

LITTLE REMAINS OF HISTORIC FEATURES

Springfield Attorney Tells How Few Relics Remain of Many Illinois Sites

Historic places of Illinois "from a prowler's point of view," was the topic of an address recently in Springfield, at a gathering of Kiwanis by John P. Snigg, attorney of that city who has traveled afoot, and on horse, extensively, asys an Associated Press report.

When at Quebec, he said, he visualized a "beginning of Illinois" in the venture of the gallant La Salle, heading his boats westward for the Illinois country. "Thereafter," the

speaker said, "It was interesting to go back to Chicago, walk across the bridge and note the bronze ablet that records the fact that Robert Cavalier La Salle passed that way.

Nothing Remains

"Now nothing remains to connect him and his gallant band of Frenchmen with the present generation save a bronze tablet. Nothing remains that they left, save the memory of stout hearts and high visions of empire. And so it is with so many of the places in Illinois.

"Nothing remains as a connecting link with the past. At Starved Rock, nothing remains to tell the story of La Salle and Tonti, and the Illinois Indians. At Peoria you can wander up and down both banks of the river, past house boats, stumbling over fishermen and nets and fishermen's children and your guess is as good as that of the most scholarly historian as to the location of the Fort of the Broken Heart.

"You can stand on the hills of Randolph county, as I have done many times and look down at the turbid waters of the Mississippi and nothing remains of Old Kaskaskia, once capital of Illinois. Its main streets are in the middle and at the bottom of the river. The city of Troy, immortalized by the great bard of Greece, has been excavated and restored to some extent after more than two thousand years, but Kaskaskia will ever remain just a memory.

Find Traces

"But there are many places in Southern Illinois where there are tangible traces of French and English occupancy. You may walk as I did, north of the many hills of Chester, past the southern Illinois penitentiary past the old Pierre Menard home, where La Fayette was entertained, and there on the crest of the hill find the well defined remains of the earth works of Old Fort Gage, not the first one, but the second.

"Here in Old Garrison Hill cemetery you may find inscribed on a statue erected by the state this inscription, 'Those who sleep here were first buried at Kaskaskia, and afterwards removed to this cemetery.' They were the early pioneers of the Mississippi Valley. They planted free institutions in the wilderness and were the pioneers of a great commonwealth. In memory of their sacrifice, Illinois, grateful, erects this monument, 1892.

"And the thought that came to me as I stood on this hill, overlooking miles of valley, standing in weeds up to my waist, was that Illinois had forgotten them.

Old Kaskaskia

"I have prowled around ancient cemeteries all over the country, but have never found one quite as neglected as this one. Foxes had burrowed into the graves, floaters found in the river are buried here with the old pioneers, the nameless dead of wandering gypsy bands, paupers, — and the weeds grow high.

"When the name of ancient Kaskaskia is mentioned, it conjures up the shade of the most colorful and picturesque character that has ever stalked across the pages of the history of Illinois. With less than a modern company of infantry, he set out to conquer an empire and wittingly conquered more than an empire."

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