COLLINS HOMESTEAD.

THE Collins homestead was one of the first frame houses built in Illinois. Wrought nails were used in its construction. The joists were made of oak trees hewn to a straight edge on one side to receive the floor. The weatherboards were of black walnut. In the kitchen was a huge brick oven about four by six feet. Next to this was a chimney place five feet across, and in it an iron crane, from which hung a variety of iron links and hooks. A back-log, often of more than a foot in diameter, was used, and on the large andirons in midwinter was sometimes piled nearly a half cart-load of wood.

Grape vines festooned the two-story porch in the front of the house, and no grapes, in after life, have tasted more delicious than did these to the palate of youth. Under the entire house was a huge cellar, and often here were stored from ten to twenty barrels of cider, and from ten to forty barrels of apples. Here, too, was usually a barrel of pickled pork, a barrel of home-made soap and a barrel of delicious apple butter, made rich with the best of boiled cider.

Locust and hard maple trees stood in the front yard, while walnut, chestnut, apple and cherry formed a wind brake to the west and north. On the front door, was an old-fashioned brass knocker. The doors were furnished with latch and bolt, the door knob not being in use on the frontier at that day. In the large garret was a great variety of odd things which had been brought from New England. Among them were a tinder-box, steel and flint for making fires, and several bellows for starting the flame. There was a spinning wheel and reel for skeining yarn, a candle mold in which thirty candles could be made at one molding, a round tin oven with crank and spit for roasting or baking before the open fire in the big fire-place. I remember also a pair of leather hats, which tradition represented as having been used by military members of the family, probably my grandfather, during the war of the revolution. There were several brass candlesticks with tray and snuffers, a large brass warming pan and a foot stove at which the Puritan used to warm the feet, at the period in our history when a stove or a musical instrument in a church building was regarded as sacrilegious. Here too, was stored a "safe" made of two-inch oak with a heavy hasp and padlock. There was also a curious old piano, the keys of which were lettered with indellible ink, a mnemonic device of some one who probably had limited musical talent. Here too,