Hansen, Nicholas
From: Schenectady, N.Y.
Last residence: Schenectady, N.Y.

Records show one
Nicholas Hanson (not found as Hansen)
Pvt. in Capt. Moses Waters Co.,
101st Regt. (Carter's) N.Y.Militia

Commencement of service: July 29, 1814
Expiration of service: Aug. 22, 1814
Commencement of service: Oct. 7, 1814
Deserted Oct 19, 1814
Nothing further found.
NICHOLAS HANSEN, A. M., was born at Greenbush, Rensselaer Co., N. Y., Sept. 25th, 1795. He is an Attorney and Counselor at Law, residing at Albany city, Law office No. 1 Douw's building.

From: The Evening Star July 29, 1864

NICHOLAS HANSEN, 1814, a resident of Schenectady, was a member of the Philomathean Society. (Died: 1871)

Philomathean Catalogue 1880
CLASS OF 1814.

NICHOLAS HANSEN.


The undersigned will start for the Illinois and Missouri territories on the first November next. His route will lay through New York, Philadelphia, Washington City to Pittsburgh, Pa.; from Pittsburgh through the State of Ohio, by the way of Zanesville and Chillicothe, to Cincinnati; from the latter place through the States of Indiana to Vincennes, and from Vincennes to Kaskaskia, St. Genevieve, St. Louis, Edwardsville and the other principal places in the above territories. He will take with him and attend strictly to the recording and return of soldiers deeds, and do any other agency business with which he may be intrusted, at places on the above route or in its vicinity. It will be observed the land offices are in his way.


Nicholas Hansen
Office 358 North Market Street, next door south of the Mansion House.

Oct. 12, 1818.
Nicholas Hansen (nor Hanson, as his name has gone into history and legislative records), was a young lawyer, who settled at "Coles' Grove" (sometimes written "Colsgrove"), the first county seat of Pike county, now "Gilead," in Calhoun county, in 1820, where he taught school. He was commissioned Colonel of the 17th Regiment of the Illinois State Militia, August 11, 1821, by Gov. Bond. The county seat of Pike county was removed in 1823, from Coles' Grove to Atlas, a town situated on the Mississippi bottom, twelve miles west of Pittsfield, the present county seat of Pike. Hansen was of Dutch descent; a graduate of Union College and had been admitted to the Bar of New York before removing to Illinois. He was County Judge of Pike County in 1821-2, and was elected to the Legislature from Pike County in August, 1822; and at the same election that Edward Coles was elected Governor, after removal of the county seat of Pike from Coles' Grove to Atlas, Hansen removed to the latter place. At a Fourth of July celebration at Coles' Grove, in 1823, Col. N. Hansen was the orator of the day. The following toast was drunk, with "nine cheers." "Col. Hansen, Nicholas Hansen, a member of our last Legislature, sacrificed on the altar of Slavery; may his services to his country be duly appreciated by the Republicans of Illinois."

Hon. Wm. H. Brown, in his admirable Paper on the convention struggle, read before the Chicago Historical Society, says that the effect of Hansen's equivocal position in the Legislature was such that after he returned home he closed up his business and left the State. In this he is mistaken. After the adjournment of the Legislature he returned to Atlas and became a Justice of the Peace, and deputy clerk of Colonel William Ross, "who held nearly all the offices of Pike County." He was elected to the Legislature a second time from Pike and Calhoun counties in 1824, but resigned his seat. On the 25th of May, 1824, he was commissioned by Gov. Coles as Brigadier General of the Third Brigade of the First Division of Illinois State Militia. July 5th, 1826, Governor Coles appointed him Judge of Probate for Pike county, as will be seen by the following letter. On the 5th of September, 1827, Governor Edwards issued an official order to General Hansen to enroll in the militia all persons subject to military duty at the "Lead Mines on Fever River or in that vicinity."
Letter of Governor Cole to General Hansen.

Vandalia, July 5, 1826.

Dear Sir:—Your letter of May 23d, recommending Wm. Ross as a suitable person to be appointed Judge of Probate, of Pike, has been received; and I now address you, not so much for the purpose of acknowledging it, as to make known to all whom it may concern, and especially to remove any misconception as to your conduct, that your letter is the only written or verbal communication I have received in relation to the person who should fill Mr. Hight’s vacancy, and that I have not received a line or a word, or even a hint, from you or from any person else, that you wanted the office, or would accept it; but believing you better qualified than any other person in the county, and that while you continue to hold the office of Recorder, that you could very conveniently and with some little profit, discharge the duties of Judge Probate, I have determined to appoint you to that office, and herewith inclose your commission. I have been thus explicit in order that it should be understood how you, who recommended another, should yourself receive the appointment.

If it should not be agreeable to you to accept the office of Judge Probate, you will be pleased to address me a letter to Edwardsville, where I shall go in a few days, and remain most of the warm and sickly season.

The death of my mother, which occurred last spring, will render it necessary for me to be in Virginia in January next, at which time her estate is to be divided, and it is necessary for me, as one of the legatees, to be there. This will compel me to set out in December, soon after the meeting of the General Assembly, at which time, if not before, I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you. I propose to return to this State in the spring by way of Philadelphia and New York.

With great respect and sincere regard, I am your friend,

Edward Coles.

Gen. N. Hansen
Pike County.

Col. Benjamin Barney, of Barry, Illinois, who was a contemporary of Hansen, having become acquainted with him in October, 1825, at Atlas, says that he came from near Albany, N.Y., and from a place called "The Walnuts." Captain John Webb, one of the oldest citizens of Pike county, says he went to school to Hansen in 1820, and that he understood that he came from Warren county, N.Y. In the fall of 1829, a brother-in-law of Hansen's
came to visit him and that he went back with him to the State of New York, and he never returned to Illinois. Captain Webo says the last time he saw Hansen was in 1865, and that he died in 1872, at the age of ninety-one years. He was never married. Col. Barney describes his as a man six feet high, well built, and of fine appearance. "He was a man of liberal education, of genial manners and well liked by the pioneers of Pike county. His only fault was a love of liquor." *

Foot Note:—Judge William Thomas, of Jacksonville, who knew him well, says he was "an habitual drinker, but not a drunkard—a man well informed in regard to the history of the county and the leading politicians."

The pro-slavery men of Edwardsville were so enraged with Hansen, that after he was turned out of the House they burned him in effigy; but Hansen was revenged. The ringleader in the ceremony was one Sweeringen, a Virginian, who was afterwards hanged in Mississippi.

Gen. Hansen seems to have been a man of ability and of polished education. Though bred a lawyer in the New York school, which at that day meant something, he appears never to have practiced his profession in this State to any extent. Neither does he appear to have made the mark in life, which might have been expected from a man of his endowments, but left the State making no sign. I have made an effort to find out something of his history after he went back to New York, but was unsuccessful.

I have also in my hands a letter from Hansen to Governor Coles, dated Vandalia, December 23d, 1826, which was after Coles went out of office. It is written in a very neat and scholarly hand, and I give it herewith, as a letter not without a certain historical interest,

Vandalia, Dec. 23, 1826.

Dear Governor:—I have delayed a little while in writing to you, waiting for something new and interesting, but, alas! I am where I begun, and can only say that Illinois is Illinois. Our legislature is yet harmonious, and though bountifully supplied with the gift of gab, has not yet brought forth anything sufficiently indicative of its character upon the future interests of our State. The Circuit Courts will undoubtedly be abolished, and in their stead we will have the Judges of the Supreme Court, without an increase. \(\ldots\) \(S\ldots\) means to make all Illinois for him, or against him, placing his redemption and resurrection on the vox populi. No man refuses Edward Coles the character of an honest man and consistent politician; and it pleases me every day to hear men bear the strongest testimony to your real merits. To be short, the want of you is felt.
On the subject of the agency at Peoria, I have got
Turney, Judge Browne, Mr. Forquer, and Judge Lockwood
to write to Mr. Cook. Hamilton has got the protem
appointment from Gen'l. Clark. I am indeed desirous
of succeeding, as it would benefit me individually;
and enable me to serve my friends and punish my
enemies.
I will write you again.

Your friend,
Nicholas Hansen.
Governor Coles.

Hansen it seems at this time was seeking an office.
Some of the pro-slavery men appear to have forgiven
him for his course in the Legislature for two of them,
Judge Browne and Judge Lockwood in writing the congress-
man, at that day, Hon. Daniel P. Cook, in his behalf.
It will be perceived that there is a charming frankness
in the closing part of his letter, in which he says
that the office he desires would enable him "to serve
his friends and punish his enemies."

Governor Edward Coles
Clarence Walworth Alvord
Editor.

Biographical Series, Vol. 1
Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library
Vol. XV pp. 78-82.
Member of the House of Representatives, Illinois, 1822-23 from Pike and Fulton. p. 53

While the pro-slavery men had precisely two-thirds of the votes of the Senate, in the House, they lacked one vote of the required number.

At almost the last moment, and when it was found that neither influence, nor threats, nor coaxing, would secure the requisite vote to pass the resolution, it was determined in order to accomplish the object that an anti-convention man should be put out of the House, and a convention man put in his place. Such a change would give the convention party precisely the two-thirds vote required. Nicholas Hansen had received the certificate of election as a member of the House from Pike county, which then embraced the whole central and northern part of the State. Hansen's competitor was John Shaw, one of the earliest settlers of Illinois.

The contest between Hansen and Shaw, for members of the Legislature for Pike county, seems to have been a very lively one.

In a letter dated Aug. 17, 1822, a writer to Coow.Coles says: "In the 'Kingdom of Pike,' I presume, they had a warm time. Yesterday, a gentleman was from there who brought dispatches from Hansen and Smith to you and others of this place (Edwardsville); he told me the contents and desired me to open it. I did so and found a very warm letter from Hansen to you, desiring those who have ever entertained a friendship for him not to despair of his prospects, etc.; and in which was a request that you should hand, for publication, a letter from Smith to you, which says that Shaw had obtained a great many of his votes from Greene, Madison and Missouri; and knowing the fidelity and correctness of the Judges appointed by the Commissioner's Court, he (Shaw) had thought fit to establish a mob poll, as he styles it, at which Shaw had received most all his votes; although Hansen was very anxious to have it appear in the paper of to-day, I have laid it away in the pigeon-hole and shall say nothing about it. He will be down Monday or Tuesday, he wrote you, when he can act for himself."
Hansen had the certificate of election, but when the Legislature met the first Monday of December, 1822, Shaw came forward to contest his seat. It is said by Governor Ford and Governor Reynolds, and others, that Hansen was permitted to occupy his seat for the purpose of giving his vote for the re-election of Jesse B. Thomas, as United States Senator, who was a pro-slavery man, and afterwards turned out to put in Shaw who was a convention man. That does not appear to be the precise fact. Both candidates were pro-slavery men, and both became strong convention men. Thomas had the most strength and was elected over Judge John Reynolds. Hansen voted for Thomas, as between him and the other principal candidate, Reynolds, equally pro-slavery. I can find no sufficient evidence that Hansen was confirmed in his seat in the first instance, for the purpose of voting for Thomas. The only thing in that regard, which appears in all the proceedings, is a statement made in the debate in the house by Mr. Lowrey, of Clark, that he had heard Ford, of Crawford, a Thomas man, as well as a convention man afterwards, say that "If Hansen were turned out Thomas would lose a vote," which was undoubtedly the case, but which proves nothing further than that Hansen preferred Thomas to Reynolds, both holding precisely the same views. This view of the matter is supported by the fact that anti-slavery and anti-convention men voted both for and against Hansen in the case of his contest with Shaw.

On the 2nd of December, 1822, the committee of elections of the House, to whom the matter was referred, reported unanimously in favor of Hansen's right to a seat, and the report was adopted by the House by a large majority. The fact of unanimity of the committee is good evidence that it was not a party question. Hansen having been thus confirmed in his seat, Shaw took his saddle-bags, mounted his horse and made his way back to Pike county, neither he nor anyone else ever dreaming that the matter could come up again.

It was not until after this contested election case was settled that the convention question came to be seriously considered.

A Convention Resolution was passed by the Senate, but the House prudently permitted it to lie upon the table until the real strength of the convention men might be tested in its own body. A resolution similar to that offered in the Senate was introduced and it obtained 22 votes, Hansen voting for it.
But one more vote, therefore, was necessary to accomplish the great object for which such a stupendous effort that had been made. That one vital vote was wanting and the resolution failed. In the meantime McFartridge, who had been an anti-convention man, through some unseen influence had changed front, and his vote, together with that of Hansen, now thought perfectly secure, would carry the measure through. Everything was now ready, and certain success seemed assured. On the 11th of February, 1823, the Senate resolution, which had been quietly lying on the speaker's table, was taken up for its final passage.

At the very pinch of the game, what was the astonishment and fury to find Hansen changing front and voting against the resolution. It is to be regretted that Hansen's course is neither very clear, nor very satisfactory in this regard. It was, therefore, lost;

The indignation against Hansen knew no bounds. The members who had become convention men, and who had voted to confirm him in his seat, at the commencement of the session, were the most furious of all;........By the suffrages of his constituents, confirmed by a vote of the House, Nicholas Hansen had held his seat in the House of Representatives, from the very first day of the session; and after a contest, solemnly decided in his favor on the 9th day of December, 1822, that seat was held unchallenged and unquestioned by anybody. ........On the 12th of February, 1823, and nine weeks after the House had decided that Hansen was duly and legally elected, and after he had sat at that time without one question being raised as to his right to a seat, Colonel Alexander P. Field, of Union, made an extraordinary motion. It was no other than a motion to reconsider the Resolution of the House, adopted December 9th, 1822, declaring Nicholas Hansen to be entitled to his seat.

The resolution which the House had adopted and which it was proposed to re-consider was as follows:

"Resolved, That Nicholas Hansen is entitled to a seat in this House."

On the vote Hansen was put out of the House and Shaw seated.
There was no slave party in Pike county, but the voters were divided almost equally between the Hansen party and the Shaw party. Each of these parties had local objects to accomplish. For this purpose, the party of Mr. Hansen desired him to retain his seat, and his influence with the majority of the House. The Shaw party, believing that the Convention resolution would certainly be passed by some means, and not realizing that there was any danger of the introduction of slavery, desired their leader to obtain the seat which they believed he was entitled. Mr. Hansen voted for the Convention Resolution when he knew that his vote would not carry it, and thus retained his seat ten weeks. When he found that it would carry if he voted for it, he voted against it. He was then turned out, and Mr. Shaw admitted, by whose vote the resolution was passed. By these means Mr. Shaw occupied the seat one week, but failed in the accomplishment of most of the local objects which he had in view. Both Mr. Hansen and Mr. Shaw appear to have retained the confidence of their respective parties; for at the succeeding election they were rival candidates again; came out nearly equal; and had another contest before the House. The seat was again awarded to Mr. Hansen, and he held it during the session.

A narrative of the affair between Messrs. Hansen and Shaw, in the Legislature, was published in the "Genius of Liberty" at Lowell, La Salle Co., in December, 1840.

Governor Edward Coles
Biographical Series, Vol. 1
Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library
Vol. XV.
Clarence Walworth Alvord, Editor.