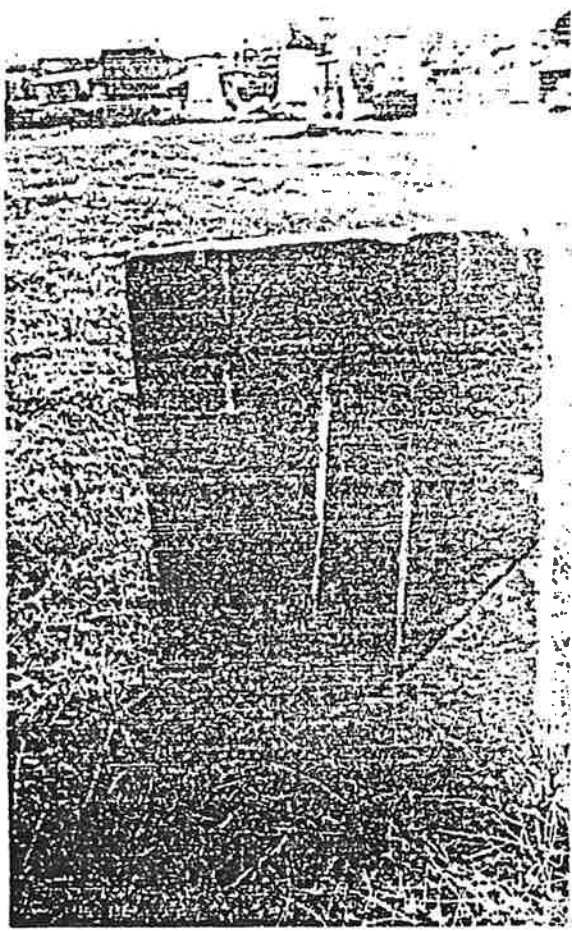


"I as the daughter of Willis and Francis Webb Willard, was born in a one-room log house two miles west of what is now Jonesboro, Union County, Illinois, June 23, 1841. I can still see the old log house on the hill, the spring just beneath the hill under a mossy bank, a deep pool running down to the log milk house. In 1842 we moved into a larger house father had built on the same 40-acre tract and remember we had the first coal stove in the community, it being shipped from Pittsburg and landed in a steamboat at Willard's Landing, which my father owned and operated. We still cooked many things, however, on the irons in the fireplace of which our house had six, one each in the kitchen, dining room, parlor and bedrooms upstairs.

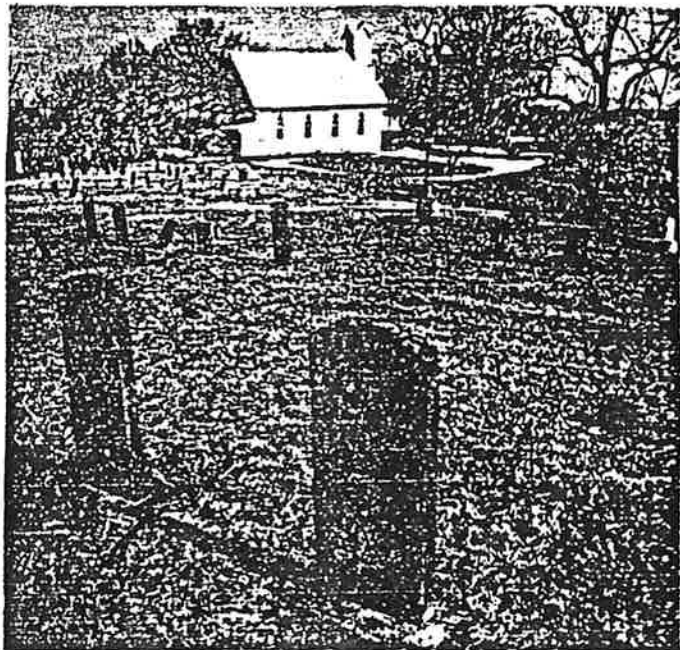
"Just six years before I was born, or in 1835, (it actually was during the winter of 1838-39) the United States government moved the Creek, Cherokee and Chickasaw tribes of Indians from their Georgia and Florida reservations to their new homes in the Oklahoma Territory. This was in the midst of a severe winter, and they travelled on foot and by ferries across large streams, the old route through the Ozarks from the Ohio River to the Mississippi River at Willard's Landing was the only open route. After they had crossed the Ohio the intense cold had frozen the Mississippi solid and it was necessary for the army officers to quarter their charges until the river broke up. Three thousand of them were quartered six miles east of Jonesboro . . . 160 acres which the Indians cleared of timber for firewood that winter. There now is a large church and fine cemetery known as Camp Ground Church, taking its name from this Indian camp almost one hundred years ago. Three thousand five hundred were quartered three miles



ABRAM HUNSAKER, with George Wolf the first white settler in Union County in 1803, is buried in the Jonesboro Cemetery.

across southern Illinois as Willard and Company. This company became most active in hauling goods and farm products of the local residents to the Mississippi River where they were loaded on riverboats for transport to New Orleans and other ports. Conversely, supplies needed by these early Illinoisans came by boat from these same ports and were picked up and distributed by Willard and Company. In only a few short years, the company had sales of over \$100,000 per year. To facilitate the business with the riverboats, the Willards constructed a superb gravel road (the best in the area) from Jonesboro to Willard's Landing on the Mississippi. The Willards were also responsible for the first steam saw mill and first steam grist mill in the area in 1836.

The notable forced trek of the Cherokee, Creek, and Chickasaw Indians from their homes in the southeastern United States to Oklahoma Territory came across Union County. Two markers, one along Route 146 east of Anna and one along Route 146 west of Jonesboro, tell of two nearby campsites for the Indians during the winter of 1838-39. A portion of an interview in 1932 by Mary Hill Wiley with 91-year-old Mary Ann Willard Goodman gives wonderful insight into early life in Union County and particularly into the Indian movement across Union County:



TIME-BLACKENED tombstones at Campground Church and cemetery. The church is on the site of an early Cherokee encampment.

Section
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west of Jonesboro on Dutch Creek . . . which was on the old Willard Landing turnpike road. This was near our home, and father has told me how the army officers employed him to run his grist mill day and night, grinding meal for the Indians and each morning would call and give him a government order for \$100.00. Two of the most prominent chiefs' names were 'Bushyhead' and 'Nowatta.' They boarded in Jonesboro with Mr. Winstead Davie and made daily trips back and forth to the camp on Dutch Creek. When the river opened they crossed into Missouri at Willards Landing."

Long before the tragic trek of these nineteenth century Indians, the area of Union County was inhabited by prehistoric Indians. Large quantities of broken pottery, flint tools, broken projectile points, and flint chips, particularly in the Mill Creek and Reynoldsville-Ware areas, point to considerable activity by these early Indians. Settlers in the Mill Creek area reported that the ground was so full of flint chips and fragments that they could barely get their plow through it.

Mill Creek flint is thought to have come from at least forty different quarries in the area. A spade and two hoes, made from Mill Creek flint, can be seen exhibited at the Cobden Museum.

Jonesboro remained the only town in the county until 1841 when a small settlement developed around a mineral spring in the northeastern section of the county. Known as Saratoga, the town tried to capitalize on the high mineral content of the water, but such was not to be the case and the town never thrived.

A year later, in 1842, a small community called Preston was established along the Mississippi River west of the community of Wolf Lake as a shipping point, but frequent flooding by the great river brought about an early demise for the village.

When the first newspaper in the county, the *Jonesboro Gazette*, was published in 1849, it was strongly oriented to the rural element, since most of the population of the county was still on farms. Many country churches and schools had sprung up throughout the county. The old St. John Cemetery, with burials back at least to 1818, Mt. Tabor Cemetery south of Alto Pass, and the Toledo Cemetery north of Cobden are three of the oldest cemeteries in the county and are worth a visit.

With the outlook becoming more favorable around 1850 that the Illinois Central Railroad would run a line from Chicago to Cairo, Winstead Davie offered a parcel of land just east of Jonesboro for the railroad to pass through. Here Davie laid out plans for a new community in 1853 which he called Anna in honor of his wife. The town developed rapidly, primarily because of the railroad, but other features of the land attracted people to the area. Quarrying for limestone rocks northeast of town began in 1856, and good potter's clay in the region was responsible for the development of the Anna Pottery. The Kirkpatrick brothers, who operated the pottery, were widely renowned as artists in their craft.

The first passenger train on the Illinois Central Railroad from Chicago to Cairo roared through the state on January 1, 1856. This event signaled the development of villages and towns the length of the state. In Union County, both Cobden and Dongola, in 1857, followed Anna as railroad towns.



SMALL PICNIC area, shelter and capped mineral spring mark site of Western Saratoga.

ONE OF THE few evidences that the community of Kaolin existed is this foundation of one of its buildings.

