HISTORY OF JEFFERSON COUNTY.

CHAPTER I.

ABORIGINAL TRACES, FRENCH HISTORY.

A passing tribute, to the memory of a race who have left but few traces of their sojourn in the territory now embraced in Jefferson county, may not be deemed inappropriate before entering into the details that make up our authentic history. There are probably few who have not dwelt with peculiar interest upon the glimpses we catch through the mists of the past, of whole tribes of men that have vanished from the earth, leaving no heirs or representatives to inherit the richer blessings of our age; of nations whose part in the great drama of human life must always be the theme of conjecture; whose sages are forgotten, and whose warriors sleep unhonored in the dim obscurity of oblivion. Few are the monuments we may interrogate, and doubtful the interpretation of the enigmas which the scattered traces of their existence offer, nor can these furnish the basis of a well-founded conjecture of the people, or the period, or in some instances the object with which they were related. At most, we can but offer a few facts, and leave the field of conjecture open to those who may have more ample means of comparison, and the leisure and talent to devote to this deeply interesting field of inquiry. The general inference which has been reached by those whose researches have been especially devoted to this study, is that none of the remains of art in this section of the state, can pretend to the antiquity that belongs to the mound builders of the Ohio valley; that they indicate at most but a slight attainment in civilization; that they denote no further object than self defense, or simple sustenance; and that they evince no general plans, no organized system, beyond what the necessities of the moment suggested. Further than this we know nothing. The enclosures hereafter described exhibit that similarity that leads us to believe them the work of the same race, for a common object—pro-