

desist in the demolition of the mounds, lest the spirits of those who revere them most, should in an unpropitious moment visit their desecrators with the vengeance such profanity merits.

### Mineral Point in Days of Yore

For some time prior to the settlement of the Lead Mines, the miners, under the regulations of the War Department, were licensed to explore and occupy the mineral lands in that region, though in consequence of the hostility of the Indians to the explorations and encroachments of the whites, they seldom ventured far beyond that protection which numerical strength and the defensive organization near Galena secured.

It was in the autumn of 1827, upon the cessation of the Winnebago disturbances, that the more daring and enterprising, prompted by the hope of discovering vast mineral treasures, the existence of which over a wide extent of territory, the many flattering accounts had so truthfully pictured, banded together in well armed squads, over-run the country *prospecting\** in all directions. They were usually, in those times, governed by certain surface indications, the most infallible of which were the old Indian diggings, which were found in almost every direction, and their locations were marked by the many small aspen groves or patches indigenous to the up-turned clay of the prairies in the lead region. By the rude and superficial mode of excavation by the Red men, much mineral remained in the diggings, as well as among the rubbish; mining in these old burrows, therefore, not only at once justified the labor, but frequently led to the discovery of productive mines. "Gravel mineral," carbonized so as scarcely to be distinguished from water-worn pebbles, and occasionally lumps weighing several pounds, were exciting evidences of the existence of larger bodies upon the highlands in the vicinity. The *amorpha canescens*, or "masonic weed," peculiar to the whole country, when found in a cluster of rank growth, also attracted

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\* A term applied by diggers to those who moved from place to place, sinking small shafts with a view of discovering mineral in unexplored regions.  
S. T.