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PORTRAIT AND

BIOGRAPHICAL

RECORD

—OF—

*Winnebago and Boone Counties, Illinois,*

CONTAINING

Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens,

Together with Biographies of all the

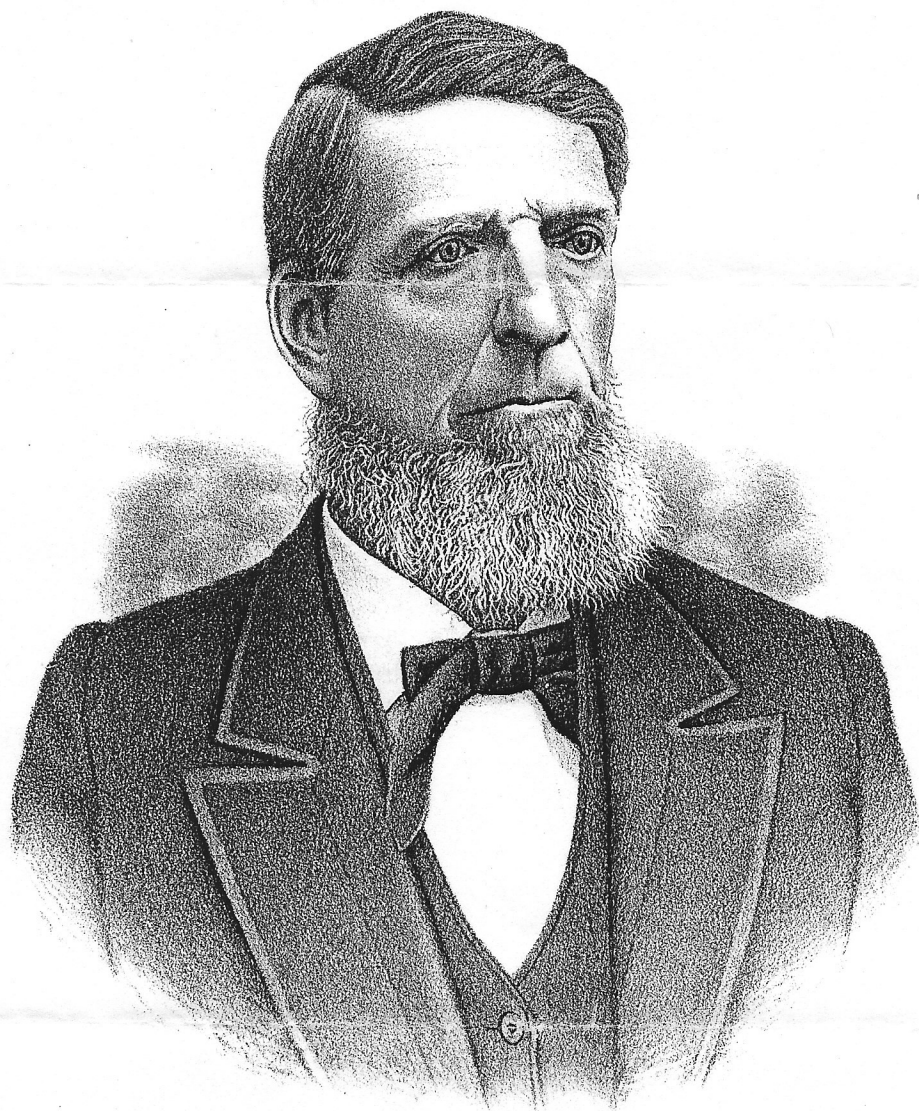
Governors of the State, and of the Presidents

OF THE UNITED STATES.

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1892.



REUBEN HANKINSON.

selling out, established as a merchant tailor. A twelvemonth later, he sold out, since which time he has not been engaged in active work of any kind. In 1890, he was married to Mary Hargan, also a native of Ireland, and a member of the St. James Catholic Church, with which body our subject is also connected.



**R**EBUBEN HANKINSON. Among the intelligent and highly respected families of Rockford, we may well note the family of our subject, whose pleasant home is located at No. 702 North Second Street. Mr. Hankinson was born in Johnstown, Montgomery County, N. Y., April 17, 1812, and died April 26, 1892, aged eighty years. He was the son of Frances Le Roy Hankinson, a native of New Jersey, from which State Reuben Hankinson, his father, hailed. After his marriage, the grandfather of our subject went to Nova Scotia where his decease occurred. The maiden name of his wife was Sally Le Roy, who, after the death of her husband, emigrated to Canada and departed this life in Middlesex County, province of Ontario.

The father of our subject was one of a family of eight children, and was quite young when his parents moved to Nova Scotia. Later, he returned to the States and made his home with an uncle in New York. After his marriage, he leased a tract of land in Montgomery County, and when purchasing property on his own account became the owner of a farm in Canajoharie Township. In 1835, he disposed of that estate and, removing to Middlesex County, Canada, there made his home until the fall of the same year, when he returned with his family. He purchased a tract of timber land, on which he erected a small frame house, and here the family resided for the succeeding three years. The father then sold the farm and, coming to Michigan, spent his last days in Oakland County.

Martha Jones was the maiden name of our subject's mother. She was born in New York State and was the daughter of Joseph Jones. She bore her husband eight children and departed this life on the farm in Michigan. Reuben Hankinson, of

this sketch, was twenty-three years of age when he accompanied his parents to Canada, making the journey with one horse and a buggy. He resided with his parents until his marriage, when he rented land adjoining the old home and resided there until 1841, which was the date of his advent into Illinois. The journey hither was made with two wagons and four horses, the party starting from Oakland County in the month of April and reaching Winnebago County two weeks later.

On locating here, our subject purchased a tract of land in what is now Guilford Township. As there were no improvements on his place, he bought a log house of Judge Shaw, which he moved onto the land and occupied with his family until a few years later, when he was enabled to erect a comfortable brick dwelling. In 1859, Mr. Hankinson sold his estate and came to Rockford, where for a number of years he was engaged in the sale of tinware. Ill health, however, compelled him to retire a few years later.

The original of this sketch was twice married. His first wife, to whom he was united in 1836, was Miss Ruth Sovereign; she was born in Middlesex County, Canada, a daughter of John and Miriam Sovereign, and departed this life in 1842. Three years later our subject was married to Alvira Mason, whose birth occurred in Scipio, Cayuga County, N. Y. Her father, Milton S. Mason, was born in Connecticut and was the son of Daniel Mason, also a native of that State. The grandfather of Mrs. Hankinson was reared in Connecticut, from which State he removed to New York about 1800, and lived for some years in Dutchess County. Later, he moved to Cayuga County, and resided there until he died in 1842. He was a rapid reader, reading the Bible through in forty-three hours and twenty-three seconds.

The father of Mrs. Hankinson was a young man when his parents removed to New York State, and after his marriage went to Cayuga County, purchasing a farm in the town of Scipio, where he resided until 1835. Then selling his property, he came to Illinois, being accompanied hither by his wife and three children. He located about three miles west of Belvidere, making a claim to four hundred acres of Government land, on which he



erected a double-hewed log house and commenced to improve his tract. For a number of years there were no railroads and Chicago was the nearest market place. Mr. Mason resided there until his death, which occurred in 1842. The maiden name of his wife was Mary Ingraham, a native of Rhode Island and a daughter of Thomas and Margaret (Swan) Ingraham. She was married a second time, this union being with John Sovereign, and spent her last days in Rockford. Mrs. Hankinson is probably one of the oldest settlers in Northern Illinois, having been a continuous resident of the State since 1835.

Of the first marriage of our subject, one daughter is living, Martha Hadley. Of the second marriage were born the following children: Francis M., Mason T., Mary E., Allie J., Willie H., Fred E., Kittie J. and Henry.

We are pleased to present on an accompanying page a portrait of the late Mr. Hankinson, whose death was widely and sincerely mourned.



**S**AMUEL A. BLAIR. Although past the allotted age of man, three-score years and ten, Samuel A. Blair is one of the prominent men of the county and has ever taken a deep interest in her progress and development. He was born in Lebanon, Madison County, N. Y., on the 2d of October, 1817, of the marriage of Brown and Mary (Collins) Blair, the former a native of Worcester County, Mass., born in 1779, and the latter of Hamilton, Madison County, N. Y. The father died in Roscoe in 1855, when seventy-six years of age, and the mother died in Westfield, Chautauqua County, N. Y., when but forty-four years of age, leaving three sons and two daughters, viz: Samuel Alva, our subject; Albert, born in 1818, died in New York of quick consumption; Mary S., born in 1821, became Mrs. Gardner and died in the prime of life; Darwin, born in 1823, is a large farmer of California; and Ann became Mrs. Cheney, of Roscoe, and died of consumption.

In the spring of 1839, when in his twenty-second year, our subject, in company with Dr. B.

Bradley, of Beloit, came overland with teams to Illinois. Reaching the Maumee River, they found the ice going out, and after waiting there about three days for the ferry-boat, that was ice-bound, young Blair decided to cross the river anyway. Disregarding the advice and counsel of older heads, he plunged into the turbulent waters and, contrary to all predictions, reached the opposite shore in safety. Such was the indomitable will and courage of this young pioneer. Including delays, etc., they were thirty-eight days in making the trip. They stopped for four days in Michigan, and here Mr. Blair saw the first individual shaking with the ague, and, though he laughed then, he found it no laughing matter in subsequent years. Mr. Blair first worked on a farm for Franklin Able (who was the founder of Roscoe) for one year at \$16 per month, and then, learning of his brother's illness, he and Mrs. R. J. Cross and Mrs. Isaac Cole (sisters) went to Chicago. While there, our subject met an old friend, Hiram McHenry, captain of a brig on the Lake, and he took passage for Barcelona, N. Y., arriving only in time to see his brother die. Soon after he returned to Roscoe, but about a year later he went back to New York State and purchased a large drove of sheep, fourteen hundred head. After shearing them, he started back in June and, although he met with cold weather and storms and delays, he arrived in Roscoe in fairly good condition in August.

In 1844, our subject married, in Westfield, N. Y., Miss Mary Miniger, who was a native of that place and the daughter of Lowe and Martha (Martin) Miniger. Mr. Miniger became a wealthy farmer and died when eighty-two years of age. His wife died at the age of seventy-six, leaving six children. Our subject purchased his first farm of one hundred and two acres near his present home, in 1839, and later he purchased eighty acres, a part of his present farm. He sold the one hundred and two acres and thought seriously of going to Missouri, but the Dred Scott Decision caused him to abandon this project, and he purchased his present property. He now owns two hundred and thirteen acres in this farm and eighty acres one mile north. All his improvements are first-class, and he is a representative farmer of the