

A SCRAP OF HISTORY.

The "Illinois Grant" - What It Is and How It Received Its Name - Its Dimensions.

New Albany Daily Ledger, 1870 February 18, p. 4 col. 3

In the transfers of real estate published weekly in the Ledger, there often occurs in the description of lands and lots such terms as "Block A, Illinois Grant," or so many acres in No. ____, or Block __, "Illinois Grant." As we are frequently asked what "Illinois Grant" means, we will explain for the benefit of those not posted. Much of the land within the present limits of Clark county, and that portion of Floyd county lying between the Clark county line and a line running in a northeasterly direction from a point on the Ohio river just above where Upper Seventh street, if opened, would strike it, was granted by the Virginia legislature, in 1786, and conveyed to commissioners, in trust, to be apportioned, according to their rank, to Gen. George Rogers Clark, and the officers and men of the army he commanded in the expedition to, and capture of, Vincennes and Kaskaskia, as military bounty for their valuable services. The total amount of this grant was one hundred and fifty thousand acres, and these were divided into tracts of five hundred acres each, except in one instance. This exception was in favor of the town of Clarksville, named for Gen. Clark. One thousand acres, lying along the falls of the Ohio, were specially set aside for a location for Clarksville, a town which, at that time was expected to rival Louisville, and become the great city of the falls. It is not necessary for us to tell our readers that all these great expectations have come to naught, and that Clarksville long ago fell into decay and now contains the hamlets of only a few poor fishermen, while Louisville has become the first city of the southwest, and bids fair to rival even Cincinnati and Chicago.

The first settlements of any consequence upon the Illinois Grant were made from 1790 to 1800, near the Ohio river, so that the inhabitants, on the first notice of the approach of the Indians, who were then very hostile to the settlers, might escape for safety to the Block Houses at Louisville and on Corn Island. On the organization of Clark county, in 1801, all the "Illinois Grant" was included in its limits, besides a good portion of what is now Floyd county; and the first court held in the "Grant" was convened on the 7th of April, 1801, at the town of Springville, the then county seat. This was called a Court of Quarter Sessions, held under the old Virginia law, and the Justices composing it were Marston G. Clark, Abraham Huff, James N. Wood, Thomas Downs, William Goodwin, John Gibson, Charles Tuley, and William Harrod, all appointed by Gov. Harrison "of Indiana Territory."