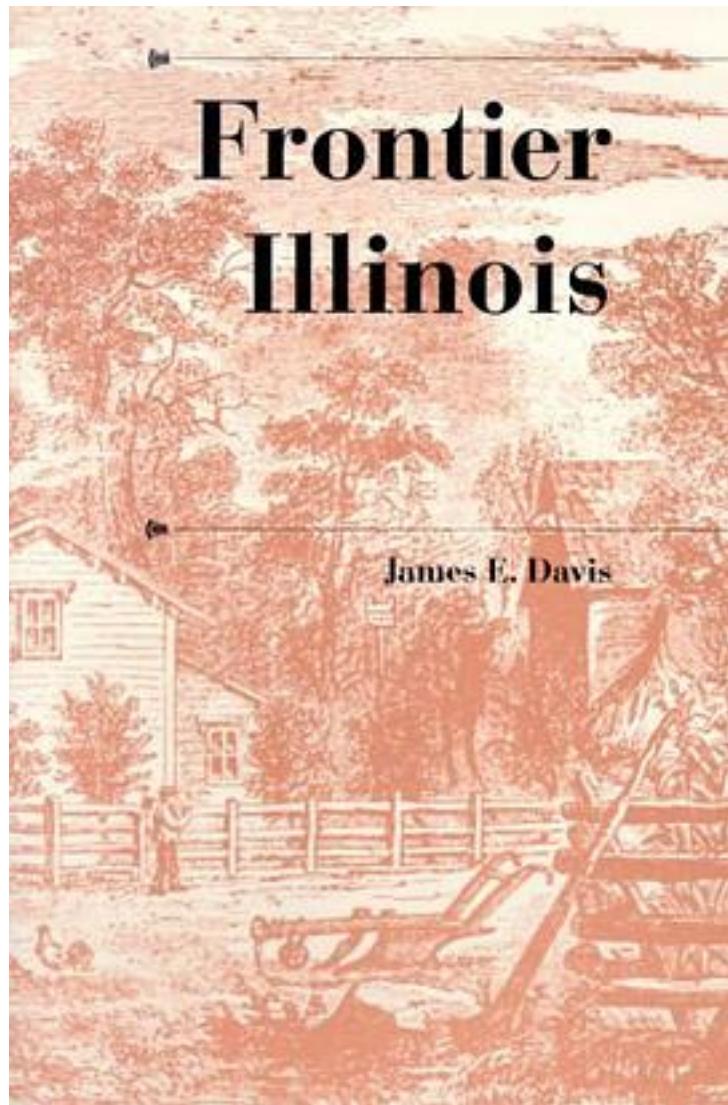


Frontier Illinois



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著者:Davis, James E.

出版者:Indiana Univ Pr

出版时间:2000-8

装帧:Pap

isbn:9780253214065

'O, this is a delightful country'! One newly arrived settler wrote to a friend back East. Indeed, as James E. Davis shows, many newcomers found Illinois a hospitable and relatively peaceful place in which to start a new life. Davis tells a sweeping story of the making of the state from the Ice Age to the eve of the Civil War. He describes the earliest Indiana civilisations, the coming of LaSalle and Joliet and the founding of the French colony, the brief history of British Illinois, and the complex history of subsequent settlement which brought distinct cultural traditions to Illinois. A major theme of this book is the relative absence of violence, at least after the Blackhawk War of 1832, over explosive issues such as slavery. Throughout, Davis keeps the reader mindful of Illinois' ordinary people. James E. Davis begins his volume on the frontier period in Illinois history with three eye-witness accounts of the settlement process during its highest tide, the 1830s. We hear Sarah Aiken, of northern New York, David Henshaw, of Massachusetts, and Charles Watts, an Englishman, describe what Illinois life was really like in those days, and why Sarah wrote to a friend back home, 'O, this is a delightful country!' Professor Davis then looks far back into the Illinois of the glaciers, and the series of Indian civilisations that changed the land. These included the villages around Cahokia, where 20,000 people lived in the year 1100 C.E., more than in any city in Europe. The French explorers La Salle and Joliet appear next, the precursors of other French men and women who created stable settlements like Kaskaskia and the rest of the old French colonial zone, in uneasy accommodation with the Indians. The brief history of British Illinois, and the Revolutionary War which assured Illinois' American future, then follow. Davis then traces the complex settlement process, first from Kentucky to the south, and later from New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio to the east, bringing distinct cultural traditions to Illinois. One of his most important findings, and a major theme of this book, is the relative absence of violence, at least after the Blackhawk War of 1832 which removed the last substantial Indian presence from the state. Among whites, however, whether they came from the upland South or from Yankee roots, struggles over land, court houses, county seats, railroads, markets, and even the explosive fugitive slave question were resolved with a minimum of bloodshed. Davis explains all of these events in Illinois' early history and many more. Railroads started crisscrossing the state in the 1840s; Chicago began its role as the gateway between East and West; and in the 1850s, on the eve of the Civil War, Illinois passed beyond its frontier period. Throughout the book, James E. Davis keeps the reader mindful of what happened to Illinois' ordinary people. This will not surprise those familiar with his best-known previous work, *Frontier America, 1800-1840*, a path-breaking synopsis of the early demographic history of Trans-Appalachia. For many years a professor of history at Illinois College in Jacksonville (the oldest continuing higher-educational institution in the state), and a renowned teacher there, Davis brings to life in this book the frontier period of Illinois history.

作者介绍:

目录:

[Frontier Illinois 下载链接1](#)

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