



History of Rockford and Winnebago County Illinois: From the First Settlement in 1834 to the Civil War (Classic Reprint)

Charles A. Church

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Excerpt from History of Rockford and Winnebago County Illinois: From the First Settlement in 1834 to the Civil War

In the days of the ancient Rome Janus was the guardian deity of gates. As every gate turned either way, so Janus was represented with two heads. One was of a youth, to indicate beginning; the other was of an old man, suggestive of the end. The first looked toward the future; the second, toward the past. The student, like Janus of old, surveys the past; and only from this point of view can he intelligently interpret the present, and in some measure forecast the future.

As a community becomes older, and the habits of its people become fixed, the study of local history receives attention. A movement was recently begun in this state for the purpose of creating popular interest in state and local history; and these subjects will doubtless receive more attention than formerly. This volume does not claim infallibility; but it does purport to be a thorough and conscientious effort to present in miniature the life of this community during a period of twenty-seven years from its first settlement. It is primarily a history of Rockford; but no history of the city would be complete unless considerable attention were given to the county, as a background. Nearly all the early settlers have passed away. This fact makes the fund of reminiscences smaller than might be desired. It is believed, however, this volume contains a larger number of local facts than were ever before presented in a single work. This is due to the fact that the author has been fortunate in obtaining access to sources of information that were not available to any of his predecessors. It is hoped that the treatment of all available material has been such that no future historian of Rockford will be obliged to go over the ground in order to substantiate the facts herein set forth. The Roman poet, Ovid, made Janus say: "Everything depends on the beginning." The author hopes that upon this foundation a later historian will rear the superstructure of a complete history of the Forest City to the close of the century.

Clio, the muse of history, is represented as wearing a wreath of laurel, and holding a half-open parchment roll, upon which she has inscribed the deeds of heroes and the songs of love.

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