

Red Bud, Ill., a Town That Is a Whole Museum.



RED BUD, Ill., should be officially put down by the managers of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis in 1903 as one of the star features of their Midway. Red Bud is thirty-three miles from St. Louis, but it could be catalogued as an annex of the Midway and a map and diagram of its location could be supplied to intending visitors so that they could find it without any trouble.

The beauty of Red Bud, Ill., as a Midway feature would be that it is already complete, and that no extra expense would have to be gone to in order to make it ready for show purposes. All that is needed even today, a good two years before the exposition is ready to open to make Red Bud, Ill., a star Midway attraction, is a good leather-lunged barker to stand on the platform of the Mobile and Ohio depot at Red Bud, Ill., as the trains come in and wave his cane over the city while he announces in his accustomed modest and unassuming tones:

"And here you are, and here you are, and here you are. Here you are at Red Bud, Ill., the modern Nineveh. Here's Red Bud what has Babylon crowded clear off the map. Here's your city of modern wonders. This is Red Bud, Ill.

"This is the place. They are all here. The chance of a lifetime. Stop off, ladies and gentlemen, and see the wonders of Red Bud, Ill. See the cave what runs down twenty miles into the earth and in whose farthermost corners you can see the reflection of the fire in the pit which is never quenched. See the oldest white settler in Illinois. See old Fort Chartres, which was built in 1718, long before any one here within the sound of my voice had a grandfather. See the home of Larry the Hermit, where he lived and where he died. See the first Baptist church ever built in the great commonwealth of Illinois, and likewise gaze upon the first, the original Methodist church ever built in the State, which will be shown to you by gentlemanly guides on the inside.

"Come on, come on, see the only monkey-faced owl in existence. See the rattlesnake chickens, two genuine living, breathing rattlesnakes that take care of the little chickens, and who do everything but crow in the morning or roost at night. Come and help find the lost lead mines and be worth a million dollars a minute.

"Come, come on, come on. This is the place. This is the time. This is the opportunity. Come and see the wonders of Red Bud. They are all upon the inside. Positively as represented by the gentlemanly press correspondents or money refunded at the depot."

SPREADING RED BUD'S FAME.

Red Bud, the town of modern wonders, is a place of 2,000 population, situated in the northwest corner of Randolph County and about thirty-three miles from St. Louis. Not much was known of Red Bud outside of Randolph County up to a few years ago, as previous to that time Julian Helber, the official historian of Red Bud, was still busy attending school in the little old red school-house near the town. As soon as the historian received his commission as correspondent for various metropolitan dailies he immediately began a series of explorations around Red Bud and was soon thrilling the world by the publication of the wonderful things he discovered.

Many credulous persons after a time began to think that the historian of Red Bud was more enthusiastic than exact in his writings, especially when he commenced finding monkey-faced owls and rooster rattlesnakes. But a visit to Red Bud will convince the most skeptical that, while the historian is possessed of a vivid imagination and does not allow a story to suffer from a lack of strong coloring, Red Bud is in reality a city of wonder, and the historian is abundantly able to "make good."

The feature of Red Bud which has caused the historian more sleepless nights and the newspapers a greater amount of telegraph tolls than any other is the cave, some eight miles west of the town. The cave has been known for over a hundred and fifty years, and legends have been handed down by the oldest inhabitants of how the earliest settlers of the State took refuge there at various times from the Indians, and of how outlaws and freebooters used the cave as a hiding place and fortress when hard pressed by their enemies.

Just as Christopher Columbus was the real discoverer of America, although the honor is claimed for the Norseman who visited the country centuries before the time of Columbus, so, although the existence of the cave at Red Bud is claimed to have been known for a hundred and fifty years, the historian

of Red Bud can be set down as the real discoverer.

FARMERS AWAKENED.

The farmers around Red Bud used the cave to store potatoes in and to keep their butter and milk cool up to two years ago, when the historian of Red Bud found it. The historian was shocked to see a real cave, once the home of bandits and robbers, and a fitting place about which to weave stories of love and plots and counterplots used for such pebbles purposes as the storage of potatoes and butter and milk. He immediately began telegraphing of the finding of all sorts of strange and startling things in the cave, and finally succeeded in arousing the interest even of the farmers under whose land the cave extended. They began a series of explorations, most of the expeditions being personally led by the historian himself.

The cave has been explored now for a distance of eight or ten miles, and new avenues leading away in almost every direction are still being discovered. The cave has several remarkable stalactite and stalagmite formations, and many rocks of grotesque forms are found in its dark depths. Like all first-class caves, the one at Red Bud has a "Fat Man's Misery," without which no cave would be complete; a "Pipe Organ," a "Graveyard," a "Water Fall," and a "Great Dome." There is also a small lake in the cave, containing fish that have no eyes. The thoroughfares in the cave are much smaller than those in the Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, and there are no great halls or underground rivers as there is in the Kentucky cavern. However, as the Mammoth Cave people charge the visitors \$5 for a visit to their cavern and the Red Bud people are satisfied with the modest sum of 25 cents, the visitor to the Illinois grotto cannot complain of not seeing as much at Red Bud as he would in the Kentucky cave.

OLD FRENCH FORT.

After discovering the cave the historian of Red Bud rediscovered Old Fort Chartres, a few miles from Red Bud. The powder-house which was built of limestone in 1750 is still standing, and the mounds around it mark where the ramparts stood.

In a hurried retreat that the French made from the fort when the English were advancing upon it in 1758 all the cannon and rifles in the fort are said to have been thrown into four wells which were within the walls. The historian of Red Bud has made a half dozen desperate reconnaissances in the vicinity of Fort Chartres to discover these wells and dig up the buried cannon, but in each attempt he has been routed, horse and foot, by the present defenders of Fort Chartres, an estimable German family, who resent the idea of having their peach orchard dug up in order to find some old iron. The historian has not abandoned his plans to capture Fort Chartres, however, and another expedition under his leadership is being organized with the intention of a night attack and the taking of the fort by storm.

Fort Chartres was first built of wood in 1718 by the French, and, having a royal charter from the French crown, was called "Fort de Chartres." Philip Renault had his headquarters here for many years, and here D'Artaquette, the Governor of Illinois when it belonged to France, organized his disastrous campaign against the Chickasaw Indians in 1736, and which ended in D'Artaquette and Vincennes being burned at the stake. Fort Chartres has been the theater of great historical events and is only waiting for the novelist who will weave out of it a love story full of gory deeds of valor, and dead Indians.

PIONEER BAPTIST CHURCH.

The first Baptist church built in Illinois, and which dates back to 1790, is still standing at Red Bud, as is also the first Methodist church, built a few years later. The latter is now being used for a stable, while the old Baptist church is too decrepit for even that humble use. An old stone house which dates back to the middle of the last century is also still standing in Red Bud.

John Fahey, who will be 100 years of age next March, came to the vicinity of Red Bud about 1817, and is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, settlers of Illinois. He is still hale and hearty and able to recount many tales of the early pioneer days.

While along the New England coast the inhabitants patiently turn up mile after mile of sand in the hopes of discovering where Captain Kidd buried his treasures, down in Red Bud, Ill., they hunt for "the lost lead mine." The lost lead mine was the one in which the Indians for many years secured their supply of lead. The whereabouts of the mine was kept secret and most jealously guarded.

It is said that a young white settler who made desperate efforts to ferret out the location of the mine made love to the only daughter of old Chief Duchene. The Indian maiden promised to drop grains of corn along her path the next time she visited the mine, and the young settler was to follow the corn and secure the Indian's secret. But a young Indian, a rejected suitor for the hand of the Princess, followed the trail of corn and carefully picked it all up, almost as fast as it was dropped. Then he killed the maiden

for attempting to reveal the secret of the mine, but at night the old chief had the murderer taken to the doorway of the mine and killed there that his ghost might always guard the secret of the lead from the whites. Hence a good active ghost, waving a tomahawk, can be enumerated among the wonders of Red Bud.

The owl that has a face like a monkey was discovered down in the woods near Red Bud, and when the official historian saw it his joy was intense. He had it photographed and

wrote enough to fill a book about his amazing discovery. An ornithologist at St. Louis said the owl is a species of one that is sometimes found in England but seldom in this country. This matter of fact explanation was a great disappointment to the historian of Red Bud, who again interested himself in the field of natural history and so called forth and found a farmer, Jack Froind, who had two remarkable rattlesnakes. These snakes had been put under a hen when they were tiny and raised with the chickens. They

became as they grew bigger the protectors of the little chicks against rats and other snakes and are now two of the most respectable members of Farmer Froind's poultry yard. They do not crow as yet, but the historian has great hopes and is anxiously watching them every day.

The historian, in addition to discovering the wonders of Red Bud and exhibiting them in the papers, is also a clarinetist of ability and the leader of the Red Bud Band. He is the telegraph operator at Red Bud and also the

express agent for several companies. He likewise does outdoor photography and surveying, teaches telegraphy and shorthand, hunts and fishes, and when he has nothing to do works on the book he is writing.

When Red Bud, through all the exploitation its wonders have received in the newspapers, finally becomes a great metropolis, it should erect a statue to the historian who not only gave the story of these marvels and many more to the world, but discovered most of them and even invented a few.