

many made fortunes, and many lost them. The country presented a hurly-burly business aspect. The inhabitants were a heterogeneous mass, thrown together from all parts and in all shapes and conditions; but the whole were characterized by some leading or general features. Honesty, hospitality, generosity and kindness were predominant characteristics of the entire community, although in some, they might have been alloyed with indolence and recklessness to some extent.

I removed my family to the mines in the fall of 1827, and settled at New Diggings, now in La Fayette county. So intent were the new-comers on making money by mining, that they could not take time to erect for themselves and families even a comfortable dwelling place. Instead of houses, they usually lived in dens or caves; a large hole or excavation being made in the side of a hill or bluff, the top being covered over with poles, grass and sods. A level way from the edge of the hole at the bottom was dug out, some ten or twelve feet; and this gang-way being closed upon either side, was covered over on top thus, forming a sheltered entrance to the "*dug-out*," as such places were usually called. In these holes or dug-outs, families lived in apparent comfort and the most perfect satisfaction for years, buoyed up by the constant expectation of soon striking a *big lead*. To these miserable places of abode, men were compelled to carry upon their backs every thing they and their families required for food and fuel. The miners all lived in similar or worse places, or encamped upon the open ground.

What was then called *prospecting*, was the general business of the country. This consisted in digging "*succor-holes*," in all imaginable shapes and depths, and in all manner of places. When a *lead* was struck, then all would flock to that vicinity to mine; and hence, in the course of a few years, mining was concentrated, in some considerable degree, in certain localities, such as New Diggings, Hard Scrabble, Coon Branch, Fair Play, Platteville, Mineral Point, Dodgeville, Blue Mounds, &c., places still of considerable note. During these few early years, the mines