

colony, which gave great impetus to the region.<sup>1</sup> The unlicensed plants could, however, be numbered by the score. The leasing system was so unsatisfactory to all concerned, and yielded the government such scanty revenue, that, under act of Congress approved July 11, 1846, the lands were brought into the market and sold in 1847.

It appears from the report of Lieut. M. Thomas, U. S. A., superintendent of lead mines, made to Congress in 1826,<sup>2</sup> that there were in the Fever river diggings, July 1, 1825, about 100 persons engaged in mining; December 31, 1825, about 151; March 31, 1826, about 194; but by June 30 the number had leaped to 406, which was increased to 453 by August 31. The agent estimates that in Missouri, at the period of his report, there were 2,000 men thus engaged — "miners, teamsters and laborers of every kind (including slaves);" but some of these were farmers who, with their slaves, spent only their spare time in the mines.

In 1827 the name Galena was applied to the largest settlement on Fever River, six miles from its junction with the Mississippi.<sup>3</sup> The heaviest immigration set in in 1829, and from that time the history of the lead country is familiar.

What had particularly helped the later development of the Fever river region, after the Indians had been quieted, was the fact that on the west side of the Mississippi the mines were held to be private property, and prospectors were warned off. In 1832 the United States war department asserted the right of the general government to the tract granted by Spain to Dubuque, and Lieut. Jefferson Davis was sent from Fort Crawford with a detail of infantry to eject all settlers in "the Spanish mines" claiming title from Spain. There was much dispute as to the

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<sup>1</sup> In *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, vi., p. 271, Dr. Meeker gives an interesting statement of early affairs in the mines, after his first visit, in 1822. Another valuable account is in *Hist. Jo Daviess Co., Ill.*, pp. 448 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *House Ex. Docs.*, 19th Cong., 2d sess., ii., No. 7.

<sup>3</sup> The river is not now navigable, owing to heavy deposits of soil worked down from the limestone bluffs.