

**FRENCH AND
INDIANS
OF ILLINOIS RIVER**

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French and Indians of Illinois River by N. Matson

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N. MATSON

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OF ILLINOIS RIVER**

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OF
ILLINOIS RIVER.

By N. MATSON,

Author of "BEYOND THE ATLANTIC," "REMINISCENCES OF
BUREAU COUNTY," MAPS, SKETCHES, ETC.

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INTRODUCTION.

The beautiful country between the Wabash and Mississippi rivers, now within the boundaries of the Sucker State, was once occupied by the powerful tribe of Illinois Indians. Over these prairies, and through these groves, these wild people, while in their native simplicity roamed at pleasure. Generation succeeded generation, and no one doubted their right to possess the land. The French came and lived among them, introducing a new religion with arts of civilization, and between the races harmony and friendship prevailed. But afterwards an enemy came, war and carnage followed, and the Illinoisians were annihilated.

For a time the conquerors possessed the land, but the tide of civilization, which is ever rolling

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westward, compelled them to find a new home beyond the Father of Waters.

To give some account of these events, has been the object of this work, and to what extent these efforts have been a success, the reader is left to judge. Some of the incidents herein narrated, are drawn from history, others from traditions, while many are from the statements of persons who figured in them. To collect these traditions from the Indians and early French pioneers, has been the work of many years, and harmonizing all conflicting accounts, candor compels me to admit, has not been a success.

This is an account of people who left no history, and all that is known of them are seraps of tradition, which are more or less veiled in doubt and uncertainty. While the Indians were still in the country, I obtained from them many things relating to the past; some of which are confirmed by notes recently collected among the tribe in western Kansas.

The descendants of the early French pioneers now living on the American Bottom, have also been interviewed, and all their traditions carefully

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noted. Many of the places where marked events occurred have been visited ; at some of which relics of the past still exist.

A short time since, a small edition of this work was published and copies of it sent among the descendants of the French pioneers, Fur Traders, Indian Agents, etc., for the purpose of obtaining their criticism ; and through this means many errors were detected, and new facts developed.

This book does not claim to be a full and complete history of the French and Indians of the Illinois river, but will be found to consist mainly of sketches and incidents relating thereto. Neither does it vouch for the correctness of every statement made in its pages ; as many of them are compiled from conflicting accounts, and of their probability or improbability, others can decide.

Among those who aided me in my researches were Geo. E. Walker and Col. Garden S. Hubbard, of Chicago ; Col. D. F. Hitt and David Walker, of Ottawa ; John Hamlin, of Peoria, and Lyman C. Draper, of Madison, Wisconsin.

N. M.

PRINCETON, September 1, 1874.

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