THE TRIMMELLS IN AMERICA, 1790-1900: THE STORY OF A PIONEER FAMILY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to present the story of "The Trimmells in America, 1790-1900." It is hoped that it will contribute to a better understanding of the attitudes and environment of frontier families who pioneered the American Midwest during the nineteenth century. It is also intended as a study of conditions which prompted them to leave established communities, and of the conditions they faced upon migrating to new settlements.

Like the Pony Express, frontier farming was more significant as a forerunner of progress than for its duration in terms of time. People who contributed vitally to frontier history often were obscured by legendary individuals who were more entertaining than ordinary. Pioneers used what they could of the experience gained from ançestors on earlier frontiers, and innovations based upon planning and guessing, designs and decisions, toil and tedium became the agricultural revolution. Inventions, such as the reaper, the gang plow, windmill pump, and tractors mechanized farming to make the American Midwest into a leading region in production of the world's food supply.

This study was conducted by tracing several generations of descendants of a French immigrant who came to America soon after the War for Independence. Primary source materials have been used for the study of attitudes and temperament as well as for personal descriptions. Published materials generally have been used as reference for environmental conditions.

The reader will note that, with the opening of each new frontier, there is first a relation of biographical materials to the region that the pioneers left behind, and this is followed by an account of the region they approached. Description of the discontent in the old environment is succeeded by discussion of the migration and ensuing development of the frontier region. Organization of the narrative is difficult, as such a study must tread a narrow path between an overly complex documentation of facts and an overly sentimental characterization of the people.

What commenced as a search for the missing names on a family tree has evolved into almost a decade of research in pioneer history, for members of the Trimmell family were among those migrating to most of the new frontiers opened for settlement between 1790 and 1900. References in Wilson County, Kansas; Vermilion County, Illinois; Shelby County, Kentucky; New Orleans and Philadelphia proved valuable.

The writer's visits to the foregoing communities resulted in personal interviews with members of the family who had remained in their native communities, and many have contributed related materials through sustained personal correspondence. Family records and local libraries in the different communities yielded much biographical material and indigenous history. The United States Census records have been helpful for making comparisons between the migration patterns of various Trimmells and moves made by others of the same community.

Frontier families were significant to the development of this nation. Pioneering apparently was a tradition with some of the families, for several generations settled the different frontiers during the nineteenth century. Census records indicate that many families never were represented in the opening of frontiers. Further research may be justified on this subject.

Pioneer families were, typically, young married couples with a child or two. Most migrated for economic opportunity, and not for adventure in the usual sense of the word. Their parents or grandparents had helped settle the community they were leaving behind, and the young pioneers knew from childhood experience what was involved in developing farms from wilderness land.

CHAPTER II

TRIMMELLS BEFORE 1825

The Trimmells are of French ancestry. Sufficient evidence supports French origins, but the actual date of the initial migration to America has not been determined.[1] Information regarding Trimmells and their activities before 1825 is sketchy. Piecing items together has involved much speculation, but they came as a family, apparently, in the years just prior to the French Revolution. Misspellings of the original name exist, and in order to associate individuals as a family, the similarity of names has been studied in comparison to places and events.

Immigrants with French ancestry were not new to America. Until after the French and Indian War, France controlled most of what is now the central part of the United States. Migration in small numbers had occurred for more than a century, with small settlements developing along

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[1]Lottie E. Jones, History of Vermilion County, Illinois (Chicago: Pioneer Publishing Company, 1915), I, p. 157; L. Wallace Duncan, History of Neosho and Wilson Counties [Kansas] (Fort Scott, Kansas: Monitor Printing Company, 1902), p. 619; "Rebecca T. Piper's Death Removed Last Member of Pioneer Family of County," an undated newspaper clipping of the obituary for Mrs. Piper, contributed to the author's files by William P. Trimmell, Topeka, Kansas.

the Ohio River, the Mississippi River, and the Missouri River. In addition, there were small areas of French settlement around Montreal and Quebec in Canada. French settlers were included in the thirteen English colonies along the Atlantic Coast prior to the American Revolution, but they rarely gathered in communities as did the Germans, Swedes, and Scotch-Irish. They were assimilated quickly into the population wherever they lived, and little effort was made to enumerate them by national origin.

Of the non-Catholic families who left France when the Edict of Nantes was revoked in 1685, many eventually lived in America. By the early 1700's, approximately ten thousand Huguenots were among the total colonial population of 200,000.[2] The English exiled the French Acadians from Nova Scotia in 1755, and some 8,000 refugees were relocated by prescribed quota among the other seaboard colonies.[3] These desolate people were not welcomed by many of the communities and nearly half of them eventually drifted to Louisiana, where the present-day "Cajun" is a derivative of the word "Acadian" which in French means "people by the sea."

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[2]Oscar T. Barck and Hugh T. Lefler, Colonial America (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958), p. 290.

[3]Carolyn Ramsey, Cajuns on the Bayous (New York: Hastings House, 1957), p. 12.

Records were kept and names were listed for many of the Huguenots and Acadians, the groups most often identified with French immigration, yet they represented a small fraction of the total French in American settlements. The 1790 census of the United States listed 54,900 Americans of French descent among the total population of 3,172,444.[4]

French poets, novelists, and philosophers had idealized the "natural man" and had written of the wonders of the New World Wilderness for half a century before the Trimmells came to America.[5] The Third Estate included nearly ninety per cent of the population in France and was comprised of independent and unorganized people who were neither leaders nor followers. Curious and calculating, the French were reared in a social tradition of individual choice wherein each person, to a great degree, was responsible for his own decisions. They tended to be rough and inventive braggarts. Involvement in group riots and mass demonstrations, such as those occurring in the initial stages of the French Revolution, was not typical behavior in

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[4]Louis B. Wright, _The Cultural Life of the American Colonies, 1697-1763_ (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 57, citing American Council of Learned Societies, _Report of the Committee on Linguistic and National Stocks in the Population of the United States_ (Washington: American Historical Association, 1932).

[5]Walter Havighurst, _Land of Promise_ (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946), p. 167.

a country which had encouraged such free-thinkers as Descartes, Pascal, Buffon, Voltaire, and Diderot.[6]

More typical, in all likelihood, were those individuals or families who set out alone to seek opportunity in other countries. The French who came to the English colonies swore allegiance to the King of England as a matter of port procedure, and went about the business of making a fresh start in a new location.[7] They adopted the language and traditions of the community where they settled.

Conditions leading up to the French Revolution had been developing for thirty years or more before the outbreak of the revolution in 1789. An explosive increase in population had occurred after 1760, with ninety per cent of the people in rural occupations. Tillable land and food grew scarce, and unemployment became serious both in rural areas and in the cities. Living costs increased and income fell. Profiting from the plentiful labor supply and inflated

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[6]Laurence Wylie, Village on the Vaucluse (Cambridge: The Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 267; Phillip Carr, The French at Home (New York: Lincoln MacVeach, 1930), p. 193; William Brownell, French Traits (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1918), p. 13; John Higginbotham, Three Weeks in France (Chicago: The Reilley Company, 1913), pp. 119, 236-237; John Finley, The French in the Heart of America (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1915), p. 350.

[7]Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Information Leaflet Number One, 1945, p. 3.

prices were a few who operated commercial, financial, and industrial enterprises.[8]

The cry for "Liberte, Egalite, and Fraternite" was misleading. Liberty and fraternity had existed in France for decades. The clamor was for equality--and economic equality, at that. Seeking equitable political representation became a means to a goal of economic equality.[9] High-minded generalizations were made, but the economic inequities were the igniting force of the French Revolution.

Unemployment left half-starved peasants roaming and begging in the rural areas. In the cities, there were riots for bread, work, and higher pay.[10] Many of the French middle-class could envision no end to the salt tax, the head tax, the grain transport tax, and the tariff abuses. Most could not afford to leave the country; many of those who could afford to, did.

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[8] Gordon Wright, France in Modern Times, 1760 to Present (Chicago: Rand McNally Company, 1960), p. 17.

[9] Andre Maurois, The Miracle of France, translated by Henry L. Binnse (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), p. 227; Albert Geurard, France, A Modern History (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1959), p. 236; Wright, France, p. 17.

[10] Leo Gershoy, The Era of the French Revolution, 1789-1799 (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1957), p. 12.

There was confusion in France with little note made of those leaving the country, and American ports were lax in reporting statistics. Careless losses and fires often destroyed the best efforts in registrations. Names underwent many changes in the process of immigration. In some cases, this was deliberate; in others, illiteracy and language differences caused the variation in spelling. A French name would not likely end with a double "l" as does "Trimmell". While the original spelling may have been "Trimmel" or "Trimel" with the accent upon the last syllable,[11] there are numerous other French names with similarities and no evidence of connection with the "Trimmell" family. The Anglo-Saxon name of "Trammell" has been used by mistake in a few instances, but there appears to be no connection between the two families.

In the French province of Poitou, about forty miles east of the city of Poitiers is a village name La Tremouille. The Trimmell family may have come from this area. The province of Poitou has had a high percentage of non-Catholic families dating back to the sixteenth century. This region was the scene of several years of warfare by Protestants led

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[11]Chrystie Trimmell, Orinda, California, to the author, July 12, 1962, letter expressing knowledge of French names from having resided in Paris, France.

by Coligny in the middle of the sixteenth century.[12] The name of the village, La Tremouille, and the name "Trimmell" would have similar pronunciation. Nothing associates the Trimmells with that village, however, except the similarity of names and the fact that the Trimmells were not Catholics when they settled in the United States.

Passenger lists of ships leaving the French ports of Calais, Cherbourg, Dieppe, Fecamp, Dunkerque, LaHavre, and Honfluer between the years of 1700 and 1800 do not include the names of "Trimmell", "Trimmels", or "Trimel".[13] This is not surprising, because the French spelling may have been quite different, or the family may have registered an entirely different name for the purposes of passage. The listed cities were the major ports of France, but it is true that immigrants may have left from obscure ports or even crossed into another country to make their departure.

John "Trimmels" may have been the original Trimmell immigrant in America. He lived in Philadelphia with his wife and one son, under the age of sixteen, in 1790.[14] The

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[12] Karl Baedeker, Southern France, Fifth edition (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1907), p. 8.

[13] Charles Braibant, Director of Archives Nationale de France, November 13, 1959, letter to and in possession of the author.

[14] United States Bureau of Census, Department of Commerce and Labor, Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790: Pennsylvania (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), p. 215.

family lived at 195 North Front Street in Philadelphia in 1791 and 1793. John "Trimmels" was listed as a mariner in 1791 and as a sea-captain in 1793. A study of the city directories of Philadelphia for the years between 1785 and 1819 indicates that the family lived there no more than three or four years.[15]

It is likely that John "Trimmels" moved to Kentucky sometime prior to 1799, and there entered a second marriage with Ellen Parris. The John "Trammell" of Shelby County, Kentucky, was probably the same person as John "Trimmels" of Philadelphia, for he was listed as John "Trimmell" when he later lived in New Orleans.

To assume that the three names apply to the same person is speculative, of course, but circumstances in later years indicate that this is a definite possibility. The surname of "Trimmell" is not common in this country, and there appears to have been a family relationship among all the Trimmells, for they lived near one another from time to time in later years. This is true even though some of them were born in widely-scattered locations and recorded with variations of the same name. The presently identified

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[15]Alan W. Thomas, Head of the General Information Department, Free Library of Philadelphia, April 26, 1961, letter to and in possession of the author.

original French immigrant of the family eventually moved to New Orleans and lived there many years, but the family seems to have moved about a great deal during the first twenty years in this country, with children born in several different states and to two mothers. John "Trimmels" may have been employed with freight transport along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, for he appears to have been a landowner and taxpayer in Shelby County, Kentucky, for a short time. References made to his children having lived there at various intervals in later years suggest they were there in association with their mother's family.

Only an estimated 30,000 persons in scattered, almost self-sustaining settlements were living in Kentucky in 1784,[16] a decade before John "Trimmels" moved there. The isolation of these settlements is indicated by the fact that the second store in the territory was established in 1783, and third in 1784.[17] Early migration, coming chiefly from Virginia and North Carolina, more than doubled the population in a little more than five years, for the 1790 census of Kentucky listed 73,677.[18] Yet, the real boom in settlement

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[16]Nathaniel S. Shaler, Kentucky, A Pioneer Commonwealth (American Commonwealth Series, edited by Horace E. Scudder; Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, and Company, 1885), p. 93.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid., p. 108.

occurred in the following decade.

The Trimmells are reported to have pioneered in Kentucky in the days of Daniel Boone, but there is no indication they arrived with one of Boone's settlement parties.[19] Daniel Boone's brother, Squire, operated a "station" in Shelby County during the 1780's before the town of Shelbyville was established,[20] and some of his children may have lived in the county at the turn of the century.

In 1790, the "over the mountain" population in the United States, excluding Western Pennsylvania, was 166,641--or about five per cent of the national total. By 1810, the same region listed 1,162,939 persons, increasing the ratio to about sixteen per cent of the national total.[21] Although the first settlers in Kentucky came primarily by way of the Cumberland Gap from Virginia and North Carolina, the later settlers usually came overland through Pennsylvania and down the Ohio River. The early settlements were near the isolated forts built as protection against the Indians. Later settlers who came by the northern route found the

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[19]Duncan, Wilson County, p. 620.

[20]Louise C. Drake, Kentucky in Retrospect (Frankfort: Sesquicentennial Commission of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, 1942), p. 185.

[21]B. A. Hinsdale, The Old Northwest (New York: Townsend and MacCoun, 1888), p. 426.

state already "opened" with the original fort families usually remaining as pillars of their communities and encouraging the expansion of civic advantages rather than trying to preserve "elbow room". Very few individuals preferred spending their lifetimes moving from one primitive frontier to another. One major move was usually sufficient.

The old military roads, with some remodeling and slight rerouting, continued to carry the overland traffic between the Atlantic port cities and Pittsburgh, located at the head of the Ohio Valley. These roads were the chief access to the Ohio Valley for immigrants for more than fifty years.[22] From Philadelphia, the Trimmells may have travelled the Forbes Road to Pittsburgh before moving down the Ohio River to Kentucky. Shelbyville, in Shelby County, was but a short distance from the river landing at Louisville.

The greatest wave of migration into Kentucky had occurred during the 1790's before the Trimmells arrived. From 1790 to 1800, there had been a 225 per cent increase in the population.[23] The rate declined from 1800 to 1810 with

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[22]R. E. Banta, _The Ohio_ (_Rivers in America Series_, edited by Hervey Allen and Carl Carmer; New York: Rinehart and Company, 1949), p. 98.

[23]Drake, _Retrospect_, p. 53; Shaler, _Commonwealth_, p. 146.

only an increase of 84 per cent.[24] Most of the better land had been settled by the turn of the century, and the later settlers often moved about frequently for a few years attempting to locate in new communities which were already laid out. Many eventually entered commercial or professional occupations rather than to face the loneliness of the wilderness.

Sampson Trimmell was born in either Louisiana or Pennsylvania in 1796, lived in Kentucky in 1834, and was a farmer in Vermilion County, Illinois, in 1850.[25] Samuel Trimmell was born in Maryland in 1807 and lived in Vermilion County, Illinois, as early as 1833.[26] William Trimmell was born in Kentucky in 1801, reared in New Orleans, married in Kentucky in 1823, and lived in Vermilion County after 1826.[27] These three men seem to have been sons of John "Trimmels".

Robert "Tremmels", a silversmith, lived at 26 Conti Street in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1810. The census listed two men under the age of 25 living at that address,

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[24]Shaler, Commonwealth, p. 155.

[25]Henry J. Schroeder, Bethesda, Maryland, November 30, 1960, citing the Seventh United States Census of Vermilion County, Illinois, 1850, a letter to and in possession of the author.

[26]Ibid. [27]Ibid.

indicating he had no family at that time.[28] He may have been the eldest son of John "Trimmels", and the one listed as being under the age of sixteen when they lived in Philadelphia in the early 1790's.

Thomas E. Trimmell, born in New York in 1817, was a silversmith in Harrison County, Kentucky, in 1850. He seems to have been a grandson of John "Trimmels", and may have been a son of Robert "Tremmels", the New Orleans silversmith. In 1850, Thomas E. Trimmell's family consisted of him and his wife Mary, aged 24; son, George, 5; son, Thomas, 3; and a daughter, Mary, aged 1.[29] His wife and children were listed as natives of Kentucky. Thomas E. Trimmell and two of his children were buried in the "Old Graveyard" in Cynthiana, Kentucky, with inscriptions which read:

"Thomas E. Trimmell
Born Oct 15, 1817
Died Sept 15, 1851"

"Mary, daughter of
Thomas and Mary Trimmell
Born July 31, 1849
Died March 1854"

"Ann, daughter of
Thomas and Mary Trimmell
Born Feb 28, 1851
Died Mar 27, 1854"

There seems to be no further information regarding the surviving children and their mother. If she remarried,

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[28] New Orleans Public Library, microfilm files, Third United States Census of New Orleans, 1810.

[29] Schroeder, November 30, 1960, citing Seventh United States Census of Harrison County, Kentucky, 1850.

George and Thomas may have changed surnames.

John "Trammell" married Ellen Parris with the permission of her father, Robert Parris, in Shelby County, Kentucky, on April 22, 1799.[30] In this instance, there almost surely was a misspelling for John "Trimmels". "Parris" became a frequent baptismal name in future generations of Trimmells. John "Trammell" was an officer in the 18th Regiment (Shelby County) of the Kentucky Militia from 1799 until sometime after 1805.[31] He was the only "Trammell" listed among the Shelby County taxpayers in 1800, and no person named "Trammell", "Trimmels", or Trimmell was listed in the census of 1810.[32]

No reference lists the names or number of John Trimmell's children. If he was the John "Trimmels" of Philadelphia, there were children previous to his marriage in Kentucky. John and Ellen Trimmell seem to have been the parents of at least five children, with the eldest being

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[30]Mrs. Clark Boyd, Shelbyville, Kentucky, July 26, 1961, citing Burns, _Shelby County Marriages_, p. 80, a letter to and in possession of the author; Katharine P. Nichols, Librarian, Shelby County (Kentucky) Library, July 20, 1959, a letter to and in possession of the author.

[31]_Ibid._, citing Clift, _Cornstalk Militia_, pp. 147-211.

[32]_Ibid._, citing both the _Second_ and _Third United States Census of Shelby County, Kentucky, 1800_, and _1810_.

William who was born in 1801.[33] Greene Trimmell of Green County, Kentucky, likely was another son, and Parris Trimmell and Milley Trimmell probably were of the same family.[34]

John and Ellen Trimmell left Kentucky sometime between 1805 and 1810. If Samuel Trimmell was their son and born in Maryland, one may conclude that they settled in New Orleans after having lived briefly at other locations. Going and coming from the river-landing at Louisville would not have been considered unusual during those years. Some 1,200 boats carrying both passengers and cargo passed the Falls of the Ohio at Louisville during the shipping season of 1810-1811.[35] Possibly half those boats were keel boats which made "round-trips" between any two of many ports between Pittsburgh and New Orleans, and the other half were one-way transport which were torn apart downriver and sold

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[33]Schroeder, November 25, 1963, citing the Tenth United States Census of Vermilion County, Illinois, 1880, wherein Elizabeth Trimmell Vinson lists Kentucky as birthplace of both her parents, letter to and in possession of the author.

[34]Parris Otto Trimmell, Wichita, Kansas, November 6, 1959, personal interview with the author; Ruby Trimmell Gentis, Beggs, Oklahoma, September 15, 1960, personal interview with the author.

[35]Havighurst, Wilderness, p. 310.

as lumber.[36] Crew members and passengers had a choice of ways to return home. They might enlist as a crew member on a keel boat going upriver, they might work or ride a coach northward over the Natchez Trace which had opened in 1796 as a postal and coach route, or they might board a sea-going vessel charted for Baltimore, Alexandria, or Philadelphia. The chief route homeward was by way of the Atlantic Coast, across Pennsylvania, and downriver from Pittsburgh.[37] A French immigrant with a maritime background may have found river transport more to his liking than agriculture, and this would explain the frequent changes of residence during the early years of the century.

Rafts, like "floating islands", carried a vast assortment of cargo. There were homemade rafts carrying immigrants downriver with the family, livestock, feed, seed, furniture, and farm tools to the frontier. Some rafts carrying commercial freight made long journeys downriver, but the use of rafts commercially was ordinarily for shorter distances. "Floating cities" were seen along the river; built on rafts, these portable businesses were

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[36] Harold Sinclair, The Port of New Orleans (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran, and Company, Inc., 1942), p. 102.

[37] Hinsdale, Northwest, pp. 399-400.

anything from theaters, libraries, barrel coopers, and blacksmiths to gristmills, and sawmills.[38]

The first steamboat was built on the river in 1811, and others soon were built. During the first five years, their chief use was between Natchez and New Orleans. After 1815, steamboats were designed to contend with the strong currents in highwater season, and they were used over the entire river system. About sixty steamboats were launched on the Ohio River between 1817 and 1820, and quickly replaced the more primitive craft excepting for short "hauls" and along the tributaries.[39]

Statistics were not maintained with exactness during the early years of New Orleans. In fact, none of the states seemed to concern themselves with keeping vital statistics until after 1880 or 1900. Churches and family Bibles recorded what statistics were kept excepting in uncommon instances.[40] A number of circumstances explain the lack of records in New Orleans.

In the first place, it was a port city which created a cosmopolitan atmosphere. Crewmen from sea vessels and

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[38] _Ibid._

[39] Havighurst, _Wilderness_, p. 314.

[40] Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, _Information Leaflet Number One_, p. 2.

upriver boats swarmed the city much of the year. Temporary residents often were immigrants who eventually settled elsewhere. Many of the city's permanent residents were French. Although controlled by Spanish and American officials for many years, the confusion continued from the 1790's until after the 1840's.

French-speaking immigrants, in particular, were allowed much privacy, for many of them left France during the Revolution and were official enemies of the Spanish authorities in Louisiana. New Orleans winked at their arrival and often allowed them unregistered entry.[41] The population nearly doubled in Louisiana between 1805 and 1810, and the increase consisted mainly of refugees from the French West Indies.[42]

The French and Americans disagreed in government matters after the United States took possession of Louisiana. The legislature authorized separate municipal councils which were given much autonomy despite their being under a single mayor.[43] This policy was in force until the

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[41]Henry E. Chambers, Mississippi Valley Beginnings (New York: G. P. Putnams Sons, 1922), p. 144.

[42]George W. Cable, The Creoles of Louisiana (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1901), p. 156.

[43]Sinclair, Port, p. 177.

municipalities were combined in the 1840's.

New Orleans experienced 37 yellow fever epidemics between 1803 and 1900. In addition to yellow fever, cholera, bubonic, and small pox all took their toll in lives. When as many as five-hundred deaths occurred in a day, tombs could not be built rapidly enough. Burials in trenches were made unceremoniously and with little thought of keeping records of those interred.[44]

Information regarding Protestants in New Orleans during the first half-century is virtually non-existent. An Episcopalian parish, ministering to all non-Catholics of the region, was organized in 1805. All the earlier records were lost in 1833, and many others were destroyed by fire during the Civil War. Christ Church, as it was named, has no references to Trimmells.[45]

The Louisiana State Historical Museum which preserves many of Louisiana's old documents has no information relating to the Trimmells. The Louisiana Bureau of Records and Registrations was established in 1914, and has few records predating the Civil War. They have no information concerning Trimmells.

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[44] _Ibid._, pp. 186-210.

[45] Doris Gildert, Parish Secretary of Christ Church Cathedral, New Orleans, Louisiana, February 21, 1964, letter to and in possession of the author.

For half a century, Trimmells were in and out of New Orleans, but very little is known of their activity. The obscurity suggests that they were neither famous nor infamous, and spent those years in a manner considered commonplace for whatever community was their home at a given interval.

The directory of New Orleans listed no "Trimmels", "Trammell", or "Tremmels" in 1805 when the population of the city was 3,551 whites, 1,566 free-colored, and 3,105 slaves.[46] The only listing in 1810 was Robert "Tremmells", a silversmith. John Trimmell, almost surely the same person as John "Trimmels" of Philadelphia and John "Trammell" of Kentucky, was a private in the 10th and 20th Consolidated Regiments of the Louisiana Militia in 1812, and living in New Orleans.[47]

Anne Trimmell died in New Orleans during the week of December 18, 1822. Born in Virginia in 1791, she probably was a daughter-in-law of John Trimmell, and wife of Robert "Tremmells". Thomas E. Trimmell, the silversmith in

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[46] New Orleans City Council, New Orleans in 1805 (New Orleans: The Pelican Gallery, Inc. 1936), from the microfilm files of the New Orleans Public Library.

[47] Marion J. Pierson, Louisiana Soldiers in the War of 1812 (New Orleans: Louisiana Genealogical and Historical Society, 1963), p. 118.

Kentucky, may have been her son. Anne Trimmell was interred in the Protestant Cemetery on Girod Street.[48]

John Trimmell continued to live in New Orleans, and was living at Fourth and Bacchus Streets in Lafayette Parish in 1851. He worked as a gardener at that time, and was between seventy and eighty years of age.[49]

The Parris family continued to live in Kentucky, even though Ellen apparently moved about with her husband, John "Trammell". The families maintained close contact, for the Trimmell children were in Kentucky at various times when they were growing up. Rubin Harrison married Rhoda Parris in 1804 in Shelby County, Kentucky, and he gave bond for Milley Trimmell to marry John Bateman on February 21, 1816.[50] Milley would have been either the first or the second child of John and Ellen Trimmell. In either case, she was young for marriage. There was no reference to her age, but Rubin Harrison appears to have been her uncle, and this may explain the alleged relationship between the

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[48]The Louisiana Courier, December 18, 1822, p. 1, Column 3, "Obituaries."

[49]City of New Orleans, New Orleans City Directory, 1851 (New Orleans: The New Orleans City Council, 1851).

[50]Schroeder, November 30, 1960, citing Bell, Early Marriages, p. 89; Boyd, July 26, 1961, citing Burns, Shelby County Marriages, pp. 6, 37; Nichols, July 20, 1959.

Trimmells and President Harrison.[51]

William Trimmell was twenty-one years of age when he married Sarah Gilleland on September 15, 1823. Her father, Daniel Gilleland, gave his permission.[52] William and Sarah Trimmell had one child born in Kentucky, and he was John J. Trimmell, born in Shelby County on June 14, 1824.[53] Their other children all were born after they migrated to Vermilion County, Illinois. They were Elizabeth, born 1827; William II, born 1830; Sarah who married Gentry Williams, but for whom no date of birth is listed; Mary, born 1834; Rebecca, born 1838; and Parris, born 1842.[54] While other Trimmells lived in Illinois from time to time, the remainder of this study is concerned primarily with the activities of William and Sarah Trimmell and their descendants.

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[51]Flossie Baker Cox, Oakwood, Illinois, August 5, 1962, personal interview with the author.

[52]Boyd, July 26, 1961, citing Burns, Shelby County Marriages, p. 80.

[53]Ruby Trimmell Gentis, Beggs, Oklahoma, an undated newspaper clipping with no notation of the name of the newspaper, "Obituary of John J. Trimmell".

[54]Tombstone inscriptions from the "Old Trimmell Cemetery", located one mile north of Newton, Illinois; entries in family Bibles; Jones, Vermilion County, I, p. 120.

CHAPTER III

FRONTIER CONDITIONS IN KENTUCKY

Kentucky was one of the more isolated of the American states before the War of 1812. Excepting for those living near the Ohio River, settlers had few associations with other regions. Commerce consisted chiefly of bartering surplus farm goods. When a family had surplus produce, they exchanged with a family who had something they needed, or they went to a trading post and bartered for a few items not actually made on the farm. Bartering in the community was usually called "neighboring", and local supply loosely determined the comparative values.[1]

Barter economy continued even after merchants and peddlers appeared on the frontier. Farmers brought produce to the stores, and selected merchandise from the stock equal to the determined value of their produce.[2] Merchants set the prices for both the farm produce and the stock in the store, but they were not long in business if they did

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[1]Luther and Thelma Trimmell, Coyville, Kansas, reported frontier experiences as told to them by their grandparents.

[2]Rebecca Burlend, A True Picture of Emigration (The Lakeside Classics, edited by Milo M. Quaife; Chicago: R. R. Donelley and Sons Company, 1936), p. 78.

this in a manner considered unfair to the settlers. Stores were patronized only so long as merchants provided goods at prices which would save settlers the time and expense of doing the merchandising themselves. Some farmers became merchant-traders, but this practice was not common, for crops suffered and the other work was neglected if settlers spent their precious time being merchants. The early stores were little more than "warehouse trading centers", because much of the stock came from the local community.[3]

The cost of transporting goods to the frontier often made "imports" too expensive to purchase unless the need was great, so merchants relied to a great degree upon local supply. Cane sugar from Louisiana cost from forty to fifty cents per pound in the 1820's, but storekeepers could barter for honey and maple sugar locally for seven or eight cents per pound.[4] They stocked cotton fabric and imported tobacco in small quantities, but sold less of the luxury items than they sold of the linen and woolen goods and plug tobacco brought in by the settlers.[5] Settlers bought tea and coffee

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[3]Roscoe C. Buley, The Old Northwest, Pioneer Period (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1951), I, p. 214; Thomas Ford, A History of Illinois 1818-1847 (The Lakeside Classics, edited by Milo M. Quaife; Chicago: R. R. Donnelley and Sons Company, 1945), I, p. 138.

[4]Burlend, Emigration, p. 78.

[5]Buley, Northwest, p. 207.

for special occasions,[6] but merchants sold more local whiskey, which some farmers made at the ratio of two gallons per bushel of corn.[7]

Cheese made with rennet, hams and sideport cured with woodashes and hickory smoke, "rendered" butter which did not become rancid with age as did salted butter, thread spun from wool and flax, coarse woolen and linen cloth woven on home looms, maple sugar, wild honey, corn whiskey, plug tobacco, flour, and buttons whittled from hard wood were a part of the variety of farm produce bartered by the ingenious settlers.[8] What the merchant could not "move" locally, to took to the river traders and exchanged for goods imported from other regions.

Eventually the value of produce sent out of Kentucky exceeded the value of goods brought in, and currency became essential. Bartering continued to dominate frontier commerce for several years, but frugal settlers and storekeepers often preferred cash for the difference between exports and imports. Transportation inflated prices of

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[6]Ford, Illinois, I, p. 42.

[7]Buley, Northwest, p. 225.

[8]Harriet S. Arnow, Seedtime on the Cumberland (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), pp. 403-415.

imports beyond what settlers were willing to pay. Heavy, bulky, or fragile merchandise was especially expensive to transport. Small local industries were built to supply such articles as farm tools, spinning and weaving devices, cooking equipment, wagons, barrels, and feather-beds. Glass and paper factories were built to supply the valley in the late 1790's. In 1800, one port of entry on the Ohio River recorded 700 boxes of glass bottles shipped down the river that year; window panes commonly sold for five cents each in stores.[9]

An iron furnace was built in 1791 in Kentucky, and a tobacco-processing factory was built in 1793. As early as 1789, a manufacturing society for making cotton cloth and stockings was organized in Danville, Kentucky.[10] Local sawmills, gristmills, and forge shops were built. The need for currency grew more and more important, for a cloth factory could hardly exchange all its output for butter and cheese, nor could an iron furnace successfully operate using the barter system.

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[9]Archer B. Hulbert, The Paths of Inland Commerce (Chronicles of America Series, edited by Allen Johnson; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), pp. 74-75; Havighurst, Wilderness, p. 259; Arnow, Seedtime, p. 262.

[10]Drake, Retrospect, pp. 39-45.

Most of the currency used on the frontier before the War of 1812 originated in New Orleans. Spanish silver pieces and the ten-dollar notes called "dixies" were the principal kinds of money used.[11] The Kentucky Insurance Company, chartered in 1802, issued a few transfer notes which were used in the river trade. The Bank of Kentucky was chartered in 1806 with a capitalization of $1,000,000, but this was minimal compared with the money Kentucky required to develop its industry and trade.[12]

Agriculture in Kentucky was sufficiently developed by 1815 for local needs and to sustain a few small industries which processed farm products for export, but improvements in grain varieties and breeds of livestock were yet to come. Little land in the state was left unsettled, but the existing farms strongly needed improvement.

The population of Kentucky increased each year, although the settlement "boom" had ended. The state was no longer isolated, and most of the land was past the primitive pioneering stage. Industry and commerce seemed next on the agenda, and some improvements in transportation were needed to encourage this growth.

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[11] Herbert Ashbury, The French Quarter (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1936; Cardinal Edition; New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1955), pp. 54-55.

[12] Drake, Retrospect, p. 57.

With the increasing population, social institutions were in demand, and Kentucky sought to be up to date! The state ranked sixth in the nation according to population and social institutions--schools, churches, libraries, hospitals, jails, new roads, canals, theaters--were in demand. Factories, freight lines, and improvements were promoted by the Kentuckians to help make their farms the best in the country.[13] Some of the improvements might be handled by private enterprise and others by public planning.

Not enough money was in Kentucky to initiate the programs of improvements, and the demands were for more money--easy money. The state legislature chartered forty-six independent banks in 1818 with capitalization of $8,720,000 to provide the ways and the means for funding the improvements. Those were "heady" times with big dreams running rampant; the independent banks were authorized to issue paper currency in excess of their capitalization in order to stimulate the economy.[14]

The chartering of those independent banks hardly could have been timed more poorly. Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio became the most severely affected regions in the

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[13] _Ibid_., pp. 61-69.

[14] Shaler, _Commonwealth_, p. 177.

financial panic which had just begun. Within a few months nearly a third of the American population felt the impact of the depression which grew from the post-war boom. The Second United States Bank, chartered in 1816, had operated through branch banks over the nation as well as through state banks which were allowed to operate as branches. Specie reserves dwindled to five per cent of the outstanding loans within two years.

The Dallas Tariff Act, passed as a temporary protection for American industrialists and agricultural suppliers in 1816, had opened the gates for Americans who demanded they free themselves from depending upon European manufactured goods. Inexperience and over-optomism had led the banks into a hysteria of speculation. Loans often were made on goodwill and rosy prospects with little regard for secured collateral. Not only banks loaned money in such fashion, but private loans were drawn up also.

Unsophisticated industrialists and farmers borrowed money in amounts beyond their net worth in many cases, with no thought of arranging long-term loans. The object was to continue renewing short-term loans until such time as payments of principal were possible. Short-term loans hardly allowed sufficient time for new businesses to organize, much less commence defraying indebtedness by means of

revenue.[15]

In 1818, the United States Bank commenced retrenching by calling upon its branches to collect from their patrons. Debtors, with their expansion just under way, had neither specie nor bank notes for repayment. In some instances there were foreclosures, and in other instances there was quick refinancing which was merely "grasping for straws."[16]

Almost as soon as they opened their doors, the new independent banks were caught in the scramble. They loaned capital to eager patrons who offered long-range prospects, and otherwise flimsy security on short-term notes. Enterprises, often sincerely planned, usually borrowed money with the confidence of renewing notes indefinitely. A great deal of speculation was in new lands just opened in Illinois and Missouri. Land bought on credit up to five years needed to be resold or cultivated almost immediately to meet indebtedness, but usually was not. Businessmen borrowed money to construct buildings, then mortgaged the

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[15]Charles M. Wiltse, John C. Calhoun, Nationalist 1782-1828 (New York: The Bobbs-Merril Company, Inc., 1944), I, pp. 175-176; Robert Taylor Stevenson, The Growth of the Nation 1809-1837 (The History of North America Series, Vol. XII, edited by Guy C. Lee; Philadelphia: George Barries Sons, 1912), pp. 148-152.

[16]Wiltse, Calhoun, I, pp. 175-176.

buildings to buy equipment, and used the equipment as collateral to obtain still more loans for supplies and materials.[17] When demand for repayment or refinancing was made, the whole business would not sell for enough to meet loan installments.[18]

Caught in the pandemonium were people in the community who had borrowed money, the reputation of the banks, and those with subscribed investment in the banks. Riddled economically, people of the frontier regions were helpless to explain just what had happened. The money was gone, but to where? Who was responsible? "Well, those 'rascals' at the banks did it!" The banks became the whipping boys and were dubbed the "forty thieves".[19] Developing community institutions reflected the panic, private business reflected the panic, and families reflected the panic. Few people had refrained from speculating in economic betterment, and those who had been most conservative faced depression of prices and increases in their tax burden. Families cast about for solutions.

The state legislators, once agog with plans for

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[17]Ford, Illinois, I, pp. 45-49.

[18]Snaler, Commonwealth, p. 177.

[19]Wiltse, Calhoun, I, pp. 175-176.

improving Kentucky, were faced with saving Kentucky.[20]

Previously, legislation had encouraged investment in progress; but the "new look" was to abolish imprisonment for debts, to revoke existing bank charters, to pass Relief Acts, and to enlarge the lunatic asylum. In desperation, they devised a state-supported banking system for issuing bills of credit, and tried to send disagreeable creditors to jail for not accepting them for face value.[21]

The Kentuckians with a few assets left were the taxpayers, and they were expected to support the debtors, finance the completion of internal improvements, and purchase consumer goods to save the merchants and manufacturers. People on both sides of the ledger were finding survival difficult. The whole country was affected to some degree, so other regions were unable to sustain the economy of the "over the mountain" states.[22]

> Mama was a great hand at stretching, when she had anything to stretch, but she wasn't fooling anybody with some of the meals she set on the table them days. It was bad enough at our house, but we knowed it was a blamed sight worse at some of the neighbors.

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[20]Drake, Retrospect, p. 64.

[21]Ibid., pp. 61-66; Shaler, Commonwealth, pp. 173-177.

[22]Wiltse, Calhoun, I, pp. 175-176.

> I got plum tired a doin' nuthin' but growin' things in the summer jes to eat 'em up in the winter, the same thing over and over every year and never gettin' no place.[23]

Kentuckians migrated to Missouri and Illinois in large numbers after 1820--particularly between 1824 and 1830.[24] Pioneer movements almost always reflected discontent with conditions at home, for the volume of migration swelled in bad times.[25] Religion, health, freedom, and other interests entered the picture, but whatever combination of reasons brought settlers to a new frontier, the common denominator usually was economic.[26] Few settlers moved to new regions by accident, for most investigated prospects as carefully as possible, and moved with a definite location and project in mind.[27]

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[23]Martha F. McKeown, Them Was the Days (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 67.

[24]Chambers, Beginnings, p. 130.

[25]James K. Hosmer, A Short History of the Mississippi Valley (New York: The Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1901), p. 153.

[26]Allan G. Bogue, From Prairie to Corn Belt (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 18; Robert L. Stevenson, Amateur Emigrant and Silverado Squatters (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1909), pp. 3-5; Paxson, Frontier, p. 44.

[27]Duncan, Wilson County, p. 732.

CHAPTER IV

DEVELOPMENT OF ILLINOIS

William and Sarah Trimmell lived in Kentucky for nearly three years after their marriage in 1823. With their two-year-old son, John J., they moved to the Illinois frontier in the spring of 1826. Riding two horses, they left Shelby County and crossed the Ohio River at Louisville. Following the Vincennes Trail across the Wabash River, they turned northward for the last hundred miles of their journey in virtually unsettled territory.[1] They chose land in the wooded valley of the South Fork of the Vermilion River, some 120 miles north of Vincennes, and this became their home for as long as they lived.

Sarah Trimmell wore a blue dress which she had made especially for the journey. It was made of woolen goods she had spun, woven, and dyed. She kept that dress and showed it to her children and grandchildren when she related to them her story of their move from Kentucky to Illinois.[2]

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[1]Work Projects Administration, Writers Program for the State of Illinois, Illinois, A Guide to the State (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1939), p. 120.

[2]Jones, Vermilion County, I, p. 120.

English-speaking settlers had been in Illinois since Virginia had made grants to Revolutionary War soldiers, but numbers were small. Some 2,000 French settlers remained in Illinois even though most of them had migrated across the river to Missouri in the 1760's following the French and Indian War. Prior to the wave of migration after 1820, most of the white population lived along the Ohio, Mississippi, Wabash, and Kaskaskia Rivers. The northern two-thirds of the state was claimed chiefly by Indians.[3]

Illinois needed a population of 40,000 to become a state in 1819, but an early-in-the-year census showed less than this minimum number. Settlers arrived rapidly, so United States marshalls were authorized to count immigrants as they entered Illinois at Vincennes, and again count the number leaving at St. Louis. Subtracting the difference determined that more than the necessary 10,000 had remained to settle in Illinois during the short interval between the census and statehood.[4] Almost all of that number had come from Kentucky, and most of them started farms from meager beginnings. Wealthier immigrants generally went on to

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[3]Chambers, Beginnings, p. 123; Ford, Illinois, I, p. 33.

[4]Lloyd Lewis and Henry J. Smith, Chicago (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1929), p. 21.

Missouri where slavery was legal. Few came from New England and the Middle Atlantic states until after the Erie Canal was opened in 1825, and the National Road was extended west from Wheeling between 1824 and 1835.[5]

The financial panic affected Illinois after 1819, but in a somewhat different way than in Kentucky. Indebtedness in Illinois was almost all related to land speculation and to merchandise purchased from trading-posts on credit. The flood of migration to Illinois in the 1820's was a stimulus to the economy of the new state, for internal improvements and industrialization had not begun to any great extent and there was little public indebtedness.[6]

The population of Illinois increased rapidly for more than forty years. From 12,282 in 1810, it increased to 55,162 in 1820. The census showed 157,445 in 1830, and 476,183 in 1840. The number of residents tripled in the 1820's, and tripled again in the 1830's! There were nineteen counties laid out by 1819, forty-five counties by 1826, and sixty counties by 1833. In 1854, Illinois had 100 counties.[7] A survey of Illinois was authorized in 1804,

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[5]Ford, Illinois, I, p. 87.

[6]Ibid., pp. 45-46.

[7]Theodore C. Pease, The Story of Illinois (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 126-127, 270.

and the range and meridian lines drawn. Detail work on townships was not completed until 1810. The first sales of public lands were in 1814.[8] Land sold for $2 per acre before 1820 with down payment of $1 and five-year credit for the balance. The credit system was repealed in 1820 and the price lowered to $1.25 per acre. Minimum purchase was established at eighty acres, rather than the previous minimum of 160 acres.[9] Some settlers "squatted and filed", but others were able to pay $100 cash for their 80 acres. Few could afford to buy from the earlier "squatters" who charged for the buildings and clearings already made on the land.

Illy-Noy[10]

She's back there by the Wabash,
The Ohio, and the Lakes.
She's got crawdads in the swampland;
There's milksick, mange, and shakes.
But those things never stopped us,
Or took away the joy
Of moving into that new land,
The State of Illy-Noy!
We moved the family in there.
Headaches did annoy,
But we got our wealth and honor
In sickly Illy-Noy!

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[8]Douglas C. Ridgley, The Geography of Illinois (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1921), p. 138.

[9]Banta, Ohio, p. 276; Pease, Illinois, p. 89.

[10]Hyla Bacon, a song heard sung in the family, possibly a folk version of another song.

An editor of a newspaper in Centerville, Indiana, ated 120 wagons loaded with families and possessions ded west during one 15-day period in 1825.[11] Nineteen- ousand boats and rafts passed West Troy, New York, on the ie Canal in 1826.[12] Most of this traffic was related to e opening of the Midwest settlements. Indeed, there were rawdads in the swamps--and mosquitoes; there were seasonal bouts with ague, milksick, and Illinois mange which was called "seven-year-itch". Settlers worked overtime during the summer season, for they knew full well they could contend with illnesses from late August until late October.[13] Thirty years before, people pioneered in Kentucky because they preferred to face the hazards of the wilderness rather than to remain along the Atlantic Coast where they had little hope of advancement. Now, another group was ready to face the hazards of the wilderness rather than to remain in the established communities which were suffering the financial panic.

Illinois mange, or itch, broke out in spreading spots,

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[11]Havighurst, Wilderness, p. 218.

[12]Robert Taylor Stevenson, Growth, p. 392.

[13]Buley, Northwest, p. 244; Burlend, Emigration, p. 63.

and was treated with sulphur packs.[14] The ague, or "shakes", was treated with numerous inventions varying from one household to another. Rather than to rely upon curing the illness, itself, most settlers treated themselves with year-round medications hoping to resist the disease. One such preparation was:

> Pour as much black pepper as will lie on an eighth-dollar. Lick the pepper off the coin if possible or mix it with molasses (syrup) in a spoon. Take this four mornings, skip a week; repeat for four mornings, skip another week. Do this all season.[15]

"Mortification", probably cancer, was treated with:

> Take equal parts of each and pulverize--brimstone, alum, and gunpowder; then mix as much as will lie on a quarter-dollar with half a gill of vinegar and water--for a grown person.[16]

Almost every family suffered a "round" with local diseases during the first year. Cholera, yellow fever, and other plagues brought upriver by boat traffic took their toll from time to time. Pioneers had to be sturdy if they survived, but they were far from healthy much of the time.

The Kickapoo Indians ceded a large area of land during the summer of 1819, and Vermilion County was among the

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[14]Burlend, Emigration, p. 63.

[15]Banta, Ohio, p. 398. [16]Ibid.

counties later formed from that region in central Illinois.[17] William and Sarah Trimmell arrived in the spring of 1826 when Vermilion County was less than six months old. When they came, the only settlement was at the junction of the two main forks of the Vermilion River. A salt-works, serving a 200-mile radius, had been operating for about two years. A tavern and twelve cabins comprised the town which served as county seat in 1826.[18]

The Trimmells chose land a few miles west of the salt-works, and became the first to file an entry for government land in Pilot Township, Vermilion County, Illinois.[19] A part of Section 24, Township 20, north of Range 13, west of Meridian 2, became the nucleus of the family farm which was expanded through the years. It was about a mile north of the village of Newtown.[20]

Settlers were unfamiliar with prairie lands, and believed absence of trees indicated sterile ground, so the Trimmells filed for land along a creek in a timbered area,

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[17]W. P. A., Guide to Illinois, p. 402. [18]Ibid.

[19]William Paris Trimmell, Topeka, Kansas, January 28, 1962, personal interview with author.

[20]Obituary of Rebecca Trimmell Piper, newspaper clipping in possession of author.

and laboriously cleared it of trees.[21] In reality, "sod-busting" was more difficult than "timber-clearing" until after John Deere produced steel-faced plowshares in 1837.[22] This, along with the need for water, fuel, and building materials, was the chief reason for avoiding the grasslands for cultivation.

The Trimmells were Americans by 1826, for they pioneered new lands with procedures considered practical at the time. They spoke the language of their neighbors, and their children married among frontier families who paid little heed to their various European origins. While descendants of the earlier French settlers in Illinois continued some of the national traditions in the communities along the Mississippi River,[23] the Trimmells did not. Reference to their French ancestry was incidental.

Immigrants moving to Illinois in the 1820's usually were young married couples with a child or two. It was common to hear pioneer people speak of being born in _one_ state, _reared_ in a second state, and of spending their

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[21]Havighurst, _Wilderness_, p. 212; Jones, _Vermilion County_, I, p. 120.

[22]Allan Nevins and Henry S. Commager, _The Pocket History of the United States_ (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1942), p. 362.

[23]Chambers, _Beginnings_, p. 119.

adulthood in a third state.[24] For example, William Trimmell was born in Kentucky, reared in Louisiana, and pioneered in Illinois. His son, John J. Trimmell, was born in Kentucky, reared in Illinois, and pioneered in Kansas. Trimmells born later in Illinois were reared in Kansas and pioneered in Oklahoma, Wyoming, Idaho, and Oregon.[25] Native Kentuckians were in all the major Indian fights, the Texas Rebellion, on frontier farms, and in legislative assemblies of each new state so long as "westward expansion" lasted.[26] The same was true of people native to Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.[27] Those who had spent their childhood in pioneer homes tended to repeat the settlement patterns of their parents or grandparents. They moved westward to obtain inexpensive farm land which they developed along with the social institutions and privileges. Usually the development consisted of modifications of what they had known before they migrated to the frontier.

Though they became active in educational, civic, and political developments in Vermilion County within a few

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[24]Duncan, Wilson County, passim.

[25]Records in the Trimmell Family.

[26]Shaler, Commonwealth, p. 171.

[27]Duncan, Wilson County, passim.

years, it is doubtful if William and Sarah Trimmell paid much attention to the more worldly events of the summer of 1826. July 4, 1826, was the fiftieth anniversary of American independence, and both Thomas Jefferson and John Adams died on that day.[28] Across the Wabash River from Illinois, Robert Owen made a famous speech about other definitions of independence on July 4, 1826, when he urged abolition of private property, religion, and marriage ties.[29] The thousands of pioneers who hoed in their corn "patches" that day were significant to history, but the "notions" of Owen and the deaths of Jefferson and Adams were the recorded events.

William and Sarah Trimmell first lived in a "primitive-style" cabin as did most of their neighbors. The bark, left on the logs, made logs easier to handle during construction and provided insulation for the cabin walls.[30] Puncheon floors, made by turning up the flat face of split logs, and clapboard roofs were found only in the favored homes in the early years.[31] Primitive cabins had no rafters,

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[28]Robert Taylor Stevenson, _Growth_, p. 214.

[29]_Ibid_., p. 421.

[30]Margaret Whittemore, _Historic Kansas, A Centenary Sketchbook_ (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1954), p. 90.

[31]Jones, _Vermilion County_, II, p. 400.

for sidewalls arched into the center of the roof because gable-end logs were cut shorter and shorter. Much skill was needed for dove-tailing the corners and fitting the gable-ends correctly, yet this freed the builders from the tedious and time-consuming shingle making. Primitive cabins usually leaked, but they were sturdy and durable.[32]

The fireplace often was the last part of the cabin to be built. Some pioneers hauled stone for fireplaces, but many were built with a method similar to concrete construction a century later. A mixture of clay, water, and salt was poured into a wooden frame. The clay mixture solidified with the first fire, and the outer forms were left as protection from erosion for the chimney. The Trimmells had a fireplace which occupied nearly all of one end of the cabin. Built for cooking, it also served for heat--if the family huddled close enough to the hearth.[33]

"Hard-clay" floors for cabins were made by mixing salt water and clay and pounding it flat over the floor. Window panes were not expensive in the Ohio Valley, but were difficult to transport overland. The Trimmells covered their windows with oiled paper which was easily replaced by

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[32]Arnow, _Seedtime_, pp. 259-262.

[33]Jones, _Vermilion County_, II, p. 400.

rubbing new paper with raw fat. Door hinges were of hickory withes, and simple furniture was fashioned with an axe.[34] Lexington, Kentucky, had a nail factory as early as 1802 and nails sold for eight cents per pound. Settlers sometimes used nails for furniture making, but pegging and dove-tailing were more common since nails were better suited to milled lumber than for the rough native timber used on pioneer farms.[35]

Families needed to provide for most of their needs and comforts through ingenious use of local materials. Cloth was made from wool, flax, and cotton grown on the farm, and footwear was made from local hides and skins. The spinning, weaving, dyeing, tanning, and sewing was done by hand.[36] Soap was made with lye and pork fat, usually once annually.[37] Hominy, a significant staple in the pioneer diet, was made by removing hulls from white corn with a lye solution. This could be dried and stored year-round.[38]

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Robert Taylor Stevenson, Growth, pp. 382-383.

[36] Ford, Illinois, I, p. 42.

[37] Viola Busby Ware, Altoona, Kansas, maternal grandmother of the author, relating the soapmaking techniques used by her mother.

[38] Arnow, Seedtime, p. 397.

Hominy-making paralleled the English process of "pilling" wheat, and the rice-hulling done by the Acadians in Louisiana. "Indian hominy" was more like succotash, a soup made by boiling cracked corn with beans, and was not commonly served in pioneer homes.[39]

"Long-sweetening" was a term for wild honey or molasses made from cane, maple, or corn. "Short-sweetening" was the refined sugar from Louisiana, and too expensive for most pioneers. "Sorghum molasses" was not known in America before the Civil War, so the reference to molasses simply meant "syrup".[40] Gristmills were among the first business establishments in a frontier village due to the need for cornmeal.[41] Beef was seldom eaten; but dairy products were regular diet, and among the first cash crops in new settlements.[42]

William Trimmell, establishing a farm in 1826, was yet to use the many inventions developed in the 1830's to improve farming. There was a great lack of steel implements such as axes, knives, and other cutting tools which needed

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[39]Robert M. Coates, The Outlaw Years (New York: The Literary Guild of America, 1930), pp. 15-16.

[40]Banta, Ohio, p. 398.

[41]Coates, Outlaw Years, p. 14.

[42]Arnow, Seedtime, p. 409.

replacing periodically.[43] Scattered individuals experimented with mechanical mowers, reapers, and steel plows for many years before 1830, but most farmers used hand tools until the inventions were manufactured at a cost they could afford to pay. Harness, wagons, barrels, and sometimes steel implements were made at home.[44]

Farmers worked 32.8 minutes for every bushel of small grains produced in 1830. By 1890, only 2.2 minutes were required to produce the same amount. A farmer could cut up to two acres of wheat daily with a cradle, and half that with a hand sickle.[45] There were only four to ten days harvesting time for small grains such as wheat or barley before shattering, so one farmer could cut no more than ten to twenty acres of wheat per summer with his wife and children binding and shocking it. Any left uncut was grazed by livestock.[46] Corn, with its protective husks, would stand undamaged for several weeks of harvest and was more suited to the frontier for this reason.

The iron and steel industry grew rapidly after the

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[43]Havighurst, Land of Promise, p. 193.

[44]Ford, Illinois, I, p. 43.

[45]Nevins, History, p. 362.

[46]Finley, Heart of America, p. 334.

development of the hot air-blast process in 1828. Americans produced ten times as much iron and steel within four years.[47] Hand tools became more plentiful, and farm machinery could be produced at a lower price. The wilderness was a new land where fame and fortune awaited the swift, the bold, the strong; and pioneers all were pressed for time. There was a "hit-and-miss" and "lick-and-promise" crudity about the first building they built and tools they made, but evermore was the dream of having more time for nicer things later when they could afford to buy them.[48] The hurried settlers rationed their time to initiate social and educational institutions in their new communities, and these same hurried settlers initiated the use of time-saving farm machinery a few years later.

Early in 1827, William Trimmell helped lay out the new village of Danville, the first real town in Vermilion County.[49] Dan Beckwith, for whom the town was named, built a trading post a mile east of the salt-works and donated one-hundred acres for a townsite. Danville had a gristmill and a post office within a year; and five years later, in

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[47] Robert Taylor Stevenson, Growth, p. 103.

[48] Nevins, History, p. 196.

[49] Jones, Vermilion County, II, p. 400.

1833, there were 81 cabins and houses in the village.[50] The Trimmells and their neighbors saw their farming interests expand almost as rapidly as did the county seat. They opened the wilderness with hand tools, a few acres, and primitive cabins; and they remained to introduce mechanized farming, expanded acreages, and comfortable dwellings. When William Trimmell died in 1848, he and his wife owned five-hundred acreas after having deeded farms to their children who had married and "started out" for themselves.[51]

During the first few years on the Illinois frontier, the Trimmells and their neighbors concerned themselves with clearing land and providing meager necessities. By 1830, prairie lands were obtained and used for cattle-grazing which was their apparent natural use. Grain from the farm, then, was fed to cattle and marketed on the hoof. The cattle enterprise was a source of wealth to the Trimmells; and almost without exception, the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of William and Sarah participated in the growth of the American livestock industry.[52]

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[50]W. P. A., Guide to Illinois, p. 403.

[51]Jones, Vermilion County, I, pp. 120, 157, 164; II, pp. 400, 740.

[52]Jones, Vermilion County, I, pp. 120, 157, 164; II, pp. 400, 740; Duncan, Wilson County, pp. 619-620; Obituary of Rebecca Trimmell Piper, a photostat of the original

William Trimmell, John J. Trimmell, John Vinson, William Trimmell II, Harvey Piper, and Paris Trimmell all drove cattle to Chicago when it was a struggling village along the lake. Often there was no market for livestock on foot in the earlier years, so they butchered at the edge of town and sold dressed beef to residents for as low as three cents per pound.[53] Farmers drove livestock to Chicago when there was a demand for beef, but most Illinois cattle were driven to eastern markets until the mid-1840's. Wagons were driven north into Chicago only during a few weeks in the autumn, but livestock could wade the mire and cross the rivers almost year-round.[54]

There was little incentive for marketing in Chicago in the early years of Illinois settlement, for a few cabins clustered around Fort Dearborn comprised the lakefront village. Incorporated as a town in 1833, there were 43 dwellings and about 200 residents. The land boom in 1835

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undated newspaper clipping in possession of the author; Obituary of John J. Trimmell, a copy of the original newspaper clipping supplied by Ruby Trimmell Gentis, Beggs, Oklahoma, and in possession of the author; Obituary of George Paris Vinson, a photostat of the original undated newspaper clipping in possession of the author.

[53]Duncan, Wilson County, p. 619.

[54]Lewis, Chicago, p. 40.

and plans for building a canal to connect Lake Michigan with the Illinois River increased the population to 7,590 in 1843. Ten years later Chicago had its first railroad from the East, a canal to the Illinois River, and a population of 60,650.[55] The growth of Chicago paralleled the growth of the meat-marketing in the region, and slaughter houses built in all parts of the town, each with its own stockyards, made for a confusion of milling, bawling cattle until 1865 when the railroads and packers organized the Union Stockyards at the edge of town.[56]

Those with feedlots obtained livestock from various sources, the most common being the smaller farms of the area. Cattle were bought a few at a time and gathered into herds which were driven home for a winter of feeding on locally grown grain.

The Trimmells and some of their neighbors bought Louisiana and Texas cattle in New Orleans during the 1830's and 1840's, and drove them home to Illinois. It is likely that William Trimmell was among the crew who took Gurdon Hubbard's flatboat downriver to New Orleans in 1831.[57] He

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[55]Kogan, Chicago, pp. 66-73.

[56]Ibid., passim.

[57]W. P. A., Guide to Illinois, p. 403.

apparently accompanied freight downriver regularly. Going to New Orleans also meant a visit to his parents who continued to live there as late as 1851. William Trimmell may have been in Texas during the Mexican War, for his son, John J. Trimmell, enlisted.[58] He was in New Orleans buying cattle in 1848 during the cholera epidemic, and died enroute home. He was buried in Walnut Hills Cemetery in Cincinnati, after almost completing the journey by way of Philadelphia and the Ohio River.[59] Sarah Trimmell remained on the farm with her three younger children: Mary, 16; Rebecca, 11; and Paris, 9.

In 1830, William and Sarah and their children had been the only Trimmells in Vermilion County.[60] By 1850, which was two years after the death of her husband, Sarah lived in the vicinity of forty or more relatives. John J. Trimmell, her eldest son, lived in Collin Township with his wife and three young children. Elizabeth Vinson, her eldest daughter, lived nearby at the edge of the prairie with her husband and

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[58] Thomas Trimmell, Nowata, Oklahoma, August 4, 1959, letter to and in possession of the author.

[59] Reva Hoff, Danville, Illinois, August 6, 1962, personal interview with the author.

[60] Schroeder, November 30, 1960, citing the _Fifth United States Census of Vermilion County, Illinois, 1830_, letter to and in possession of the author.

two young daughters. William Trimmell II, her second son, lived on an adjoining farm with his wife and infant son. Her second daughter, Sarah Williams, also lived in the community.[61] Samuel Trimmell, William's younger brother, lived with his family next to John J. Trimmell in Collin Township. Samson Trimmell, brother to William,[62] lived in the same community with his family; and Sarah's brother, Hugh Gilleland, lived in the county with his wife and four children.[63]

All the Trimmells in Vermilion County in 1850 were farmers and livestock feeders, and the same was true in 1910. They engaged in other part-time work upon occasion, and participated in community projects, but their bases of operation were their farms. John Vinson was Justice of

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[61]Ibid., citing Seventh United States Census of Vermilion, County, Illinois, 1850.

[62]Ida H. Harris, 143 West Center, Logan, Utah, November 13, 1968, letter to and in possession of the author. Mrs. Harris, in researching the family of Samson Trimmell's wife, indicates the spelling of his name was "Sampson" and that his birth occurred in Jefferson County, Kentucky, in 1800. Previous reference was made to his birth elsewhere in 1796. If born in 1800, Samson Trimmell would have been the eldest son of John "Trammell" and his wife, Ellen; and he would have been a brother to William Trimmell who was born in Kentucky in 1801. Samuel Trimmell was born into the family in 1807, and one wonders if such similar names would be given to brothers.

[63]Schroeder, citing the Seventh United States Census of Vermilion County, Illinois, 1850.

Peace for twenty-four years, and also a preacher and horse doctor when the need arose.[64] William Trimmell II worked actively at the grass-roots level during the formation of the Republican Party, and helped obtain a state system of public education.[65] Kelly Trimmell, a son of Paris Trimmell, was known for his work in the Prohibition Party and the Methodist-Episcopal Church.[66] William Trimmell III was active in educational projects, the Republican Party, and the Methodist Church.[67] John J. Trimmell participated in Masonic, Republican, and Grand Army of the Republic activities for about fifty years.[68] Harvey Piper, along with others in the family, promoted organizations for advancements in livestock breeding and marketing.[69]

Paris Trimmell, Sarah's youngest son, died while young. Her eldest son, John J. Trimmell, and all of his children, some of whom were already married with families of

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[64] Jones, Vermilion County, I, p. 164.

[65] Ibid., II, p. 400.

[66] Ibid., II, p. 740.

[67] Ibid., I, p. 157.

[68] Ruby Trimmell Gentis, Beggs, Oklahoma, May 17, 1955, letter to and in possession of the author.

[69] Paul D. McCray, Taylor, Michigan, September 5, 1961, personal interview with author.

their own, migrated to Kansas in 1873. The other Trimmells remained in Illinois until after World War I when they entered lines of work other than farming. Succeeding generations scattered nationwide and have since become associated with numerous occupations.[70]

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[70]Duncan, Wilson County, p. 620; letters to and in possession of the author from the following persons: Thomas Trimmell, Nowata, Oklahoma, August 4, 1959; Vera Trimmell McCarthy, Venice, California, February 21, 1960; Richard H. Trimmell, Downey, California, October 23, 1959; Claudine Long, Rolla, Kansas, July 6, 1959; Beulah Trimmell Sterling, Downey, California, May 8, 1964; Ruby Trimmell Gentis, Beggs, Oklahoma, May 17, 1955; personal interviews with the following persons: Guymon Trimmell, Danville, Illinois, August 6, 1962; Cecil Trimmell, Wichita, Kansas, March 16, 1968.

CHAPTER V

ILLINOIS DURING ITS EXPANSION

A frontier settler, by turns, might be a farmer, storekeeper, land dealer, lawyer, preacher, Congressman, judge, or soldier; or often was many trades at one time.[1] Rarely did he progress from one frontier to another following the same line of work. Where he was successful in acquiring wealth or credit, he usually remained. The next frontier usually was settled by his children who repeated the same pattern.

Older settlers rarely migrated except in cases of economic disaster, and younger people tended to migrate the shortest possible distance necessary to obtain land. Very few migrated because they preferred to be away from other people.[2] A move was not to be taken lightly, and few looked forward to the strangeness and primitive living on a new frontier. Hazards were weighed against possible opportunities before plans were made to relocate.[3] Most

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[1]Nevins, _Pocket History_, p. 195.

[2]Duncan, _Wilson County_, _passim_.

[3]James D. Callahan, editor, _Jayhawk Editor: A Biography of A. Q. Miller, Senior_ (Los Angeles: Sterling Press, 1955), p. 23.

people preferred to remain where they were, and if possible they modified their occupations to fit opportunity in the changing community.

> Emigration, from a word of the most cheerful import, came to sound most dismally in my ear. There is nothing more agreeable to picture, and nothing so pathetic to behold.[4]

Kansas and Nebraska were opened to settlement in 1854, but the Trimmells all remained in Illinois where they had survived the panic of 1837, and on through the late 1860's when the initial wave of migration to Kansas began after the Civil War. Even when the great shocks from the panic of 1873 caused many families to relocate, only one branch of the Trimmells moved westward.

Illinois had improved since the 1820's, and few who had weathered the storms of developing the state wanted to leave and repeat the experience. For the most part, the "seasoned" pioneers found the means for living through the depression. Those who migrated were usually young families whose local opportunities were limited.

Illinois was settled rapidly after its admission to statehood in 1818. By 1830, when one-third of the national population lived west of the Alleghenies, Illinois was among

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[4]Robert Louis Stevenson, Amateur Emigrant, p. 14.

the larger populated states.[5] Rapid settlement had brought quick development of trade and transportation. Public education was not required by state law for many years, but Illinois villages formed schools for their children as one of the first internal improvements. Sometimes the ministers promoted village societies for supporting education, but often the pioneers simply joined together for making plans to "git the young'uns educated."[6]

Illinois never suffered the isolation known to early Kentucky settlers, for the steamboat and mail routes prevented this. Post offices and trading posts were established almost as soon as the region opened. Hezekiah Niles founded his Weekly Register in Baltimore in 1811, and published everyday news of commerce, economics, and world events.[7] This served as a mutual contact between different sections of the country, for it was in wide circulation for many years.

National awareness may have been demonstrated by the rise in the popular vote. Only 356,000 people voted in the election of 1824, but 1,500,000 voted in 1836. In 1840, the

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[5] Nevins, Pocket History, p. 185.

[6] Ford, Illinois, p. 128.

[7] Robert Taylor Stevenson, Growth, p. 399.

popular vote was 2,400,000, or seven times the total in 1824.[8] New voting laws accounted for some of the increase, and the demands of the frontier settlers caused many of the changes which occurred.

Frontier politicians rarely were orators or philosophers. They did not consider government to be a "fraternity of the ruling class", nor did they regard legislation as an art. Districts elected representatives who were sent to the legislatures with definite missions to perform. Each was to represent his home district rather than to socialize with legislators from other districts.

The children of William and Sarah Trimmell appeared to possess an affinity for local and state politics. Seldom did any of them hold elective offices other than township posts, but they were active in election campaigns and governmental activities after 1845. Along with other Illinois farmers, the family's interest in politics paralleled Abraham Lincoln's political career.

John Vinson, as Justice of the Peace, knew Lincoln over a period of several years.[9] Young lawyers often

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[8]Nevins, Pocket History, p. 188.

[9]Reva Hoff, Danville, Illinois, August 5, 1962, personal interview with author.

followed the circuit judges from one district court to another. Lincoln was away from home six months of the year defending cases in circuit court during the 1840's and 1850's. He spent so much time in Vermilion County that he formed a law partnership with Ward Lamon in Danville between 1852 and 1857.[10] Danville was a small town, and many of the residents knew Lincoln personally. The Vinsons, Trimmells, and Pipers enjoyed him as an overnight guest from time to time, and it is doubtful if they visualized the giant-sized "yarn-spinner" as prospective president of the United States.[11] When various factions opposing the Kansas-Nebraska bill organized the Republican party in 1856, the Vinsons, Trimmells, and Pipers hoisted the banner with enthusiasm.

The Illinois economy was far from stable in the 1830's due to the fluctuating banking policies, and the need for capital to finance internal improvements. National revenues continued to show a surplus each year, and the national debt was reduced to a mere $37,000 in 1835.[12] Frontier states did not show such fiscal surplus, however, with their obligations

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[10]John J. Duff, A. Lincoln, Prairie Lawyer (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1960), pp. 210-216; W. P. A., Guide to Illinois, p. 403.

[11]Reva Hoff, Danville, Illinois, August 5, 1962, personal interview with author.

[12]Robert Taylor Stevenson, Growth, p. 371.

growing more rapidly than revenue.

As was learned in 1836 and 1837, the national surplus was not what it seemed to be. The United States Treasury actually had little currency and the surplus consisted chiefly of land receipts. In 1836, Congress ordered the Treasury to deposit the apparent surplus in state banks. As branch banks of the Second Bank of the United States had the surplus out in loans rather than in cash reserve, the manager of the Second Bank had to call all the notes in within a year.

The system for selling public lands allowed each $100 to finance several eighty-acre farms instead of a single purchase. Branch banks made loans to farmers who signed land as security. Land offices deposited the $100 with the United States Treasury who re-deposited it in a branch bank who re-loaned to another family who paid it to the land office. The procedure depended upon extension of credit until patrons could meet obligations to the banks, either from resale of land, or from production revenues. Problems developed when patrons forfeited land to the banks who, in turn, forfeited the land to the Treasury when they were unable to meet obligations in specie. Had more patrons chosen foreclosure rather than to search for money to pay the notes as best they could, the economy would have

suffered more.

The United States Treasury had less currency and more land than anticipated, and the state banks received less federal deposit than they had hoped for. The panic of 1873 lasted three or four years, and families generally fared better than did the state banks and governments who needed the federal deposits to boost their internal improvements programs.[13]

States passed emergency tax programs to finance indebtedness, but farmers lived through the ordeal by complaining about high taxes, unreliable banks, and politicians who simply "couldn't be trusted." On Sundays, they ate vinegar pie and predicted the next year would be better.

VINEGAR PIE[14]

Two cups water
Two tablespoonsful vinegar
One cup sugar
Three eggs-separated, with
whites used for meringe.
(Lemon flavoring if you can
afford to buy it.)

In 1840, most Illinois residents were in agriculture,

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[13]Nevins, Pocket History, p. 469.

[14]Daisy F. Baber and Bill Walker, Injun Summer (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1952), p. 41.

with only 13,180 of the 120,000 population employed in manufacturing.[15] This total did not indicate how many farmers operated small shops on their farms.

Illinois still had a few "squatters" in 1840.[16] Eventually, they sold the fruits of their labor for as much as $500 for 160 or 320 acres. They often bought land at a different location with the proceeds,[17] and sometimes they "squatted" only until they sold sufficient crops to pay the filing fee for the land they developed.

The majority of the farmers in Illinois in 1840 would have been classed as small-scale operators. They were the more recent immigrants with either 80 or 160 acres of land still being cleared or broken for cultivation. Smaller farms barely supported the families with basic needs during the years of improvement and development.

Large-scale farmers generally were those who had lived in the state since earlier years of settlement. Sometimes penniless when they migrated, their expansion over a decade resulted in ownership of 500 to 1200 acres of

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[15] David M. Potter and Thomas Manning, Nationalism and Sectionalism in America 1775-1877 (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1949), p. 105.

[16] Ibid., p. 118.

[17] Turner, Frontier, p. 86.

land. Much of their land was under cultivation, and extra livestock and farm products were marketed in New Orleans or in Atlantic port cities. They had extra money for buying luxury items from manufacturing centers, and extra time for serving as county officials or as state legislators.[18] The Trimmells had expanded sufficiently to be considered large-scale farmers by 1840.

Little freight was shipped down the Vermilion River from Danville, as the Hubbard Trail had been extended and was the Chicago-Vincennes State Road in 1834. This gave Vermilion County trade outlets to Lake Michigan and to the Wabash River, and wagon freight increased both in export and import from the county.[19]

Where there had been families with growing children in the 1840's, there were families of young married couples in the 1850's, who preferred to locate in the proximity of their parents. Occupations continued to be agricultural, but adaptations were made due to the population increases. The same amount of land had to produce more, and this often was accomplished through livestock-feeding programs supplying the Chicago meat markets. This generally was done in

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[18]Potter and Manning, Nationalism and Sectionalism, p. 118.

[19]W. P. A., Guide to Illinois, p. 397.

conjunction with grain farming, yet some enterprises were devoted exclusively to cattle-feeding. Obtained locally, from Missouri and Iowa, or driven from Texas or the High Plains, the cattle were "finished" and marketed from Illinois farms. Expansion continued even during the Civil War when many men and boys were away as soldiers.[20]

Illinois was quick to support Lincoln during the Civil War. Volunteers always were in excess of the quota, so the draft was never needed. More than 145,000 men and boys from Illinois had served in the Grand Army of the Republic by January, 1864.[21]

Sarah Trimmell saw several of her family enlist for military duty, and saw all of them return. John J. Trimmell and his son, William H. Trimmell, both enlisted;[22] and John Vinson served as a lieutenant in a regiment from Vermilion County, and was in several campaigns.[23] Their cousin, James H. Trimmell, a son of Samson Trimmell, served a long enlistment and used a sword which was preserved by

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[20]Bogue, Prairie to Cornbelt, p. 95.

[21]Pease, Illinois, p. 176.

[22]Thomas Trimmell, Nowata, Oklahoma, August 4, 1960, letter to and in possession of the author.

[23]Jones, Vermilion County, I, p. 164.

his grandchildren[24] a century after the war ended. No reference mentions the wartime activities of William Trimmell II, Paris Trimmell, Harvey Piper, George Brown, and Gentry Williams--all sons and sons-in-law of Sarah Trimmell. There is no mention of the wartime activities of her nephews: Henry, Silas, and Daniel--sons of Samuel Trimmell.

Sarah Trimmell's children and grandchildren all lived in Vermilion County in 1870, with some of her grandchildren married and upon farms of their own in keeping with the family tradition of deeding acreage to children for a "start". Parents had established large families of children on farms in the county since the 1840's, but keeping the next generation in Vermilion County was going to be difficult.

John J. and Clarissa Trimmell had seven sons and one daughter still living at home in 1870, and William H. Trimmell, their eldest, was already on his own farm. Elizabeth and John Vinson had four sons and three daughters still at home in 1870, with one daughter married and living nearby. William II and Roseilla Trimmell had two sons nearly grown and a young daughter. Rebecca and Harvey Piper had two sons and three daughters, all of whom were quite young. Paris and Pricilla Trimmell had one daughter and one

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[24] Ethel Trimmell Dodd, Dixon, Illinois, January 2, 1960, letter to and in possession of the author.

son at that time. Mary and George Brown, and Sarah and Gentry Williams had families for whose futures they felt responsible. Illinois land was no longer easy to obtain, yet the frontier in Kansas and Nebraska would sever family ties due to the distance.

A family reunion in 1872 would have included more than fifty children and grandchildren of Sarah Trimmell. The children still living with John J. and Clarissa were: Richard, born 1847; Peter, born 1849; the twins, Anslum and Simeon, born 1852; Mary, born 1855; John D., born 1859; Charles, born 1862; and Cyrus Lincoln, born 1869, and two years younger than his eldest nephew.[25] William H. Trimmell, born in 1843, married Elizabeth Hamilton after returning from the way and their children were George and Iva, aged five and one.[26]

Children still living with Elizabeth and John Vinson were: Sarah Abigail (Abbie), born 1848; William Henson, born 1851; Francis Levin, born 1857; George Paris, born 1860; Elizabeth, born 1863; Carrie Belle, born 1866; and Charles Wesley, born 1869. Mary Ann, born 1845, married George McCray, and their children were John, Elizabeth, and Willy,

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[25] Paris Otto Trimmell, Wichita, Kansas, November 5, 1960, personal interview with the author.

[26] Thomas Trimmell, August 4, 1960.

aged one to six years.[27]

Children of William II and Roseilla Trimmell were: George W., born 1851; William Paris, born 1852; and Laura, born 1859.[28] Rebecca and Harvey Piper had the following children: James Paris, born 1858; Jennie, born 1861; Ida, born 1865; Ellen, born 1868; and Charles, born 1871 Lillie Piper was born two years later in 1874.[29]

Paris Trimmell and his first wife, Sarah Cork Trimmell, had two children: Jane (Jennie), born 1864; and Kelly Cork, born 1867. After Sarah's suicide in 1868, Paris married her younger sister, Pricilla (Zilla) Cork. Gertrude, born in 1876, was a half sister to Jennie and Kelly, and was two years old at the time of her father's death in 1878.[30] No reference lists the names and ages of the children of the Brown's and Williams', yet they each had

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[27]Reva Hoff, Danville, Illinois, February 22, 1960, letter to and in possession of the author; Paul D. McCray, Phoenix, Arizona, September 10, 1961, letter to and in possession of the author.

[28]Guymon Trimmell, Danville, Illinois, November 10, 1960, letter to and in possession of the author; Ray Smith Trimmell, Indianapolis, Indiana, September 13, 1960, letter to and in possession of the author.

[29]Flossie Baker Cox, Oakwood, Illinois, August 5, 1962, personal interview with the author, with reference to Piper family records in her possession.

[30]William Paris Trimmell, Topeka, Kansas, April 14, 1961, letter to and in possession of the author.

at least one child named William, and lived in the same vicinity.[31]

The panic of 1873 created the situation influencing Trimmells to consider migration from Illinois to Kansas. Illinois experienced financial troubles by 1872, and the rate of mortgage foreclosures almost doubled in the state during the early 1870's.[32] Families who had borrowed money for business expansion after the Civil War were affected most severely, while those who were free of debt with savings tended to benefit. Shortage of currency caused inflation of specie rather than the deflation experienced in the late 1830's, and those who owed money had to increase production to meet obligations. As early as 1868, Saint Louis markets paid only 95 cents per bushel for corn, and less than 3 cents per pound for beef and pork. Local markets paid less.[33]

The panic of 1873 dragged on for nearly five years before the economy absorbed the shock,[34] and affected the whole country. In general, Americans had too little capital

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[31]Jones, Vermilion County, I, p. 120; Flossie Baker Cox, August 5, 1962.

[32]Bogue, Prairie to Cornbelt, p. 284.

[33]Charles C. Howes, This Place Called Kansas (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), p. 99.

[34]Nevins, Pocket History, p. 469.

for financing the quick development of western lands, and circumstances were comparable to the depression after the War of 1812. The real impetus to the panic was the rush in railroad construction and land sales in the West. Little provision was made for the time lapse between investment and production, and the crisis came in the winter of 1872-1873 when European markets ceased buying sufficient stock to underwrite the expansion. Progress came to a halt when large, well-established banking firms in the East closed their doors, unable to meet the demands for payment.

Nearly 23,000 miles of railroad were built between 1865 and 1873, or more than one-third of the national total. Profits from eastern lines could not cover the obligations incurred by western extensions built previous to settlement. Stability depended upon patience and continued investment in railroad enterprise until they returned a profit from business in the Great Plains.[35]

Over-investment in agriculture contributed to the depression in much the same way as railroad construction, for farms on the great plains required heavier and more expensive machinery. Farmers often borrowed money to buy land as well as for fencing and building materials, and

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[35]Webb, Great Plains, p. 278.

about $500 was needed for starting a farm on the prairie, most of which was borrowed money.[36] Creditors who could wait a few years for repayment generally found agriculture to be a sound investment. Sod had to rot a year after it was broken, so about all a farmer did the first year was break sod for the fields, erect buildings, raise a garden, and grow enough corn for home use.[37]

Nationally, the depression affected agriculture, manufacturers whose products decreased in value, merchants whose customers had little money to spend, railroad companies who could not pay obligations, banks who received so little return from customers they could not pay their own debts, and investors who received no profit from the businesses they financed. Established states such as Illinois felt the impact when prices fell on local products, and capital invested in land, banks, and railroads returned no income. Manufacturers and merchants who operated on credit had too few cash customers.

> The grocer couldn't hire us at the store anymore. He didn't have enough business to need us, because nobody had money to buy what he had to sell. He had to eat groceries off his own shelves, but the trouble was he couldn't get no more groceries unless he paid

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[36]Everett N. Dick, The Sod House Frontier 1854-1890 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1937), p. 78.

[37]McKeown, The Days, p. 103.

> for them first. He couldn't buy goods on time because the big business he bought from was having to pay cash to the bigger businesses they bought goods from. It made everybody short of money; and no matter how you figure, it's blamed hard for folks to keep going without money.[38]

John J. Trimmell financed his cattle-feeding operations on credit after he came home from the war, and the inflated currency brought business losses. With perseverance, he probably could save his own business within a few years, but several of his children soon would need farms of their own. It was unlikely that he and Clarissa would be able to salvage their own farm and expand enough to help the boys and Mary establish themselves. He was nearly fifty years old and had to consider the future of eight children ranging from the ages of five to sixteen years. Anslum had returned to Illinois after having lived in Kansas two years. He had run away from home in 1868 when he felt his parents were too harsh. He had walked to Kansas at the age of fifteen and worked several months among strangers in Linn County, in a stone quarry, on farms, and doing other odd jobs. Later, he had walked to Labette County and spent a year doing railroad work, well-digging, and farm work, and had returned to Illinois in 1870. Still living in Vermilion County in 1873, his knowledge of Kansas and the opening of the Osage Lands

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[38] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

in the southeastern counties of the state was a factor in the family's decision to migrate.[39]

Both John J. Trimmell and his eldest son, William, could deduct army time from the five-year residence requirement for homesteading in Kansas.[40] Proceeds from the sale of their Illinois holdings would establish John J. and Clarissa on the frontier, and they might assist the children as they started farms of their own over a fifteen year period. Both had been with their parents in the early years of Illinois settlement, and had no grand ideas of adventure on the frontier. They anticipated discomforts and risks, and weighed these with possible advantages of relocation. The decision was made, and the Trimmells became a part of the 16,000 families who proved claims in Kansas in 1872-1873.[41]

Other Vermilion County people who moved to Kansas in those years were Samuel Kizer, John Phillips, George Wiggins, A. J. Huffman, and Herbert Peyton who all settled in Wilson County.[42] There is no record to show who may have moved to

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[39]Duncan, Wilson County, p. 619.

[40]Noble L. Prentis, A History of Kansas (Winfield, Kansas: E. P. Greer, 1899), p. 124.

[41]Howes, Kansas, p. 31.

[42]Duncan, Wilson County, pp. 512, 538, 616, 778, 782.

nearby counties opened for settlement at about the same time. Nearly twenty per cent of the native-born Illinois persons lived elsewhere in 1870, and the percentage increased to twenty-five by 1880.[43] The census in Kansas in 1880 showed most Kansas residents had come from Illinois and Missouri.[44] Nearly 100,000 Civil War veterans were included.[45]

The "typical" pioneer in Illinois in 1850 was between 25 and 45 years of age, and had a family before migrating. Younger pioneers generally were from Ohio, Indiana, or Kentucky; and they were establishing a farm for the first time. Older pioneers usually had suffered financial reversals on farms in Pennsylvania, Virginia, or New York; and they had come from the greatest distances.[46]

Younger pioneers in Kansas in 1880 usually had come from Illinois or Missouri, while the older pioneers were from a greater distance.[47] John J. and Clarissa Trimmell were not "typical" frontier settlers, for the more common decision would have been for them to remain in Illinois while aiding their children to establish farms on the frontier.

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[43]Pease, Illinois, pp. 186-187.

[44]Howes, Kansas, p. 31.

[45]Prentis, Kansas, p. 169.

[46]Bogue, Prairie to Cornbelt, p. 23.

[47]James C. Malin, The Grassland of North America: Prolegomena to Its History (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1947), p. 289.

CHAPTER VI

SETTLEMENT OF KANSAS

The Missouri Compromise in 1820 established the eastern boundary of the territory which became Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma. Until that time, the Kansas Indians controlled and occupied most of the eastern half of that area, with a few Osage villages scattered along the eastern fringe. The more nomadic tribes of Plains Indians claimed the western half. Exploring parties mapped the territory west of the 95th meridian as the "Great American Desert",[1] and little interest in settling the High Plains occurred for many years.

By the Indian Removal Act passed in 1830, the United States government reserved the eastern half for relocating eastern Indian tribes. Most land exchanges took place during the 1830's, but continued until the late 1840's.[2] A census of Indians in Kansas made in 1854 enumerated fourteen tribes of eastern Indians in addition to the Kansas and Osage

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[1]William F. Zornow, Kansas: A History of the Jayhawk State (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), p. 43; Henry Inman, The Old Santa Fe Trail, the Story of a Great Highway, Second Edition (Topeka: Crane and Company, 1899), pp. 157-159.

[2]Zornow, Jayhawk State, pp. 5, 43.

tribes, and the results showed fewer native Indians than were relocated by the Indian Removal Act.[3]

The northern boundary of Kansas was drawn in 1854 by the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and the territory was surveyed officially. Authorized settlement began the same year, and was limited to the small portion of the territory not included in Indian Reservations.[4] The Kansas River valley, along with narrow strips along the northern and eastern borders were the chief regions of Kansas settled before the Civil War. Indian tribal leaders allowed some favored farm families to "squat" on Indian land, but no valid census of those families was made.[5] Governor Reeder ordered a census of Kansas in 1855 which counted 8,501 persons.[6] Five years later, in 1860, the population was 107,206.[7]

Much was written of the Free-Staters who rushed to

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[3]W. Stitt Robinson, Jr., "The Role of the Military in Territorial Kansas", Essay #4, Territorial Kansas, Studies Commemorating the Centennial, Committee on Social Science Studies, University of Kansas Publications (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1954), p. 83.

[4]Howes, Kansas, p. 189.

[5]Warren E. Greathouse, Coyville, Kansas, a personal interview with Luther Trimmell, June 15, 1964.

[6]Prentis, Kansas, p. 51.

[7]William E. Connelley, An Appeal to the Record (Topeka: Crane and Company, 1903), p. 112.

save Kansas from slavery, and of the anxious Missourians who rushed to save Kansas from the Abolitionist. As with other phases of history, most of what happened in Kansas between 1854 and 1865 did not appear in the headlines as news. New land offices in the eastern half of the territory did a brisk business, and most of the customers paid little attention to the border skirmishes once past them and enroute to their destinations.[8]

Anslum Trimmell's wife often told of her childhood migration to Kansas, for the Dougherty family crossed Missouri during the border troubles in 1856.

> The family encountered many mishaps. Upon one occasion they were met by armed men and ordered to turn back, but without effect. An incident of this journey will serve to show the condition of things at that time, it being impressed most vividly upon the mind of Mrs. Trimmell, who was then only a child. The family was overtaken by a man with his throat cut. He had been set upon by some of the murderous bands then terrorizing the country, his throat cut, and left for dead. Reviving, he set out again and traveled with the Dougherty's a day or more when, on passing a house, he saw two men sitting on the porch, and recognizing them as the men who had assaulted and left him for dead two days before, he pulled his pistol without warning and shot them dead.[9]

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[8]Walter H. Schoewe, "Political Geographical Aspect of Territorial Kansas", Essay #1, Territorial Kansas, Studies Commemorating the Centennial, Committee on Social Science Studies, University of Kansas Publications (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1954), p. 5.

[9]Duncan, Wilson County, p. 621.

Further indication that most settlers endured the border difficulties only as a calculated hazard of the journey is the fact that sixty-two waterpower gristmills were operating in Kansas in 1860.[10] Several hundred farmers must have been raising grain, and not attending to warfare, and several thousand acres of sod were broken around several hundred homesites. The gristmills were built to be used, and more apt description might have been "Sweating Kansas" rather than "Bleeding Kansas".

Organized colonization such as that associated with the activities of the New England Emigrant Aid Society was not as common as many historians have indicated. Of the more than 100,000 population in Kansas in 1860, only 2,834 were born in New England,[11] and many of those persons had lived in Ohio, Indiana, or Illinois since childhood.[12]

Drought was a more general disaster in 1860 than was border warfare and political controversy. Sixteen months without rain from June 19, 1859, until November, 1860, brought hardship to Kansans of all creeds. Nearly a third

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[10] Bliss Isely and W. M. Richards, _Four Centuries in Kansas_ (Wichita: McCormick-Mathers Publishing Company, 1936), p. 259.

[11] Connelley, _Record_, p. 112.

[12] William A. Mitchell, _Linn County, Kansas: A History_ (Kansas City: Campbell-Gates, 1928), _passim_.

of the settlers left the territory leaving their cabins for others to claim within a few years, and their water wells for years to come as traps for travelers who crossed the unmarked prairies. Many of those who did stay, could not leave because they money was spent and their supplies exhausted. They remained with little, except intestinal fortitude, ingenuity, and hopes for the future.[13]

> Husbands hated to go home for meals for they must meet the appeals of their wives to climb onto their wagons and strike out for "back home". Men had their work and their ambitions, and the drudgery bore hardest on the women.[14]

For those settlers who had come in 1854 or even earlier, there had been four good crop years, and they weathered the drought better than did the newcomers.[15] Those left without reserves rarely perished, but found numerous ways of earning money for a subsistence even though it meant leaving the families for long periods of time while working away from the farmsteads.[16]

Almost all the early Kansas traffic passed through

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[13] Prentis, Kansas, p. 91; Duncan, Wilson County, p. 755.

[14] Nevins, Pocket History, p. 353.

[15] Floyd B. Streeter, The Kaw, The Heart of the Nation (The Rivers of America Series, edited by Carl Carmer and Jean Crawford; New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc. 1941), p. 220.

[16] McKeown, Them Days, p. 127.

what became Kansas City, Leavenworth, and St. Joseph. Prior to 1900, few persons entered Kansas by way of southern Missouri, and even the Indian lands of Oklahoma were approached by the military road connecting Fort Leavenworth with Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, since the 1830's. The Ozark region was not settled for many years, since the earlier pioneers lived north of the Missouri River and along the Mississippi River. Moses Grinter, formerly a soldier at Fort Leavenworth, established the first ferry across the Kansas River in 1831. The first white settler in Wyandotte County, his cabin and trading post became the nucleus of what was later Kansas City, Kansas, and housed the first civilian post office in the territory from 1850 to 1859.[17]

The brick home built in 1857 to replace the early Grinter cabin remains as a historic restaurant overlooking the Kansas River a century later.[18]

A trading post was built at the crossing of the Mariais des Cygnes River in Linn County in 1835 to supply the Pottawatomie Indians, and a military installation named Trading Post was built there in 1842 to serve the traffic

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[17]Margaret Whittemore, _Historic Kansas: A Centenary Sketchbook_. (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1954), p. 71.

[18]The Grinter House Restaurant was in operation during August, 1965.

on the military road. Soon moved a few miles south and renamed Fort Scott, it became the hub for pioneer routes into southeastern Kansas.[19]

A stage coach line ran regularly along the military road during the 1850's and 1860's,[20] and the two railroads built south from Kansas City between 1868 and 1871 followed approximately the same route through Fort Scott to Baxter Springs and Chetopa.[21]

Steamboat passengers hardly noticed Kansas City in 1855, since there was but a landing pier with one street running back uphill to a village of less than a hundred houses hidden in the trees.[22] There was little change for ten years, or until after the railroad crossed into Wyandotte County in 1866 and the cluster of settlements in the vicinity of the juncture of the Kansas and Missouri Rivers became the metropolis of cross-country traffic. A bridge spanning the Missouri River was opened July 3, 1869,

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[19]Mitchell, Linn County, p. 117; Zornow, Jayhawk State, p. 174.

[20]C. W. Goodlander, Early Days of Fort Scott (Fort Scott, Kansas: Monitor Publishing Company, 1900), passim; Mitchell, Linn County, p. 117.

[21]Goodlander, Fort Scott, pp. 110, 124, 131-133.

[22]Elise D. Isely, as told to Bliss Isely, Sunbonnet Days (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1935), p. 57.

amid fanfare and speech-making,[23] but the cities of Leavenworth and St. Joseph were without bridges until early 1872.[24]

Frontier migration resumed vigorously after the end of the Civil War due to available lands, promotion of railroads, livestock grazing on the High Plains, and developments in machinery for larger acreages.[25] Many of those who had left during the drought years returned later,[26] and eventually the panic of 1873 caused an increase in settlement.

Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act in 1862, and the Department of Agriculture grew more active in the introduction of new crops and new farm machinery.[27] Plains farming was concurrent with what amounted to an agricultural revolution, for there was a marked transition from hand tools to machines between 1870 and 1890. The transition occurred on almost all farms west of the Alleghenies, and future changes in farm machinery were predominantly perfections and modifications of the mid-nineteenth century inventions

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[23]Goodlander, Fort Scott, p. 122.

[24]Whittemore, Historic Kansas, p. 74.

[25]Martin Ridge, "Why They Went West," The American West, I, #3 (August, 1964), p. 83.

[26]Dick, Sodhouse Frontier, p. 43.

[27]Ibid., p. 83.

developed in the American Midwest. Daniel Morgan Boone, son of the noted explorer and father of the respected Indian agent, was stationed in Kansas in 1827 by the United States Government to assist the relocated eastern Indians in learning to farm in the new climate,[28] and he became precedent to expanded interest in societies for the improvement of new crops and new techniques in American agriculture.

After the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, the Indians in Kansas gradually ceded their reservation lands in exchange for lands in what later became the state of Oklahoma. The Osage Indians held large areas of land in southeastern Kansas after other tribes had ceded most of their land. The Osages sold Kansas lands to the railroad companies in 1869, and most moved to Oklahoma. Due to a ten-year controversy over "squatters rights" the funds were held in trust for the Indians, and the regions were officially opened for settlement in 1880.[29]

Sixty per cent of Kansas was settled through preemption and homesteading, and the remaining forty per cent was awarded to railroad companies, educational institutions,

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[28]Whittemore, Historic Kansas, p. 96.

[29]Zornow, Jayhawk State, p. 103.

and other social projects financing construction with resale of gift lands.[30] Pioneers had filed for about 26,000,000 acres of Kansas land by 1873, and the Osage lands were some of the last to be claimed.[31]

Homesteading was more popular in print than in practice, as only 58,170 final entries had been made by 1890.[32] Not even half the Civil War veterans who settled Kansas took advantage of the waiver of residence requirement, for the 1890 population of Kansas was 1,423,485 or about 300,000 families, of whom about one-third included veterans as heads of households.[33] Less than one-half the claims entered were transferred or commuted.[34] Most of the more experienced farmers pre-empted land rather than to homestead because they could obtain title more quickly and use the land for financing machinery or improvements. Those filing homestead claims often were inexperienced hopefuls who came to the frontier unprepared for farming. Sometimes they selected land unfit for cultivation, but more often

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[30] _Ibid._, p. 171.

[31] Callahan, _Jayhawk Editor_, p. 15.

[32] Zornow, _Jayhawk State_, p. 171.

[33] Prentis, _Kansas_, p. 203.

[34] Zornow, _Jayhawk State_, p. 171.

forfeited claims because they were not equipped to succeed on the plains where agriculture had become a comparatively technical work.

Factories marketing new machines found an eager market in Kansas and Nebraska. A self-governing windmill was invented in 1854 and a factory built in Chicago in 1862, with others soon to meet the demand of railroad companies and farmers who needed windmills to pump underground water.[35] The first chilled-steel plow was designed by James Oliver of South Bend, Indiana, in 1868, and modifications making it a gang plow soon met the needs of the western farmers.[36]

Ben F. Appleby spent a winter with his cousin near Trading Post, Kansas, and designed the twine binder while employed in the local three-man broom factory. He had a large factory in Minneapolis by the early 1880's and hired his Kansas friends as salesmen throughout the Midwest, where the twine binder proved better than the wire binders in the 1870's.[37] McCormick and Deering combined forces and

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[35]Carl F. Kraenzel, The Great Plains in Transition (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), p. 131.

[36]Maurice Frink, W. T. Jackson, and Agnes W. Spring, When Grass Was King (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1956), p. 44.

[37]Mitchell, Linn County, pp. 323-324; Nevins, Pocket History, p. 363.

made a twine binder in 1880, the year in which steam-engine threshers appeared on the market. A combination of the reaper and thresher was made in the same decade. The "combine" was not practical until powered with an internal combustion engine, for the original steam-engine tractors were a fire hazard in the fields of ripe grain.[38]

Corn and wheat were the chief farm crops in early years of Kansas farming, with sorghums popular within a few years. Transporting grain was costly, so livestock farming predominated with crops grown for feed, and patches of cotton and flax for home use.[39] Farmers in Kansas and Nebraska profited from cattle even through the panic of 1873 when those farther east had to cut back their herds. Cheap Texas cattle purchased at the edge of Indian Territory at Baxter Springs, Chetopa, or Coffeyville were used to enlarge domestic herds in the early years, and half the Kansas cattle were cross-breeds in 1885.[40] Local meat-packing plants and railway refrigeration soon made livestock farming the chief business of the plains.

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[38]Kraenzel, Great Plains, p. 134; Nevins, Pocket History, p. 364.

[39]Robert C. Athearn, High Country Empire: The High Plains and the Rockies (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1960), p. 138.

[40]Zornow, Jayhawk State, p. 149; Howes, Kansas, p. 95; Streeter, Kaw, p. 203.

Livestock farming, as a business, grew from different origins than ranching operations in the High Plains. Ranching developed from open grazing, and was primarily concerned with supplying feedlots with cattle rounded up and shipped or driven to the regions where grain farming had advanced enough to produce crops in excess of family use.[41]

The Trimmells, arriving in Kansas in 1873, used the first years for improving their farms with buildings and fences, opening fields for cultivation, and for producing enough grain and food crops for private use. They phased into livestock farming within a few years, for the abundance of cheap cattle made this a profitable way in which to market the hay and grain grown on their farms.

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[41]John A. Edwards, _In the Western Tongue_ (Wichita: The McCormick-Armstrong Press, 1920), _passim_.

CHAPTER VII

TRIMMELLS IN KANSAS

The total population of Vermilion County, Illinois, increased more than thirty per cent between 1870 and 1880, yet the rural townships of Blount, Oakwood, and Pilot each increased less than ten per cent.[1] Birth of children would have made more increase than that had all the families remained in rural areas. Established farmers who survived the economic depression of the late 1860's had to increase acreage and enlarge operations due to lower prices of produce, and this raised the price of land in relation to production. Livestock and farm products were valued at $3,159,545 in 1870, but decreased to $2,628,586 in 1880. Value of land rose from $14,080,111 in 1870 to $15,702,103 in 1880.[2]

Economic conditions caused some farm families to change occupations and relocate in urban areas of the county, but many repeated the pioneer experiences of their parents and grandparents by migrating to the western frontier.

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[1] Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, pp. 25, 113.

[2] Compendium of the Ninth Census of the United States, 1870 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1883), p. 698.

Despite sophistication in other sections of the nation, frontier regions west of the Missouri were settled in the primitive manner used on earlier frontiers. Within a few years, better machinery improved farming methods, but the initial ground-breaking was still tedious and primitive work.

John J. Trimmell, with his wife and nine children, drove to Kansas in 1873 with wagons laden with possessions they knew they would need for developing the frontier.[3] In Kansas, the depression of the early 1870's had driven out most of the petty speculators, and experienced farmers relocating on the frontier found opportunity awaiting them.[4] The number of ranches increased in the High Plains, and livestock farmers in eastern Kansas and Nebraska found cattlefeeding profitable from the beginning, except in those years when extreme weather conditions interfered.[5]

The Missouri River bridge, four years old in 1873, and the seven railroads made Kansas City a transportation hub and one of the important livestock and meat-packing

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[3]Duncan, Wilson County, p. 619.

[4]Ridge, "Why They Went West," pp. 47,54.

[5]Webb, Great Plains, p. 231; Athearn, High Country, p. 138.

centers by the time the Trimmells passed through.[6] The population was only about 3,000,[7] yet it was a growing city with many changes since Anslum Trimmell had been there a few years before. The Kansas City Stockyards, built in 1871 by a joint stock company, operated as a feeding and transfer yard,[8] and fifty years later Anslum Trimmell would boast that he had driven enough steers to Kansas City to make a line double-breast to Coyville, and that he had drunk enough whiskey to set a bottle on every fence post between the two towns.[9]

John J. Trimmell, with his wife and two youngest sons, Charles and Cyrus, settled between the villages of New Albany and Longton in what became Elk County.[10] The seven older children filed for their own land and lived at various locations in southeastern Kansas, and changed sites often during the first years to obtain land desirable for

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[6] A. Theodore Brown, Frontier Community: Kansas City to 1870 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1961), pp. 227-229.

[7] Sparks, National Development, p. 154.

[8] Streeter, Kaw, p. 191; Frink, Grass Was King, p. 48.

[9] Luther Trimmell, Coyville, Kansas, father of the author, discussion of conversations with his grandfather, Anslum Trimmell.

[10] Duncan, Wilson County, p. 619.

permanent homes. Heads of households, no matter of what age, could file for land or pre-empt. Unmarried girls and widows could file for land, but married women were excluded.[11]

Elk, Labette, Montgomery, and Wilson were new counties in 1873, and were made up of former Osage lands. New land offices were opened during the 1870's at Independence and Neodesha along with areas in the western part of the state.[12] William H. Trimmell and his family settled near Cherryvale in Montgomery County, as did Richard Trimmell and John D. Trimmell. Peter Trimmell lived near Neodesha in Wilson County; Simeon Trimmell near Buffalo and Anslum Trimmell near Coyville also were in Wilson County. After leaving the home of their parents, Charles and Cyrus farmed near Parsons in Labette County, and Cherryvale in Montgomery County.[13] No record indicates where Mary Trimmell Morris and her family lived prior to the death of her husband, yet she and her children lived with Anslum at Coyville much of the time. She and some of her grown children migrated to the vicinity of Laramie, Wyoming, in

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[11]Percy C. Ebbitt, Emigrant Life in Kansas (London: Swan Sonnenchein and Company, 1886), p. 52.

[12]Schoewe, "Territorial Kansas," p. 5.

[13]Parris Otto Trimmell, Wichita, Kansas, November 6, 1960, personal interview with author.

about 1900.[14]

Southeastern Kansas was settled rapidly in the late 1860's and the 1870's, even though the last of the Osage lands were not opened until 1880. Elk County had a population of 1,397 in 1870 and 10,623 in 1880; Montgomery County had 7,564 in 1870 and 18,213 in 1880; Wilson County increased from 6,694 in 1870 to 18,312 in 1880; and Labette increased from 9,973 in 1870 to 22,735 in 1880.[15] The state of Kansas had 10,400 farms in 1860, 38,202 in 1870, and 138,561 in 1880.[16] Of the 287 heads of families interviewed in Wilson County in 1901, 145 were natives of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, or Pennsylvania. Twenty were foreign born, and twenty-one werenatives of Kansas. Though native to scattered states, more than 80 per cent had come to Kansas from Illinois and Missouri.[17]

Anslum Trimmell followed a pattern similar to many of the younger settlers who migrated to the frontier without funds. He filed for land at the north edge of Montgomery County in 1873, built a small house on it and, in 1874,

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[14] _Ibid._

[15] _Tenth Census of the United States, 1880_, pp. 29-30.

[16] _Ibid._, pp. 52-55.

[17] Duncan, _Wilson County_, _passim_.

married Sarah Ann Dougherty. They lived in their new home about six months, then sold it and rented a tract near Neodesha in Wilson County. They grubbed, cleared, and tilled this for three years, after which they rented another farm where they lived two years. Efforts in business had been reasonably prosperous and they had a little surplus money, so they changed locations by moving their family overland to Colorado. Not liking the looks of Colorado land, they returned at once to Wilson County and rented a farm from Frank Walker for two seasons before they bought their original Montgomery County claim for $200. Four years later, they sold that for $1,600 and bought 100 acres near Coyville, the purchase price being $2,700 for which they used $1,600 cash and went into debt for the balance. At that time, they engaged regularly in the cattle business, and that 100 acres became the nucleus of the 1038 acres they owned near Coyville in 1900.

Anslum Trimmell bought and shipped any kind of animal which showed prospect of profit. Sometimes he lost money, but on the whole his position at the end of each year showed a gain. He occasionally borrowed sums of money considered unsafe by the conservative farmers, but made the ventures with no loss of property or repute. By 1900, he shipped on the average of 50 boxcars of cattle annually in

addition to several dozen hogs. An average of 3000 bushels of grain produced annually was mostly fed on the farm. Hay was harvested from prairie land a few miles away.

The family took an enthusiastic interest in civic and political affairs in addition to their farming business. Life had changed enormously for Anslum Trimmell since he had spent those three years as a youngster working on well-digging crews, in rock quarries, and as a farm hand some thirty years before.[18]

Minerals were important to the Kansas economy almost from the beginning of settlement. Stone was quarried for railroad building, and coal was mined for powering the locomotives. Lead and zinc were found in Cherokee County in the 1870's, and in 1900, Cherryvale had the largest lead and zinc smelter in the nation.[19] Natural gas was found near Iola in 1871, and developed in the 1890's when demand increased.[20] W. H. Mills discovered crude oil on the bank of the Verdigris River on the T. J. Norman farm at the edge of Neodesha in 1892, and continuous production began the following year.[21] Norman #1 is listed as a historic site,

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[18]*Ibid.*, pp. 619-620.

[19]Zornow, *Jayhawk State*, pp. 289-290.

[20]Prentis, *Kansas*, p. 237.

[21]Duncan, *Wilson County*, p. 673.

for this was the first petroleum found west of Indiana. Eighty-seven wells were producing a daily average of four barrels each when the Standard Oil Company refinery opened in April, 1897.[22] The salt industry in central Kansas grew rapidly during the 1880's, and had reduced the price of this precious commodity in the Mississippi Valley.[23]

Almost forty years after the Kansas-Nebraska Act which created Kansas as a territory, the World's Columbian Exposition opened in Chicago. There had been lean years of drought, grasshoppers, and financial depression; there had been factional strife in the government, epidemics of small-pox and diptheria; there had been range war between the cattlemen and the farmers. Yet, the intrepid Kansans survived the disasters and progressed in the fruitful years. They opened the Kansas pavilion at the Columbian Exposition in September, 1893, and proudly displayed the products of their ingenuity and effort. The pavilion included exhibits planned by schools and colleges, by farmers and livestockmen, by mining and forestry interests, by railroad companies, and by manufacturers and homemakers. From the authorization by the state legislature until the pavilion opened in Chicago represented two and one-half years of preparation; and to

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[22]Zornow, Jayhawk State, pp. 289-290.

[23]Prentis, Kansas, p. 190.

the pioneer families of Kansas, displays of their success at the World's Columbian Exposition meant much the same as a victory celebration.[24]

John J. Trimmell, though having been a large-scale livestock farmer in Illinois, had a modest farm in Elk County in 1900.[25] He was enjoyed for his jovial disposition and reckless mannerisms. Children in the community were attracted to the two-wheeled cart towed by the fastest horse he could find to hitch between the shafts. Being large of girth and stature, he filled the front seat, and other passengers rode in the swaying, churning rear seat suspended behind the axle. He was the hero of any child invited to accompany him cross-country on his frequent trips for errands or visiting in the five-county area.[26]

A family reunion of John J. Trimmell's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren in 1900 would have included more than forty-five descendants. William H. Trimmell, his eldest son, had died in 1893, but would have been represented by four children all grown and married, and six grandchildren. George C. Trimmell lived in Montgomery

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[24] _Ibid._, pp. 226-230.

[25] Duncan, _Wilson County_, p. 620.

[26] Augusta Bertenshaw, Fall River, Kansas, June, 1941, interview with the author, recalling childhood acquaintance with John J. Trimmell.

County; Richard H. Trimmell lived near Garnett, Kansas; Iva had married David Kable and lived in Toledo, Ohio; and Lee Trimmell also lived in Toledo.

John J. Trimmell's second son, Richard, and his wife Cora, lived near Cherryvale, Kansas; and their five older children: Blanche, Pearl, Vernon, Zoe, and Vera still lived at home. Glenn, the youngest, was born in 1901.

Peter Trimmell, the third son of John J. Trimmell, lived in Neodesha and worked at the Standard Oil Refinery. His first wife and two of their children had died in 1897, and he had recently married Laura Davis. His daughter, Ruby lived at home, and his youngest child, Beauannah, was born in 1901.

Anslum, another son of John J. Trimmell, lived near Coyville with his wife, Sarah. Their two older sons, Rollie and Charles, were married and lived near their parents, and they each had one child. Jusdon, Nellie, Milton, Parris, Lena, and Ernest still lived at home.

Simeon, twin brother of Anslum, made his permanent home at Coyville, but worked in the oil fields much of the year. When he and his wife were divorced in about 1880, he left his farm near Buffalo. His daughter, Florence, lived with Simeon periodically, but the family heard no more of her after she declared her intentions of becoming a

circus dancer in the 1890's and left Coyville.[27]

John D. Trimmell, the sixth son of John J. Trimmell, had died in about 1880 when he was less than twenty-five years of age. His widow remarried and lived in the vicinity of Cherryvale. His daughter, Grace, married Purl Devaney and lived nearby until the early 1900's when she and her family migrated to the frontier in Idaho.[28]

The three children of Charles Trimmell lived in Coyville with Maggie Huffman. After his wife died in 1893, the children never lived with Charles; and Clythero, Claude, and Pansy assumed their father settled somewhere in Oklahoma though they never knew for certain.[29]

Cyrus Lincoln, the youngest son of John J. Trimmell, lived with his family on a farm near Cherryvale in 1900. His children were Lee, Roy, James C., and Edith.

Mary Trimmell Morris had lived at Coyville periodically, but was in Wyoming early in the 1900's. Her eldest son, James P. Morris, served in the Spanish-American War under the assumed name of Sinclair, and the family never

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[27]Parris Otto Trimmell, Wichita, Kansas, November 6, 1960, personal interview with the author.

[28]*Ibid*.

[29]Ruby Trimmell Gentis, Beggs, Oklahoma, September, 1960, personal interview with the author; Claudine Callahan Long, Rolla, Kansas, July, 1959, letter to and in possession of the author.

heard from him directly after his enlistment. A post card bearing a photo of the raising of the Maine in Havanna Harbor was addressed to Anslum Trimmell during World War I. Among the crew on the photo was a sailor the family assumed to be James Morris, for the card was addressed to "Uncle Anse, Coyville, Kansas." No further word was received.[30]

Clarrisa Meade Trimmell died in 1893, after a marriage of about fifty years. In the same year were the deaths of William H. Trimmell, her son, and the wife of Charles Trimmell. The small-pox epidemic may have been the cause.[31]

John J. Trimmell remarried in 1898, and continued to live near Longton, Kansas. An injury from an accident led to his death on Christmas Day of 1906, after an action-packed lifetime of more than 82 years.[32] This grandson of a French seaman was a native of Kentucky, reared on the Illinois frontier, and became a pioneer in Kansas. He lived to see some of his children and grandchildren settle the frontiers of Oklahoma, Wyoming, and Idaho.

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[30] Luther Trimmell, Coyville, Kansas, recalling an event occurring during his childhood.

[31] *Ibid.*

[32] Ruby Trimmell Gentis, Beggs, Oklahoma, May, 1955, letter to and in possession of the author.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY

Periods of rapid settlement of frontier regions corresponded with periods of economic disaster in communities the pioneers left behind. This study has been concerned chiefly with the attitudes and environment of pioneer farmers. What sort of people set about developing the wilderness into communities "just as good, or better" than the homes they had left?

Relating several generations of one family to successive frontier regions provided a good frame of reference. Apparently, pioneering was considered a solution of last resort in most families and not a pursuit of colorful tradition. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote that immigration was romantic to envision and describe, but very pathetic to behold. He had learned the difference between legend and experience.

Rough and rugged pioneers who settled the successive frontiers of the American Midwest during the nineteenth century brought about their own obsolescence through their ingenious inventions which revolutionized farming methods. Where the river cities had scorned the "kaintucks" who brought produce to market, a century later the technical

and scientific farmers tended to avoid the crusty survivors of an earlier era.

Kentucky experienced a settlement boom in the 1790's, and the economic conditions following the War of 1812 brought a surge in the settlement of Illinois. Timbered lands were claimed first and cleared for cultivation, for the prairie sod was almost impossible to break with the farm tools commonly used until the 1840's and 1850's.

Machinery designed and produced for use on the prairie farms of the American Midwest revolutionized the nation's agriculture in the course of a few years. Steel production increased greatly during the 1830's and 1840's making possible the mass production of equipment such as reapers, gang plows, shovelled cultivators, threshing machines, mowers, balers, and press mills for grinding grain. Barbed wire fencing, windmill pumps, and steam-engine tractors appeared on the market as a result of need on the High Plains.

No longer could a family develop a wilderness farm with a hoe, an axe, and hard work. Credit and financing were difficult for the pioneer farmer to understand, because he had little schooling and no experience in banking. The greatest deficiencies of those developing the frontier seem to have been lack of long-term financing and failure to

provide reserves to absorb the fluctuations of money values.

Farming methods had changed little through the centuries so long as timbered land could be cleared for cultivation. Hand tools and hard work provided food for a family and surplus for a little cash. Breaking the prairie sod became the impetus for the agricultural revolution, for this required machinery of a larger and more expensive kind. Farming became a business, rather than a way of life. Mechanical aptitude to operate the machinery, economic aptitude for managing finances, and the technical awareness for observing new strains in seed, livestock and trends in marketing were needed for successful farming. Those who attempted to continue with hand labor and no education usually could not succeed on the prairie farms and were forced to seek different occupations.

John "Trimmels," a seaman living in Philadelphia in 1790, later lived in various inland locations and finally in New Orleans. His children became frontier farmers. This study is concerned chiefly with his second son, William Trimmell, and his descendants. From the Illinois frontier in the 1820's to the Oklahoma frontier in the 1890's, different generations of the Trimmell family were represented among the pioneers. Prior to World War I, this family was almost exclusively employed in agriculture, and

in the years following World War II, very few remained upon farms. The study of this family in conjunction with frontier history has served to indicate the short period of time in which the agricultural revolution took place.

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