation by this time.

Now as my father went into that neighborhood nearly as early as Mr. Beckwith, and they were the best of friends, living less than a mile apart, I feel confident my knowledge is correct. I would like at this time to tell of the oldest record in the county although I am sorry to say, I have no proof whatever to corroborate my statements.

In about 1857 or 1858, I with another boy while wandering with guns and a dog found an old beach tree on the hillside west of the golf ground, half way up the hill, with this inscription carved on it, "S. David, 1804". The carving was so well done that there could be no mistake in the reading. Several years afterward in conversation with an old man that when a boy lived near Lafayette, Indiana, I mentioned seeing this carving. He said he knew in his boyhood days an old trapper by the name of Samuil David in Tippecanoe County, Indiana.

After talking with him I went to look for the tree. I found only a little line of rotted wood. Time and the storms had blotted out the record and it only remains in the memory of the little boy who saw it seventy years ago."

---

Nov. 25, 1899

Did Dan Beckwith die in 1835?

I do not know. I think perhaps as early as that he made the journey to Washington, D. C. and received the commission of County Surveyor of Vermilion County. On his return he contracted a cold, this was followed by pneumonia, and this

carried him off in a few days. He was in the prime of his life. He was one of Nature's noble men, and his early death was much regretted, and by none more than Amos Williams to whom he had been as a brother and staunch friend. He left his young wife, Mary, and two children, Melissa, four years, and Hiram, two. Another was born about four months later. They named her Charlotte. She only lived a year or two.

The way the Beckwiths came to be in this part of the country may have been from the fact that George Beckwith married Charlotte, daughter of Jesse Gilbert, and Dan followed and located in what was afterwards Danville.

Was Dan Beckwith born before Amos Williams? I do not know his age. I think he was younger than Amos Williams. Did Amos Williams sister come from Pennsylvania before Maria, his daughter was born? No. When she was seven weeks old Amos Williams made the trip to Pennsylvania in a two horse covered wagon, accompanied by one Evans, a cousin of the Shelby's of Indiana. The Shelbys were also cousins to Amos Williams. This overland trip lasted nearly eight weeks. In the meantime, Martha Williams, nee Shaw, visited in Paris Ill., taking with her her infant daughter, Maria. On the return from Pennsylvania, Amos W. brought his widowed mother and sister Mary W., then a girl of sixteen. They remained with the family, and became part of the household of Amos and Martha Williams in June of 1827.

Mary W. afterwards became the wife of Dan Beckwith, Sarah Williams, widow--died a few years later, at the home of Amos Williams.

Dan met Amos and either surveyed with him or for him, he became a member of our family, in this way met and married Mary W. Their first child, Melissa, was two or three years younger than Maria W. and as brother Frank came next to me, it seems as though H. B. must have been older than Smith Williams, if Dan died in 1835 and I have the ages of children any wheres near right. I should think you could approximate pretty nearly.

I believe that auction sale of lots was mis-

represented as to time and place, as old Hezekiah Cunningham and Uncle Jesse Gilbert both told me the first sale of lots took place somewhere on Main or near the Square, about where Charley Palmer's bank now stands, and that while the sale was going on someone came up to place of sale and told the Auctioneer that the rattle snakes were biting the horses heels that were tied in Uncle Amos's pasture west of house. They adjourned and went down and killed the snakes, which no doubt, had crawled up hill from that old den below the house near Vermilion River. They then went back and resumed the sale. I think this is sale referred to by Hiram Beckwith. I have not seen his book, but this is the best history I can give you of those times.

We have an old bible somewhere with the date of Grandma Williams death. She was still living, I think, when Smith Williams was born. Will try and look it up.

Mrs. M. L. Woodbury

I found the bible and here is what it says,  
"Sarah Williams departed this life Monday evening, the seventh day of February, 1831, age fifty-five years, seven months and eighteen days. Mrs. Williams lived in Danville from 1827 to 1831.

---

### A Boy and A Girl

Dan Beckwith and Mary Williams' boy was named Hiram and was called "Hi".

Amos Williams and Martha Ann Shaw's girl was named Maria and was called "Nier" or "Ni".

So there you are Cousin "Hi" and Cousin "Ni".

---

### Five Prospective Sites for Danville

1. The Salt Works--five miles west of Danville.
2. Catlin or Butler's Point--eight miles southwest  
west of Danville.
3. Denmark Hill--where the lake is now.
4. Myres Mill--one mile east of Moores Corner.
5. Piankeshaw village--where Redden Square is now.

## The Salt Works

Less than a month after the treaty at Fort Harrison, August, 1819, the Vermilion River was explored. It appears from an affidavit made to Joseph Barron, who for many years was General Harrison's interpreter, and claimed to own the lands watered by the Wabash and the streams flowing into it, that he was at the "Vermilion Salines" as early as the year 1801. He also states that he was at the same salt spring situated on the Big Vermilion River on the north side, about one and a half miles above the old "Kickapoo town", and about fifteen or eighteen miles from the Big Wabash River in Clark County Illinois on September 22, 1819. With him was Lambert Bona, Zachariah Cicott (as we know the name, or Shecott, as spelled by the justice of the peace who wrote and verified the affidavits to which Bona, Cicott and Barron had sworn before him on December 8, 1819), and Truman Blackman together with four Shawnee Indians whom Barron had hired to go with him and show him minerals, salt springs, etc.

The legislature previously passed a law to encourage the discovery and development of saline water by the terms of which any person making such discoveries should have the exclusive right to manufacture salt within a given area. Conflicting claims arose directly as to the right of several parties, and it was several years before they were finally adjusted. The letters and affidavits sent to Governor Bond from the contestants afford reliable dates and other interesting matter relating to the first settlement of the county.

Captain Blackman set two or three men to work with spades and by digging two or three feet into the saturated soil saline water was procured. This was boiled down, two gallons of water yielded about four ounces of salt. All the men excepting Beckwith and Whitcomb returned to Fort Harrison and procured provisions for future operations. The latter part of November Treat returned with his wife and children. A cabin was erected and the Treat family took immediate possession. In this way and at this place began the first permanent settlement within the present limits of Vermilion County. During this time several wells were sunk sometimes to a depth of fifty feet. The salt was excellent in quality, purity and strength,

and great expectations were raised as to the benefit that would accrue to the people of the Wabash Valley. It was not until 1824 that salt was manufactured on a scale equal to the demands for it. In the spring of 1824 John W. Vance obtained possession of the salines. Vance brought twenty-four large iron kettles from Louisville in a bateau, down the Ohio up the Wabash and Vermilion to the mouth of Stony Creek, about four miles southeast of Danville, and hauled by oxens and wagons over trails--not roads.

Soon the number of kettles was increased to eighty holding one hundred and forty gallons each. One hundred gallons of brine was required to make a bushel of salt, and from sixty to eighty bushels a week was a good run. The salt sold readily at the works for from one dollar and twenty-five cents to one dollar and a half per bushel. A great deal was taken away in wagons and in sacks on horseback.

Taken from the "History of Vermilion County", by H. W. Beckwith.

Another queer thing about this salt works was that they kept the men busy cutting down the forest trees for fuel for the furnaces and only a few feet away, at Mission-Field, near Possum Trot, now the Polly-Wogg Club, was an untold quantity of coal which they did not know could be burned. Coal was first discovered in Ottawa, Illinois in 1813. Coal was first sold in Pennsylvania for twenty-one dollars a ton.

If you have not seen the salt kettle in the D. A. R. Museum in the library you cannot realize what a task it was to haul one kettle--let alone eighty.

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### Locating the County Seat

"John Boyd and Joel Phelps, of Crawford, and Samuel Prevo, of Clark county, were appointed commissioners to meet at the house of James Butler, on the second Monday of March, then next; and, after taking oath for a faithful discharge of their trust, to examine for, and determine on, a place for the permanent seat of justice of the county,

taking into consideration the convenience of the people, the situation of the settlements, with an eye to the future population and eligibility of the place." The act required that "the owners of the land selected as a county seat should donate and convey the same to the county in a quantity not less than twenty acres in a square form and not more than twice as wide, to be laid off in lots and to be sold by the county commissioners for the purpose of erecting public buildings. In case of a refusal of the owner to donate the required ground, the commissioners were required to locate the county seat on the lands of some other person who would make the donation contemplated by the act."

An examination of the old private laws shows that it was a general custom of those days for the Legislature to require a donation of lands as a condition for the location of county seats, believing that the people of the new county should share the profits of the lucky land-owner.

The act further provided that, in the event of the county seat was located within the bounds of the Saline reservation on the Big Vermilion River--the Saline lands, by act of congress, had become the property of the state--the county commissioners should,--as soon as practicable, purchase of the state the quarter or half section designated for the use of the county. And the act further provided, section 3, that "all courts should be held at the house of James Butler until public buildings were erected for the purpose, unless changed to another place by order of the county commissioners."

Boyd and his associates, after a casual examination of the country, made their report, by which they located the county seat some six miles west of Danville and back a distance from the south side of the Salt Fork. A more unfavorable place could hardly have been selected; the surface was cold, flat, clay ground. It is doubtful if ordinary wells could have been secured, to say nothing of cellars or drainage which are indispensable for the convenience and health of a town. It would have been impossible ever to have attracted enterprising men to such a spot; and if the county seat had been established there, it never would have grown to the dignity of a city,



or even attained the respectability of the average modern town.

Fortunately for the future welfare of the county, Vance, the lessee, refused to yield his rights. The citizens generally were very much dissatisfied with the site selected, and sent up a remonstrance coupled with a prayer for the removal of the county seat to a more desirable location, and for relief generally. Accordingly, on the 26th day of December, 1826 (private laws of Illinois, 1826-7, page 2,) the general assembly passed an act, which recites in the preamble: "Whereas, the seat of justice of Vermilion county has been located by the commissioners appointed at the last session on land which was then and still is leased by the governor for a term of years to certain persons for the manufacture of salt; and whereas, the said lessees are unwilling to surrender the same, or any part, for the use of the county, in consequence of which no improvements can be made thereon; and the citizens having petitioned for its removal, and for remedy whereof," "therefore," it was enacted, "that William Morgan, Zachariah Peter and John Kirkpatrick, of Sangamon county, be declared commissioners to explore the county and designate the place, which, on being located, should forever remain the permanent seat of justice of Vermilion county." The same section further provided, that in case the new commissioners "should locate the county seat within the Saline reservation, the state would relinquish its title to a half quarter section, or fractional section, on the Vermilion River, not exceeding eighty acres, in the reservation, upon which the county seat might be located, for the use of the county, on condition that congress would confirm the same to the county." On the 31st of January, 1827, the new commissioners reported to the county commissioners "that, in their opinion, the lands donated by Guy W. Smith and Dan W. Beckwith, near the mouth of the North Fork of the Vermilion River, was the most suitable place in the county for such county seat."

A most fortunate choice it was. A better site could not have been selected. In the whole state there is not a spot of ground where Nature herself has combined so many advantages of drainage, surface soil, water, coal, timber, stone, gravel and all else that is required for the successful growth of an inland city; and the act of the commissioners in establishing the county seat here has largely contributed to the growth and development of the entire county.

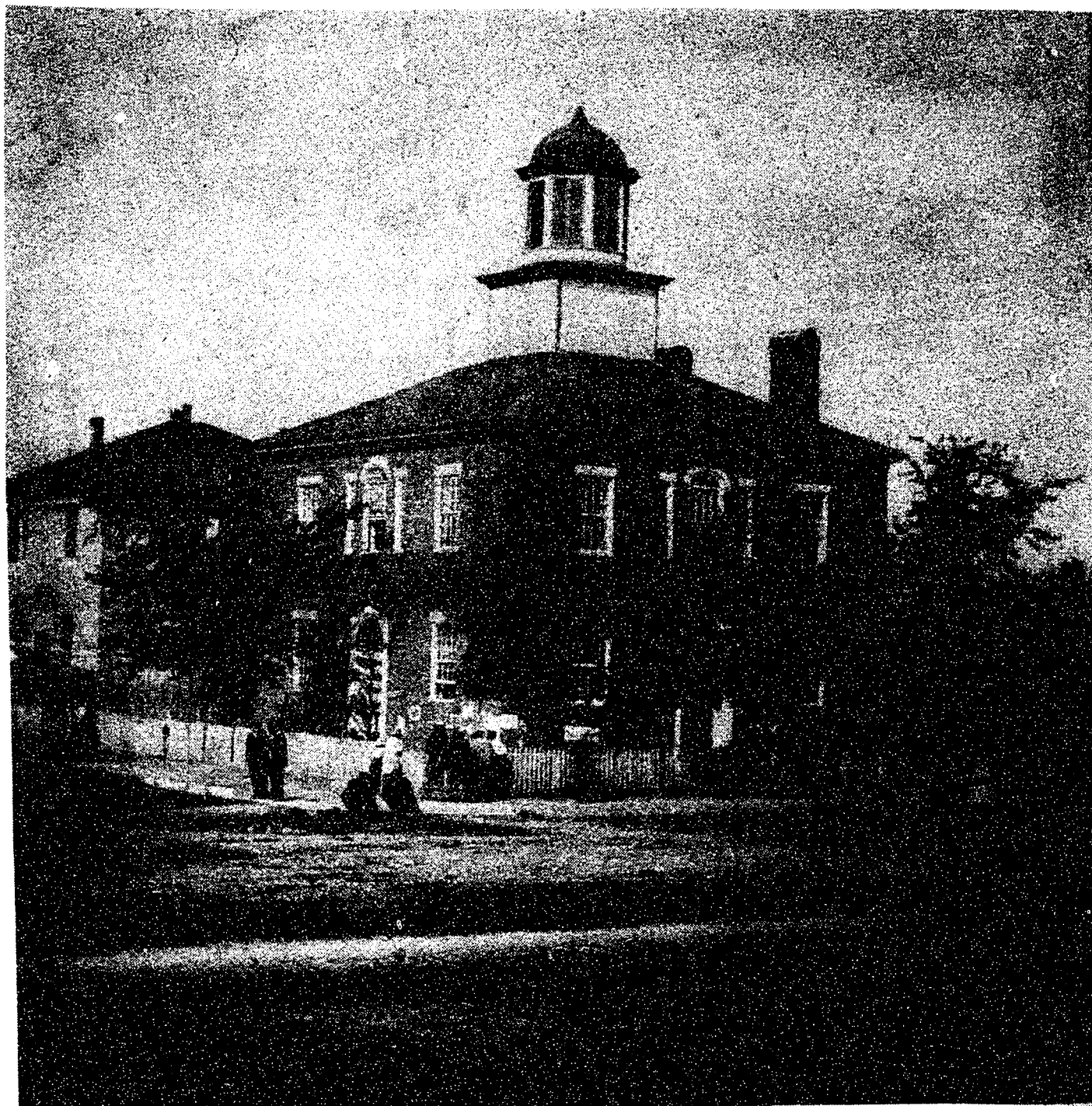
## Piankeshaw Village

The thought of making a town at Danville was not original with Messrs. Morgan, Peter, and Kirkpatrick. The chiefs of the "Miami-Piankeshaw" Indians had selected it as the place of one of their villages about one hundred years before, giving it the name of Piankeshaw. It is almost certain that the old village of Piankeshaw, referred to in French documents as far back as 1719, and in the accounts of English and early American writers was strung along the North Fork from the northwestern city limits to Main street, thence along the Vermilion River as far as the extreme eastern part of Danville, and extending back in an irregular line a half mile or more, from the bluffs of the two streams. We will summarize a description of the locality at the time it was determined to establish the county seat here. Just fancy all the houses in and around Danville taken away; all the fences, gardens, and lawns; remove the streets and walks and all other signs of civilization; restore the trees to the surrounding forest, and look upon the landscape as it appeared to Guerdon S. Hubbard (to whom a great deal of the success of Danville is indebted) in 1819, to Harvey Luddington and Jacob Swisher in 1821, or to Alvin Gilbert, Hezekiah Cunningham, the Leneve Brothers, John H. Murphy, Leander Rutledge, Amos Williams, Dan Beckwith, or William Bandy a few years later and before the white settlers had made many of their marks upon it. You see a line of stalwart oaks upon the river bluffs, and others like solitary sentinels, scattered at wide intervals over an open plain. West of Stony Creek, and extending from east Danville, northwest in the direction of the woolen factory or Madison Square on Logan Avenue, are patches of hazel and jack oak, both of recent growth. In the vicinity of the high school extending north and west is a broad meadow set in with blue grass with old corn-hills visible over many acres of it. Under the hill and in the other bottom extending from the mouth of the North Fork and Vermilion, at a convenient distance from some of the numerous springs that bubble out of the hillsides, are scattered wigwams formed of bark, or the naked lodge poles of other huts. These are only the temporary abode of roving bands of Kickapoos or Pottawatomies while on their hunting rounds. East of Vermilion street is seemingly, a prairie, with a few stunted bushes that grow for



In this picture is shown the corner of the square where the Woolworth building now stands. Looking up Vermilion street you may see the First M. E. Church spire. The two story building on east side of the street was and is now the property of Bandy family. Notice the horses feeding from the back of the wagons.

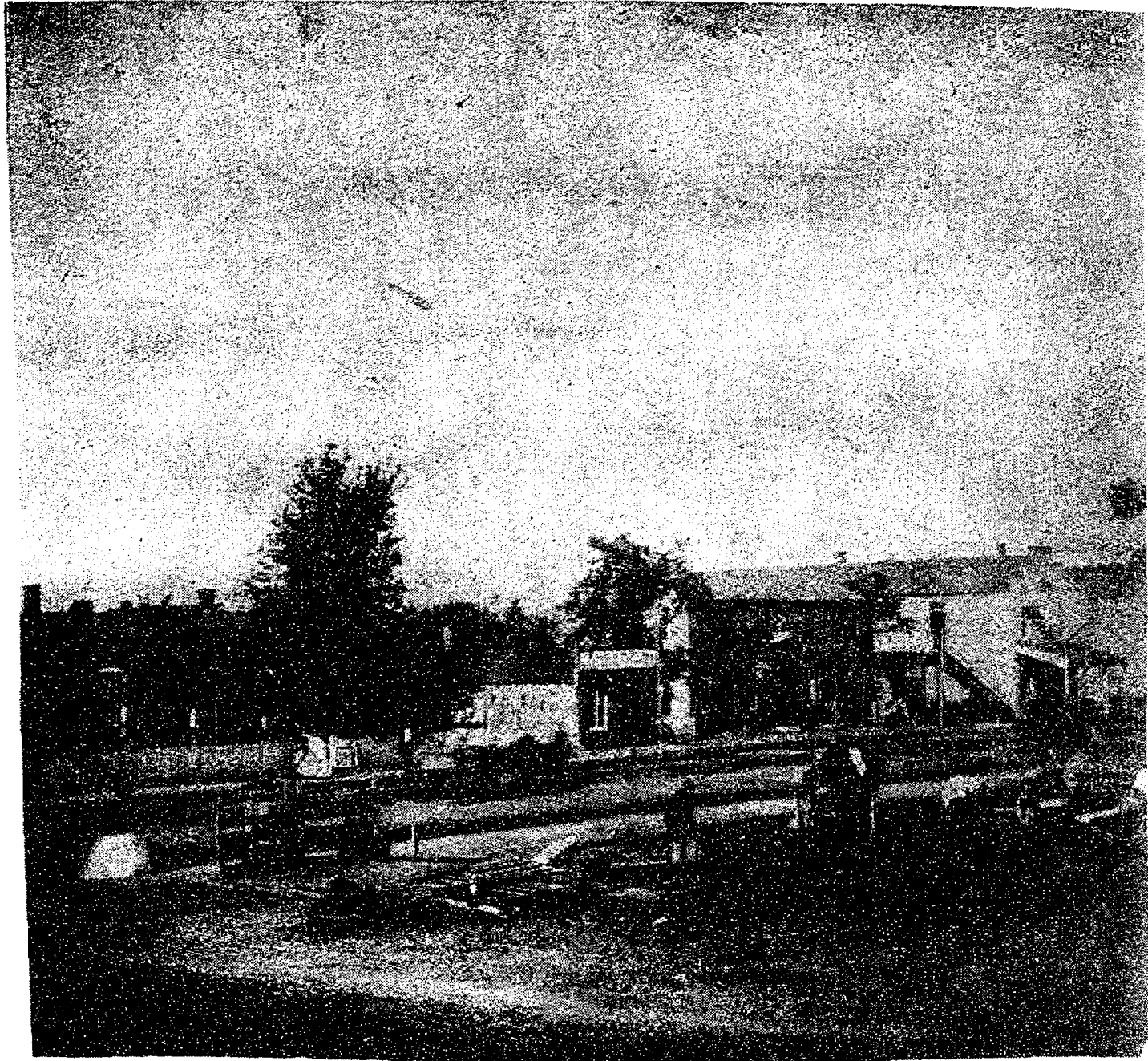




This picture shows the northeast corner of the square and the second court house with jail in the rear. There is a white picket fence around the court house grounds.







This picture shows us East Main street.  
One of these houses was Captain Frazier's home.





Vermilion County Jan<sup>y</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> 1826

Messrs Morgan, Kirkpatrick, & Peters, Gentlemen  
appointed to locate the permanent seat of Justice  
of Vermilion County have performed said ser-  
vice and are about to return to their several homes

Therefore we the undersigned taking into considera-  
-tion the inconvenience of their coming again or  
sending here to get pay for their services have  
agreed to pay the several sums set against our  
Names respectfully for the purpose of paying said  
Commissions for their services ~~on~~ Condition  
that it shall be paid to us again as soon as it  
can be obtained from the County Treasurer

Signers Names	Debt	cont	Settled	Debt	cont
J. A. Beckwith Paid	3	00	Settled Dec. 6, 1828	3	00
William Reed Paid	3	00	Settled Sept 16, 1827	3	40
William Bowler	4	50	Settled Dec 12, 1827	1	69 1/2
John Spencer Paid	1	50	Settled Oct 29, 1827	1	69 1/2
John Light Paid	1	00	Settled Sept. 6, 1827	1	13
Philip Stanford	00	50	Settled Sept Dec. 6, 1827		50
John Lane	1	00	Settled Oct 29, 1827	1	13
Robert Trickell	40	50	Settled Oct 29, 1827		50 1/2
	12	00			



a single season, only to be burned to the ground by the autumnal fires. The Piankeshaws are gone--swept away by their powerful neighbors, the Pottawatomies and Kickapoos.

Dan Beckwith and Guy Smith having entered into bond to execute a deed to the county for the lands, severally agreed by them to be donated in the event of their being selected as the place for the county seat, on the receipt of the report of the locating commissioners, consisting of Asa Elliott, Achilles Morgan, and James McClewer, ordered the lands to be laid off into town lots, and appointed the 10th day of April, 1827, as the day when the lots would be offered at public sale. Notice of the sale was published in the Illinois Intelligencer, issued at Vandalia, the state capital, and also at Indianapolis, Indiana; these were the nearest newspapers. The town was laid out by the county, through its commissioners. Dan W. Beckwith, the county surveyor, was employed by the commissioners to run out one hundred lots. The day of the sale having come around, a large number of the people were collected; bidding was lively, Harvey Luddington acting as auctioneer. Forty-two lots were sold from which the county received nine hundred and twenty two dollars and eighty-seven cents. The average price was about twenty-two dollars per lot, a small price when compared with their present value, as most of the lots sold were on Main and Vermilion streets, in the vicinity of Redden Square. It will be observed that Danville was not created as a private enterprise. It is the bantling of the county, whose people, in their corporate capacity, are responsible for its good fame and proper behavior. The commissioners who laid it out named it after the man--"Dan" W. Beckwith, who earliest lived here, adding the "ville" to his christian name. His name is often referred to as Daniel or Danel. His name in full was Dan, without any other addition.

The Indians told Col. Guerdon S. Hubbard that the village was sometimes called "the big Piankeshaw town."

Taken from the "History of Vermilion County", by H. W. Beckwith.

Locating the Seat of Justice  
Vermilion County Illinois Jany. 31 1827

Messrs. Morgan, Kirkpatrick, Peters Gentlemen,  
appointed to locate the permanent seat of Justice  
of Vermillion County have performed that service--  
Therefore we the undersigned taking into consider-  
ation the inconvenience of the commissioners ob-  
taining the consideration required for their ser-  
vices we do agree to pay the several sums annexed  
to our names for the purpose of satisfying their  
demands provided they can obtain the sd sums as  
soon as the Treasury may be able to replace the  
same

Subscribers Names

James Butler (paid)	\$3.00	Settled Sept. 18, 1827	
			\$3.40
Seymour Treat (paid)	1.00	Settled May 30, 1828	
			1.00
Asa Elliott (paid)	3.00	Settled Oct. 6, 1827	
			3.40
George M. Beckwith (paid)	3.00	Settled Oct 10 1827	
			3.40
A. Williams	2.00		
Guy W. Smith	6.00	Settled Oct 1829	
			6.78

Wolf Scalp Certificates Paid

William Shaw-----	paid	\$0.75
Samuel Cozard-----	paid	.75
Wells Morgan-----	paid	1.00
James Purcell-----	paid	.75
Henry Drake-----	paid	.75
William Drake-----	paid	.75
Joseph B. Vance-----	paid	.75
John L. Brown-----	paid	.75
Elijah Tyrey-----	paid	.75
John Johnson-----	paid	5.75
Jefferson Morris-----	paid	1.75
Isaac Sandford-----	paid	1.75
Thomas Cary-----	paid	5.75
Abraham Halfhell-----	paid	1.75
John C. Bradley-----	paid	2.75
Morgan Morgan-----	paid	1.75
William Wyatt-----	paid	1.75
Lewman Montague-----	paid	3.75
Elijah Austin Jr.-----	paid	4.75
Absolem Starr-----	paid	11.75
Total		\$50.25

Received of Amos Williams the sum of Twenty five  
cents, being in full for the land tax for the year  
1830 on sixteen acres in the N.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of S.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$   
of section 8, and N.E. of the S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of sec 8 both in  
T. 19 N. R. 11 W. donated by G. M. Smith to the  
County of Vermilion

---

State of Illinois  
Vermilion County, ss. I, Amos Williams, clerk of the County  
Commissioners Court in and for said county do hereby certify that  
proof has this day been made before me by the oath of  
Thomas Freeman that Jonathan Maxwell  
is the owner of a certain stray Horse, of the following description  
to wit: a Sorrel Horse sixteen hands high eight or nine years old left  
hind foot white to the pastern joint, some saddle marks

taken up by Harman Cannaday and posted before Corten  
C. Hunt Esq on the twentieth day of June 1834

These are therefore to direct you to said Harman Cannaday  
to make restitution of said animal, without delay according to law

Given under my hand at Vermilion the thirtieth day of June  
A.D. 1834

Amos Williams, clerk



TAXES IN 1830 ON THE 80 ACRES ON WHICH DANVILLE  
WAS FOUNDED IN 1827

Received of Amos Williams the sum of Seventy and  
a half cents being in full for the Tax on Twenty acres  
of land donated by D. M. Beckwith to Vermilion Coun-  
ty. - Also twenty seven acres conveyed to said Wil-  
liams by said Beckwith said land being in  
the E. W. N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 8, in T. 19 N.  
R. 11 W. And said sum being in full for  
the Tax on said lands for the year 1830

Amos Williams D. C. 1830

Danville, Ill  
Feb. 22, 1831

Received of Amos Williams and Ezekiah Cunningham  
the sum of seven cents and a half being in  
full for five acres in the N. W. N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec-  
tion 8, in T. 19 N. R. 11 W. (conveyed by G. M. Smith  
to the said Williams & Cunningham) in full  
for the year 1830 -

Amos Williams D. C. 1830

Received of Amos Williams the sum of sixty six  
cents, being in full for the land Tax for the year  
1830, on forty-four acres in the N. W. N. E.  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section No. 8, in T. 19 N. R. 11 W. donated  
by G. M. Smith to the county of Vermilion

Amos Williams D. C. 1830





This is the very beginning of Danville. This is where Dan Beckwith gets his pay for surveying the town of Danville, Illinois. The bill is made out to Amos Williams as agent, and signed by himself as Clerk of the county.

State of Illinois) Commissioners Court, Sept. 1827  
Vermilion County )  
To the agent for said County

Sir--Pay D. W. Beckwith the sum of twenty-one dollars and fifty cents, out of any money in your hands not otherwise appropriated for surveying the town of Danville, Ill.

Attest,

A. Williams, Clerk

Recd. the within of A. Williams,  
county agent.  
Dec. 3rd. 1827

D. W. Beckwith

*State of Illinois  
Vermilion County ) Commissioners Court, Sept. Term, 1827  
To the agent for said County  
Sir - Pay D. W. Beckwith the sum of Twenty-one  
Dollars and Fifty cents, out of any money in your hands not  
otherwise appropriated, for surveying the town of Danville, &c  
Attest A. Williams, Clerk*

*D. W. Beckwith  
Order for \$21.50  
Recd the within of  
A. Williams county  
agent  
Dec. 3-1827  
D. W. Beckwith*

This is the very beginning of Danville, Illinois. This is where Dan Beckwith gets his pay for surveying the town of Danville. The bill is made out to Amos Williams as agent and signed by himself as Clerk of the county.

## The Prairies between Danville and Georgetown

The prairie between Danville and Georgetown is flat and level, as those who are familiar with it know, and before it was used as a cattle range, or broken up in farms, the wild grass grew so high over the most of it that it obscured the view of a man when mounted on a horse; and in the fall of the year when the grass would ripen, and take fire by accident or otherwise, the flames would leap like waves of the ocean in a storm at sea, and under the force of the wind would sweep over the solitary plain at a rate of speed dangerous to the fleetest animals that might attempt, in terror, to escape before it.

As told by Hiram Beckwith at the old settlers reunion in 1878.

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### Judge John H. Murphy's Speech at the Reunion

Fifty-nine years ago this fall I came to Edgar county; fifty years ago last April, my father and Hezekiah Cunningham came to Danville. At that time Hezekiah Cunningham, Amos Williams, Dan Beckwith, Solomon Gilbert, William Reed, Jesse Gilbert, George Wier, and another man whose name I cannot remember, were here. Hezekiah Cunningham had a large stock of goods in a log store 16 by 25. Amos Williams built a hewed log house--that is, hewed the logs before they were up; Cunningham and I put up our houses and skutched down the logs afterwards.

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Taken from an old newspaper, the "Daily News", dated August 5, 1878.

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At the time of the old settlers reunion, held in the old fairgrounds, north of town. On this occasion the platform fell injuring many of the principle speakers--but no one seriously.

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*List of Lots sold in Danville, Vermilion County, Illinois  
on the fifth day of September, A.D. 1827.*

<i>No. of Lot</i>	<i>No. of Block</i>	<i>No. of Range</i>	<i>Purchasers' Names</i>	<i>Am. sold for D. C.</i>
3	1st	1st	Henry Metzel -	30 00.
2	1st	2nd	A. Williams	14 12½
6	3rd	1st	Martin Current	15 00.
8	3rd	1st	George Williams	8 75.
5	3rd	1st	Thomas Current - - -	8 12½
1	3rd	1st	Abner Williams	9 00.
3	1st	1st	Henry Ludington - - -	26 00.
2	1st	1st	William Watson - - -	20 25.
1	1st	1st	Martin Current	13 50.
2	1st	1st	Achilles Morgan - - -	15 00.
8	2nd	1st	George Ware - - -	10 00.
<i>Also, at private sale on the 3<sup>d</sup> day of October, A.D. 1827.</i>				
8	2nd	1st	James Wallace - - -	12 87½
1	1st	1st	Espe Clark - - -	15 00.
<i>Also, on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1827</i>				
1	1st	2nd	Noble Owens	10 12½
<i>Total</i>				<i>\$ 208 25-</i>

*Vermilion County, Ill:*

*I, Amos Williams, County agent in and  
for said County, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a  
correct list of Lots sold in the Town of Danville, Vermilion  
County, Illinois, on the days set forth in the foregoing  
list*

*Given under my hand, at Danville, this 27<sup>th</sup>  
day of November, A.D. 1827.*

*A. Williams, County Agent*



Account of moneys received by Amos Williams, as county agent  
for Vermilion County, Illinois, from the 10<sup>th</sup> day of April, 1827  
to the 31<sup>st</sup> day of December, A.D. 1829, (both days inclusive)

	Partial pay -amount-	Full pay -amount-	Disburse
	D. C.	D. C.	D. C.
George Sines		15 15	20
Salmon Wilson		10 00	
Henry Luddington	8 93 $\frac{1}{2}$		
Henry M. Frabee		14 35 $\frac{1}{2}$	
James Frame		20 11	
Gordon S. Hubbard		75 05 $\frac{1}{2}$	15
Jacob Rutter		29 25	
Daniel Scott		13 00	
Olive Miller	7 18 $\frac{1}{2}$		
George Mosey		71 24 $\frac{1}{2}$	
William Reid		64 50	
Don W. Beckwith		26 62 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 23 $\frac{1}{2}$
Henry Luddington	31 8 $\frac{1}{2}$		
Asa Elliott and George Simpson		50 74	
George M. Beckwith		44 74 $\frac{1}{2}$	
Nathaniel Burley		28 81 $\frac{1}{2}$	13
Alexander Brazleton	32 3 $\frac{1}{2}$		
James Butler		44 68 $\frac{1}{2}$	
James Vaughn		10 12 $\frac{1}{2}$	
John McGee		11 45 $\frac{1}{2}$	
James C. McGee	8 79 $\frac{1}{2}$		
John Burley		20 50	
John Light		29 92	
John Morgan	3 54		
Amos Williams		28 62 $\frac{1}{2}$	
	92 71	605 94 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 61 $\frac{1}{2}$



Account of money, &c. (Continued)

	Partial pay months - 1	Full pay months	Discount
	D. C.	D. C.	D. C.
William C. Neal		22 9 1/2	
William Butler		32 00	
Henry M. Grabeu		13 65	
James Newell		42 23 1/2	18 3/4
John B. Hawkins		15 3 1/2	20
John L. Lyon		20 75	
Thomas C. Neal		14 50	
Henry Metel	29 24		
Marion Current		29 50	
George Williams		9 22 1/2	
William Current		8 10	
Abner M. Williams	7 65		
Henry S. Sinton		27 00	
William Watson		21 00	
Achilles Morgan		15 00	
George Ward	6 91		
James Wallace & Jesse Clark		28 1 1/2	6 1/2
Noble Owens	7 00 1/2		
Moses F. Cunningham		10 75	86
Herziah Cunningham	36 56 1/2		
Bluford Runyon			
John Shaffer	16 85 1/2		
Abraham Walhill		9 00	18 3/4
Nicholas Bolloin		17 59 1/2	23
George Haworth	7 50		
John Phillips		20 25	
Amos Williams		18 00	
	111 78 1/2	375 14 1/2	2 3 1/4





# Account of money, &c. (Continued)

	Partial pay- ments		Full pay- ments		Discom- ments	
	D.	C.	D.	C.	D.	C.
Henry Stevenson	17	10 $\frac{3}{4}$				30 $\frac{3}{4}$
John Swinford						
John Chandler			12	00		
Warren Oliver			45	51 $\frac{1}{2}$		60 $\frac{1}{2}$
William Jones	4	00				
Oliver Preston	16	91				11
John W. Murphy			28	25		
Cornelius Vangundy						
Patrick Saffery			25	00	2	00
	38	11 $\frac{3}{4}$	110	76 $\frac{1}{2}$	3	02
Am't brot forw <sup>d</sup> from Page first	92	71	605	94 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	61 $\frac{1}{2}$
" " " " Second	111	78 $\frac{1}{2}$	375	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	2	34 $\frac{1}{2}$
	242	51	1091	85 $\frac{1}{2}$	6	98
			242	51		
Total am't collected on Town Sots	\$ 1334 36 $\frac{1}{2}$					

The foregoing is a true and correct List of the purchasers of Sots in the Town of Danville, W. together with the amount of money by them paid on each and every Sot, viz the first column represents the partial payments - the second column represents the full payments, and the third column represents the discount on Sots

Errors Excepted  
 February 1, 1830

A. Williams County Agent



Bills paid for the laying out of lots in the  
County Seat.

State of Illinois) Commissioners Court, June Term,  
Vermilion County ) 1827

To the agent for said County,

Sir--Pay Thomas O'Neal the sum of Three  
dollars and seventy-five cents, out of any money  
in your hands not otherwise appropriated, for five  
days service in laying off lots in the County Seat.

Attest A. Williams, Clerk

---

State of Illinois) Commissioners Court, June Term,  
Vermilion County ) 1827

To the agent for said County,

Sir, Pay Henry Stephenson two dollars  
and twenty-five cents, out of any money in your  
hands not otherwise appropriated for three days  
services in laying out lots in Danville.

Attest A. Williams, Clerk

Received the within in full of A.  
Williams, County Agent. Oct. 10,  
1827

Geo. Beckwith

---

State of Illinois) Commissioners Court, Sept. Term,  
Vermilion County ) 1827

To the agent for said County,

Sir--Pay Philip Standord the sum of one  
dollar and fifty cents out of any money in your  
hands not otherwise appropriated, for two days  
service in laying out lots in Danville.

Attest A. Williams, Clerk

Received the within in  
full of A. Williams, County  
Agent, Dec. 6, 1827  
Philip Stanford

---

State of Illinois) Commissioners Court, Dec. Term,  
Vermilion County ) 1827

To the agent for said County

Sir--Pay Harvy Luddington two dollars  
out of any money in your hands, not otherwise ap-  
propriated, for two days services as crier, for  
the sale of lots in Danville, on the 10th and 11th  
days of April last. Attest A. Williams, Clerk

March 3rd 1828--Recd. the within  
in full of A. Williams, County Agent

Harvy Luddington

Bills paid for the laying out of lots in the  
County Seat.

State of Illinois } Commissioners Court Dec. Term,  
Vermilion County ) 1828

To the agent for said county

Sir--Pay Nathaniel Beezley the sum of  
two dollars and twenty-five cents, out of any  
money in your hands not otherwise appropriated,  
for three days services as chain carrier in sur-  
veying in and out lots in Danville.

Attest A. Williams, Clerk  
Danville, Ill. Dec. 25, 1828--

This day received of A. Williams,  
County agent the sum of two dollars  
and twenty-five cents in full of the  
within.

Attest Nathaniel Beezley

---

State of Illinois } Commissioners Court Dec. Term,  
Vermilion County ) 1828

To the agent of said county

Sir--Pay Dan W. Beckwith the sum of  
twenty-one dollars for surveying in lots and out  
lots etc. out of any money in your hands not  
otherwise appropriated.

Attest A. Williams, Clerk  
Dec. 9, 1828--This day received of  
A. Williams co. agent the within in  
full. D. W. Beckwith

---

State of Illinois } Commissioners Court, Dec. Term,  
Vermilion County ) 1828

To the agent for said county,

Sir--Pay James Clyman the sum of two  
dollars and twenty five cents, out of any money  
in your hands not otherwise appropriated for three  
days services as axe man in surveying lots in  
Danville in October last. Attest A. Williams,  
Clerk

Dec. 20, 1828--This day received of A.  
Williams, county agent the sum of two  
dollars and twenty five cents in full  
for the within.  
James Clyman

State of Illinois } Commissioners Court, June Term,  
Vermilion County ) 1829

To the agent for said County

Sir--Pay Hezekiah Cunningham the sum of fifty-four cents, out of any money in your hands not otherwise appropriated for back interest by him paid on town lots by the said Cunningham purchased. Attest A. Williams, Clerk

Received of A. Williams, County agent, the sum of fifty-four cents in full for the within order.  
July 16, 1829

H. Cunningham

---

State of Illinois } Commissioners Court, June Term,  
Vermilion County ) 1827

To the agent for said County

Sir--Pay John Light the sum of seventy-five cents, out of any money in your hands not otherwise appropriated for one days service carrying chain in laying off donation for county seat.

Attest A. Williams, Clerk

Received the within in full of  
A. Williams county agent, Sept.  
6, 1827. John Light

---

Received of Amos Williams, county agent, one dollar and thirteen cents, being in full for the amount I subscribed to pay William Morgan for his services as commissioner in locating the county seat.

September 6, 1827

John Light

---

Mr. Amos Williams--Sir please pay William Reed one dollar thirteen cents for one dollar which I subscribed to pay the commissioners who located the county seat of Vermilion County and this shall be your receipt in full. John Lambs

Sept. 14, 1827

Recd. the within of A. Williams,  
county agent

October 29, 1827 W. Reed

---

Mr. Amos Williams, Clerk of Commissioners Court  
of Vermillion County Illinois-----Sir please let  
Beckwith and Reed have my county order of 82.25  
for services in laying off the county seat.  
Danville 15 Sept. 1827 Henry Stevenson

---

Received of Amos Williams county agent three  
dollars and forty cents, being in full for the  
amount I subscribed to pay William Morgan for his  
services as commissioner in locating the county  
seat of Vermilion County, Illinois.  
Sept. 18, 1827 James Butler  
J. Butler's Receipt for \$3.40

---

Received of Amos Williams County Agent fifty six  
and one half cents being in full payment for the  
amount I subscribed to pay William Morgan for his  
services as commissioner in locating the county  
seat of Vermilion County Illinois  
October 29, 1827 Robert Trickle  
R. Trickle's Receipt for \$0.56 $\frac{1}{2}$

---

State of Illinois)  
Vermilion County )

Sir--Pay John Kirkpatrick the sum of thirty-  
four dollars out of any County money not other-  
wise appropriated for seventeen days services in  
locating the county seat of Vermilion County.  
Oct. 30-1827 Attest A. Williams, Clerk  
Oct. 30, 1827--This day received of  
A. Williams county agent thirty-four  
dollars being the amount of the  
within order in full.  
George Haworth

---

Received of Amos Williams county agent fifty-six  
and one fourth cents being in full for the amount  
I subscribed to pay William Morgan for his ser-  
vices as commissioner in locating the county seat  
of justice Vermilion County Illinois.  
Dec. 6, 1827 Phillip Stanford  
Phillip Stanford's Rect. for \$0.56 $\frac{1}{4}$

State of Illinois) To the agent of said County  
Vermillion County )

Sir--Pay Zachariah Peter the sum of thirty-four dollars, out of any county money not otherwise appropriated for seventeen days services in locating the county seat of Vermillion County.

Attest A. Williams, Clerk

Oct. 30, 1827--This day received  
of A. Williams, county agent thirty  
four dollars being the amount of the  
within order in full.

George Haworth, for Z. Peter

---

Received of A. Williams County agent one dollar  
sixty nine and a half cents being in full for the  
amount I subscribed to pay William Morgan for his  
services as commissioner in locating the county  
seat of Vermillion County Illinois.

Dec. 12, 1827

William Bowen

W. Bowen's Rect. for \$1.69 $\frac{1}{2}$

---

Received Darwin, Illinois, February 24th 1828, of  
John Moore eleven dollars, money sent here for  
commissioners appointed to locate the seat of  
Justice of Vermillion county.

Jacob Harlan

---

Received of A. Williams County agent, one dollar  
and thirteen cents, being in full for the amount  
I subscribed to pay William Morgan for his ser-  
vices as commissioner in locating the county seat  
of Vermillion County Illinois.

Seymour Treat

May 30, 1828

Seymour Treat's Rect. for  
\$1.13

---

Mr. Amos Williams

Sir:

You will pay the amount of my county  
order to William Reed which is \$2.25 and oblige,  
yours

Vermillion June 10th 1827 Joel B. Hawkins

---

State of Illinois) Commissioners Court June Term,  
Vermillion County ) 1829

To the agent for said County,

Sir--Pay Bluford Runyon the sum of one  
dollar for putting stock lock on jail door.

Attest A. Williams, Clerk

Recd. of A. Williams Co. Agt. the  
sum of one dollar for the within.

Bluford Runyon

## Danville At An Early Day

Danville was laid out in 1827. At that time it was inhabited exclusively by Indians. It was surveyed by Dan W. Beckwith (the father of our townsman by that name) and Amos Williams, father of Maria and Enoch Williams, now residents of this city. For two years Mr. Williams had the first and only residence in the place affording not only a retreat for himself and family from the wolves, rattlesnakes and Indians but an occasional resting place for travelers and fortune hunters of an early day.

After that for a few years the place improved rapidly--some twelve houses going up in the next five years, being about as many years in advance of Chicago. It was by this time a thriving village. Those of the north doing all their land office business here, and the officer in Chicago kept all his papers in an old two story white hat.

The first hotel was a two story log house containing four rooms built on the ground now occupied by Doan and Bierly's grocery store, northwest corner of public square, 1 and 3 West Main street. The proprietor's name was Haworth. Mr. Haworth was afterward the first person interred in the old Danville graveyard. Some years later the court house and the old North Street Methodist Church were among the first public buildings erected.

The first school house was a small log cabin with one door and two small windows each about two feet square, admitting but little light when the door was closed. The large old fashioned fire place served to warm and partly light the room. This institution of learning was situated on Vermillion street and at the south end, not far from the railroad bridge across the Vermillion river. A few years later the First Presbyterian Church was also used as a school, having folding doors, it could be made into two rooms or thrown into one at pleasure. It was for the time one of the most useful and convenient buildings that could have been erected. Its cupola contained the first bell brought to the place. This building was planned, and for the most part built by the late Reverend Enoch Kingsbury, one of the



early enterprizing citizens.

The changes after this were many and rapid, and owing to our much increased facilities seemed less miraculous or at least less a matter of wonder. How the merchants, taylorers, lawyers, and doctors flocked in, to say nothing of land speculators,--and brought with them, or helped to develop the wealth of the place is too tedious to mention.

"An Old Timer"

---

### The Old Grave Yard

Land had been given for the village of Danville, but no provision had been made for a last resting place of those citizens whose life labors had been ended. Therefore, Amos Williams gave land for a burial ground which became known as the Grave Yard. It extended from the north side of Madison street along the east side of Washington Avenue to a point somewhere between Seminary and Williams streets. A subscription was taken up to raise money for building a rail fence around the ground and providing strong gates.

In the course of time, Danville grew into a city and spread out in all directions. It seemed best to discontinue the Old Grave Yard. New land was purchased for a cemetery north of the city and given the name of Springhill Cemetery. Then followed a long discussion as to what to do with the Old Grave Yard. Finally the city sold the ground at auction and people were requested to move the bodies of their loved ones to Springhill or elsewhere. That was a heart-breaking task and in many cases there were none left of families to look after such work. Many were moved though and in time the old burial ground ceased to be a subject of daily consideration. Some people think that it would have been more in accordance with the wishes of Amos Williams if the Old Grave Yard could have been retained by the city and made into a park. Would it have been too sad, or would it have required too much expense to make it beautiful? Some questions are hard to answer.

Madie Woodbury

## The Old Grave Yard

An article of agreement made and entered into this 21st day of February A. D. 1833, between William Reed and Amos Williams of the County of Vermilion and state of Illinois of the one part and John Piper of the county and state aforesaid of the other part, Witnesseth that the said Piper for the consideration hereinafter mentioned hath this day undertaken and agreed to post and rail the grave yard near the town of Danville, Illinois. The said Piper undertakes promises and agrees to enclose said grave yard with a good and substantial post and rail fence not inferior to the best post and rail fencing in the town of Danville, Illinois, said enclosure to have two gates placed where ever the said Reed and Williams may direct--gate posts at least 12 inches square gates to be eight and a half feet wide one post for each gate to be rabited--posts for fence to be hewed to not less than 4 inches thick--the rails to lap nine inches said gates to be made paling gates and rising in the centre and to be riveted with two rivets in each paling--Iron hinges, hasp and padlock for each gate All of said work to be done in a good and substantial workmanlike manner by or before the said Reed and Williams in consideration of the premises undertake promise and agree to pay to the said Piper the sum of forty-nine dollars in full for the above work as soon as the above work is fully completed and received by the said Reed and Williams.

Attest

H. Newell, Jun.  
M. P. Lowry

William Reed (SEAL)

A. Williams (SEAL)

John Piper (SEAL)

---

Subscriptions for a rail fence to be put around the Grave Yard on Washington Avenue in 1833.

We the undersigned being desirous of having the grave yard, near the town of Danville, Illinois, enclosed with a good substantial post and rail fence, do hereby agree to pay, the sums

set opposite to our respective names for the purpose of aforesaid by the first day of April next-  
February 14, 1833.

<u>Subscribers Names</u>	<u>Amount</u>
A. Williams	\$2.00
William Reed	2.00
D. W. Beckwith	2.00
Solomon Gilbert (paid)	2.00
Samuel Gilbert (paid)	1.00
John Prickett (paid)	0.50
James Parmer (paid)	1.00
Francis Puner	2.00
Joshua W. Fry (paid)	2.00
John H. Murphy (paid)	2.00
John Sam'l Russell (paid)	1.00
Jesse Gilbert	1.00
G. M. Beckwith (paid)	2.00
John M. Wilson (paid)	1.00
T. Alexander (paid)	1.00
Absulom Haworth	1.00
Wm. Kinkinnon (paid)	0.50
Wm. Knight (paid)	1.00
W. Fithian	2.00
John Light	1.00
E. F. Palmer (paid)	1.00
E. M. Wilson (paid)	1.00
Seymour Treat (paid)	0.50
Jonathan Philips (paid)	0.50
E. Kingsbury	0.75
A. Pettyohu	0.50
Hez. Cunningham (paid)	2.00
A. R. Moores (paid)	2.00
B. Runyan (paid)	1.00
T. H. Alexander	1.00
James Mackley (paid)	1.00
Leander Rutledge	1.00
George L. Atkeson (paid)	0.50
George Willey (paid)	0.50
A. M. Poff	0.50
James Powles (paid)	0.50
Jacob Gowin	0.50
Jacob Stahe (paid)	2.00
John W. Smith	2.00
David Roland (paid)	1.00
Isaacs C. Cravens	1.00
John Partlow (paid)	0.50
Reuben Partlow	0.50
Lanner Partlow	0.75
Joseph Matson	0.50

John Pearson (paid)	1.00
Peter M. Cox	0.50
Thomas N. Alison	1.00
Samuel Howell	1.00
L. L. Rowilson	1.00
Joseph Jackson (paid)	1.00

This graveyard was on the east side of Washington Avenue between Madison and Seminary streets.

Reminiscence written in Nov. 29 1895

My Dear Enoch and Em

I can recall but a few scenes connected with our dear mother's death, I remember the friends from Paris filled the house, that there was great mourning and sadness, six children left motherless, the friends wanted to take the baby home, but Pa decided Aunt Cornelia should assist us, with the aid of an old colored woman. She was with us several months and she had the name of taking the entire charge of little Sam but in fact it was I who got up all hours of the night and warmed the milk and fed the little fellow. We had old fashioned milk bottles, never having seen a rubber nipple and they were a great deal of trouble. We used a goose quill, then wrapt strips of muslin around the quill till it would fit tight in the bottle and even then sometimes the milk would leak out and wet his clothes. The weather was cold and it was great trouble and care. Aunt C was very fond of the beaux and spent much time primping and received calls from Culbestson, old Billy Wells and others, spent the evenings thus, and I and old Thema had to undress and put to bed the little girls and see about Smith and Enoch and also look after them in the morning, as Auntie was too tired to be called upon. Pa also was a helpless individual. It was, Maria get me this and get me that--always when I was in sight. I went to school as much as I could, for the year after ma died as I was very anxious to complete United States History with my class and finish Philosophy and astronomy and pa was willing and anxious that I should. I had to make up for it by times and hence the amount of work, I had to do nights and mornings. Aunt C sewed a good deal through the day, no sewing machines then you know and from her I learned to

sew and cut and fit a dress. My mother taught me sewing too, everybody had to learn that as it took so long to make garments by hand.

I do not remember where mother's funeral was held, I think old North street Church on Hazel street. Mr. Fairbanks preached the sermon--it was very touching, and in fact would have preached itself. The preacher's wife afterwards wrote some verses about the mother in heaven and all of us here without her tender care which we all felt much more than the writer could but it was well meant. Carriages were scarce in those days and pa hired an old bus and some of the best conveyences to be found then to take the children and friends to the funeral and the villagers followed on foot. Our children thought the bus was very funny and shoved and pushed about and I think Enoch and the little girls laughed at the funny sight while older people mourned for their sad bereavement. I also remember that it rained while we stood around the open grave waiting for it to be filled up. It would have been considered barbarous to have left till the last spadeful was thrown in. Such was Danville in 1843.

M. L. Woodbury,  
daughter of  
Amos Williams

---

Amos Williams

to H. J. Rodgers Dr.

1852

Feb. 25th	To 15 days tuition of Jas. Jordan at	
	5¢ per day	\$0.75
	To 54 days tuition of Enoch Williams	
	at 5¢ per day	<u>2.70</u>
		\$3.45

H. J. Rodgers

Danville Ill. March

1852

---

Danville Jan 20th 1850

Mr Amos Williams to

O. W. Cooley, Dr.

To	tuition of Smith, 8 weeks	\$2.00
To	" of Charlotte E. 12 weeks	3.00
To	" of Mary 11 weeks	2.75
To	" of Enoch 11 weeks	<u>2.75</u>
	Recd. Payment	\$10.50

---

Received of Amos Williams the sum of one dollar being in full for the tuition of one scholar in the singing school taught by me.

Jacob Sheriff

Danville Ill.

Feb 28, 1842

---

Singing school took the place of parties.

---

Mrs. Fanny Kingsbury, wife of the minister, taught school in her own parlor for a while in Danville. She also taught the early settlers how to tailor men's clothes. Every family had its own pants board and tailor's goose (a great big heavy iron). In the D. A. R. Museum at the Public Library there is a tailor's pants board and goose.

After a visit East to her old home Mrs. Kingsbury met the girls on the street and said, "Oh girls I have learned to knit with one needle (meaning crochet) and you can make the prettiest things, all of you come over tomorrow afternoon and I'll teach you how."

There is also a beautiful hand-made collar made by Mrs. Kingsbury in the D. A. R. Museum in the Public Library.

In an old diary I read the following article, "We girls had such a nice time at Mrs. Kingsbury's yesterday afternoon. She served sassafras tea and the most delicious white bread with butter."

---

### Early Danville Schools

It seems that there was more than one first school. As near as we can understand it the first group of scholars were taught by Amos Williams, in his own home, 10 South Clark street, south of Main street, and west of Walnut. As that was a dwelling house and also the Vermilion county post-office, it may have been inconvenient at times to have a school there. Also court met here for about one year.

The first separate school house was the little Haworth smoke house. Mr. Haworth erected

a two story log house of four rooms on the north-west corner of the Public Square. It stood on the most eastern corner fronting east on Vermilion street. Also it served as the first Danville hotel. Mr. Haworth dug a well and fixed a shelter for the town people in case they should be attacked by the Indians, who still lived nearby. A little to the west of the hotel and back some distance to the north from the side walk, was the smoke house. It was a log cabin some ten by fifteen feet with an earth floor. The children of today, 1934, may not know just what a smoke house is. In those days people had to fatten and kill their own hogs or wild deer or other animals. After having the meat in salt for a while the hams and bacon were hung up by strings tied to the rafters and then every day for a few weeks a little fire of hickory chips was made in the middle of the floor and the smoke went up over the meat and helped to make it so it would keep for summer food. When the meat had been smoked enough, the little house could be used for other purposes so it happened that it became a school house for a part of the year. Think how funny that was to go to school with smoked meat wrapped up in old cloth hanging over-head or maybe not wrapped at all. Only some eight or ten children were there at a time and their teacher was Dr. Beckwith. The temporary first school house was burned by a group of mischievous men. A Mr. Henry Blunt had stored some venison hams in the building intending to ship them to New Orleans by flatboat. While a group of men amused Blunt at a grocery store the others fired the building. The alarm was not given until the blaze was fairly under way and by the time that Blunt and his companions arrived it was too late to save the property. Blunt supposed, of course, that the fire was accidental. His anticipated speculation was spoiled, yet venison half roasted or otherwise was quite cheap in Danville.

The county had reserved some land south of South street, between Vermilion and Hazel streets. Part of it had been used or continued to be used as a pound for stray animals, especially cattle and horses. It was decided to let a part of this land be used for a school. So a log cabin about twelve by fifteen feet, was put up there south of South street towards Vermilion street. It had a door and two small windows on one side and on the other, a large old fashioned fire place with the

chimney on the outside of the house. This school house was the first real one. It had "Puncheon" boards for floor and seats. "Puncheons" were the outside slabs of logs, one side having bark on. They were rough, but much better than round logs.

Among the teachers in the early schools were Dr. Norton Beckwith, Harvey Luddington, and Enoch Kingsbury. One man in particular deserves special mention. James A. Davis came to Danville with nothing except the clothes on his back, having lost his possessions in the Wabash River. Dr. Beckwith, finding that Davis was a well educated man circulated a paper among the people and raised a list of scholars and Davis was installed as teacher.

The next school was one that Amos Williams built himself on his own land and it stood on the west side of Franklin street, number 124, some little distance north of North street. It was about twenty feet square, had a real plank floor, and was heated by a stove standing in the middle of the room. A door and two windows faced east and on the other sides were some panes of glass up high to admit light. This was considered a a real good room and was used for various meetings as well as for a school.

The Presbyterians finally erected a real church in 1835. It had folding doors and was used as a two room school as well as a church.

At last the seminary was built. It was north of West Main street near Pine and still survives, now as the headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

As the town spread northward another school was built on the northeast corner of Vermilion and Seminary streets. It was of brick and was called the Union Seminary. It was destroyed by fire in 1871, the same year as the Chicago fire.

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#### Union Seminary

Know all men by these presents that I, Amos Williams of the County of Vermilion and state of Illinois, am held and firmly bound unto the Union Seminary of said County and State in the sum of Five thousand dollars, lawful money of the United



States, to be paid to the said Union Seminary. To which payment well and truly to be made. I bind myself, my heirs, executors and administrators firmly by these presents. Sealed with my seal and dated this twenty ninth day of March AD one thousand eight hundred and fifty one.

The condition of this obligation is such that if the said Amos Williams, shall as soon as the said Union Seminary shall have the walls erected and covered of a building for seminary purposes on the land hereinafter mentioned, convey to the said Union Seminary by a good and sufficient general warranty deed, the following described tract or parcel of land lying and being in the county and State of aforesaid, to wit: Beginning at a point on the east side of Vermilion Street extended forty seven rods north of the North West corner of Lot No Two in Block Four North Range one East in Cunninghams addition to the town of Danville thence East four chains and seventy five hundredths of a chain to the west side of Hazel street extended from said town--thence north six chains and thirty one and two thirds hundredths of a chain thence west four chains and seventy five hundredths of a chain to the east side of said Vermilion Street extended thence south with said street to the place of beginning containing three acres more or less then this obligation to, be void otherwise to remain in full force and virtue.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the day and year above written.

Amos Williams (SEAL)

Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of

O. L. Davis

---

OREGON PARTY,

Your company is respectfully solicited at the UNION SEMINARY on this evening, 6 o'clock.

Committee of Arrangements:

P. M. Parks,  
J. C. Short,  
W. A. Murphy,  
Danville, March 22nd, 1852

T. R. Forbes,  
U. S. Murphy,  
W. Hollingsworth

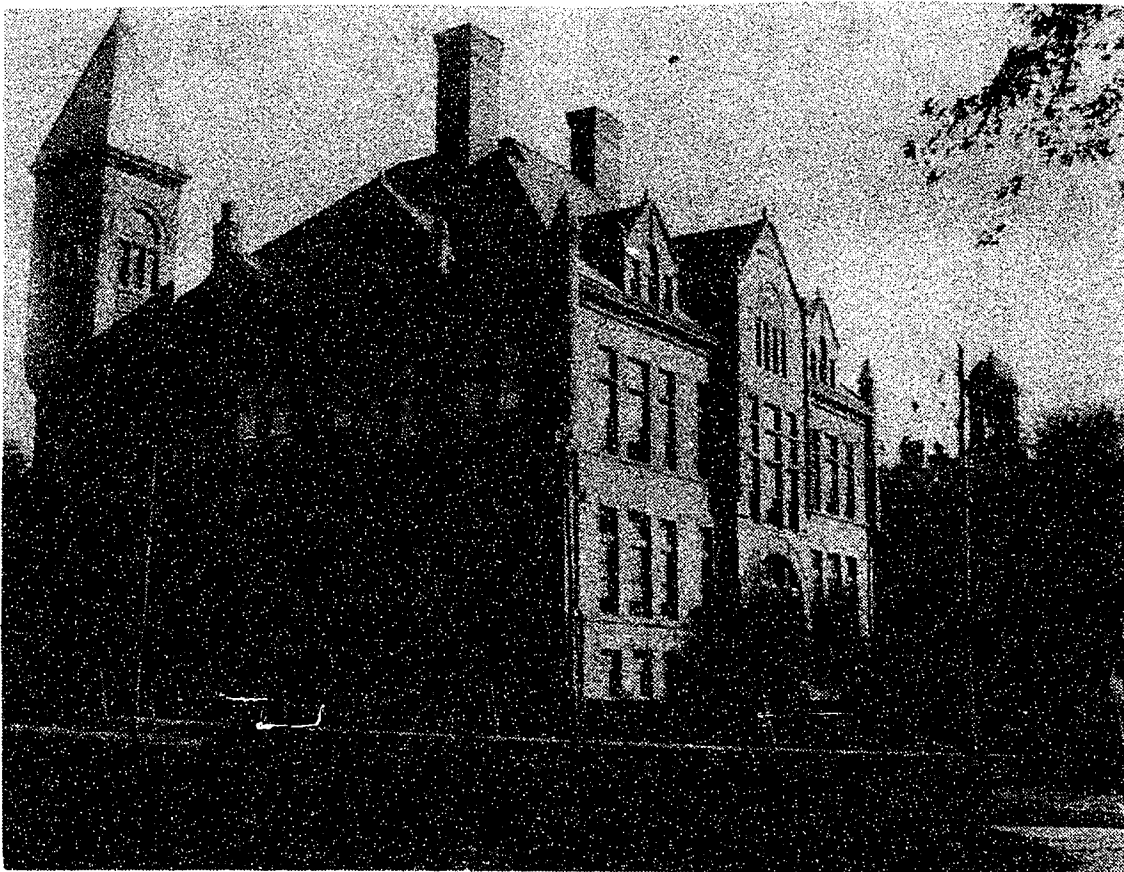
### Summary of Early Danville Schools

1. Haworth's smoke house. It was built in 1827. Located 4 West Main street behind Haworth store, northwest corner of public square.
2. A log school south of South street between Vermilion and Jackson streets down by Wabash Bridge.
3. Log house built by Amos Williams on his own ground and at his own expense. School held in day and entertainments at night. Rented free of charge. 124 North Franklin street.
4. Old Red Seminary on Main, Gilbert, and Pine streets. Occupied by American Legion headquarters.
5. Union Seminary--northwest corner of Vermilion and Seminary built 1851; burned down 1871.
6. Washington building and high school. Built in 1871 and torn down 1889.
7. High school building--Seminary, Gilbert, Pine streets. Built in 1889.



Old Red Seminary

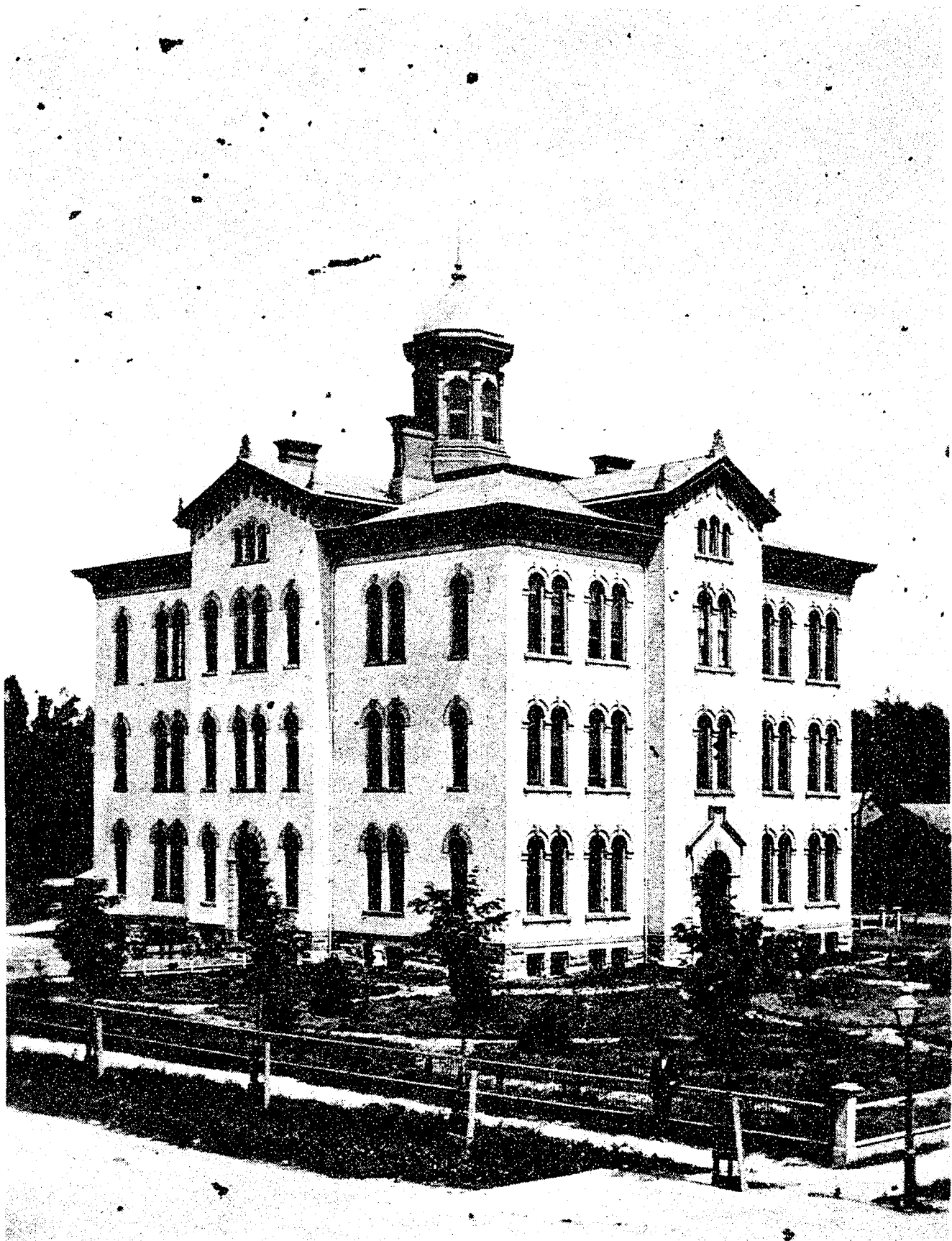
Located on northwest corner of Pine and Main streets. This was the fourth school house built. It is now the headquarters of the V. F. W.



First High School Building

First building used for high school courses only. It was located on Pine, Seminary, and Gilbert streets--north of the Washington school. Built in 1889.

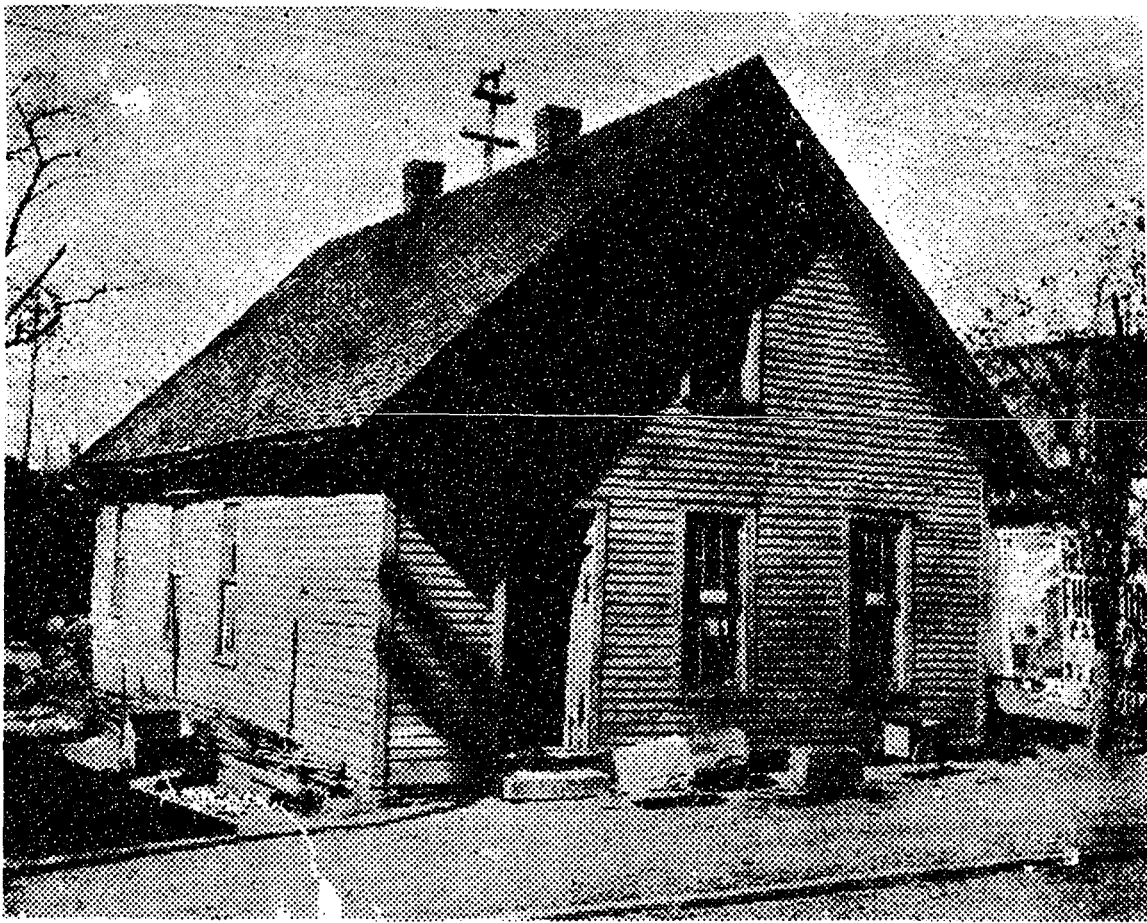




Washington School

Built in 1871. Facing Madison, east on Pine and west on Gilbert streets. Third floor was used as high school. Notice the formal garden on south side of the building near the teachers' entrance. The fence was painted green with white corner posts. Also note the lamp posts.





First Presbyterian Church

Built in 1835 on northwest corner of North and Franklin streets, moved to west side of South Walnut street in 1858. It was used for church and school for a long time. Also it was used for a post office when Reverend Kingsbury was post master. The church was built with folding doors that could be thrown into one or two rooms at pleasure.



Rev. Enoch Kingbury's Home, South Walnut Street, the bluff of Vermilion River. Social center of early Danville. Amos Williams' Home on South Clark St.





## The Old Court House Used As The First Church

During the first six years of its existence the church had no building of its own in which to worship, using the court house much of the time. It was a quaint log house with its immense fireplace in which smoldered the backlog; the benches of rude puncheons mounted on legs, with puncheons fastened against the walls for desks; four small windows, each sash of which held four 7 x 9 panes of glass, furnishing the light; the lofty, narrow pulpit which elevated the minister near the ceiling; the minister acting in the double capacity of pastor and janitor, making the fires, sweeping the room and ringing the bell. The little house was almost surrounded with hazel brush and a scattered growth of large forest trees, through which roads were cut, but no regularly laid out streets.

Taken from the First Presbyterian Church Centennial.

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### First Church Building

The first church edifice of the First Presbyterian church was erected in 1835, and stood at the northwest corner of the village of Danville on the same site occupied by the present church building. The building was moved from that site to 12 South Walnut street in 1858 in the rear of what is now known as the King block. This building was used for worship until after the Civil War. The new church that was to take its place was started in 1858, but money was scarce and the delays were such that when the year was over only the basement had been completed. This was roofed over, however, and services were held in the basement of the new church when meetings were not held at the old frame building. The war over, the new church was completed and dedicated in December, 1865.

The old church building on 12 South Walnut street was used as a meeting house for many years afterward, school being held there and for a short time it housed the Danville post office. Afterward it was used for a residence many years. When it became unfit for a residence a newspaper

distributor used it as a distributing station, and for about five years it was the assembling point of all the street newsboys. Finally it became the center of a junk yard, around which scrap iron and old bones and rubbers were piled, and then its roof gave shelter to rags, old papers and other material bought by junkers that would spoil in open weather. Eventually it was torn down, thus coming to an ignominious end, after having served both church and community so nobly in their early struggles to get a foot in the wilderness. Certainly it deserved a better fate, but in passing out unnoticed and unsung, it lost none of the glory it had earned nor suffered in the memory of those who knew the part it had played.

For a short period during the administration of President Lincoln, the Danville post office was located in this building and "Father" Kingsbury held the office of postmaster.

Taken from the First Presbyterian Church Centennial.

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### The Old North Street Church

The first church was a plain wooden building about 24 by 75 feet with an aisle down the center and hard wooden benches on either side. It was lighted by tallow candles. Its seating capacity was perhaps 150. The preacher gave out the hymns two lines at a time, and the people lifted up their voices and sang with as much devotion and praise in their souls perhaps as the congregation now, led by a pipe organ.

In 1856 the old frame church was moved to the southwest corner of Hazel and North streets. It continued to be used for church and Sunday school services while the new two story brick structure was being built on the original site.

## The Attack on Fort Dearborn as Told by Hezekiah Cunningham.

The Winnebago Indians considered all white people their enemies because of the cruel treatment inflicted on one of the tribes by a group of unprincipled boatmen. War parties were formed, going about and attacking white people. The Pottowatomies around Chicago were preparing to join the Winnebagoes and the inhabitants at Fort Dearborn became greatly alarmed over their threatened destruction by the Indians, in August, 1827.

Word was sent by Col. Hubbard throughout Vermilion county for troops. Col. Hubbard left Chicago in the afternoon and reached his trading post on the Iroquois, that night. The next day he reached Spencer's, two miles south of Danville and from there runners were sent to settlements on the little Vermilion. It is thought by some that this was the occasion where he earned the title of "The Fast Walker", or Pa-Pa-Ma-Ta-Be. All the people of the county who were able had been enrolled under the militia laws of the state and organized as "The Vermilion County Battalion", of which Hezekiah Cunningham was captain. The men in this company met at Butler's Point, six miles southwest of Danville. Volunteers were called for and fifty men offered their help. Next an election of officers for the campaign, choosing Achilles Morgan, captain; Majoy Bayles, first lieutenant, and Col. Isaac R. Moores as second.

The men arrived at the Vermilion River about noon on Sunday, the day after assembling at Butler's Point. The next day before noon the men arrived at Hubbard's Trading House on the north bank of the Iroquois, about one-quarter of a mile from the river. A large number of Pottawatomies were lying about the trading house; and when it was proposed to swim the horses over in advance of passing the men in boats, the men objected, fearing the Indians would take their horses or do them other mischief. Mr. Hubbard assured them that the Indians were friendly.

The whites were deficient in arms, having only squirrel-rifles, flint-locks, old muskets, or anything as a means of protection. The men remained at the trading house the rest of the day. The next day they moved forward, swimming Beaver

Creek and crossing the Kankakee at the head of the island near Momence. All the way from Danville the whites had been following an Indian trail, "Hubbard's trace". It rained almost everyday of the march.

Chicago was reached about four o'clock on the evening of the fourth day in the midst of a very severe rainstorm. The people of Chicago were very glad to see the men as they had been expecting an attack every hour since Col. Hubbard had left them.

Chicago at this time consisted of six or seven American families, a number of half-breeds, and a lot of idle Indians. The town was guarded for eight or ten days when a runner came in announcing that Gen. Cass had finished a treaty with the Winnebagoes and that we might disband and go home.

The citizens were over-joyed and in their gladness they turned out one barrel of gin, one barrel of brandy, one barrel of whiskey, and (knocking the heads of the barrels in), invited everyone to drink, which they did. The ladies at Fort Dearborn treated the men expecially well.

They gave them all manner of good things to eat; loaded them with provisions, and gave them all those attentions that the kindness of woman's heart would suggest. There were three ladies, recently from New York, who distributed tracts and other reading matter among the men and interested themselves in their spiritual as well as temporal welfare.

On the return home the men camped out nights and reached their destination on the evening of the third day. The only good water they got going out or coming back was at a remarkable spring bursting out at the top of a little mound in the midst of a slough a few miles south of the Kankakee.

Taken from the "History of Vermilion County", by H. W. Beckwith.

Following this page is a letter of thanks from the settlers in Chicago, thanking the Danville, Ill. troops who had come to their rescue. The Chicago Historical Society offered us seventy five dollars for this letter but we thought it should stay in Danville.

To Capt. Morgan and the Officers  
and Soldiers under his command. }

Friends and fellow Citizens  
The Indian Agent Alexander Wolcott Esq. being informed  
that the Winnebagoes intended to make a descent on this  
place, and finding it unprotected with the physical means  
of defence, deputed our worthy friend Mr. G. S. Hubbard,  
as a messenger, to you to give us the protection due, as citi-  
zens of the United States, in the hour of danger.

Permit us, in the names, and on behalf of the people  
of Chicago, to present to you, our sincere thanks, for the kind  
efforts which you have made to protect us from a Savage and  
hostile foe. -

We can assure you, that your ready consent, and pro-  
-omptitude in coming to our assistance, at the first moment of al-  
-arm, has given us the fullest proof of your valor; and we are  
happy to congratulate <sup>you</sup> as a band of patriots, exercising the rights  
of faithful and free-born Citizens, in the high and important tr-  
-usts of defending your Country. -

Did our safety require it, we feel  
confidently that we should have your aid as long as danger pres-  
-ented itself; but from the official instructions received from Gov.  
-Camp this morning, we should perhaps do injustice, to ask for a con-  
-tinuation of your good services, although it is possible that the  
danger is not entirely over, and that the time may soon arrive  
when your assistance may be most required. -

With sentiments of the highest Esteem,  
We remain very respectfully. Yours

Chicago August 5<sup>th</sup> 1827 -

John Kenzie

James Kenzie

Russell & Hancock

David Hall Jr.

G. S. Hubbard

Stephen J. Scott

J. B. Beaubien -



## The First Court House

On the first Monday of June, 1827 the county commissioners board met at the house of Asa Elliott; and, on the first Monday of September following, at the house of Amos Williams, in Danville. Here at the Williams' home the affairs of the county were conducted until the county purchased the log house built by Wm. Reed, on the Lincoln Hall lot, 12-14 West Main street, with the design of fitting it up for public use. This was the first court house. It was one story high, with space for a low attic above, about sixteen feet square, and made out of heavy logs, hewn inside and out. Subsequently the county sold it, with the lot, to Hezekiah Cunningham, who agreed to provide the county, for the term of two years, unless the new court house should be completed before that time, with a place for holding courts, etc. The first court house was removed, some years after Cunningham purchased it, to a lot on the corner of North and Hazel streets, where, in after years, it was weather-boarded, and formed the prominent feature of the wings attached to it on the east and north by James Parmer. It, with its attachments, remained here until May or June, 1876, when the whole was destroyed by fire.

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State of Illinois } Commissioners' Court, Dec. Term,  
Vermilion County ) 1828

To the agent for said County

Sir--Pay William Reed the sum of Two Hundred Dollars, out of any money in your hands not otherwise appropriated for a house and lot by him sold to the county commissioners for the use of the county.

Attest A. Williams, Clerk  
First Vermilion County Court House,  
on southwest corner of the square.

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The above order shows with what accuracy and exactness Amos Williams, as Clerk of the Commissioners' Court kept records. This order was written by him, to himself ordering the money paid to William Reed for the first court house.

State of Illinois } Commissioners Court, Sept. Te.  
Vermillion County ) 182

To the agent for said county,

Sir--Pay Asa Elliott the sum of three dollars and fifty nine cents out of any money in your hands not otherwise appropriated, for money advanced to defray the expense of obtaining a deed from G. W. Smith for sixty acres of land, being part of the town of Danville.

Attest, A. Williams,  
Clerk

Received the within in full  
of A. Williams County agent  
Oct. 6, 1827  
Asa Elliott

Guy Smith was the giver of sixty acres of land  
for the site of Danville, Illinois

Bills paid for the erection of the Court House in  
1832-1833.

Received of Thomas Durham, by the hand of Amos  
Williams the sum of one dollar and fifty cents  
in full for labor on the court house.

Sept. 14, 1832

Johathan Phelps

State of Illinois } Commissioners Court,  
County of Vermillion ) December Term, 1832

To Amos Williams, County agent of said  
county.

Sir--Pay Amos Williams the sum of sixty-two dollars thirty-one and one fourth cents, out of any money in your hands not otherwise appropriated, for the amount by him paid to J. H. Murphy for the purpose of procuring balls and arrow for court house spire.

Attest, Amos Williams

State of Illinois } Commissioners Court, June Term,  
Vermillion County ) 1833

To the agent of said county

Sir--Pay James Mackley the sum of forty three dollars and twenty five cents out of any money in his hand not otherwise appropriated for laying floor in court house.

Attest A. Williams



State of Illinois }  
Vermilion County } Commissioners Court, March Term, 1832  
To the agent for said county.

Sir - Pay Gurdon S. Hubbard Six  
hundred Dollars out of any money in your hands not other-  
wise appropriated, being the amount to be advanced to  
him towards the erection of a court house.

Attest,

A. Williams clerk

State of Illinois }  
County of Vermilion } Sec. Commissioners Court, June 28, 1832  
To the agents for said county.

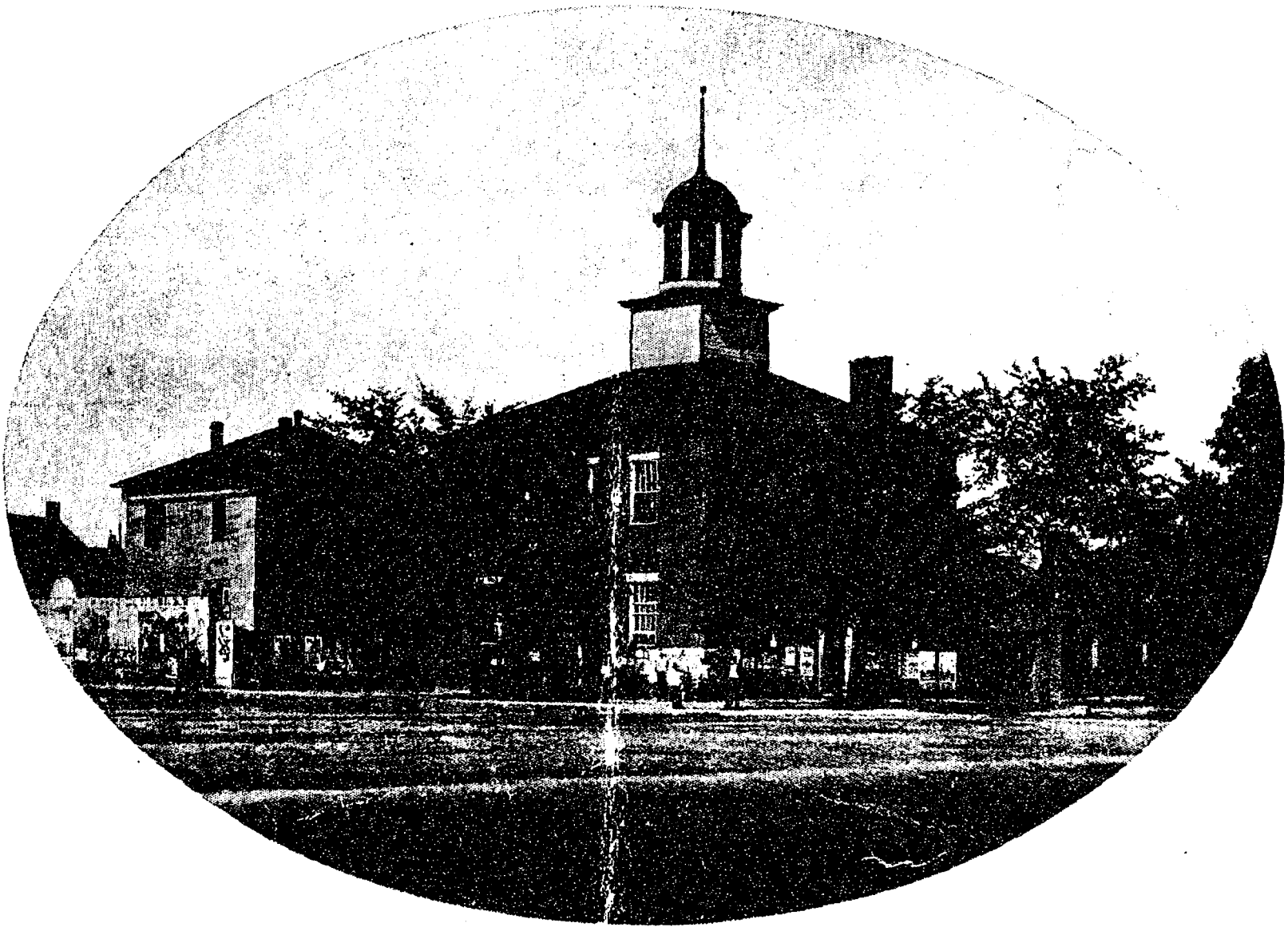
Sir - Pay William Reed the sum of one  
hundred Dollars out of any money in your hands not  
otherwise appropriated, for the amount by him paid to  
Gurdon S. Hubbard towards the erection of the court  
house in Danville.

Attest

A. Williams clerk

Gurdon S. Hubbard was the contractor for the  
erection of the court house in 1833. The follow-  
ing receipts show that Mr. Hubbard received his  
pay before the work on the court house was even  
started.





## VERMILION COUNTY COURT HOUSE

Completed in 1833.

This was not the first court house owned by this county. The original court building was a log structure twenty by thirty feet sold to the county by Wm. Reed in 1828 for \$200.00.

It stood on Lot 1, Block 1. South, Range 1 West, or exactly on the ground occupied today (1910), and for over fifty years by the Woodbury Drug Co.

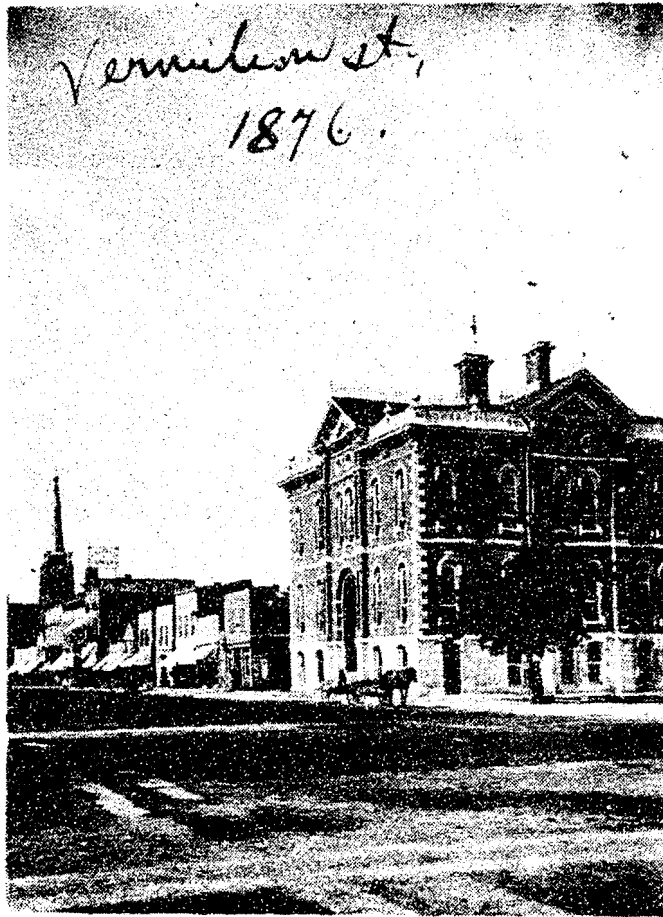
This log court house and lot were sold to Hezekiah Cunningham in 1831 for \$350.00.

By an odd coincidence the court of the county later returned to this same ground. After the court house shown above was burned, temporary quarters were secured in old Lincoln Hall.

This is another link to make historic in Vermilion County history the spot on which the Woodbury Drug Co. continues to do business.

Abraham Lincoln was attorney in many cases in the building shown above. He often stopped at the Woodbury Drug Store while enroute to the McCormack House, where he boarded.





Vermilion street from the square, looking north, M. E. Church spire, the third court house in the foreground. Notice the one-horse dray, the flagging walk across the square and the trees around the court house.



The First Wabash Depot

Amos Williams donated two hundred dollars toward the station and grounds.



We the undersigned do hereby acknowledge the receipt of the number of copies of the laws passed by the fourth General Assembly of the State of Illinois at their second session, from A. Williams clerk of the county Commissioners Court of Vermilion County —

1826/	April 23	Asa Elliott JP	Sum	June 2
"	"	W. Beckwith		
"	"	James Butler		
May	29	David Brazelton		
"	"	J. B. Alexander		
"	"	Henry Martin		
"	"	Seymour Great		
"	"	Achilles Morgan		
June	21	James Ticknor box		
July	7	Isaac R. Moore	major	
"	29	Wm Swank C. P.		
		G. W. Beckwith Capt		
		James McCure		
September	12	Marcellus Smith	Lieut	
1827	Feb. 23	Albion Brazelton		
		for Nelson Moore Capt		
		Peter Spencer JP		
		Saml Cozad JP	2	





## The Second Court House 1833-1872

Work was begun on the new court house early in 1832. Guerdon S. Hubbard was the contractor and John H. Murphy, the active superintendent in charge of the work, to whom special credit is due for the interest he manifested in, and the integrity with which he discharges his trust. The brick were mostly made by Norman D. Palmer, at his farm, northwest of the city. The building was completed in 1833, and was used for nearly forty years by the county, and until its destruction by fire in 1872. It was located on the Public Square, on the north and east, and the sidewalks of Main and Vermilion streets on the south and west. It was a two story brick building, some forty or fifty feet square, with main entrances on the south and west sides, and a door on the north. The lower story was in one room for court purposes; the upper part was divided into four rooms for the convenience of juries, etc. The old building in its time was honored by the presence of some of the most noted persons in our nation, called thither either in the capacities of judges or counsel. Judge Treat, now of the United States senate, presided here as our circuit judge. Col. E. D. Baker, afterward governor of Oregon, and who was killed at Ball's Bluff, Virginia, during the rebellion, and Edward Hannigan, of Indiana, whose reputation as an orator was national, have filled its walls with their eloquence. Here has the musical voice of Leonard Swett, the sparkling wit of Usher F. Linder, and the dramatic magnetism of D. W. Vorhees, often charmed jurors and spectators. The immortal Lincoln, during the many years he itinerated the circuit regularly attended the Vermilion courts, and in the course of a long, successful and scrupulously honest practice of his profession, became personally acquainted with, and warmly attached to, almost every man in the county.

Taken from the "History of Vermilion County",  
by H. W. Beckwith.

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## The Third Court House

In due time after the second court house burned the board of supervisors began maturing

plans for a new building. A committee was appointed to examine other court houses and collect information concerning errors to avoid and what advantages should be secured in the construction of the building. It was desired to locate the building on the spot it now occupies. The peculiar shape of the ground, being barely sufficient for it, necessarily determined the shape of the building. The building was erected of red bricks trimmed in white.

Taken from the "History of Vermilion County," by H. W. Beckwith.

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### The Fourth Court House

The fourth court house is the one now in use, 1934.

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### In The Early Days

Letter from Sidney Breese--License to Sell Goods--Power of Attorney to Guerdon S. Hubbard--Cure for Bilious Fever, Etc.

Through the kindness of Mrs. W. W. R. Woodbury we give to our readers today a copy of some old papers and letters giving an insight into the history of the early days of Vermilion county. The first is a letter from Hon. Sidney Breese, who desires public notice given that he will deliver a public speech to the citizens of Vermilion county on the 4th of July, 1831, on subjects connected with the approaching congressional election:

Palestine, June 27,  
1831

Amos Williams, Esq.:

Dear Sir:--I will thank you to give general notice to the citizens of Vermilion county that I will make them a public speech at Danville on the 4th of July, on subjects connected with the approaching congressional election. Perhaps, as it is the anniversary of our independence, a very general collection can be had. As I am a stranger in your parts, I should be much pleased to meet a general collection of the people. I

would thank you to send notices into the different settlements, and any expense you maybe at I will reimburse and reciprocate the favor. Please show this letter to my friend, Mr. Beckwith.

Your friend,  
Sidney Breese

Next we publish a copy of a license given to William and J. H. Murphy to "sell and retail goods, wares and merchandise in the county of Vermilion, Illinois," which is as follows:

State of Illinois, County of Vermilion, sct. Commissioners' Court, June Term, 1833.--Be it known that permission is hereby granted to William and J. H. Murphy to vend, sell and retail goods wares and merchandise in the county of Vermilion for one year from the date hereof. The said William and J. H. Murphy, having paid into the county treasury, for the use of the county aforesaid, the sum of seven dollars and eighty cents, agreeably to the statute in such case made and provided. In testimony whereof, I, Amos Williams, clerk of the county commissioners' court, in and for said county, have herewith set my hand and affixed the seal of said court at my office in Danville, Illinois, this third day of June A. D. 1833.

A. Williams, Clerk

It was necessary in those days to "keep a tavern", and one Henry Watkins is granted a license to "keep a tavern at Danville, Illinois", in the following languages:

State of Illinois, Vermilion County sct. The People of the State of Illinois. To all who shall see these presents, Greeting: Know ye that license and permission are hereby granted into Henry Watkins to keep a tavern at Danville, in Vermilion county, Illinois, for the term of one year from the third day of December A. D. 1833, agreeably to the order of the county commissioners' court of Vermilion county, at the December term, 1833, of said court, he having paid the sum of eight dollars there for, and also given security in the sum of three hundred dollars, conditioned as the law directs. Witness: Amos Williams, clerk of the county commissioners' court, in and for Vermilion county aforesaid, and the seal of

said court being hereto affixed at Danville this third day of December A. D. 1833.

A. Williams,  
Clerk

Power of attorney was also known in those days and lawyers were tolerated, as appears from the following document issued to Guerdon S. Hubbard by one Marcus Snow, 2nd sergeant in Capt. James Penner's company of mounted militia:

Know all men by these present, that I, Marcus Snow, a 2nd sergeant in Capt. James Penner's company as a mounted volunteer of Illinois militia, Vermilion-county regiment, commanded by Colonel L. R. Moores, do hereby constitute and appoint Guerdon S. Hubbard of the county of Vermilion and State of Illinois, my true and lawful attorney, to receive in my behalf from the paymaster of the United States for the state of Illinois, or any other persons legally authorized in that behalf, my pay for thirty days' service as an officer as aforesaid, commencing on the 23rd day of May A. D. 1832, and ending on the 23rd day of June A. D. in 1832.

Marcus Snow

Signed, sealed and acknowledged in the presence of Joseph Inis and A. Williams.

Subscribed and acknowledged before me the undersigned clerk of the circuit court in and for the county of Vermilion and state of Illinois, this 13th day of August A. D. 1832.

A. Williams, Clerk.

As hundreds of our readers are more or less troubled with billious fever and biliousness, we very gladly and without hope of recompense publish the following receipe used by Dr. Smith of Georgetown in the year 1828. We are acquainted with some of the ingredients, and can heartily recommend them:

"Take the emetic 24 or 30 minutes before the coted stage comes. After some purging take 60 drops of soduim, which will put the patient into a perspiration. In three or six hours take one grain of sulphate quinine every 2 hours. From 6 to 12 powders is sufficient. Then make a tea of dogwood bark, black cherry bark and quakenasp bark. Drink freely."

Taken from the "Daily Commercial", dated Saturday, September 4, 1886.

## Politics

Recd. of Leander Munsell, Esq. eleven dollars, being in full for printing three thousand electoral tickets for Vermillion County, Illinois.

John Dowling  
Recd. of Amos Williams the within  
amt. of eleven dollars. W. Fithian

W. Fithian advanced above amt. to L. Munsell

---

Danville, Illinois  
November 29, 1834

Gentlemen:

Mr. John Hiestand called on me a few days ago and paid me fifty cents, and wished me to have the Vandalia Whig sent to him at Danville, Ill. during the session, you will please pay in the amount to the printer as that amount cannot be sent by mail and I will account to you for the same--

Yours respectfully  
A. Williams

Messrs. Vance, Elliott, Fithian  
Vandalia, Illinois

Taken from an old scrap book.

---

Treasurer's Office, Danville,  
Illinois, March 22, 1835

Received of Amos Galusha the sum of Twenty five dollars in full for license granted to him by two of the County Commissioners of Vermilion County, Illinois, to keep a tavern in Danville, Ill. for one year, unless recalled and rendered null by the County Commissioners at a regular term of their Court.

J. Alexander Treasr. V. C.

\$25.00

# Price Lists of Early Days

Danville, Ills. May 4th

Amos Williams	
Plastring house-----	152 $\frac{3}{4}$ yds
at 38 cts. per Y.D.-----	\$57.38
Building Chimney-----	33.00
To Lime-----	2.50
Whitewashing-----	0.75
the whole amount----	\$63.53

A. W. Love

Accepted by

John B. Page

---

Received of Amos Williams the sum of sixty dollars and forty cents, being in full of all demands for the within bill.

May 13, 1837

A. W. Love

Amos Williams

To a note on Francis Umpenhour-----	\$10.00
To walnut shingles for silver smith-----	6.00
To seven thousand 3 hundred walnut shingles made for mill-----	14.60
To 3500 oak shingles for store house-----	7.00
To laying up 3000 old rails at 21 cents a hundred-----	3.75
To 500 stakes-----	6.87
To making 1150 rails and laying up-----	6.46
To making and setting bars-----	.50
Syrup barrel and sugar water barrel-----	1.87

---

Amos Williams to S. Rutledge Dr.

1834

Nov. 19	to	Painting house-----	24.00
"	"	" Puttying in 87 lights glass-----	87 $\frac{1}{2}$
"	"	" Fixing table-----	18 $\frac{3}{4}$
"	"	" Fixing cellar door-----	25
"	"	" Fixing counter-----	62 $\frac{1}{2}$
"	"	" To chair-----	2.00
			\$25.93 $\frac{3}{4}$

Recd. Payment in full

Danville, Ill.

Nov. 19, 1834

Leander Rutledge, the first cabinet maker

AMOS WILLIAMS TO BECKWITH & REED DR.				
1827	'	To	1 Jar	' 25
June 14	'	"	16 $\frac{1}{2}$ H Sugar	' 1.65
	'	"	12 $\frac{3}{4}$ to do	' 1.15
Aug 3	'	"	$\frac{1}{2}$ yd plaid	' 10
Sept. 5	'	"	3 quarts whiskey for county	' 37 $\frac{1}{2}$
Nov. 20	'	"	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ yards flannel	' 1.87 $\frac{1}{2}$
	'	"	1 yd callico	' 43 $\frac{1}{4}$
Nov. 26	'	"	4 quarts and 1 pint whiskey	' 56 $\frac{1}{4}$
	'	"	2 lbs. coffee	' 50
	'	"	1 yd callico	' 37 $\frac{1}{2}$
Dec 12	'	"	3 quarts and pint whiskey	' 43 $\frac{1}{2}$
15	'	"	3 quarts and 1 pint whiskey	' 43 $\frac{1}{4}$
	'	"	1 skein thread	' 06 $\frac{1}{4}$
19	'	"	1 bottle paragoric	' 25
	'	"	1 tape	' 6 $\frac{1}{4}$
21	'	"	$\frac{1}{2}$ pint castor oyl	' 25
	'	"	1 small deer skin	' 37 $\frac{1}{2}$
	'	"	1 skein silk	' 12 $\frac{1}{2}$
	'			' 9.27 $\frac{1}{2}$
1828	'	"	$\frac{1}{2}$ lb nails	' 6 $\frac{1}{4}$
Jan 25	'	"	3 quarts and 1 pint whiskey	' 47 $\frac{1}{2}$
Feb. 4	'	"	9 light window glass	' 56 $\frac{1}{4}$
	'	"	1 quart whiskey	' 12 $\frac{1}{2}$
	'			' 10.40 $\frac{1}{4}$

Feb. 9th 1828

Received of Amos Williams Ten Dollars forty six and one fourth cents in full for the within account

for Beckwith & Reed

Wm. Reed

This is one of the first bills from the first store in Danville, Illinois. It is dated from June 14, 1827 to February 4, 1828. It must have been one of the "saddle-bag stores", as they were called, because the provisions were brought up from Terre Haute on horseback in saddle-bags.

#### Bill for Labor on a Cabin

3 days chopping-----	\$2.25
8 days hauling-----	16.00
hewing puncheons-----	4.00
raising-----	1.00
chinking and daubing-----	1.50
building chimney-----	3.00
clapboards-----	1.00
	<u>\$34.25</u>

Danville, Ill. Oct 31,  
1835

Received of Amos Williams----eighty-six dollars and seventy-five cents. Being in full for plastering as well as all other demands to this date.

Archibald Dunlap

## How Did Our Vermilion River Get Its Name?

Our mother, Mrs. Maria Williams Woodbury, grew up by the river. She used to walk along by it and pick up shells from the sand. She loved it as long as she lived and she lived a long time. She used to tell us that the river had some spots of red or vermilion colored clay in places along its banks. People said that the Indians used that bright colored clay to paint themselves in queer colors for their war dances. So the river became known as the river with vermilion clay by it--or the Vermilion River.

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## Indian Sign Language

The Matilda Ziegler magazine of Monsey, New York, dated September, 1934, tells that the Smithsonian Institute is making a dictionary of a sign language that was once in use among the Indians all over North America, whatever spoken language they might use. There are ten thousand signs and any idea or emotion could be expressed by them.

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Subscription for a bridge across the Vermilion River. To be paid for, if the bridge stands through the winter, and the Spring freshet.

The undersigned citizens of the County of Vermilion and State of Illinois considering it a matter of great public intrest to have a bridge erected across the Big Vermilion at or near Gilberts ferry, do agree to pay the sums set opposite to their respective names whenever called upon by any one of the three comitioners to be hereafter elected by the subscribers, and each and every ten dollars subscribed and instalments regularly paid as called for is to entitle the holder to one vote in the election of comitioners to contract for the building of said bridge, Fifteen percent on the amount subscribed will be required to be paid in to the comitioners as soon as they are elected, and not more than one-half of the subscription will be called for until the bridge is finished and the residue to be paid immediately after the bridge stands through one winter and the spring freshet.



# Vernilion Circuit Court May Term 1844.

Frederick Stipp, et al  
vs { In Chancery  
The widow & heirs of George Stipp dec'd  
Clerks fees

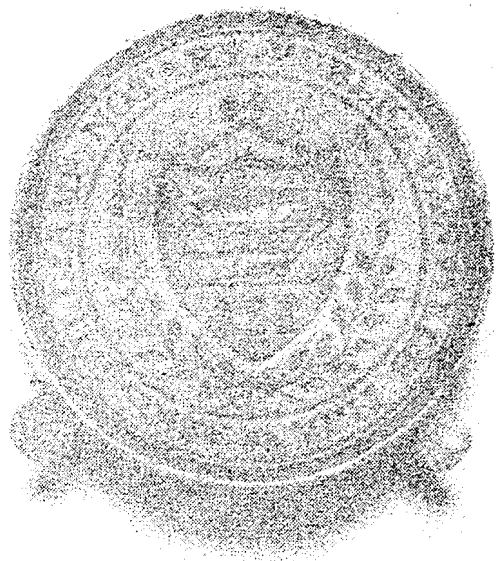
1844.		J. C. Q. C.
Apr	Filing Petition & Issuing Summons	50
May	Docketing the cause	12 1/2
"	Ent appearance of Attorney	12 1/2
"	Ent order appointing Guardian ad litem	25
"	Filing answer of Guardian ad litem	25
"	Entering Decree	25
"	Ent order setting Decree aside	25
"	Ent order granting leave to amend Bill	25
"	Filing Amended Bill	16 1/2
"	Filing answer of Guar to amended Bill	16 1/2
"	<del>Entering</del> deft to answer & filing	18 1/2
"	Ent final Decree	25
"	Making Bill of Costs & copy	3 1/2
"	Making Complete Record	

1844	Sheriff Francis fees	
Apr	Executing & Ret Summons	2.12 1/2
"	Travel 8 Miles	50

Pocket fee 2.50

The many visitors going to the court house said after looking at the old records "Amos Williams never failed to dot an "i" or cross an "t."





Amos Williams To Henry R. Rees D<sup>r</sup>  
 1833 Sept. To making Patent Pref<sup>y</sup> } 5.00  
 for county seal }  
 Rec<sup>d</sup> payment in full  
 Sept. 20, 1833. Henry R. Rees<sup>his</sup>  
 (mark)

The seal is of brass and was made in York, Pa. It weighs about a quarter of a pound and looks more like a scale weight than anything with which it can be compared. On its face is engraved: "Amos Williams, notary public," with the picture of a steamboat and a plow. That was before the neat, easily manipulated seals of today were invented.





### The Old Red Covered Bridge

Built in 1857 and torn down in the 90's.  
It was located west of the Memorial bridge  
across the Vermilion River. A ferry was the  
first means of crossing the river at this point.





The Wabash Bridge.  
Drawn by  
Mary Julia Williams  
Daughter of  
Amos Williams.

The first engine that ever ran into Danville was The Pioneer. It crossed the bridge over the Vermilion River in the latter part of October, 1856.





<u>Subscribers Names</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Solomon Gilbert	\$100.00
Isaac R. Moores	100.00
C. S. Galusha	75.00
C. S. Galusha	25.00
Ferguson Anderson	125.00
Amos Williams	150.00
H. A. Steel	25.00
Jonathan Draper	50.00
James Clyman	100.00
Peleg Cole	50.00
Wm. Moore	25.00
Green B. Look	50.00
Enoch Laycock	50.00
Joshua Parish	25.00
James Cook	10.00
Isaac Froman	50.00
	20.00
<hr/> James Ticknor	25.00
	25.00
<hr/> Joel Ferguson	25.00
Cyrus Dauglap	15.00
Jesse _____	25.00
E. Hamilton	10.00
Loring Draper	50.00
Samuel Hill	5.00
Asa Hamilton	10.00
	15.00
<hr/> Morgan L. Payne	25.00

Some of the names were so worn that they could not be read--spaces were left for these.

The money was never collected and the bridge never built. Later plans were made to build another bridge which was finished in 1857.

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## Early Mail Routes

It was down Clark street and around on Water street along the bluff of the Vermilion river, past Walnut street and Reverend Kingsbury's home, onto Vermilion street that the big lumbering stage coaches wended their way.

In fine weather the mail was carried on top of the old Concord, New Hampshire stage coach, with passengers inside, who paid at the rate of \$.06 a mile. Stage tavern meals were \$.37½ cents. "The mail was to be delivered in four horse post coaches, eight months and residue on horse back."

Some conditions of stage coach travel are well stated in a travelers guide book published in 1843, as the following: "Emmigrants and travelers will find it to their interest always to be a little skeptical relative to statements if stage drivers and agents for stage coach lines, to make some allowances in their own calculations for delays, difficulties, and expenses, and above all, to feel perfectly patient and on good terms with themselves, the officers, and the world generally, if they do not move just as rapidly or fare quite as well as they desire, for they sometimes have break downs and runaways. In rainy bad weather the mail is carried on horseback and then the traveler must do the same or stay at home."

The swindler and horse thief were rampant in the early days and the mail carrier besides giving verbal notice of them, posted bills along the route.

The first article in reference to the mails is a memo taken to Vandalia in January, 1826 by Amos Williams. He must have still been a resident of Paris.

He says, "The people wish the mail route to be extended from Terre Haute to Paris, thence to Vermilion Salt Works, thence to Vermilion Court House Indiana, thence to Clinton and thence to Terre Haute. Once in two weeks and to have a mail from Palestine to Paris once a week.

The first letter we have in our collection, as to the mails is the following, from Paris, Ill.

April 7th 1826

Sir--yours of 1st of March, was duly recd in the 23rd inst. (it took 23 days to come from Washington)--at the Paris P. office, together with a copy of the law, regulating the Post office a key for opening the mail bags and the necessary forms and directions.

I have herewith enclosed you a bond agreeable to the instructions and also the oath and certificate required by law.

I have called on Wm. Barrick who is the contractor, to carry the mail from Palestine, Ill to Paris Ill. to furnish this office with a mail. The number of his route is 385.

The distance from Vermilion C. House Ill. to Paris Ill is 25 miles.

So you see that was the very beginning of the mail route out of Danville.

On Jan. 31--1827 is a receipt to Seymour Treat esquire, for the sum of 57 cents in full for postage from the 2nd day of July, 1826 to the 27 day of Jan. 1827, inclusive.

A. Williams P. M.

On March 10-1828 from Vincennes comes the following letter addressed to Ver. Court House. A large portion of the accompanying letters instead of being forwarded to you by the P. M. of Newport Ver. Co. Ind. as was his duty, have been sent back here, to Vincennes after being some-time detained.

In order to avoid a like occurrence you will please inform me if there is a mail direct for your office--and instruct me in what way to send your letters. Respect, Sam'l Hill P. M.

Next we have in our collection what was known as a way bill for passengers, mail stage office.

Vincennes July 7-1830 It is divided into nine columns. The first one is the passengers name, next is where from--where to, number of passengers from each town, distance going, dollars, cents, extra baggage, and remarks.

Newport Ind. Feby. 21-1828

Dear Sir: I rec'd yours requesting the names of the distributing post offices between this Newport and Chillicothe Vincennes is a Distributing post office and Louisville Ky. is the next D. P. O. southward Cincinnati and Lancaster O. are also D. P. O. I have been in the habit of mailing all eastern letters to Cin. and those for the southward to Louisville and for the different mails of this state to Vincennes.

Very respect yours etc.

S. B. Gardner

This is a letter written to the Post-Master General.

July 10th 1828

Sir--yours of the 25 inst was duly received here last evening, requesting certain information relative to the mail routes leading to this office which I hasten to answer, and am able to state that from Merom Ind. to this place, and on the western end from Newport Ind to this place--which are as follows: The mail leaves Merom Ind. every Monday morning thence 6 miles to Palestine Ill. thence 14 miles to York Ill. thence 9 miles to Clark C. H. Ill. Thence 25 miles to Paris Ill thence 15 miles to Carolus Ill and thence 13 miles to Danville Ill where it arrives every Wed. eve. and the mail from Newport Ind to this place leaves Newport Ind every Friday morning and arrives at Danville Ill. the same evening distance 23 miles. The distance from Danville Ill to Fort Clark Ill is 119 miles. The foregoing is a correct statement of the routes etc. as far as I am acquainted.

A. Williams P. M.

We have a letter written in 1832 by W. B. Archer, saying that a mail route is about to be established to Chicago once in 2 weeks. The arrangement will be very gratifying to the many good and worthy citizens in the north eastern part of our state. He also says they are trying to get a grant of land for a state road and a declaration that the same is located to your town.

Following is the copy of a letter sent by  
P. M. Williams to the P. M. General on Oct 15-  
1834

In answer to the circular from the P. O. Dept  
under date of Sept. 8-1834--I will remark that  
the 1st mail that was received in this county  
was in the month of April 1826, about two months  
after the act of the Legislature of this state  
passed, forming the Co. of Ver. The amount due  
the P. O. Dept. on the 1st of July 1826 was 21 $\frac{3}{4}$ ¢  
and the amt. due the P. O. Dept. for the quarter  
ending 31st of Sept. 1834 is \$1.24 $\frac{1}{2}$ . The busi-  
ness of this office has increased regularly since  
its establishment.

Following are short letters from Hugh Newell,  
written at the time of Van Buren's election.

Iroquois, Ill. or Rossville  
Jan. 7, 1837

A. Williams, Esq.  
P. M. Danville, Ill.

Sir: Please send by the  
bearer Mr. William Armstrong all letters and papers  
in your office, directed to this.

As we have no regular mail, let us have it  
any way in which we can get it.

Yours truly,  
H. Newell  
in great haste

Iroquois, Illinois (Rossville)  
December 13, 1836

A. Williams, Esq.

Sir: For God's sake send us a  
mail as soon as you can find any kind of an op-  
portunity to do it.

We are as you may well suppose  
in great anxiety to get the news. The mail could  
not have failed at a time when the news would  
have been more interesting than at the present  
and unless we get some news soon, darkness will  
cover the land, and gross darkness the people of  
Iroquois.

If the mail does not soon pass,  
please drop me a line giving the result of the  
presidential election and such other news as may  
be interesting to the people generally and send  
it by some traveler.

I am in good health and I hope  
this singular scrawl may find you and your family  
well.

Your friend,

H. Newell

Lawerence, Illinois

Dear Sir

I would inform you agreeable to the Post Master General orders Mr. McDonald and my self will be at your town on Satterday 21th next to establish and convay the mail from that place to Chicago the county seat of Cook in conversation with Mr. Scoot the Post master of Vincennes he thought it would be best to take a brace of mail bags from their place which we will do knowing there is no Saddlery in that place in haste.

Yours Respectfully,  
R. Oliver

Jan 10th 1832

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This letter is establishing the mail from Danville to Chicago January 10, 1832. They speak of carrying a brace of mail bags as they knew there would be no saddlery or harness shop in Chicago.

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Chicago Ill  
Nov. 12th 1833

Sir

The bearer Mr. Herrington is employed by me as Special Carrier, in consequence of the failure of Mr. Oliver, Which is recommended by the General Department. You will please inform him of the times of leaving etc. and other information necessary as he is a stranger in your country. You will please inform him at what place the mail is due--this place for the last three weeks--if within your knowledge.

Very Respectfully yours,  
Gen S. E. Hogan  
Postmaster

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Middletown, Kentucky  
Oct. 14th 1833

Mr. Joseph C. Lander

Sir--I received your favour of the 22nd of Sept. announcing the health and prosperity of your

section which gave me indescribable joy and satisfaction to learn that you are in a prospering condition. I have but little intelligence to communicate you more than the family is well and the ballance of your friends and relatives. We have had an awful visitation of the judgement that are abroad in the land that walketh abroad at noon day and comes like a thief in the night carrying off in its progress its millions of victims. I am happy to inform you the disease has nearly subsided it seems that in our neighborhood we have been the spared monuments of Gods mercy whilst the epidemic has been raging all around us with great violence but comparatively speaking but a few have been numbered among the pale nations of the dead. You wrote to me wishing to know the particulars of the destruction of the cholera and upon this subject I could write you a volume containing 100 pages announcing to you death and destruction but for the want of time and room i shall dismiss the subject. the county of Bourbon alone have lost upwards of 600 souls Fayette and the adjoining counties have suffered greater losses so abundant have been the prescriptions among the regular physicians as well as empyrics that little was effected relative to a cure. I will just here give you the names of a few individuals that fell victims to the epidemic grand father and wife James Fromans wife Lucas Clinkinbeard Black Asher and his father besides many others have had the premonitory symptoms but are convalescent you can just inform your parents that grand father died one of the most triumphant deaths that mortal man can die.

A solemen seriousness seems to prevade all classes and we are litterally in mourning and the work of reformation is going boldly on and the result of gods awful visitation has been the professes subjugation of many truly impetent soul to the church of Christ and there is many more feeling a deep solicitude in consequence of their wicked rebellion against god and we trust the hearts of many christians have been received and a spirit of supplication granted, and indeed it is evident among us that god never said to the seed of Jacob seek ye me in vain.

It is customary among young persons when addressing each other to say something relative

to a matrimonial subject but few have taken place during the elapse of five months Mr. Thomas Owen and Miss Emily Forman on the fourth of July ascended the palladium of Hymenial felicity to enjoy that empyrean flame of glory that crown the connubial state During the crop season we were literally submerged with water which rendered our crops light William Whaley and wife are on a visit to Kentucky. The amount of cash notes on hand and sale bill of grand fathers estate amounts to near 6000 dollars I add no more yours with true regard

J. C. Lander

J. W. Spencer

The following is a letter asking about a favorable location for a distillery.

Mr. Amos Williams

Dear Sir:

I am enquiring for a location in some part of the western country to establish the distillery business--the section where you reside has been favorably represented to me. I take the liberty to ask your opinion of that place for the business and would be more than thankful for the answers to the following enquiries--is there any distillery near you--is rye and corn raised there in sufficient quantity to supply an establishment capable of working from 100 to 200 bushels per day and what is the price--is there a market for some part of the whiskey in the country and what is the price. Where is your market city that can be depended on for a steady market and what is the expense of freights--is there a market for beef and pork that would be fattened from the hops.

What communication have you to New Orleans--the price of freights and the time required to perform the journey. You will observe by this letter that I have but a limited knowledge of your country and would be thankful for a description of the soil and climate--is the water good and above all is it healthy. I am looking for a location to make a permanent residence and will duly appreciate your kindness if you will write me soon as possible regarding the required information. I shall go west in July and should you write favorable will call on you.

Eaton Madison Co. New York Very respectfully yours,  
April 22 1837

Alpheus Morse



## Distillery Comments

Mr. Vanbickle

Sir, I understand you are about erecting a distillery, and this is the cause of my taking the liberty to address you, I hope you will not consider me your enemy because I express my regret at your undertaking, and thus attempt to give you some of my reasons why you should desist.

1st I believe the business will be unprofitable to you. You no doubt expect to make by it but tho it may seem profitable, do you know of any body who of late years has got rich by it? Look at the distillery and grocery keeper in this country and see if you find one who is now in flourishing circumstances, I have closely observed them for the last 8 years and to my knowledge some of them have become drunkards and several of them have failed. I tried to discourage \_\_\_\_\_ when he was beginning but said he, "There is money to be made at it. There is no mistake of it." He went on till he ruined himself and his father in law, the old still then fell into the hands of the \_\_\_\_\_ and they pursued it till they found it unprofitable and now all is left to rot down. \_\_\_\_\_ distillery neither enriched him nor \_\_\_\_\_. Of grocery keepers look at \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and all the rest of them. The most of them were once well off as to property and were temperate. What are they now? Has not a curse generally followed the business?

2ly I believe you will loose a good many friends by the business You must be aware that the making and selling of ardent spirit is condemned as immoral by the majority of the better part of the community. A neighbor of yours feels so bad about it that he has cut out of his paper several pieces on the subject which he wishes you to read and he says if you knew how much many of your neighbors are opposed to it you would not strike a lick upon it. He says he fals and some others fal as tho they ought not to raise any grain or do anything else for a man who will engage in the business. Now sir, is it wise to pursue a calling which will set the best of men against you?

3ly The business is discountenanced by the laws of the state. Two states have already forbidden the retailing of spirits and several others have done very much to discourage it. Will you look at the laws of our state on this subject? A copy I have enclosed. Why do our laws oppose if the calling is good?

4ly The offices of the business are ruinous on the community. Of the poverty, misery and crime produced by it you cannot be an entire stranger--you can live by more honorable and profitable feelings I have no doubt. That you have seen very little come of the use of the article there can be no doubt and now the question whether you will commence a business which has ruined so many as to property, character and health? Some of your friends hope that upon due reflection you will abandon the object. Will you be so good as to peruse the pieces which your friend sent you they can do you no harm--my hope is they will do you much good. Accept this from a well wisher.

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#### Guerdon S. Hubbard

Col. Guerdon S. Hubbard is a native of Vermont. At the age of sixteen years he left Montreal to come west and engage in business for the American Fur Company in Mackinaw. He reached Chicago in October, 1818. Mr. Hubbard followed the Indian hunting grounds and in this manner acquired a knowledge of all the country between the Wabash and Illinois Rivers, as far north as Chicago and south to Vincennes. The trading posts of the Illinois brigade of the American Fur Company were on the Iroquois, the Embarrass and Little Wabash. In 1824 he succeeded Antonin Des Champs, who for forty years before had charge of the company's trade between the two rivers. Col. Hubbard abandoned the posts on the Illinois and introduced the pack-horses in place of boats, using the "Hubbard's trace", as his trail from Chicago to the salt works was called, to conduct the fur trade. In 1827 he abandoned the posts on the Embarrass and Little Wabash, and later con-

structed the first frame building--a store house--ever erected in Danville or the county. It was located on the southeast side of the public square, number two East Main street. This became the head of the Indian fur trade in this part of the country.

The Indians would file into town on their ponies, sometimes fifty or one hundred, with their furs, squaws, papposes and trade at Hubbard's corner would be unusually lively. The Indians camped on the bluff east of Vermilion street where they enjoyed themselves and feasted on bread made of flour, and upon meat and other luxuries for which they traded their furs. I just know the old settlers had as good a time and as much excitement when Guerdon S. Hubbard and his band of Indians filed into town as we do on circus day.

In 1832 the fur trade declined owing to the scarcity of fur-bearing animals. Col. Hubbard converted his stock into white goods--as merchandise suitable for white people were called to distinguish them from the kind adapted to the Indian trade. In this same year Hubbard sold his stock to Dr. Fithian and in 1833 took up his permanent residence in Chicago. The old records of the county clearly illustrate the activity and energy of this remarkable man. While a citizen of this county he was foremost in every enterprise to develop the resources of the county. As canal commissioner he cast the first shovel of earth out of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. No man did more than Col. Hubbard to give Vermilion county and Danville a start.

Taken from the "History of Vermilion County."

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Guerdon S. Hubbard died September 14th 1886-----  
Guerdon S. Hubbard, the famous pioneer of Illinois died yesterday at his residence, 143 Locust street, Chicago. Mr. Hubbard had been an invalid for nearly four years, and for a year prior to his death was totally blind. One of his eyes were removed about three years ago owing to blood-poisoning, and it was found necessary to remove the other a year ago this fall. He died peacefully at 11:15 a. m., surrounded by his wife his daughter, Mrs. Alice Williams, of Northfield,

Minn., and the other members of his family. The cause of death was old age and a general breaking up of the system. The arrangements for the funeral have not yet been made, owing to the absence of some of the immediate relatives of the family, but the services will probably be held next Friday.

Mr. Hubbard was well known to a large number of the older citizens of Danville, and the following biographical sketch will be of great interest to them.

Guerdon S. Hubbard was born at Windsor, Vt., August 22, 1802, and attended the school of his native town until he was 11 years of age. He lived at Bridgewater, Mass., until 1815 when his father decided to move to Montreal to practice law. On reaching that point it was found that a residence of five years in the province was necessary to entitle him to do so, and the loss thus sustained made it necessary for young Hubbard to make his own living. For a year or two he was employed as a clerk in a hardware store in that city, and then engaged for five years with the American Fur Company at a salary of \$120 a year. A party consisting of twelve clerks and 100 Canadian voyagers was made up to go west in the interests of the company, and to this party young Hubbard was attached. After an adventurous voyage the party reached Mackinaw July 4, when it divided and Mr. Hubbard was assigned to the Illinois trading expedition, which consisted of twelve boats. It coasted along the eastern side of Lake Michigan and reached Chicago about November 1, 1818. There was then besides Fort Dearborn, with its small garrison, a log house occupied by Mr. John Kinzie and one log cabin in which lived a Frenchman. The party proceeded up the South Branch to Bridgeport and from there across the prairie through Mud Lake to the Desplaines river and down it to the present site of Hennepin, where the Bureau trading post was located. Here Mr. Hubbard spent his first winter among the Indians. He kept the accounts of the expedition, being the only person there who could read or write. There he learned the Indian language and made himself acquainted with their habits, modes of life and of hunting. In the spring of the next year he returned to Mackinaw, and remained there till 1826, when he succeeded to the command of



### First Frame Building in Danville, Illinois

Stood on the southeast corner of the Public Square. It was erected by G. S. Hubbard in 1827 for his fur-trading post with the Indians.

Mrs. L. T. Palmer, mother of Mr. C. J. Palmer of the Palmer Bank, says, "It was the first store I ever saw. I went across the public square through the hazel brush when quite a small girl with some of my people to see this store."



the brigade whose headquarters were located there. He then made another trip to Chicago, and against much opposition changed the plans of operation schulled the boats in the Chicago river, purchased houses for the party and made an overland trip, locating trading posts as he went between the Kankakee and upper Sangamon and Okau rivers. This route was long known as "Hubbard's Trail." In the spring he returned with his pack-horses laden with furs and peltries to Chicago. He then raised his boats, loaded them and returned with their cargoes to Mackinaw. In this manner he coasted Lake Michigan twenty-six times in open boats. In 1827 he took one half profits in the company instead of a salary, and in 1828 he bought out the interest of the American Fur Company in Illinois and became sole owner of the posts he had established.

In the spring of 1832 word was received that the Black Hawk band of Indians were killing the inhabitants on the Desplaines and Fox rivers. He persuaded Colonel Moore to call out the Vermilion county militia and march at once to the scene of these barbarities without awaiting orders from the governor, and at his own expense he furnished the wagons, provisions and ammunition necessary. When they arrived at Joliet a stockade fort was erected and one company was left there; another was sent to Dupage, where another stockade was built. The balance of the regiment joined General Atkinson, who, with the United States troops, had arrived on the Illinois River near Starved Rock. The regiment was then disbanded, as their services were no longer required, and Mr. Hubbard joined a spy company. In 1832 he was elected to represent Vermilion county in the legislature, where he introduced and passed a bill for the opening of the Illinois and Michigan canal.

Mr. Hubbard's trading post in this city was recently torn down to permit the erection of the Palmer building, on the south side of the public square.

In 1833 he confined his business to Chicago, and in 1834 built the first brick edifice ever erected in Chicago. It was built at the corner of Franklin and South Water streets and the brick were manufactured near the spot. It was a big structure for those days, and was known as "Hubbard's Folly."

Mr. Hubbard was seen at every meeting of the legislature working for the passage of a bill authorizing the building of the Illinois and Michigan canal. This passed in 1855, and Mr. Hubbard was made one of the three commissioners. In connection with A. T. Spencer and Co. he organized the first steamboat line between Chicago and Lake Superior, on which plied the steamers Superior and Lady Elgin.

Taken from a newspaper clipping dated Sept. 15, 1886.

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The many letters received by Amos Williams from Colonel Hubbard are now in the University of Illinois.

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### An Evening Frolic

About 1830, Dr. Fithian fitted up a handsome residence, 116 North Gilbert street, with a "planed floor" of hard wood lumber. Such an extravagance was unknown in Danville until that time. Puncheon floors were all the rage, and some evil genius or something else put it into the doctor's head to have a planed floor; at least, so Harris McDonald thought before he got through with his first night's experience with "that floor". He coaxed the carpenter who was building the house to let the boys have just one dance on that floor before the latch-string was turned over to the stern physician, who, in all probability, would veto any such irregular demonstration. Harris was a natural leader, and having been the originator of the night's frolic, he insisted on leading in the first reel, this, notwithstanding there were several older men and older residents in the crowd, whom a just man would have given precedence to. It caused no little feeling, but he carried the point, and placed himself, in dress gorgeously got up for the occasion, at the head of the first figure. Tight breeches, with straps passing under the shoes had just come into vogue, and Harris was the only one of the company who had the good fortune to have a pair for the occasion. He was on the top wave of internal ecstasy when the



music struck up, and the fantastic toe tripped lightly in unison to its mazy strains. Happiness in great solid chunks beamed from his delighted countenance, as he chassed down the outside, cutting enlarged pigeon-wings at every draw of the bow. No beau present "could hold a candle" to him, much less discount his graceful step. But, as if "pride must have a fall", as he attempted to bring up to a perpendicular at the foot of the set, he forgot, for the instant, that he was on a new-fangled "planed floor", and his heels slipped out from under him, and he fell flat. He tried to recover his perpendicular, but the tight pants would not yield an inch and he was as helpless as a babe. After repeated trials, to the evident satisfaction of those who had felt snubbed at his course in assuming the lead, some friend unbuttoned the straps of his pants, and two strong men tilted him up onto his feet again, and the dance went on. It was thought by his simple hearted comrades that it was "a judgment on him" for his lamentable behavior in thus thrusting himself before his betters.

Taken from the "History of Vermilion County", by H. W. Beckwith.

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Letter Written by Mrs. Enoch Kingsbury  
for publication  
in the 70's

In conversation with Mrs. Willis Hubbard who resides in Oakwood, a few days since, she related several anecdotes respecting the early settlements of this town which may amuse your readers.

She was present at the first celebration of Independence in Danville, Illinois when Sheriff Reed read the Declaration thereof, and the dinner table was set on the north of what is now the McCormic house. For twelve years the same Sheriff read the same Declaration to increasing audiences. It was Mr. Reed who preferred to pay the entire tax, which extended to the state line including Chicago, rather than to collect it. If my memory serves me right it amounted to something less than three dollars. She thinks there were

not more than one half dozen families who could have been called on for taxes at that time.

Forty-three years ago last April Sheriff Reed lived in a pole cabin where Daniels has a coal bank near West Main street. The Indians were so numerous sometimes on their floor at night that the family could not pass across the room. Rattlesnakes too were plenty in those days. One of the dens may still be seen on the bluff south of Franklin street. It was among the amusements of early settlers to hunt them during the night. On the day of the sale of town lots horses that were hitched near Shraders block were so annoyed by them that the sale was interrupted as the horses were breaking loose. After killing the rattlesnakes awhile, business was resumed and the lots sold.

Sheriff-Reed bought the highest lot, which was on the north side of Main street a few rods west of the present court house for forty-nine dollars. The corner lot east of the McCormic house brought seventeen dollars. There had been a proposition made to have the county seat near the Salt Works, six miles west of the present site and I think ground was surveyed for that purpose but not being satisfactory, Dan Beckwith proposed to give forty acres and Guy Smith of Palestine forty more and the town received its present location. It was given especially for the county seat, taking a part of the name of one of the donors.

The first court was held by Mr. Jesse Gilbert and as there was no business to transact the worthy judge playfully fined the landlord for selling one half pint of liquor to the party then present.

James Kingsbury gave this paper  
to M. L. Woodbury, March, 1888.

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### Estray Pound

Vermilion County was organized in 1826 and the first town lots in Danville were sold in April, 1827. The sale was conducted by Amos Williams as county agent and also one of the

county commissioners. He had been appointed postmaster of Vermilion county in 1826.

Now it must not be forgotten that Danville was only a tiny village in the woods, far from anywhere. The postoffice business and county business together did not require a great deal of time and maybe did not furnish much cash either. Then too in those old days of over a hundred years ago there were no wire fences. Our miles and miles of Illinois prairie did not furnish much wood and there were few lumber mills. Most of the dwellings were log cabins and men had to cut the logs and cut wood to keep the hearth-stones warm. There was no coal in use at that time. It required time to split rails for fences and time to build the fences and survey the land to determine just where fences should be located.

All these conditions led to the custom of permitting cattle and horses to roam about and some times they would get so far away that their true location was hard to determine. This led to the passage of a law requiring owners to prove their claims as the following letter shows. Amos Williams being a county officer stationed here in Danville, the county seat, was the rightful person before whom such cases had to be brought, and that there should be a place for the care of farm animals till their ownership could be determined, a pound was built for the county by Phillips Stanford at a cost of nine dollars and ninety-four cents on a spot of ground on the east side of South Vermilion street.

This pound may have been unoccupied most of the time. At any rate Amos Williams found time for many other things.

Madie Woodbury

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My. A. Williams Dear Sir--I have found a yoke of oxen strayed from me in this place taken up by Phillip Stanford and he in order to accommodate me has given them up to me without proving them as the law requires. I have promised to make proof of the same to your satisfaction before the year expires--will you be so kind as to drop me a line and say if my affidavit and John Lowery before a Magistrate will do or must the proof be made before in person direct your line to Decatur my County Town I should be glad to hear from you any how. Your sincere friend. William Lowry

State of Illinois )  
Vermilion County ) ss

I Amos Williams Clerk of the County Commissioners Court in and for said county do hereby certify that proof has this day been made before me by the oath of Thomas Froman that Johathan Maxwell is the owner of a certain estray horse of the following description to wit: a sorrel horse sixteen hands high eight or nine years old left hind foot white to the pastern joint, some saddle marks

taken up by Harman Cannaday and posted before Corbin R. Heutt Esq. on the twentieth day of June 1834 These are therefore to direct you the said Harman Cannaday to make restitution of said animal without delay according to law Given under my hand at Danville Ill this twenty fourth day of June A. D. 1834

A. Williams, Clerk

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State of Illinois )  
Vermilion County ) Commissioners Court, Dec. Term,  
To the agent for said County, 1827  
Sir--Pay Phillip Stanford nine dollars,  
ninety-three and three fourth cents out of any  
money in your hands not otherwise appropriated,  
for erecting a stray-pound in the town of Danville,  
for said County of Vermilion.

Attest

Recd. the within in full of A. Williams, Clerk  
A. Williams, county agent.  
Dec. 6, 1827  
Phillip Stanford

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#### A Reminiscence of Miss Clara Palmer in 1915

Miss Clara Palmer, Danville's oldest resident at that time, 1915, still remembers many humorous and interesting incidents concerning the Stagecoach. Miss Palmer was born in 1828. Her father, Dr. A. R. Palmer, was the first physician in Vermilion County. He, with his son, E. Fitch Palmer, opened the first drug store in Danville at the northeast corner of Main and Walnut streets. Miss Palmer recalls that returning to Danville from a trip

**Liberty, Union County, Indiana, }**

Dear Sir,—

*May 29-1845*

Though no personal acquaintance with you, I desire to enlist your aid in detecting a grand rascal and most black-hearted thief. The man I refer to, calls himself 'Dr. Charles E. Pierre,' though report says that previously he sometimes called himself Bierre, and at other times and places, Hilgenburg. He is a German by birth, but was perhaps bred in Pennsylvania. The German language is evidently his mother tongue. He converses English and French, though imperfectly. He pretends to have studied his profession and been educated in France and Germany. He is from twenty-five to twenty-eight years of age, five feet ten inches high, straight built, well proportioned, dark hair, florid complexion, brown eyes, near-sighted, and wears spectacles constantly; is excessively fond of a horse which he rides most admirably; is of a lively and good humored turn, stirring habits, affable manners, sanguine temperament, reckless disposition, and can tell a lie with as much assurance as any man living. In his profession he is extremely egotistical; will undertake to furnish a remedy for every disease to which the human family is subject, and tell of many marvelous cures he has performed.

This notorious impostor came here some eighteen months since under circumstances not very credible to himself, and commenced the practice of medicine.—But by his close attention to business, he was successful, and, as a physician, became popular with many persons. About the first of April, under the pretence that he was going to Dayton, Ohio, on business, he borrowed a fine buggy, grey horse, two sets of harness, stole an elegant silver watch, and decamped to parts unknown. He went away in most lordly style, with two match grey horses to the buggy, both of which are six or seven years old, large, handsome, trot and pace. His own, and the one he will probably keep as his riding horse, has a spot of sorrel or brown hairs, as large or larger than a man's hand on one side of his face, between his eye and his nose, which renders him very notable, and is one of the most lofty, fast and stately pacers to be found any where. The skin was once knocked off his knees, which have not haired over. He will probably change his name again; but to what, I know not — The cognomen, "Dr.," he will, however, not change. He is very fond of it, and will claim it, tho' all the world should refuse to let him wear it.

If this rake, (for such he is,) has perched himself in your vicinity, (and if he has you'll know him,) do have the goodness to drop me a line per mail, and you shall be amply rewarded for the kindness.

Yours, Respectfully.

ZIBA CASTERLINE.

*Please send this to the Sheriff of your county who will aid in detecting the fellow and whom we ask to write to me if such a man be in your vicinity. Be kind enough gentlemen to attend to this and your favours will be duly appreciated —*

*Z C*



# SWINDLING.

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EVANSVILLE, Indiana, 20th October, 1837.

Dear Sir; A few days since, an individual calling himself Greene B. Lewellen, came to this place, and made some purchases of property: among other things, two horses, one a fine young bay horse, black mane and tail, remarkably handsome neck, smooth limbs, and a natural trotter, about five years old, and valued at \$125. The other a sorrel horse, both eyes defective, both hind feet white, and it is thought, one of the fore feet also white; the sorrel is an easy trotter, but owing to the defect in his eyes, he scares and stumbles; a spot of hair has recently been rubbed off his hip, a little back of the loins.

The man is about 45 or 50 years old, rather a down look, had a bruise over one eye, and an excessive talker, and about 5 feet 8 or 9 inches high. He obtained the property by representing that he had funds in the bank in Louisville, exhibited evidences of that fact, and checked for the amount, when in fact, such a man was unknown to the bank. He had a boy with him whom he called his son, of about 17 years old, dressed in a light summer frock coat. Should such individual have passed your place, please address the subscribers, who will use every exertion to bring such a swindler to justice.

LYON & WILCOX,





East with her father, they took a canal boat at Toledo and via Fort Wayne, Logansport, Lafayette, and Covington they journeyed slowly. It being Sunday when they arrived on the Wabash Canal at Covington and no stage or rig being at hand to carry them to Danville, they continued by boat to Perrysville, where they obtained a rig and drove to Danville, completing their journey of some weeks.

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### Transportation

In these days of rapid transit by railroad and auto truck and even by airplane, it is hard to realize that there was a time when all goods of whatever kind from other towns or any where had to be brought to Danville by horses and wagons or perhaps some came in small boats on the Vermilion river. Most of the supplies from the East were shipped from Cincinnati down the Ohio river as far as the mouth of the Wabash. Then they came up the Wabash to Perrysville or Covington and from there to Danville they were brought by horses and wagons. If the roads happened to be too muddy or snowy the goods had to be stored in a warehouse till the roads could be used. A letter would be sent over by a man on horseback to tell that the goods had arrived and wagons would go over as soon as possible.

There was no rush like there is now. People could wait for weeks and months. They learned to make many things for themselves and could do many ways and even if not so perfect it did not matter so much as most of them were plain people not used to the best in the world any way. Then too many things were not known then that are old facts now.

Madie Woodbury

---

September 28, 1934

Miss Mary Woodbury,  
515 Vermilion Street,  
Danville, Illinois.

My dear Miss Woodbury:

In 1841 the Wabash and Erie Canal was successfully operated from Fort Wayne, Indiana to

Lafayette. In 1844 it was completed to Terre Haute and to Evansville in 1852. The length of the canal in Indiana was 375 miles and it extended 84 miles into Ohio. Lake Erie commerce nearly doubled during the years from 1841-46 at the time the canal began to operate a through traffic.

The water must have come from the rivers which were connected, the Maumee and the Wabash. The lands in northern Indiana through which it passed were very marshy.

There is no doubt that goods were carried over the canal both in an easternly and a westernly direction.

I hope my letter gives you the information which you need. It is the best that I can do in the time which I have available. I was unable to get in that time such facts as width and depth of the canal.

The route of the canal was as follows:

"It commenced on the Wabash and continued along the bank of the river up to the mouth of Little River; thence up the Little river to the mouth of the Abaite river; thence across that stream and up another branch of the Little river to its source; thence across the summit, seven miles, to the junction of the St. Joseph's and St. Mary's, at Fort Wayne. The water needed on the summit level was supplied by a feeder, fourteen miles long, from St. Joseph's.

From Fort Wayne the canal descended along the Maumee to the town of Maumee, at the lower end of the rapids of that river. The Miami Canal in Ohio was then continued to the Maumee to intersect the Wabash and Erie canal....."

From Elliott, J. P. History of Evansville and Vanderburgh County, Indiana. 1897 p. 101

Yours sincerely,

Marguerite Anderson

Reference Assistant.

## Rules for the stage drivers on the East end

Leave Mt Pleasant at 11 o'clock and arrive  
at Busey's by 7 next morning  
Leave Busey's at 8 and arrive at Davis' by 2  
Leave Davis' at 3 and arrive at Danville by  
8

Leave Danvill at 12 and arrive at Davis' by  
5  
Leave Davis' at 6 and arrive at Busey's by  
12  
Leave Busey's at 1 and arrive at Mt Pleasant  
by 8

The drivers at the end must start promptly  
at the time fixed, neither before nor after as it  
depends on their start to have correct time through  
the lines

Though the middle drivers may not start  
exactly at the time fixed for them, yet they must  
make their drive within their own time, and in  
every case where one driver without the best  
excuse shall consume more than a half hour of the  
time of another driver he shall forfeit and pay  
one dollar, which shall be deducted from his wages

No driver must arrive at the end of his  
drive more than one hour before the time fixed  
for his arrival, as the time of arrival should be  
uniform and preparation made accordingly

In every case where two drivers fail to pay  
the way bill, and it is left each one of those  
drivers shall forfeit fifty cents which shall be  
deducted from their wages

In case of high waters or any other obstruc-  
tion rendering it impossible for a driver to pro-  
ceed, he shall get a certificate of a post master  
which shall be sent to the contractor, and if he  
fail to do this he shall be charged with whatever  
fine the Post Master General shall afix against  
the contractor

Polite and gentlemanly deportment is required  
from the drivers, especially towards passengers  
and those with whom they board

The above rules must be particularly observed  
and any driver who does not intend strictly to  
abide by them had better immediately quit, as each  
one shall be held in every case accountable

Bloomington  
May 4th 1844

J. E. M. Clum

P. O. Vincennes 10 Mch 1828

Sir

A large portion of the accompanying letters instead of being forwarded by the Post Master at Newport Vermillion Co Ind to your office as was his duty have been sent back to this office after having been some time detained.

In order to avoid a like occurrence you will please inform me if there is a mail direct for your office--and instruct me in what way to send your letters.

Respectfully

James Hill

P. M.  
Vermillion C. H.  
Ill.

---

This letter came to Vermillion Court House Ill. July 2nd 1826, before Danville was located.

The first lots were sold in Danville April 10, 1827.

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The following is a request from the Postmaster General in 1839 concerning the number of newspapers published in this county.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

Appointment Office,

April 27th 1839

Sir:

I am directed by the Postmaster General to request you to report to this Office, with all convenient despatch, the names of all Newspapers, Magazines and Periodical Works published in your own County and the Counties adjoining, and the names of the places where they are respectively published. The object of this requirement is, ultimately to ascertain, as nearly as may be, the number of Newspapers, etc. transported in the Mails.

Very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,

Rob. Johnston  
Second Asst. Postmaster General

To the Honorable

The Post Master General of the United States

The undersigned Citizens of Vermilion County in the State of Illinois beg leave to represent that some time in the Spring of the year 1810, Amos Williams, Post Master at Danville, and Daniel C. Hill, Post Master at Georgetown, in said County and State, were removed from office, "Proscribed for opinions sake" upon a letter written by one Saml. McRoberts in which said letter said Mr Roberts asks for the removal of the said Post Masters to use his own language, "Upon political grounds" which letter was (and is yet unless destroyed) on file in the Post office Department, to which letter we beg leave most respectfully to invite your particular attention for proof of the unreasonable and uncompromising manner in which "Proscription for opinions sake" was insisted upon and carried out by the supporters and officers of the late administration, in the removal of faithful and competent Public officers to make room for brawling partisans.

We beg leave to state that from the time of the establishment of a Post office in Vermilion County Ill. and when the salary of the officer did not amount to the sum of twenty five cents per quarter, until the time of the removal above mentioned, Amos Williams acted as our Post Master, and that we unhesitatingly refer your honor for any evidence of his capability and faithfulness and promptitude in paying over all monies coming into his hands, to the many receipts made by him, and now on file in the Post office Department.

We are aware that Amos Williams and Daniel C. Hill have been and may again be complained of by unreasonable and ambitious Demagogues, but we unhesitating defy any man to point out two more faithful and competent Post Masters.

We beg leave further to state that they were removed from contrary to the known will & wishes of four fifths of the Citizens of Vermilion County. On this subject we speak knowingly for attempts had been made here to manufacture charges upon which to effect their removal, and petitions were gotten up for that purpose, but the great body of the people without distinction of party refused to sign them.

We beg leave further to state that application was made through two of our Representatives in Congress Hon. J. Lewis & Hon. S. Stuart for a copy of the letter of the said Samuel McRoberts, then on file in the Post office Department, as also a specification of the charges if any upon which our Post Masters were turned out.

All of which you will see by the annexed correspondence will denied us. Under a full view of all the circumstances we therefore most respectfully ask a restoration of the two persons above named to the office of Post Master at the places named in connection with their names respectively. — (not doubting but that time will fully satisfy your honor of the propriety of the measure.

Amos Williams

This is a petition written by Amos Williams to reinstate himself and Postmaster Hill at Georgetown. The petition was never circulated..



Business of the post office from October 1, 1829  
to May 27, 1840-----kept by Amos Williams

*Dr* Amos Williams P.M. Danville Ill. in *Ac* with the United States *Co*

To Balances due on his quarterly returns as P.M. 1829		1830 Jan 1	By <i>Ac</i> in fav	W. Lewis	22 18
From July 1 to Oct 1 1829	30 32	July 1	" " "	James Skinner	100 00
" Oct 1 " Dec 31 "	25 67	1831 July 1	" " "	Saml. Harriman	95 25
" Jan 1 " April 1 1830	24 40	" " "	" " "	Oliver & M. Donalds	62 50
" April 1 " July 1 "	42 66	" " "	" " "	Sills	10 00
" July 1 " Oct 1 "	46 22	Oct 1	" " "	Ditto	37 50
" Oct 1 " Dec 31 "	44 34	1832 Jan 1	By Cash		140 00
" Jan 1 " April 1 1831	55 16	April 13	" Cash		60 00
" April 1 " July 1 "	69 64	July 13	" Cash		70 00
" July 1 " Oct 1 "	68 02	Oct 13	" Cash		65 00
" Oct 1 " Dec 31 "	46 74	1833 Jan 1	" Cash		60 00
" Jan 1 " April 1 1832	60 16	April 12	" Cash		85 00
" April 1 " July 1 "	67 72	July 18	" Cash		80 00
" July 1 " Oct 1 "	66 87	Oct 18	" Cash		85 00
" Oct 1 " Dec 31 "	60 89	1834 Jan 1	" Cash		90 00
" Jan 1 " April 1 1833	85 41	April 16	" Cash		90 00
" April 1 " July 1 "	81 18	July 16	" Cash		85 00
" July 1 " Oct 1 "	84 70	Oct 24	" Cash		125 00
" Oct 1 " Dec 31 "	67 64	1835 Jan 1	" Cash		70 00
" Jan 1 " April 1 1834	90 28	April 17	" Cash		115 00
" April 1 " July 1 "	85 66	July 10	" Cash		120 00
" July 1 " Oct 1 "	122 58	1835 Oct 9	" Mail Bago		12
" Oct 1 " Dec 31 "	70 25	Dec 31	" This sum to <i>Ac</i> Saml. Emison		122 25
" Jan 1 " April 1 1835	116 30	1836 Jan 9	" " " to		103 39
" April 1 " July 1 "	117 12	April 15	" " " to		137 63
" July 1 " Oct 1 "	122 39	June 30	" " " Mail Bago		93
" Oct 1 " Dec 31 "	103 85	July 12	" " " to Saml. Emison		162 86
" Jan 1 " Mar 31 1836	138 50	Sept 30	" " " Mail Bago		37
" April 1 " June 30 "	163 32	Oct 11	" " " Saml. Emison		163 92
" July 1 " Sept 30 "	163 93	1837 Jan 30	" " " to		149 20
" Oct 1 " Dec 31 "	131 87	April 10	" " " to		181 80
" Jan 1 " Mar 31 1837	181 97	July 8	" " " to		204 29
" April 1 " June 30 "	203 57	Nov 24	" " " to		191 05
" July 1 " Sept 30 "	189 20	1838 Feb 6	" " " to		160 16
" Oct 1 " Dec 31 "	160 67	May 5	By This sum to <i>Ac</i> M. Keltin & Murphy		321 17
" Jan 1 " Mar 31 1838	221 18	Sept 4	" " " to & to		205 78
" April 1 " June 30 "	205 78	Oct 23	" " " to & to		223 64
" July 1 " Sept 30 "	223 90	1839 Jan 15	" " " to & to		207 59
" Oct 1 " Dec 31 "	210 78	1840 Sept 9	" Draft at 92 55		934 08
" Jan 1 " Mar 31 1839	342 05	May 27	" " " 169		100 00
" April 1 " June 30 "	221 67				
" July 1 " Sept 30 "	209 61				
" Oct 1 " Dec 31 "	171 48				
" Jan 1 " Mar 31 1840	212 73				
" April 1 " June 2	156 00				
	5300 63				
				By Balances -	162 57
					5300 63

To Balance - 162 57





Chicago. Ill Jan 1 1833

Sir  
Your favor of the 25<sup>th</sup><sup>ult</sup> is before me  
I am much obliged to you for your information in  
regard to the mails - Our Eastern Mail (from Miles M.T.)  
arrives here every Wednesday Evening and leaves for miles every  
Thursday morning - You will see by the list of Contracts made  
this year that the mail from this office to Decatur via  
Mouth of Fox is to arrive and depart precisely at the  
same day and hour as the Danville mail - The Express  
mail to Green Bay M.T. goes about once a month  
on foot -

Very Respectfully  
Yours obt. Serv<sup>t</sup>  
A Williams Esq  
J. S. C. Hogan

P.M.

Danville  
Ill



Sir

(Danville, Ill. Oct 13. 1834)

In answer to the Circular from the Post Office Department under date of September 8. 1834. I will remark that the first mail that was received in this County was in the month of April 1826. - about two months after the act of the Legislature of this State passed forming the county of Vermilion. - The amount due the Post Office Department on the 1st of July 1826. was 21  $\frac{3}{4}$  cents and the amount due the Post Office Department for the quarter ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 1834. is \$1.24 17  $\frac{1}{2}$  - The business of this office has increased ~~regularly~~ <sup>regularly</sup> since its establishment. - As to the first enquiry I am unable to say precisely what effect the extension of the franking privilege, referred to has had upon the revenue of the Department. - In any I think a very little, for this reason, that this Country is yet new and but little doing, here in comparison to many other parts of the Country.

As to the second enquiry I can say that I know of no ~~en~~ violations and violations of the law restricting the privilege, unless franking circulars by Members of Congress, preceding an Election be so considered. - As to the third enquiry - No cases of the abuses of the privileges by its being made to cover matter not proper for transportation by mail, have come to my knowledge.

As to the fourth enquiry. The practice of sending written or printed matter of any and every description to the Postmaster at this Office in order that it may be disseminated without cost has always been carefully attended to by marking the proper postage so that the <sup>Department</sup> ~~Government~~ should receive the proper amount of revenue.

As to the fifth enquiry - 1<sup>st</sup> Letters upon which postage is charged, (by the Southern mail), I should suppose about six to ten ounces per week, 2<sup>d</sup> Newspapers and pamphlets, from six to ten pounds - 3<sup>d</sup> Matter of all kinds whether written or printed, not chargeable with postage, about ten ounces per week including the official business of the Land Office at this place which is vastly more than all the other free matter taken together.

The above is a probable estimate - as the mail has never been weighed at this office, it is out of my power to be very precise - during and immediately subsequent to the sitting of Congress perhaps some larger. The average weight of the mail sent from and received at this Office, I would suppose is from eight to sixteen pounds per week.

If the comparative weight in the year 1829. was very small - owing to their being neither a printing office or Land Office at this place.



Post Office Danville Ill  
May 11, 1835

Sir

Yours under date of 27th of April was received this evening. In answer to which I can inform you that there is not any newspapers, pamphlets or magazines printed in this County. In the adjoining county south, Paris (Edgar) the "Illinois Statesman" is published weekly. In the adjoining county West (Champaign) there is none published in the adjoining county north (Iroquois) there is none published. In the adjoining county east the Perrysville Banner is published at Perrysville Indiana weekly.

---

This is the story of another Indenture.

Dr. William W. R. Woodbury was born in Ripley County, Indiana, November 19th, 1824. He was the oldest son of eight children born to Gardner Woodbury, a Yankee school teacher of New Hampshire, and his wife, Elizabeth Songer, who was born in Virginia. They met in the southern woods of Indiana and were married there. After some time they put up a log cabin of their own which was still so new when little William arrived that the home made door had not yet been hung on, and the chilly air of November was kept out by a blanket hanging over the doorway. Grandma Songer sat up at night to watch and see that no wolf entered the cabin and carried away the baby. This is the story that Grandma told us as little folks.

In 1833 the family moved to Illinois and settled on a small piece of hilly land in South Danville. Gardner had caught a severe cold wading in the water while helping to load grain on flat boats to go down the Ohio river and on to New Orleans as was often done in those days. That happened while still in Indiana. As a result of the cold Gardner Woodbury became greatly troubled with rheumatism which gradually grew worse. He therefore, was most likely glad that he could apprentice his son, William W. R. Woodbury, to Dr. Wm. Fithian, a leading physician of early Danville.

The papers were dated November 10th, 1841 and the father, Gardner Woodbury, died December 30th, 1841. William was to learn to be a druggist, which he did.

He lived at the Fithian home and spent part of his time doing farm work. He some times hauled stove wood in a farm wagon from the Fithian farm at Fithian some sixteen or seventeen miles west of Danville. In between times he read books from the Fithian library. One of the first being a big history of the world. He read it through in about two weeks. When he handed the volumes back to Dr. Fithian the doctor appeared pleased that he could read so well and so rapidly. Then he said, "Now let us go in my study and see how much you remember." Turning to a chronological table, the doctor began to ask questions. Poor little Billy could only answer a very few. There upon the books were handed back to the boy with the directions to read them again more carefully. It was six months before that boy brought those books back and when questioned that time he answered nearly all. The doctor was pleased for sure and said, "You will do to study medicine." The study was started. Young William learned the names of trees, flowers, weeds and drugs. When he was through his apprenticeship with Dr. Fithian he clerked in the drug store of Dudley Sconce and lived part of the time with the Sconce family. It was hard to save money to attend Rush Medical College in Chicago but he did and graduated as a physician in February, 1850. He had been obliged to borrow a little money from Dr. Fithian to meet the expenses of the last few weeks at college. The doctor continued to take a friendly interest in William W. R. Woodbury as long as he lived and that was a good while for Dr. Fithian lived to be ninety-one years of age.

Dr. Woodbury gradually bought the Sconce Drug Store which still exists as the Woodbury Drug Store on West Main street, Danville, Illinois. James A. D. Sconce was the first owner of the drug store, starting it in 1846. Dr. Woodbury bought half interest in 1850.

Madie Woodbury

## The Indenture

These are the notes relative to having Mr. and Mrs. Gardner Woodbury's oldest son, Billy, "bound out" to Dr. Fithian. How would the boys of today like this?

An indenture for William W. R. Woodbury aged 17 ys the 19th of Nov. 1841 until 21 years of age.

Fithian upon his part is to keep said William in boarding washing and lodging and apparel suitable to his station, and to give him at the end of his time or in other words upon his arriving at the age of 21, the sum of one hundred dollars in cash or in clothing as he may elect and to pay now to Gardner Woodbury the father of Wm. the sum of seventeen dollars.

And to instruct said William in the art of merchandising or as a druggist so far as the said Fithian is able and capable.

Insert the necessary clauses for the service of William Jr.

---

Dr. Fithian and Billy Woodbury became fast friends--almost like father and son. He always finished his letters to Billy, "Write soon and often"--your friend,

Dr. Fithian.





Mercersburg from Paris sep 25  
 1825

Mrs Mary Beckwith 25  
 Danville  
 Vermillion County  
 Illinois  
 OCT 12 1833

Amos Williams  
 Post Master  
 Vermilion County post office  
 Illinois  
 May 29 1826

A. James Williams  
 Terre Haute  
 Vigo County, Indiana

Amos Williams  
 Vermillion County  
 Illinois  
 State

Amos Williams  
 Postmaster  
 Vermillion Co.  
 Illinois

Paris Ill  
 May 10 1833

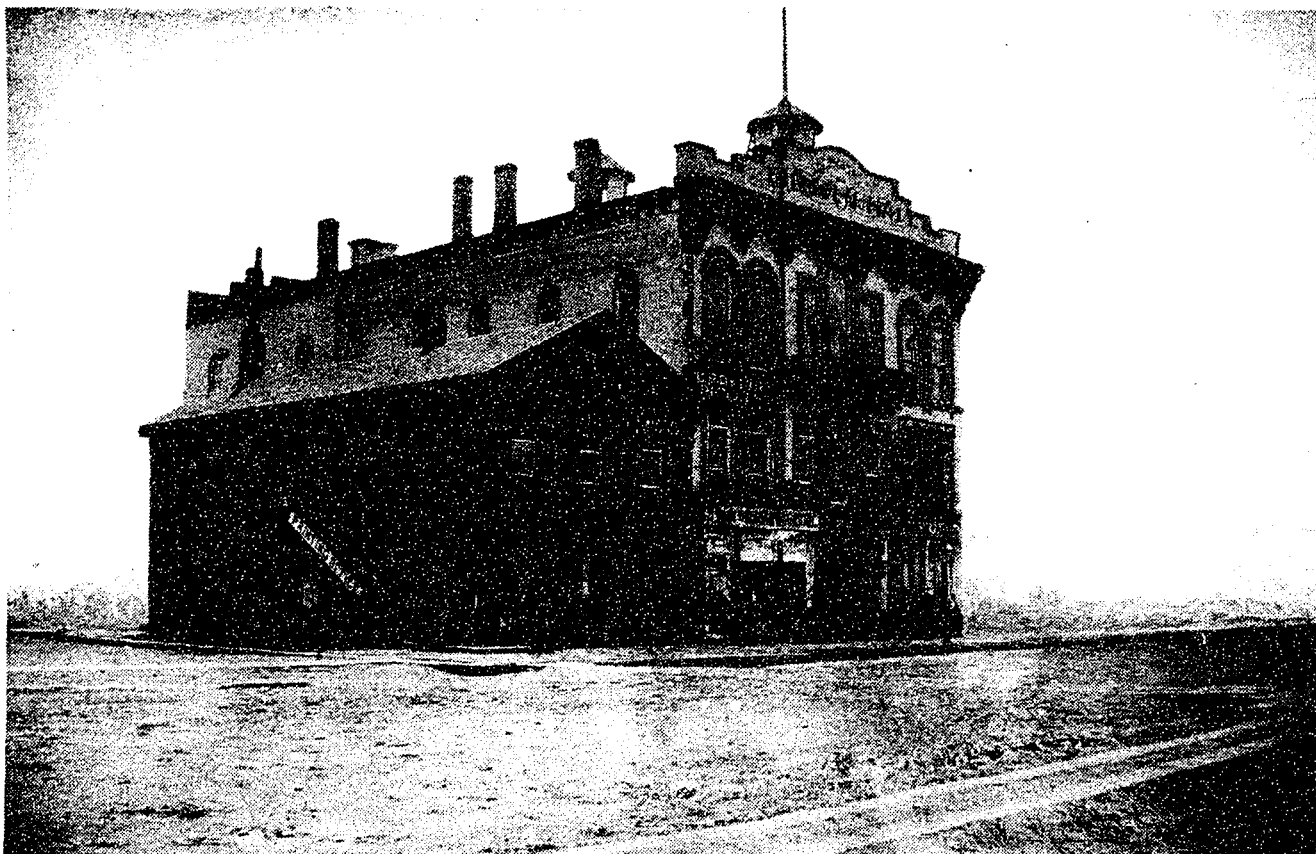
Free

A. Williams  
 Danville

Here is a group of letters that were sent in the old-fashioned way without envelopes--sealed with red sealing wax. One is from Mercersburg to Paris, Illinois; one to Vermilion County Ill.; Terre Haute Vigo County Indiana; Miss Mary Beckwith Vermilion County Illinois; A. Williams P. M. Danville, Illinois.

In the corner it said "fee 25¢" or "free", if sent to the postmaster.





### Woodbury Drug Company

The above building was erected in 1857-1860 by Dr. Woodbury. It was named for Abraham Lincoln who often traded in the one story frame building that stood on the same site from 1848 to 1859. The third story was used by the Provost Marshall, Dr. Fithian, who was appointed by Lincoln during the Civil War.

It was in this very store that Lincoln left an order for the funny book of those days entitled, "Phoenixiana." From this book Lincoln used a story in the Lincoln and Douglas debates.



This letter from Abraham Lincoln is of great importance to our city, for many contended that Lincoln never had a law office in Danville, Illinois. This letter proves that he did have one and his partner was his dearly beloved friend, Ward Hill Lamon. Mr. Lamon was President Lincoln's faithful bodyguard during the Civil War.

Springfield, Jan<sup>y</sup> 26- 1854

Mr. W. R. Woodbury &  
Mr. Hithian

Gentlemen-

Your letter is received-

You say Mrs. Sconce will relinquish her rights under the Will - This she must do, in order to get her legal rights - My opinion on all the questions asked is as follows -

She will have Dower (that is one third for life) in the lands, for which the Dr<sup>r</sup> assigned the certificates, and she will have nothing more in those lands. (I suppose the lands lie in this State)

If the Dr<sup>r</sup> was in his right mind, he cannot give away the notes and money; and if he did so, it will stand; so that this part of the case depends upon how the fact may prove to be -

Whomever administers must claim the notes and money, and contend with them, for them -

She need give no notice to the Genl Land-officer. I infer that when Dr. Sconce died neither he nor his wife had any living child; and if I am right in this, then Mrs. Sconce will hold the quarter of the land decreed to the child - If there be a child dying without brother or sister the land went in halves, or equal parts to the father and mother, and the father afterwards dying without a living child, one half of his half went to his wife - making up the three quarters -



Then having the deed to the child will do no harm—

Better mention this to Mr. H. Lamon, lest he should, unaware, commit me to the other side—

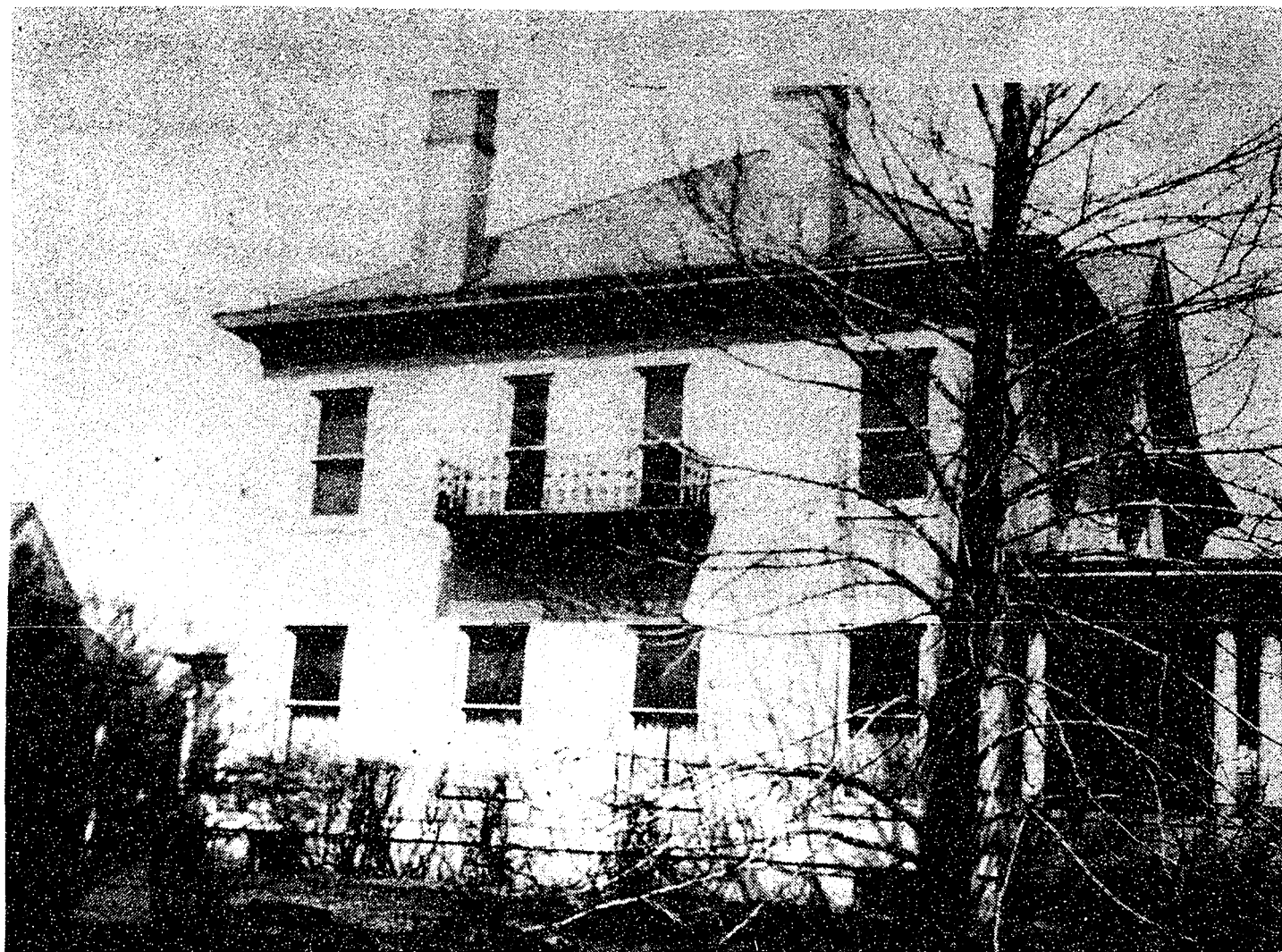
Yours to  
A. Lincoln—

Free. Lincoln N.B.

Mr. Amos Williams  
Danville  
Ills—







September 21, 1858—Lincoln spoke from the balcony of the Fithian home in the evening and delivered a formal reply to Douglas the following day.



In concluding this little book we wish to express the hope that it has given our readers some pleasure to look back over a hundred years and see the days when Danville first came into being. Back to the time when red men roamed the hills of the North Fork, and decorated themselves with pretty vermilion tinted clay from the banks of the Vermilion river that got its name from those same tints, and then gave it to our county and to one of our widest and most travelled streets. No automobiles rolled along our streets then. No electric lamps shed their light. There were no ice-boxes and no ice cream cones. Nevertheless those old timers had something we seem to have lost. They could grow their own food and materials for clothing. They did not have to depend on great factories and never heard of strikes or such poverty as now exists. Each age has some good along with the bad.

It is also hoped that we all have a clearer and better idea of what Amos Williams and those who labored with him, did to create homes for the themselves and for those who came after them, how they struggled to build a little town here in the woods and establish a lawful government for the good of all.

We hope that libraries and schools will find the bits of information in these pages helpful. With these hopes and kind wishes to all, we leave our little book in your hands.

