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Editorial by Hardy.

A MEMORIAL TO A SLOWER AGE.

Announcement of the date of unveiling of the Lincoln circuit marker, to stand on the Art Institute grounds, again serves to recall the related subjects of time and distance, both of which the lawyers of Lincoln's day had a plenty.

The old eighth district extended from Shelby County on the south to Woodford County on the north, 100 miles as the crow flies, and from Sangamon County on the west to Vermillion County on the east, fully 120 miles, and included all told, 18 counties.

An itinerary, that would take in all the 18 county seats could be arranged that could be traversed by a motorist under favorable road conditions in two days' time, allowing for a speed of 30 miles an hour and short stops. If the old circuit riders made 10 miles an hour they did well, and in fall and spring when the roads were quagmires, progress was considerably slower. Fifty miles a day was enough travel for man and beast under the best conditions. A strat from Decatur in the morning with Springfield as a destination probably meant that no court could be held that day. Members of the Macon County bar having legal business in Springfield, and leaving Decatur at 8:15 A.M. are now in the capitol by 10, and home again at 5 P.M. after business day.

Slowly indeed, the miles must have been covered by the circuit riders and wearisome enough must have been the landscape, much of it virgin prairie, for between 1847 and 1857, when Lincoln was a circuit rider, a vast number of sections were still unclaimed and uncultivated. Summer's heat was quite as intense and black soil dust quite as disfiguring as now. Insect pests were worse. The horses were terrible sufferers from the flies that bred in the tall prairie grass. Mosquitoes from the still undrained ponds that dotted the prairie added to the discomfort.

As compensation for these magnificent spaces so tediously traversed, the lawyers fortunately had plenty of leisure. As they traveled with the court there was no danger of missing an appointment with a client or being late at a pleading. Time was the thing that most of the younger lawyers were rich in.

The same atmosphere of sociability that characterizes a Pullman smoking compartment today, was present on the circuit. Lincoln's stores, which became famous after his elevation to the White House, are supposed to have been heard in tavern public rooms.

Undoubtedly stories whiled away the time between county seats. But before that immense circuit had been covered the stories must have grown stale and the travelers must have tended to become weary and morose, as travelers do now when they are a little tired of each other's company.

It is not at all certain that men were better conversationalists in a day when there was more time to talk, or that they were better thinkers in a period when one had to be alone with himself. Much of the talk and thinking alike doubtless was trivial. The present age certainly does not read the "Canterbury Tales" of Chaucer's pilgrims for their moral stimulation but rather for their humor, much of it uncouth judged by present day standards.

The Lincoln markers in the several county seats, of which Decatur is one, memorialize not the exploits of pioneers who effected great discoveries and faced great dangers, but the travels of men who accepted boredom, and physical discomfort all as a part of the day's work in a now all but forgotten period of Illinois history.

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