

## PIONEERING IN THE WISCONSIN LEAD REGION.

BY THEODORE RODOLF.<sup>1</sup>

On the first day of April, 1834, I took passage at St. Louis on a neat little steamer, the name of which I cannot recollect, but which was a regular upper Mississippi packet whose destination was Galena, the commercial metropolis of the northwestern lead mines, which were rapidly growing in extent and importance. My object in undertaking this voyage was to explore the yet comparatively new country in quest of a suitable home for my mother and her family. We had ascended the Mississippi from New Orleans to avoid the yellow fever; and passed the winter of 1833-34 at St. Louis, where we had formed pleasant acquaintances and friendships among the French settlers who at that time constituted the majority of the population. Among those, we were particularly well received by the family of John Pierre Bugnion Gratiot, to whom we brought strong letters of recommendation, and by Messrs. Pierre Chouteau, John P. Cabanne, Chenier, and others.

Gratiot's father, Charles, was born at Lausanne, on Lake Geneva, Switzerland. The family, French Huguenots, were

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<sup>1</sup>Theodore Rodolf was born in the Canton of Aargau, Switzerland, October 17, 1815; he died at La Crosse, Wis., February 12, 1892. Mr. Rodolf was a graduate of the college of Aaràn, and was for a time a student at the University of Zurich. As stated in his narrative, he came to America when seventeen years of age, and settled in La Fayette County, Wis. In 1853 he was appointed receiver of the land office in La Crosse. He was a presidential elector in 1864; a member of the state assembly in 1868 and 1870, and during the same period was mayor of La Crosse. Mr. Rodolf's reminiscences were written in 1889 at the instance of the present Editor, who consented to their first publication as a serial, in the *La Crosse Chronicle* in May and June of that year.—ED.