

and Muir, all of whom had taken Fox women for consorts.¹ The statement has also been made, but I can find no acceptable authority for it, that there was a trading-house, either French or American, near the mouth of the river,—at the portage to the Mississippi,—before any of these men were in the country.

Col. James Johnson of Kentucky² came to the lead mines of Fever River as early as 1819–20, and did some mining or smelting, and trading. A traveler on the Mississippi in 1821, speaks of meeting Johnson's flat-boats, loaded with lead.³

The largest discovery of lead ore up to Johnson's time was made in 1819 by the Sacs and Foxes operating a mine one mile above the site of Galena. Those Indians were members of a band led by "The Buck," who had long been encamped in the vicinity.⁴ It is thought that the lead had been originally worked by Dubuque's men, but that after Dubuque's death (1810) the natives had taken possession, and continued operations with the crude furnace plant erected by the whites. It took the entire force of the band to raise the enormous nugget which they had discovered, and they were very proud of it. The Indians expressed a strong desire that the find should be forwarded as a present to their Big Father at Washington; but as it was never so forwarded, it is presumable that the traders secured it in piece-meal, in the course of traffic, the rate of exchange still being a peck of corn for a peck of ore. The whites afterwards called this mine "Buck's lead," in honor of the chief who operated it; and a neighboring lead was styled "Doe's," in remembrance of the Buck's favorite squaw. The estimate was made, about 1820, that up to that time several millions of pounds had been extracted from the Buck lead, by the Indians and Dubuque's people—more

¹ *Hist. La Fayette Co.*, p. 400.

² A brother of Col. Richard M. Johnson, who was said to have slain Tecumseh.

³ J. G. Soulard, in *Hist. La Fayette Co.*, p. 402.

⁴ *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, vi., p. 281.