FRONTIER PERCEPTION AND SETTLEMENT IN NORTHEASTERN INDIANA, 1820 - 1850

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ABSTRACT

FRONTIER PERCEPTION AND SETTLEMENT IN NORTHEASTERN INDIANA, 1820-1850

By

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Frontier conditions move from place to place through time, and result in significant environmental alteration. The progression of the frontier through a study area in northeastern Indiana between 1820 and 1850 is charted using evidence from travel journals of the period, later writings, and U.S. Census material. Definitions of the frontier stage are reviewed and a revised one of two to ten persons per square mile is used. Primary and secondary sources are consulted in describing and interpreting the modifications of the environment and the changes in settlement, in living conditions, and in the economy between the pre-frontier, frontier, and post-frontier periods. New England, Mid-Atlantic, South, and Eastern Midwest were the major source regions of the settlers present in 1850. The routes most migrants used to get to the study area were the Ohio River, the National Road, and the Erie Canal.

Within a short period, from the early 1830's to the early 1840's, the frontier stage of settlement progressed through the study area. Much was written by early visitors

to the Old Northwest, describing fauna, flora, soils, and appraising the suitability of the area for agriculture. Assessments of the study area environment attracted or repelled settlers. Population densities per square mile, the increase of concentrated rural settlements, the change from largely self-sufficient to the beginnings of market agriculture, and the alteration of the environment from forest to fields reveal the progression of the frontier. Mid-Atlantic and Eastern Midwest natives dominated the study area in 1850, bringing with them elements of their varied backgrounds. Successful settlement and economic improvement were the goals of settlers; the environment was rapidly subdued and the frontier stage of settlement rapidly concluded to this end.

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Gregory Steven Rose

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I dedicate this thesis to my mother.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There are two meanings of the word "frontier", related but disparate. One is the territory near the border between two settled countries; the other is the territory between the settled and unsettled parts of a country. This second meaning is the one familiar to most of us and perhaps best described in Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 essay. The westward expansion of our country was closely tied to the movement of the frontier, that "nesting ground between savagery and civilization", according to Turner.

Between the years 1820 and 1850, the frontier stage passed through a four county study area in northeastern Indiana. The area progressed from a territory not yet settled by whites to a territory entering highly successful agricultural settlement. In 1820, the study area was still Indian owned. By about 1830, Indian title to the land had been relinquished and white settlement had begun. In 1840, all four counties were in the frontier stage, as defined by population densities per square mile. By 1850, the study area exhibited well established and successful agriculture.

Because the four counties discussed were not included in the Census of 1830, population densities per square mile cannot be completed. But, because the land had belonged to the Indians only a few years before, because no towns surviving today were founded before 1830, and because of the great amount of westward migration in the early and mid-1830's, I suggest that the frontier period in northeastern Indiana began about 1830. By 1840, though all four counties fit into the frontier definition, they were growing quickly, so that by the early 1840's, the frontier period had ended. About five years, from the early 1840's to the late 1840's, saw the early stage of agricultural growth come and go in the study area. By 1850, the next stage, successful and established agriculture, was beginning.

Basic Problem

The purpose of this study is to show the appearance, progression, and dissolution of the frontier in the study area. A number of specific topics will be considered. The term "frontier" is defined. The change in the environment associated with the changing occupance of the area will be charted, for it was modified greatly by the impact of man's activities. The numbers, sources, and routes of emigrants to the study are also included. Increasing settlement,

and the resulting economic changes, show the progression of the frontier through the study area and are covered in the paper. The lifestyles of the pioneers also reflect the changes wrought by the passage of the frontier; they are likewise studied.

Study Area and Time Frame

I chose the four counties of Dekalb, Lagrange, Noble, and Steuben in northeastern Indiana as my study area for a number of reasons (Figure 1). One is my familiarity with the area. Another is that culturally, northeastern Indiana is a settlement source crossroads, that is, one with representatives of many regions of the eastern United States settling there.

Northeastern Indiana, in physical terms, represents a basically uniform area. Glaciation worked it over, giving the topography much the same variation and look in all four counties. The study area is at the center of a large land area, sufficiently far away from lakes or major rivers that might have affected settlement patterns and times.

I have chosen the years 1820 to 1850 because they cover the time from pre-frontier, non-settled territory to post-frontier, successful agricultural settlement. Indiana became a state in 1816, on the strength of the settled areas in the southern part of the state. In 1820, the study area was a wilderness, with no legal white settlements--only the Indian

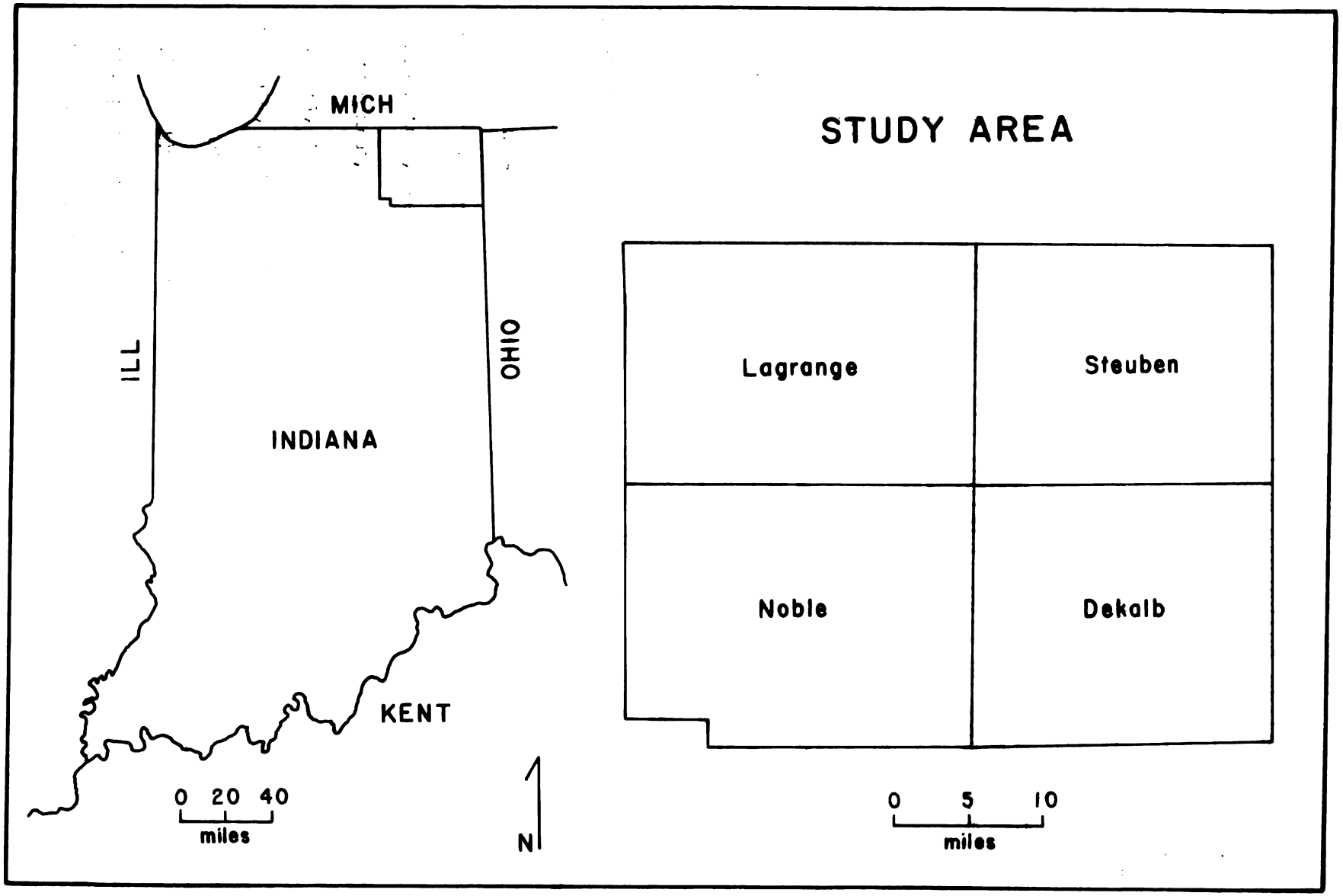
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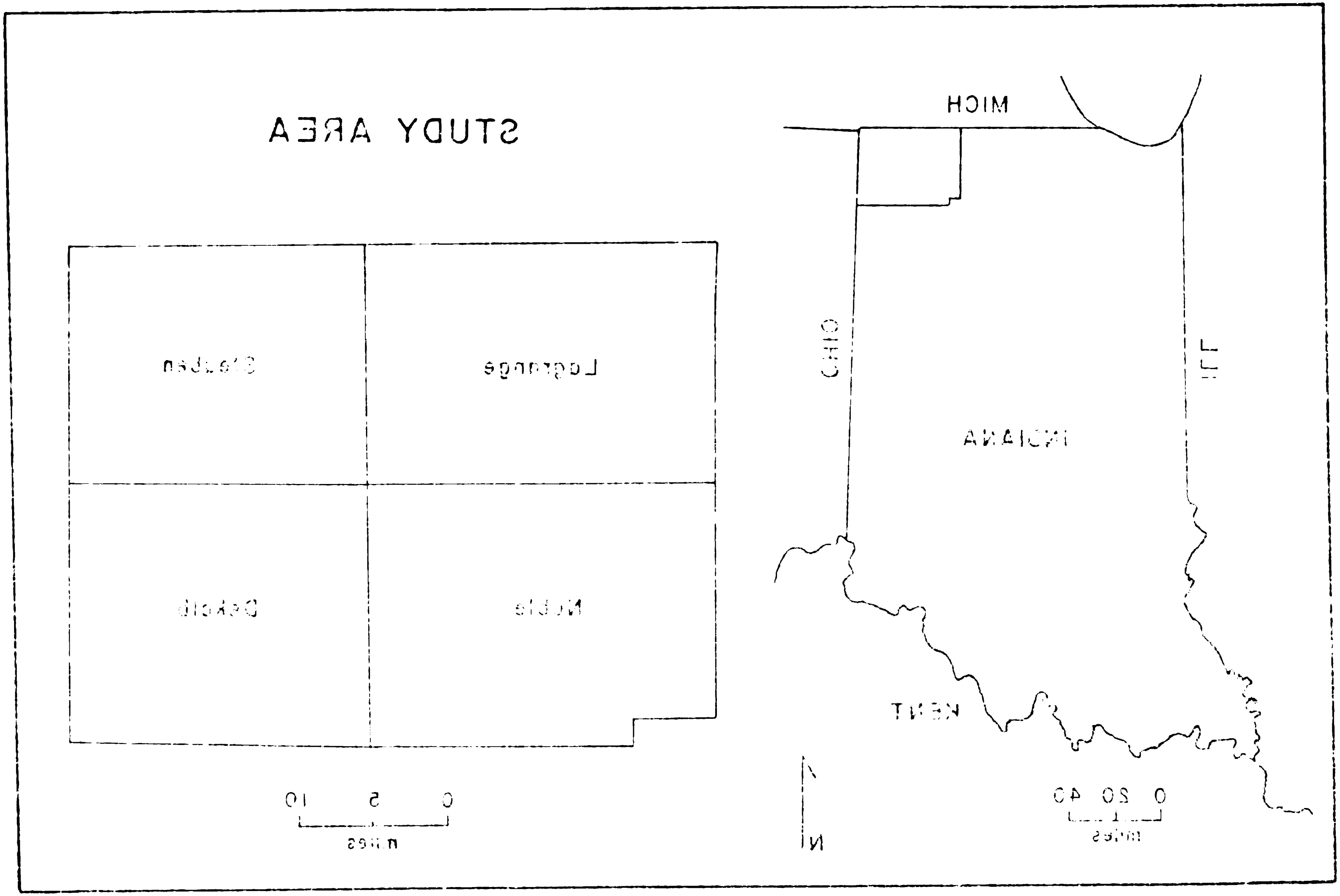
FIGURE 1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was using the land. Pressure from expanding white settlements caused Indian land cessions in the northeastern part of the state from 1820 to 1828. In 1850, the closing year of this study, the detailed Census included nativity information and revealed a population density of 21.1 persons per square mile, far above the upper density limit for the frontier stage. Northeastern Indiana could no longer be considered on the frontier by 1850.

Literature Review

Both primary and secondary sources were investigated for this paper. Two basic categories of literature were covered: one was general studies of the frontier, westward movement, and the Old Northwest; the other was on the study area itself. Literature on the frontier was consulted to define the frontier. The settlement process in northeastern Indiana was investigated in relation to the frontier. The frontier definitions of the Census Bureau, of Turner and Billington, well known frontier historians, and of Hart, a geographer, were all applied to the study area. The above sources, plus other historians and Brown, a historical geographer, were consulted about the processes and composition of westward movements. Articles by Lang were used to help analyze the population in 1850. Books on the Old Northwest, particularly the set by Buley, provided much useful information on the surrounding region that applied to the

study area. Because there was frequently a lack of specific information precisely on the study area, works about the Old Northwest and the Indiana-Michigan-Ohio area that surround the four-county study area were utilized.

From pioneers' journals, travelers' reports, and visitors' accounts, descriptions of the natural environment in and around the study area were gleaned. Literature on the study area, supported by applicable surrounding region literature was used to discuss migration sources and routes, settlement, and the changes that occurred in the northeastern Indiana frontier. By investigating these topics, the movement of the frontier to, through, and out of the northeastern Indiana study area between 1820 and 1850 can be traced.

Organization

The organization of this paper is roughly chronological in terms of frontier evolution. There are occasional stops to discuss particular subjects or features of that process or pattern in more detail. After the second chapter, which defines the term "frontier", change through time in northeastern Indiana is charted. The third chapter is concerned with the pre-frontier landscape, circa 1820. The land, the living landscape, and the Indian population are discussed. The fourth chapter deals with the entry of the pioneers into northeastern Indiana. As the settlers began to pour in, their perceptions of the environment helped to attract or

repel others. The major routes to the new lands and how the land was acquired are included. The fifth chapter discusses the amounts and source regions of the settlers who came to the study area, as identified in the Census of 1850. The sixth chapter discusses the post-frontier landscape. It includes a section on the progression of settlement and the changing population densities from 1820 to 1850. Also, there is a brief section included on the changed living landscape and farmscape resulting from the increased settlement.

The methods of analysis in this study are primarily descriptive and interpretive. For example, material describing the natural environment is used for interpretation of the changes that resulted from the passage of the frontier. Accounts of the look of the land, of the movement routes of the settlement, and of the history of the region were consulted and form the bases of the study.

The major contributions of the study will be environmental perception and analysis and frontier passage. The environment of northeastern Indiana from 1820 to 1850 will be described and analyzed. The quick passage of the frontier will be charted using settlement and environmental changes. Previous studies of the four-county area have been descriptive, not analytical. This paper will look at the process and results of the dissolution of the frontier.

CHAPTER II

THE FRONTIER DEFINED

Before considering the frontier stage in northeastern Indiana, one should define the word "frontier". This is not as simple as it might seem at first glance. Billington outlines three problems involved in defining the word[1]. First, frontier, in American usage, normally implies a line of advancing settlement moving steadily across the country. This was not always the case. The frontier could be hundreds of miles further west in one area than in others to the north or south at the same time. Kentucky and Tennessee began to be settled after the French and Indian War ended in 1763. In 1810, there were at least two persons per square mile in both states, all the way west to the Mississippi, while to the north, that same density was only as far west as central Ohio and to the south only as far west as central Georgia[2]. In other cases, the movement of the frontier left isolated areas behind it unsettled. While nearly all the rest of New York state had more than two persons per square mile by 1810, the Adirondack area was not settled to that density until at least 1850 and in places until 1890[3]. In an extreme example, from 1840 to 1860 the frontier jumped across most of the Great Plains to the Pacific coast, in response to the lure of the Oregon country

and California gold. Second, recognizing a frontier as a portion of territory suggests that there is a narrow, delimitable strip of frontier conditions. This is also inaccurate. Because there were various frontier areas in various stages scattered over much of the United States, the frontier and pioneer conditions "influenced a relatively wide band of countryside peopled by various exploiters and sufficiently enduring to make its influence felt over an extended time period"[4]. Third, when using the word frontier, one must be careful not to confuse the frontier as a process of civilization, as outlined so well in Turner's 1893 essay, with the frontier as a geographic region.

While the frontier as process cannot totally be divorced from the frontier as place, in this paper I will attempt to deal with the frontier as a geographic region. There are many definitions of the frontier as a region. Some of Turner's geographic definitions of the frontier include "meeting ground between savagery and civilization", "temporary boundary of an expanding society at the edge of substantially free lands", and "the region whose social conditions result from the application of older institutions and ideas to the transforming influences of free land"[5]. A complication that arises when defining the frontier as a region is time. The frontier changed its location through both time and place. In New England in the 17th Century, the frontier was only a few miles from well settled areas, while in the Old Northwest in

the 19th Century, the frontier may have been hundreds of miles away from successful agricultural settlement. Changes in time make new technologies available--consider how the railroad made moving to the frontier easier, and by using it how much further one could travel to get to the frontier.

Billington gives this definition to the frontier. It is

> the geographic area adjacent to the unsettled portions of the continent in which a low man-land ratio and abundant natural resources provide an unusual opportunity for the individual to better himself economically and socially without external aid[6].

Density has also been used to define the frontier. The Census Bureau in 1880 defined an area with a density of two to six persons per square mile as the frontier[7]. Similarly, the frontier was defined in the 1890 Census as "the outer edge of the area with a population density of two or more persons per square mile"[8]. With less than two persons per square mile, an area was really not settled--fur trapping, hunting, or grazing would be the likely use of the land at that density. Two to six persons per square mile defined frontier conditions, according to the Census. A density of six to eighteen persons per square mile indicated farms and systematic cultivation, though settlement was at an early stage. A density of eighteen to forty-five persons per square mile indicated quite successful agricultural settlement.

John Fraser Hart has challenged the two to six persons per square mile definition[9]. Noting that a pioneer family probably included at least four people (husband, wife, two children), at a density of two persons per square mile, settlement density would be one family for every two square miles, a very thin occupance. At six persons per square mile, one and one-half, four-member families would occupy a section of land, still not very many. Hart suggests that a density of two persons per square mile is acceptable as a minimum for settlement, but that occupance of an area does not begin until there are six persons per square mile, and settlement begins with eighteen persons per square mile[10]. In another writing, Hart elaborates this to suggest that

> three frontier lines, the frontier of occupance (two persons per square mile), the frontier of settlement (six persons per square mile), and the frontier of agriculture (eighteen persons per square mile), succeeded each other at regular intervals in many parts of the eastern U.S.[11].

A density of forty-five persons per square mile marked the frontier of urbanization.

The definition of the frontier that I use in this paper accepts the generally agreed upon lower limit of two persons per square mile. The maximum density figure for frontier settlement is expanded to ~~two~~ ten persons per square mile. These density limits are most reasonable in examining the settlement of northeastern Indiana from 1820 to 1850. If we assume, for simplicity's sake, that the land in the study area was settled a quarter section at a time

(160 acres), a density of ten persons per square mile suggests at least two, four-member families per square mile were present. A 640 acre section of land would be half settled. Generalizing over the "frontier area", this would mean that the area was also half settled. If the land was settled in eighty acre plots, allowable after reform of the land sale laws in 1820, then the two families would together settle 160 acres, or only one quarter of a 640 acre section. Either way, even with the maximum of ten persons per square mile, an abundance of land and a low man-land ratio still remain. Ten to eighteen persons per square mile, or two to four families, would result in a 640 acre section being half to fully settled. Of course, extensive wooded or uncultivated areas would persist even on the claimed lands. At a density of ten to eighteen persons per square mile, game animals to supplement the settlers' diets would be mostly gone, animal pests reduced, and schools, transportation, and commercial centers would be of increasing importance. Farms would be well defined and systematic cultivation practiced. Above eighteen persons per square mile, the area becomes "settled country".

I decided upon the two to ten persons per square mile definition of the frontier because it is best for the time and study area treated. This density range will cover the

period from the beginnings of occupance to the beginnings of settled agriculture, the period when the greatest changes came to newly opened lands, including those in northeastern Indiana. Since these densities are averages, there are likely to be areas in the averaging region of relatively heavy settlement and other areas nearly unsettled. The wider range of densities that I use to describe the frontier allows for the inequalities in settlement distribution. The scattered settlement pattern approximates the "wide band" idea of frontier settlement suggested above by Billington. A maximum limit of six persons per square mile would result in very few people for the creation of successful agriculture in the section. With only one and one half families per square mile, the successful settlement stage would be entered while the area was still quite sparsely populated. At a density of ten persons, or two and one half families per square mile, there would be more advancement before the successful settlement stage was entered. Even at the density of two and one half families per square mile, considering that the family provided the labor on the farm, not many acres would be opened. This would leave much, or most, of the area unsettled, awaiting the imminent further settlement. The resulting image of a few scattered dwellings with much empty but soon to be claimed land present fits the popular conception of the frontier.

For this paper, then, the frontier region is defined as having a population density range of two to ten persons per square mile. Through further settlement, when an area reaches a density of more than ten persons per square mile, the frontier stage is gone. At the ten persons per square mile level, self-sufficient agriculture is being superseded by market agriculture, cash crop cultivation, and permanent settlement. Increasing acres under cultivation at the establishment homesteads are often producing surpluses and improving transportation is providing a way to market the surpluses. From ten to eighteen persons per square mile, the early stage of agricultural settlement is present. Above eighteen persons per square mile, agricultural settlement is well established and successful, advanced far beyond the self-sufficiency stage. Regular surpluses are sold, and the resultant money used to buy more land or labor-saving devices.

Working from the descriptions of the frontier by population density in the Census, Billington, and Hart, I have arrived at my own definition of the frontier. In northeastern Indiana from 1820 to 1850, the frontier stage occurred when the area had from two to ten persons per square mile. Once the study area had more than ten persons per square mile, the frontier stage was over. We next want to examine the pre-frontier landscape and life in some detail.

CHAPTER III

THE PRE-FRONTIER LANDSCAPE

The northeastern Indiana landscape looked far different in the pre-frontier period, before settlement began there, than it did in the post-frontier period. The entire enrivonment was strongly altered by settlement. Flora was especially affected by the frontiersmen, and fauna nearly as much so. To get an idea of how the area looked, this chapter portrays and describes the landscape in its pre-frontier stage, relying heavily on those accounts left us by contemporary visitors. Those visitors described the environment as it appeared to them, not necessarily in scientific terms.

The Land

The notion that northern Indiana is all flat is a common misconception. Perhaps to those familiar with the Appalachains or the Rockies, northern Indiana appears level, but on closer inspection, it is far from entirely flat. There are areas of very low relief and areas with rolling topography. The soil also varies greatly--in low, flat, areas, the soil is often deep and dark colored, highly productive for crop

agriculture. In the hilly areas, the soil can be thin and stony. The variations in topography, with all the related effects, are the result of glaciation.

The four-county study area in question is a part of the Great Lakes section of the Central Lowlands province. The study area contains examples of all the characteristics Thornbury lists for the Great Lakes section.

> Here are four of the Great Lakes and thousands of lesser ones. . . Prominent end moraines, outwash plains, closed basins that are sites of lakes or swamps. . .all attest to the recency of glaciation. . .between the end moraines are areas of rolling ground moraine . . .
>
> End moraines marking the outlines of various glacial lobes and sublobes are particularly prominent in this section[12].

In each county, there are areas of rugged terrain, generally well wooded, with small deep depressions and lakes. This is characteristic moraine country.

> The Mississinewa Moraine, which extends through. . .eastern Noble and western and northern Steuben counties, "is the largest and best defined moraine in Indiana". A large portion of its area may be referred to as crumpled, because the surface resembles "a sheet of paper which has been carelessly crushed in the hand and then spread out"[13].

Lagrange and Dekalb counties also have their share of rugged morainal territory. The gently rolling ground

moraine areas, the areas of outwash, and the former lake beds account for the flat areas in the counties.

The soil also reflects the glacial heritage. In eutrophied lake beds, the soil is deep, organic muck. On the hilltops, where erosion and leaching are increased, the soil is thin and poor. In the outwash areas, sands and gravels dominate the soil. The topography affected the soils, and both soils and topography affected the vegetative cover the first arrivals found.

> Not only did glaciation account to a large extent for physical features but also for the soil distribution, and this fact, as well as the determination of lake locations and water courses profoundly affected the economic history of the (Old Northwest). From the extensive tracts of rich organic till of the corn belt of Indiana and Illinois to the sandy and infertile pine barrens of Michigan, the glacier left its mark. It accounted for the sand dunes and the swamps, for the lake plains and the beach lines, the wandering boulders and the sparkling lakes[14].

Glaciation was of primary importance in the formation of the landscape that the explorers found and the pioneers settled.

The Living Landscape

The four northeastern counties of Indiana, like all of the Old Northwest, was a wilderness little touched by man when the first white explorers and settlers entered it. The Indians had occupied the land for years, but their affect on

the living landscape was minor. When they arrived, the white entrants were astounded by nature's plenty. Abundant plant and animal life, though regionally varying, was found throughout the Old Northwest. Within Indiana, according to Wilson, "because the climate from north to south does not vary widely, indigenous animal and plant life is almost uniform throughout the state"[15].

Fauna

When the pioneer family arrived, only if part of the family had gone ahead and planted a field in the woods did they have a small crop to harvest. Usually, even if they had crops ready, they had to live off the land for a while, often years, until they had established themselves agriculturally. Meat was available to the hunters; deer and turkeys were plentiful[16]. Pioneers needed some skill at hunting, for this source of meat was an important part of the settlers' diet. Until the country was too settled, wild game was abundant, even to the point that the beasts of the forest became a nuisance, threatening to decimate the settlers' hard won agricultural plots[17].

> Bear, deer, wild turkeys, pigeons, opossums, ducks, geese, brant, partridges, quail, prairie chickens, parakeets, and squirrels, and lesser game in such numbers as to constitute a nuisance were to be found in the woods and prairies of the region north of the Ohio. Fish abounded in the streams. . .fishing with hook and line was considered too slow work; the gig and seine were favored for large catches[18].

Some of the accounts of abundance were no doubt apocryphal. Most of the settlers had come from areas where the wildlife was limited--those areas had been settled for many years. In the new lands, such abundance was available only to the earliest settlers. Soon, the pressure of hunters, the advance of settlement, and the encroachment on the breeding and foraging areas of the wild game reduced their numbers considerably, especially the larger game animals.

> Abundance such as this could not last long after settlement, for not only was game needed for food, but these creatures were frequently destructive of crops and livestock. The bear and deer were among the first to become scarce, for these animals were sought for their hides, grease, and sinews. . .as well as for food[19].

Flora

Nearly all of the northeastern Indiana wilderness was covered with trees. According to the reports, these trees were commonly of a size rarely seen today--very large trees in profusion, with crowns high above the forest floor. The floor was often quite clear--the crowns shaded the ground so that growth of underbrush was severly limited. Under these climax forests, there was a virtual desert of fauna. Most fauna preferred the mere open areas with underbrush and sunny spots. In most forests, there were a variety of tree types, each reflecting topography and soil.

> Excepting for the prairies of Illinois and limited areas in Michigan and Indiana, vast forests of virgin timber covered the region of the Northwest. In the bottom land and along stream margins grew the black and white walnut (butternut), ash, blackberry, elm (red, white and slippery), sugar maple, honey locust, buckeye, catalpa, sycamore, cottonwood, hickory, mulberry, pecan, and various oaks--such as the water oak, burr oak, white oak, and red oak. The white oak, black oak, post oak, hickory, walnut, cherry, beech and others covered the ridges, hills, and uplands. . .for thousands of years generations of trees had seeded, grown, fallen, and rotted. . .In these almost unbroken forests, somber and gloomy, came the American frontiersman[20].

Stories about the effect of these huge trees, about the strange atmosphere created by them, come from many sources. From The Trees, the first volume of Conrad Ricter's fictional trilogy about the Old Northwest, one can easily get an idea of the almost oppressive feelings generated in the shadows of these great trees.

The sameness and unaccustomed environment under these trees, where the sun never reached, reportedly caused some people to lose their mental balance. It is interesting to note that a completely different environment, the flat western prairies, had a similar affect on some pioneers. Havighurst describes their feelings this way.

> As they pushed on, the huge interior took possession of homeseekers minds. This strange, dark, timeless land was theirs to contend with and subdue. Sometimes that thought was exhilarating. . .More often, it was a somber, fearsome realization; the woods were ancient, dark, and mighty, and against them a man raised his tiny ax. In the twilit country superstitions

> flourished. Prairie people would never have as many dreads and omens as those of forest settlers[21].

The four-county study area did have some prairie outliers from the "Prairie Peninsula", mostly concentrated in northeast Lagrange and northwest Steuben Counties[22]. Here was a totally different environment, one whose value for agricultural use was long debated. In the small prairies of northeastern Indiana, timber was always nearby, so prairie settlement was not hindered by lack of wood. There was a belief, just how popular is still open to question, that the prairies should be avoided.

> In Indiana the prairie was a vast pasture of bluestem. . .with occasional swamps of bull grass. . .for all its sameness this was a varied landscape. Over its long swales and swells the prairie wore a coat of many colors[23].

A contemporary described his visit to a prairie in Calhoun County, Michigan, two counties north of Lagrange and Steuben Counties, in the following,

> What a country this is. Into land like this. . .a man can run his plow without felling a tree; and, planting a hundred acres where he would clear but ten in the unsettled districts of New York, raise his twenty-five bushels of wheat to an acre in the very first season.
>
> The absence of stumps in the land under cultivation, and the open groves adjacent give a smiling openness to the landscape[24].

The Original Inhabitants--The Indians

Tribes of the Area

When the first white settlers arrived in northern Indiana, they found a land that was, to their eyes, essentially uninhabited. The land was inhabited by Indians, though their impact on the environment was unnoticeable when compared to the white man's impact. The Indians had been re-establishing themselves in the area since about 1700. Before then, they had been forced to retreat to the westward north to escape the conquering Iroquois. Assisted and protected by the French, about 1700 the Miamis and later the Potawatomis, and Kickapoos began to move eastward into the areas they had lived in before the Iroquois attacked[25].

Indian settlements in northern Indiana had three focal areas--along the Wabash River, around Fort Wayne, and east of Chicago. The most prevalent tribes were the Potawatomis and the Miamis. The Miamis were centered in an area defined by the Ohio, Maumee, Great Miami, and Little Miami rivers. More specifically for the four-county area, the Miamis settled in the valleys of the eastern tributaries of the Wabash River. The Potawatomis settled from the Kankakee River eastward, and concentrated around the headwaters of the Tippecanoe River and in the lake region north of the Eel River. The Kickapoos were not numerous, but, despite hinderance from the Miamis, succeeded in establishing themselves along the Wabash River. After 1820, the few incoming

white settlers discovered a smattering of variously sized villages of Potawatomi and Miami in the four-county area[26].

Land Cessions

In the view of the early 19th Century, the Indians were not using the land that the white pioneers wanted. At that time, the problem was solved by Indian removal. Because the concept of ownership differed between whites and Indians, of the fifty-four land cessions by Indians of Indiana lands to 1830, only twenty-one were uncontested by other Indians. Cessions of the same area were repeated by different tribes who claimed authority over it[27].

However confusing and difficult the problems of cession and removal, it seemed inevitable. In 1810, there were 24,000 settlers in Indiana, mostly in the South, few enough that the Indians may have hoped to retain the land, but by 1820, there were 147,000[28]. The handwriting was on the wall. While there was certainly no shortage of lands, the Territorial Governors found it very hard to keep the settlers within the ceded tracts of land--the only lands that could legally be bought and settled. The pioneers kept moving in and squatting on the unceded lands.

> When Indians protested against the theft of their land, the agitated squatter interpreted it as hostility; and when protests were followed by violence or murder the (squatter) charged the Indians with war[29].

These problems over land resulted in recurring periods of tension and friction between the two groups who had been

learning from and trading with each other. The conflict caused by white settlement on Indian owned land was not ended until all the Indian lands were ceded and the natives removed[30].

To this end, there was a long series of arduously hammered-out and difficult-to-enforce land cessions between representatives of the Indian tribes and the Indiana territorial and state governments. In Chicago in 1821, Lewis Cass and Solomon Sibley held a meeting with representatives of the Potawatomi, Miami, and other tribes and acquired in part an area of land in northern Indiana. Then from the Potawatami and Miami in a treaty at Mississinewa in 1826, Cass with James B. Ray and John Tipton of Indiana, obtained the eastern half of a narrow strip ten miles wide across the northern border of Indiana and more land north of the Wabash River. In another treaty, 1828, the Potawatomi ceded additional territory in northeastern Indiana[31].

Despite all of the land ceded, there were still reserves of Indian land in northern and northeastern Indiana. The Indians were still able to live in the area, though time was clearly running against them. According to one author, the Potawatomis were less affected by the encroaching whites than the Miamis and other tribes. The Potawatomi "seemed to thrive on contact with the white man". Some of this, he concedes, was because of the buffer of the Miamis to the south, who bore earlier the problems of a northward-expanding

cession policy[32]. Three events soon brought the end much closer and

> increased the demands for migration by all tribes east of the Mississippi River. The first and most important was the Federal Removal Act of 1830; the second was the. . .plans for construction of a canal along the Wabash-Maumee between Huntington and Fort Wayne; the third was the anti-Indian hysteria which accompanied the Black Hawk incident in 1832[33].

No military activity in northeastern Indiana occurred during the Black Hawk War. In fact, the local Indians were very concerned for fear they might become involved in the war against their will. Once all the rumors and furor had died down, the final result in northern Indiana of the war was a near complete halt in immigration due to adverse publicity about the war in emigrants' home areas. This halt was blamed on Indians in general and on the local Indians specifically because they were the closest representatives of Indians. Whites were angry because they wanted increased settlement.

> Such an irreconcilable cleavage of interest between the two races caused most of the settlers to look forward to the ultimate extinguishment of the Indian title in the northern part of the state and to their eventual removal. Fears aroused by Black Hawk increased the settlers' determination that the Indians must be removed[34].

To finally clear the Indians out of northern Indiana, in 1832 a treaty with the Potawatomis was concluded that

provided for replacement lands to the west, but also kept almost 110 Potawatomi reserves in Indiana. Settlers continued to enter and squat on the reserves in northern Indiana during this time[35]. The Miami removal was much the same. In 1834, a treaty was signed with the Miamis for resettlement, and again reserves in Indiana were retained. Another treaty in 1840 ceded most of the remaining tribal lands, but only the threat of force in 1846 and 1847 brought compliance by the Miamis[36]. However hesitant, by 1850 most of the Indians had left northern Indiana. No natives were counted in Dekalb, Lagrange, Noble, or Steuben Counties[37].

Certainly the reluctance of the Indians to move was understandable. In barely a generation, land that was fully Indian owned became fully white owned. This was a bewildering turn of events. The Indian lifestyle was greatly disrupted--game ranges were cleared, roads were built, and a system of unfamiliar laws and regulations imposed. The red man was no longer welcome in lands that shortly before had been under his domain alone. The end arrived quickly for the Indians, submerged in an incoming tide of white settlers. "Doom came in a series of treaties when the Indians surrendered the last of their lands within the state and agreed to move west of the Mississippi"[38]. The frontier period arrived, and with it came much alteration of the pre-frontier landscape.

CHAPTER IV

ENTERING THE LAND

The pre-frontier landscape was in an equilibrium in 1820, as it had been for years. Flora, fauna, and the Indians were almost as one, in harmony with each other. The coming of the whites, attracted by favorable accounts and perceptions of the northeastern environment, changed all this. Once attracted, most settlers used a few major routes to get to northeastern Indiana. On arrival, the settler needed to acquire land. All of these activities began in the frontier period, when the study area was undergoing significant change.

Pioneer Perceptions of the Environment

Before many of the pioneers began to move to the Old Northwest in droves, they wanted to know that there was something worth moving to there. A migration to new land was a considerable undertaking; not only in time, but also in money and effort. The psychological effects were also considerable. To move away from home and family, (most of the pioneers were young), probably never to see family and friends again and to rarely communicate through letters,

all added to the hardships of an already difficult journey. The lure of the Old Northwest was such that many took up the challenge despite these obstacles. The attractions of new lands were great enough to pull adventurous people away from the benefits of home, even though many of them failed and fell back.

These attractions were publicized in many ways. Many early explorers and later travellers wrote books about the lands they had seen--mostly enthusiastic reports and often reflecting a vested interest--though there were unfavorable reactions as well. The Indian wars in the Ohio-Indiana region of the Old Northwest from about 1785 to 1795 and the fort system set up afterwards, introduced soldiers to areas that many later settled. People from surrounding settled areas, like Kentucky, crossed over into Indiana to hunt and look at land. At home, the land was settling up and the wild fauna decreasing. An autumn trip filled the larder for winter and attracted settlers to Indiana the next spring[39]. Government land surveyors also saw the new lands, and often bought large parcels for speculation, moving out to live on part of their land. Through newspapers and books, as well as the very important verbal contacts, information about the west was transmitted and prospective settlers pondered decisions about the great trek.

The study area considered here is not very well represented in the pioneer literature compared to other places, such as the English Prairie in southern Illinois, which was visited and written about by many. The four-county study area was somewhat isolated and out of the mainstream of early travel. Northeastern Indiana was then considered a part of the larger "Wabash Country", which

> at this time included the whole region from the middle of the state north to Lake Michigan. Its southern reaches were timbered with hardwoods intersperced with prairies. . . further north lay poorly drained lands and swamps. . .
>
> Difficulty of access was the explanation of the relatively late discovery of the Wabash Country. The Upper Wabash furnished an uncertain thorofare, and roads from the Ohio were practically nonexistent. The northern entry by way of the Maumee did not become important until after the opening of the Erie Canal, but even then few of the people who came west from Buffalo entered this region. Nevertheless, settlers pushed as close as possible from the south and east[40].

Because few travellers came right through the four-county study area, we need to rely in the main on visitors to nearby areas to get descriptions of the study area and the surrounding region. In particular, the reports on the northeastern Indiana, northwestern Ohio, and south-central Michigan area illustrate some of the pioneer's contemporary views of the study area.

The descriptions given by two separate visitors to the general northern Indiana region tell of a wilderness land far different from today's scene. From Christopher Gist:

> Ohio in those days was wooded, but as Gist moved west toward the prairies beyond the Mississippi, he found the woods becoming less dense. Much of the landscape, even in forested Ohio, was "fine rich level land, with large Meadows, fine clover Bottoms and spacious plains covered with wild rye. The wood chiefly large Walnuts and Hickories, here and there mixed with Poplars, Cherry trees and sugar trees"[41].

And from John Bradbury:

> The more northerly parts of the states of Ohio and Indiana, together with the whole of Illinois and western territories . . .(has) been noticed as possessing a different character in its natural state . . .this region is an assembledge of woodland and prairies or savannas intermixed . . .In a state of nature, these prairies are covered with a luxuriant growth of grass and herbaceous plants. . .If (the settler) places his house at the edge of one of these prairies, it furnishes him food for any number of cattle. . .The woodland affords him the materials necessary for his house, his fire, and fences[42].

The perceptions of woodlands often stressed the variety, size, and potential use of the trees.

> In the state of nature, this country was almost wholly covered with trees, many of which are of great magnitude. More than one hundred species are found and the timber is of various qualities. . .Of the oak only, there are fourteen or fifteen species, of which the overcup. . .affords the best timber. The post oak. . .is also much esteemed for the durability of its timber when put into the ground. The black locust . . .and honey locust. . .are excellent for shipbuilders. . .For furniture they chiefly use the wild cherry and black walnut.

> Nothing so much surprises the European on his first entrance into the western country, as the grandeur and beauty of many of these trees[43].

Although the following description applies to Ohio, similar tree specimens were present in Indiana.

> In the Ohio country, where interested travelers took the trouble to measure the trees, walnuts and sycamore grew six or seven feet in diameter. . .White oaks. . .grew stands so thick that the trunks. . .might rise eighty feet without a branch. One oak. . .was six feet in diameter at its base and three feet at a height of seventy-five feet. Near Greenfield, Ohio, a traveler within view of the road for miles measuring fourteen or fifteen feet in circumference[44].

On a winter journey immediately to the north of the study area in Michigan, Charles Fenno Hoffman

> found that we were in the midst of new clearings, the road leading through a level country as far as the eye could reach, and having its sides faced beyond the fields with trees, which, with tall stems and interlocking summits, stood like giants locking arms along the highway. . .the effect of this magnificent vegetation was striking even at this season; but after riding for half a day along such a wood, with not a valley to break the view, nor a hill to bound it, it could not but be monotonous[45].

One might question the veracity of these statements about the huge size and perfection of these trees. Yet the tendency to over rate the timber resources of the country to attract settlement would likely be counteracted by the realization that these tremendous specimens would have to

be cleared before the land could be farmed. Any exaggeration of an already monumental task might serve to scare potential settlers away.

The prairies provided tracts of land that were already cleared and waiting for the plow. But there was a myth afoot, how pervasive it was is debatable, that the prairie soils would not produce. "If it won't grow trees it won't grow corn". Studies by McManis (1964) and Peters (1969) have attempted to qualify this anti-prairie view, suggesting that prairies were settled, though the smaller ones were first and then the larger ones--first around their wooded edges and on stream courses--because of the pioneer's need for wood. In the study period, evidence from writings show that the pioneers often used the prairies for pastures, though some writers, such as Hoffman and Bradbury, suggested that the growing of crops on the prairies would be highly successful[46].

If the visitors to the Old Northwest could not agree on the value of the prairie soils, they usually agreed that the grassy areas were a pleasant change from the deep dark woods. A transition between the thick forest and the grassy prairies was provided by the oak openings. Often called park-like, they were sometimes described as the most beautiful sights in all of the Old Northwest.

> I struck through a wood so dense that it seemed to terminate the settlements in this direction, and then at a sudden turning of the path, I came at once upon the "oak openings". It would be difficult

> to convey an idea of the pleasing effect of such a surprise. . .English parks. . .Clumps of the noblest oaks, with not a twig of underwood, extending over a gently undulating grassy surface as far as the eye can reach, here clustered together in a grove. . .there rearing their gigantic trunks in solitary grandeur from the plain. The feeling of solitude I had when in the deep woods deserted me the moment I came upon this beautiful scene, and I rode on for hours, unable without an effort to divest myself of the idea that I was in a cultivated country[47].

A pioneer to the south in a prairie described

> "the pleasing and rapturous appearance of the Plains of Kentucky. A new sky and a strange earth seemed to be presented to our view. . .".
>
> The middle western prairies were, as. . . the Rev. Timothy Flint remarked, "diminutive though fertile copies of the more western ones". They might be completely level for several miles at a stretch, with no vegetation except coarse grass and cane which grew "often higher than a man's head"[48].

Whether the lands in the west were to be held for speculation or immediately settled, the eventual use for most was agricultural. Early visitors not only discussed vegetation, topography, and accessibility, but also soils and wetlands. With endless acres to choose from, it was important that the pioneer choose well. The sentiment was that he might as well get the best lands, for if he did not, someone else would. The eye of the pioneer, trained by personal experience and knowledge handed down through the family for generations, carefully judged the agricultural suitability of the soil.

> Every man in the new country had an eye for soil. Soldiers in the expeditions of St. Clair and Wayne talked about sloughs, bogs, bottoms, about clay, loam, marl, and deep black earth. Even in dense woods they judged the make-up of the forest floor. White oak, walnut, hickory, sugar maple meant good soil; locust and swamp oak were signs of heavy, undrained earth. The timber told what poverty or fertility lay out of sight. White oak and chestnut lands were good for corn; soft maple and sycamore land was wet and cold. Sassafras, gum, persimmon and small-leafed oaks told a story of thin and stubborn earth; beech and hard maple were a badge of warm, rich loamy ground easy to plow and ready to yield[49].

As much as good soils could attract settlement, wetlands could repel it. The fear of sickness was general, and stories of pioneers dying from mysterious malarial "agues" resulting from "miasmal" wetlands were common[50]. The reputation for sickness gained by a frontier area could long hinder its growth. Unfortunately, "the surveyors reports for northeastern Indiana were very discouraging. Impassable swamps. . .did not add to the landscape"[51]. Not only did the presence of wooded swamps discourage settlement; it also hindered travel. Along a road through the marsh and prairie west of Fort Wayne, "mud twelve to fifteen inches deep and water often standing on both sides of the road conveyed the impression that the bottom had fallen out"[52].

An excellent article by Martin R. Kaatz discusses the effect of wetlands on settlement and the various improvements that were made to stimulate growth. While the Black Swamp by name did not extend into northeastern Indiana, there

were plenty of wet places present, so many that, according to Richard Lyle Power, the settlement of Indiana was adversely affected.

> Indiana was widely accorded the unhappy distinction of being a focal point of swamps and fevers. . .
>
> It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that Indiana, far from evoking, laudatory emotional outbursts, was passed off by contemporary eastern writers as being an unmitigated morass. . .
>
> Thus it may be proposed that Indiana, subjected as it was to the far reaching social consequences of wet lands, affords an archetype for the study of this sort of environmental condition. The tenacity of its unsavory reputation doubtless explains why the business of finding new homes within Indiana was never accompanied by the emotional manifestations that produced the "Ohio Fever", the "Illinois Fever", or inspired New England people to sing "Michigania". In short, if eastern men in large numbers were attacked by a "fever" to migrate to Indiana, the fact is difficult to discover[53].

Of course, not all of the newly arrived or potential settlers were knowledgeable about the northeastern Indiana region. Many who came were unsure what they were going to find; many who might have come did not get the information they needed to attract them. Partly because of the imperfect news of the Old Northwest in the east,

> settlement lagged in northern Indiana; it was the last province in the heartland to be taken up. People in the East had luring ideas of Ohio and Illinois, but only a vague notion of a never-never land of Indiana. . .Some New Englanders thought that Indiana must be a great deal further than Illinois and were not sure it had been

> settled at all; it sounded like Indian country. Others had heard of the Indiana marshlands, infested with toads, frogs, snakes and miasma. Travelers had given the region a black account[54].

Information transfer depended on everything from books to word of mouth, and it could become strangely garbled in any of these transmissions. But for those pioneers who knew, or thought they did, there were a number of different strands woven into the perception of the northeastern Indiana environment. One thread seems generally present. The land was perceived from the standpoint of potential use--while the overwhelming beauty was often mentioned, it was only secondary. The value of the land for agricultural pursuits was utmost in the pioneers' minds, and their writing reflects this.

Fertility was a primary consideration, though this was hard to judge. If the land grew heavy vegetation--good, tall trees--and looked similar to lands at the old home that were productive, the migrant was interested. If the land was near water for domestic use or for transportation, and near a settlement, for Indian protection, assistance, supplies, and society, the settler had found the new home[55].

> A land looker wanted good soil and running water; he sought a location beside a river or a creek. He would avoid lowlands and hillsides. If he could find a natural meadow, ringed in forest with a steady trickle from a spring, he had his heart's desire. The ideal farm site was "rich as a barnyard, level as a house floor, and no stones in the way"[56].

The White Settlers Invade

Indiana has often been considered a crossroads state, available to Southerners, Easterners, and Northeasterners. A mix of settlers from these various places appears in Indiana, with pioneers from the South dominating southern Indiana, and Northeastern pioneers becoming increasingly a part of northern Indiana. Though accepting the usual risks of generalization,

> it has been said that pioneers tended to work west along isothermal lines--that is, remaining in familiar climate zones--and it is clear that the New Englander and New Yorker stuck to the upper reaches of the developing Middle West, hugged the Great Lakes, and worked up their shores. . .Kentuckians went across the Ohio to Indiana, whose "Hoosier" population contained so many Virginians . . .[57]

Another source similarly suggests that the migrants moved west as quickly and directly as possible, creating "belts of settlement" where the people and culture of areas due east were reproduced. Thus, Virginia and Carolina migrants went to Kentucky and Tennessee, Pennsylvanians to Ohio, and New Englanders to the Great Lakes[58]. Of course, there were many Southerners who moved to the northern parts of the Old Northwest, and many Northerners who moved south.

The Ohio River was the primary highway to the west until the National Road opened and siphoned off those who were moving to areas further north. The opening of the

Erie Canal made it another primary route to the west, especially attractive to those whose destination was the Great Lakes country. Local roads served those already in the Old Northwest who moved to the study area, and brought the long distance migrants from the major routes to their new land in northeastern Indiana.

Major Routes to the Old Northwest

There were three important routes to the Old Northwest used by varying combinations of people from the South, the Middle Atlantic states, New England, and Ohio (Figure 2). Because there was never only one group on each of these routes, the routes are considered here before the chapter dealing with specific sources of the moving population. The three main routes were the Ohio River, the National, or Cumberland Road, and the Erie Canal.

> American settlers used three principal entryways through Appalachia when they finally did begin to flood into the Middle West. (Southerners). . .crossed over Cumberland Gap to the headwaters of the Kentucky and Cumberland Rivers which drain into the Ohio. Men from the Mid-Atlantic states crossed Pennsylvania to the Forks of the Ohio. . .this route was most direct, but also the most difficult, and early on it was supplemented by the Cumberland Road. . .New Englanders and New Yorkers made their entry into the Middle West by way of the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes, a comparatively easy water level route of passage which became the principal route of commerce[59].

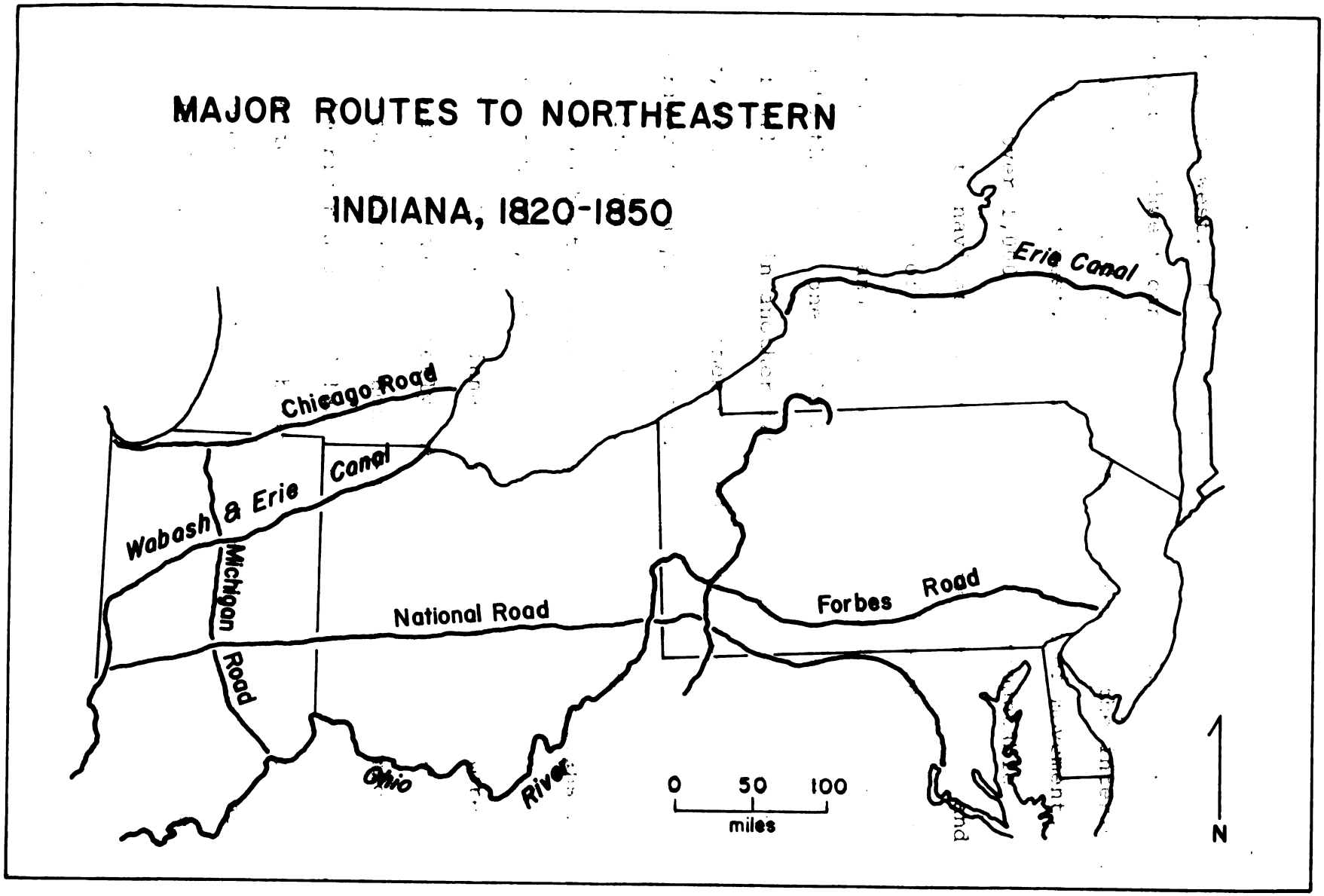
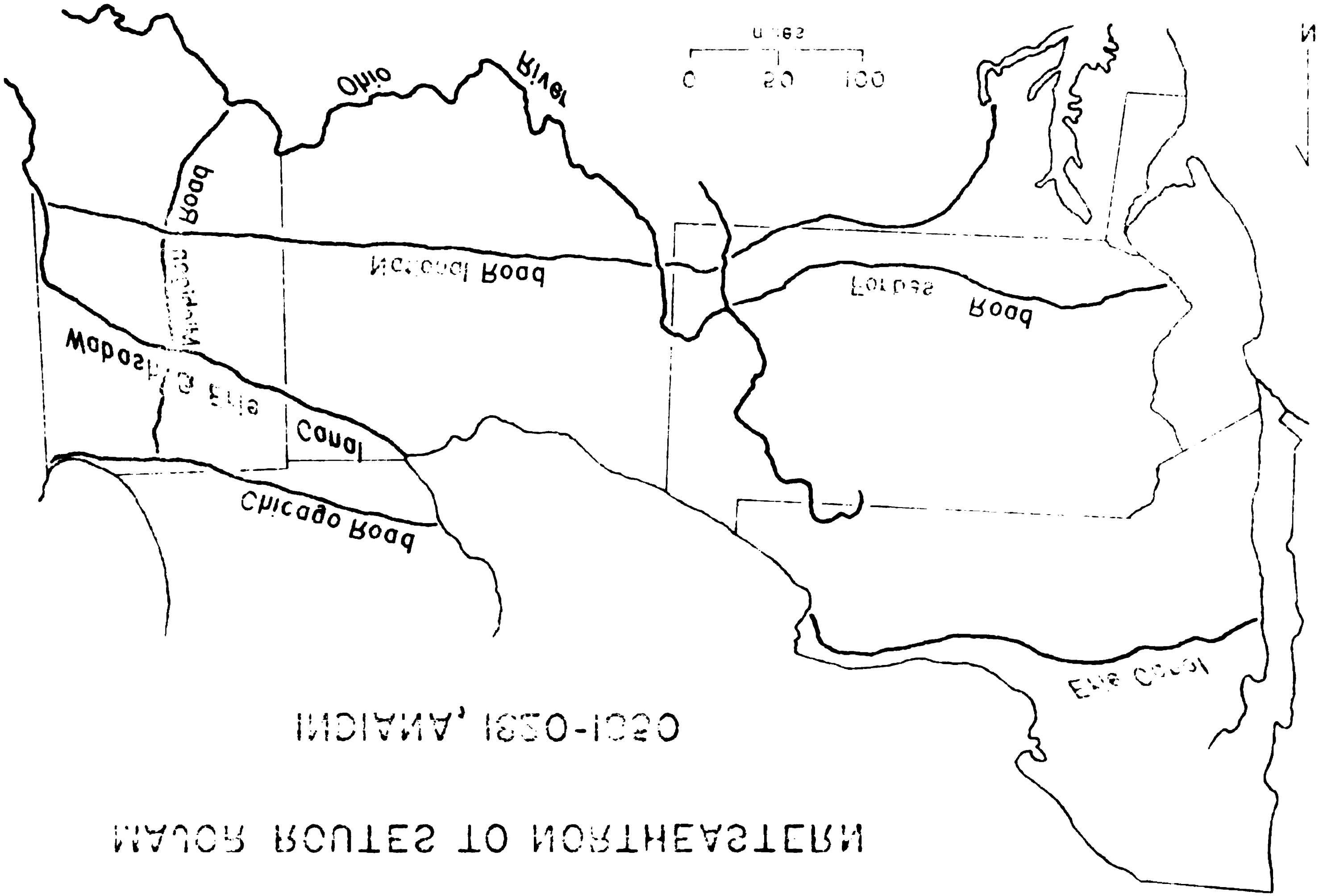

MAJOR ROUTES TO NORTHEASTERN
INDIANA, 1820-1850
Erie Canal
Chicago Road
Wabash & Erie Canal
Michigan Road
National Road
Forbes Road
Ohio River
0 50 100
miles
N

FIGURE 2



MAJOR ROUTES TO NORTHEASTERN INDIANA, 1830-1850

The Ohio River. The Ohio River is the great natural highway to the west. Its importance in the early settlement of the Old Northwest can hardly be overestimated. The river provided cheap and relatively rapid access to the interior. The Ohio flowed west, the general direction of movement, and for over 1,000 miles there were no insurmountable obstacles to navigation. Because of its availability and the general ease of travel, the Ohio River became the earliest way to Indiana and the rest of the Old Northwest. Once to the Ohio, one could build his own flatboat for the family or join another family on a flatboat. Before long, professional boatmen offered transportation down the river for a price. The river's surface by 1820 "was alive with steamboats (sixty by that year), barges, schooner boats, keel boats, flatboats, Kentucky and New Orleans boats, skiffs, rowboats, and ordinary rafts"[60].

Because below Cincinnati the Ohio River heads more southwesterly than westerly, that city and other towns downstream along the Big Bend became points where emigrants left the river and found land transportation west and north. The section of the river between Pittsburgh and Cincinnati was the most heavily travelled[61]. The best time to float down the Ohio, then still a "wild" river, was during the spring flood, a period of high water from April to June. High water lessened the danger from LeTart's Rapids, 230 miles below Pittsburgh, and about fifteen miles upstream

from Middleport, Ohio, and from the Grand Chain, a limestone ledge that created a series of rapids near Shawneetown, Illinois. A dangerous obstacle at any time of the year was the falls, really a series of rapids, at Louisville. There were always floating objects, snags, and "planters"--sunken logs--waiting to ensnare unwary flatboatmen. At the low water level, from August to October, the river was commonly fifty feet below the spring flood level. Channels through the rapids were then too shallow for navigation, and in some dry years the river could be forded at a few sites. Navigation was curtailed during low water for fear of running aground or getting caught on the rocks in the channel. Movement on the river above Louisville was normally halted for eight to ten weeks during mid-winter as well[62].

Spring was the best season for river travel for a number of reasons. First, the water level was highest, reducing the dangers in the channel. Second, the river moved fastest then, so the least amount of time would be spent getting to the West.

> In periods of low water, the average velocity in navigable channels was two miles per hour; at mean height the speed increased one half, making it comparable to a walking pace. Converted into miles gained in a downriver voyage, this was a difference of perhaps twenty miles a day[63].

Third, spring was the season for planting. The earlier in the spring that the family got to the West and found a new home, the sooner land could be cleared and crops planted, helping to ensure survival during the coming winter. Settlers left for the headwaters of the Ohio early in the spring as soon as road travel was possible and then waited for the ice to break on the Ohio so they could get started west. Besides Pittsburgh, Olean, New York, on the Allegheny and McKeesport, Pennsylvania, on the Monongahela were important "embarkation" points[64].

The Ohio River route was used primarily by migrants from the Mid-Atlantic states and from the South. It was simple, easy, and cheap. During Indiana's early settlement period, when only the southern part of the state was open, the Ohio River was the most direct route. The flatboat, because it could be quickly and cheaply constructed, was used by all groups. "The crudest of the boats were little more than good-sized rafts, and. . .might support a barn for cattle and a small cabin for the family"[65]. These flatboats were rectangular, usually thirty to forty feet long, with high sides to keep livestock, children, and the family possessions aboard. There were steering oars at the bow and stern, but these were only marginally effective because of the shape of the boat. Generally, the boat was directed by the current alone, especially in the rapids[66]. Despite

the dangers which caused many accidents, thousands of settlers began their trips to the west on a flatboat in the Ohio. As early as 1818, there were about 3,000 settlers waiting at Olean, New York, for the thaw, only one of many embarkation points for the West[67]. In later years, when other transportation routes became available, the Ohio River still maintained much importance as a way to the west.

National Road. As areas of the Old Northwest further from the Ohio River and its navigable tributaries opened up, there was an increasing need for roads. Land travel had always been an important part of westward migration, and now these new areas demanded more and better roads, connecting local settlements and the east. These roads would help attract settlers to the new areas by making travel easier and also improve the movement of goods. Around settlements in the west, roads were built into the forest to give access from the rivers and allow communication. Unfortunately, these roads to and in the west were not very good.

> Early western roads achieved the distinction of being even worse than eastern roads. Starting usually as Indian trails, they followed the uplands as much as possible. . .Here and there a few logs were placed side by side to enable passage over the worst mudholes. . .The average road was a partially cleared path on which the traveler weaved back and forth among the stumps and felled trees, trying to avoid the mudholes, which were rumored to swallow horse and rider at a single gulp[68].

Responding to constant demands from the western areas, in 1806, the federal government began to fund road improvements in the Appalachians.

In the west, the state enabling acts set aside 5 percent of the profits from the sale of public lands in each state for road building. Three-fifths of that was to be spent for roads in the state, and two-fifths for interstate roads. This "two percent fund" provided the funds for a national road. The National, or Cumberland Road, began in Washington, D.C., went through Cumberland, Maryland, followed Braddock's Trace west to Brownsville, Pennsylvania, on the Monongahela, and met the Ohio River at Wheeling, West Virginia. Then, responding to more calls from the west, President Monroe in 1825

> approved the act appropriating $150,000 for continuation of the road from Wheeling to Zanesville, Ohio, and the completion of surveys through the seats of government of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois to that of Missouri[69].

The National Road was to be not only an important way to the west, but also a patriotic example of the ingenuity of the United States. Built using the best road building technology available, Buley describes the National Road as having been

> one of the greatest vehicle roads of the world. In its eastern sections, eighty feet wide with a thirty foot center of broken stone one foot deep, with culverts and

> bridges of cut stone and waterproof mortar, this road furnished a bond between East and West. It carried mail, emigrants, and freight[70].

Ditches along either side drained off surface water. A lower course of larger crushed stones was topped with a layer of smaller stones, replenished as the need arose. These stones were broken with sledge hammers wielded by men paid a dollar per day[71].

The presence of an improved road from the east helped fill Indiana. The National Road went through Indianapolis, at the center of the state, and a system of roads in Indiana, discussed below, gave access to areas north and south of the National Road. The Road was soon heavily used, as evidenced in this letter from Richmond, Indiana, on the Road near the Ohio border, that asked in 1835

> Where upon earth do they all come from? It would seem that the whole East and North had broken loose upon us and were pouring in almost as numerous as the northern hordes that overwhelmed ancient Rome. . .(It) is well denominated "the National Road"; it might be appropriately called even now the Road of Nations, for we have samples of most of them upon it[72].

A road the likes of the National Road was unique in the United States, but it was far from perfect. Construction in Indiana did not begin until about 1835, too late for use by many settlers who took different routes west. Because it was the only road of its kind to the west, it saw heavy use. This traffic formed deep ruts that became

full scale gullies with heavy rains or melting snows and in places the road washed out. Due to the long construction time, when the western sections were finally opened, the eastern sections needed repair. A constant road maintenance program was necessary[73].

The National Road was used by all four groups of settlers. Ohioans, due to the relatively short trip involved, used the Road and other local roads to Indiana extensively, though New Englanders did not travel the Road as heavily. Because the eastern portion of the road went through Pennsylvania, many natives from that state used the National Road to get west. The Road was easily reached from all parts of the Mid-Atlantic states.

The Erie Canal. Soon after its opening in 1825, the Erie Canal became the primary route to the west. The long cross-mountain journey to get to the Ohio River could be avoided, and the canal opened the Old Northwest to an increased flow of settlers. The Ohio was no longer the only water route to the Interior--now the Great Lakes were also available via the Canal. The Canal followed the best natural lowland route across the Appalachians--the Mowhawk Valley--and provided an all water route to the Great Lakes. This water route might have been more expensive, but it was much less laborious.

The governor of New York, DeWitt Clinton, was the great promoter of the Canal; its detractors called it

"Clinton's Ditch". Begun in 1817, it may have resembled a ditch, being forty feet wide at the top, twenty-eight feet wide at the bottom, and only four feet deep. The locks were even narrower, only twelve feet wide, and ninety feet long. Because of the small locks, the largest canal boats could only carry about 100 tons. The amount of effort and expense involved in construction was tremendous, but the results justified the cost. The Canal was instrumental in the growth of the Great Lakes country--the northern part of the Old Northwest[74]. This was because, "The principal effect of this waterway was to deflect the immigrant stream from the Ohio Valley to the Great Lakes"[75].

Canal boats, pulled by mules or horses, got the emigrant and his baggage to Buffalo.

> Travelers might complain of overcrowded canal boats, poor food, and swarming mosquitoes, but they were nevertheless able to travel cheaply, take their household goods with them, and be sure of reaching their destination without losing a wagon in a mudhole[76].

Buffalo was the western terminus of the Canal. There, the migrant transferred his goods to a lake sailboat, or increasingly, a steamer. Regular packet steamer service between Buffalo and Detroit was opened in 1833. Three dollars got deck passage on this line, and the total cost to a traveler going from Massachusetts to Michigan was estimated to be about ten dollars. For this low cost, it is not surprising

that immigrants preferred to avoid the dangers of the Ohio River and take the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes[77]. Emigrants from many different places used the Erie Canal-Great Lakes route, especially New Englanders and New Yorkers. Foreign immigrants also were common on the Canal, because of the excellent connections from New York City.

Charles Fenno Hoffman described the possessions of fellow travelers on his journey on a steamboat between Cleveland and Detroit about 1835.

> They differed according to the origin of their owner. The effects of the Yankee were generally limited to a Dearborn wagon, a featherbed, a saddle and bridle, some knickknack in the way of a machine for shelling corn, hatchelling flax, or, for aught I know, manufacturing wooden nutmegs for family use . . .Whenever. . .you see an antique fashioned looking-glass, a decrepit bureau, and some tenderly preserved old china, you will probably. . .have the whole housekeeping array of a Briton. . .
>
> But still further do the Swiss and Germans carry their family relics. Mark that quaint-looking wagon which lumbers up a dozen square feet of deck. . .It might be worth something in a museum, but it has cost five times its value to transport it over the Atlantic[78].

After landing at one of the many lake ports--Cleveland, Toledo, Detroit, or later Chicago, the emigrant got on local roads and headed for his inland destination.

Transportation to the west was by 1850 much different than it had been in 1820. The National Road and the Erie Canal competed with the Ohio River for the commerce of

and emigrants to the Old Northwest. Railroads and inter and intra-state canal projects were also present, the former one waxing and the latter two waning. Plank roads were being built in an attempt to improve the awful road conditions. The three main transportation routes, Ohio River, National Road, and Erie Canal, were competing for travelers, and drawing a different clientele. No one group used one route exclusively--representatives from each settlement source were on each route. Probably, due to nearness, mostly Southerners and Mid-Atlantic natives used the Ohio River; all three, with Mid-Atlantic statesmen dominating, used the National Road; and New England and Mid-Atlantic emigrants primarily used the Erie Canal.

Local Roads

Because river transportation in Indiana left many interior areas inaccessible, and the National Road and Erie Canal-Great Lakes routes got migrants only to the general area, the hunger for new land also included a demand for an improved internal road network. Using former Indian trails, military traces, surveyors' roads, and newly hacked paths, a road network was built. In December, 1821, relying on the money from the "Three Percent Fund", the state legislature planned out an extensive road system for Indiana. Indianapolis, the new state capitol, and Fort Wayne, were to be the two foci of the system, with a major road connecting

them. This road helped improve the connections between the National Road and northeastern Indiana.

In 1826, the major north-south road in Indiana, the Michigan Road, was begun. When completed, it ran for 265 miles from Madison on the Ohio, through Indianapolis, and on north to Michigan City on Lake Michigan. Situated at the mouth of Trail Creek on Lake Michigan, Michigan City was intended to become the Buffalo of Lake Michigan, and the Michigan Road was to assist in its rise. The Michigan Road had many purposes. It was to be of military value, assist in the removal of Indians from northern Indiana, and open northern Indiana to the southern emigrant routes. Both the Ohio River and the National Road would connect to the road, and the new lands in the north could be easily reached. The entire route of the Michigan Road was open eight months in the year by 1836[79]. The roads proposed by the legislature and the many local roads all opened the interior to new settlers from the South and the other regions. Because the rivers were shallow this far north, and the study area was near the drainage divide between the Gulf of Mexico and the Great Lakes, local road transportation was of major importance in the settlement of northeastern Indiana.

Acquiring the Land

On arrival, there were at least four different ways for a settler to get possession of his chosen land. The settlers

had ideas about the type of land they would like to settle. Once the land had been chosen, possession had to be gained.

One way to obtain land was to squat on it. The pioneer would see an attractive parcel of land on his travels or in his destination area, and then stop and set up camp. A temporary stay led to permanence. Gradually, improvements were made--a clearing for the cabin, a few small fields laid out and planted, perhaps a pen built for some livestock. The pioneer's problem here was uncertainty, and his advantage was low cost. To the pioneer without enough money to buy land, squatting was the logical answer. The government had plenty of land elsewhere and it would never miss twenty acres! Someone else with enough money might buy the land and move to settle on it, only to find it already occupied. Many ugly scenes resulted over this problem. The squatter claimed "squatter's rights": discovery, improvements, and possession. The owner claimed the deed gave him legal title to the land. Often the squatter would pack up and leave, to repeat this cycle elsewhere, or the new owner would buy him out for a few dollars, paying for the "improvements" and further pinching an already depleted purse. Other times the resolution of this difficulty was less amicable and more violent. Many times, the land was not bought and in a few years, when the squatter had collected enough money, he purchased the land himself.

A way to avoid starting out from scratch was to purchase land from an original legal settler. Often, a settler would buy land, attempt to farm it for a few years, and then decide to give up. These people either moved back east to their old homes, or to a more settled area, or moved further out to the edges of the frontier. Those who failed are rarely mentioned in the glorified stories of westward expansion, but they were quite numerous. Because the old settler wanted to leave his failure, a new migrant often could buy the land and the improvements at a good bargain. The new settler family would move into the cabin and start farming the already cleared land immediately, thus saving time and much labor.

Those who bought land from the government, thus gaining a clear title to it, could go about this in a few different ways. The pioneer could investigate the area, pick a tract of public land to his liking, set up a lean-to and move in. Within a few days, he went to the land office to purchase the parcel. Or

> somewhere in the western country (the pioneers) would stop at a district land office. On the wall they would see the public lands marked out in timbered sections, prairie sections, rolling lands, ridges and river bottoms. They would make their choice, count out their money, and find their corners[80].

Before 1820, the price per acre was two dollars and the minimum amount of land 160 acres, or a quarter section.

After that year, the land could be purchased in eighty acre parcels at one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre[81]. After 1820, the installment plan was instituted. A down payment of one quarter of the total charge was required, with the rest to be paid in four annual installments. This change was in the main an attempt to make land easier for individuals to buy (smaller parcels, lower prices, liberal credit) and to reduce the attractiveness of speculator's lands[82].

> The land act of 1820 was a real watershed in the history of the public domain because it changed the emphasis from the production of revenue for the federal government to getting the land into the hands of actual settlers[83].

Speculators often bought huge parcels of land from the government and then resold small parts at inflated prices. The government policy of selling large acreages had played into the speculator's hands. They could afford the high initial investment required to buy a large parcel of land. The pioneer, who perhaps could only afford forty acres, not the 160 he was required to buy when dealing with the government, bought the smaller acreage from a speculator at an inflated price. Speculators often sent agents into newly opened lands to select the best parcels for the land company. Great portions of the Old Northwest were purchased by speculators, though the Panic of 1837 collapsed the land boom at that time and caused many bankruptcies among speculators. Not only did

the equation of northeastern Indiana with the Black Swamp slow settlement, but also the holding of land by speculators convinced many pioneers to move on to government lands. In the state, large holdings by speculators occurred mostly in the prairies of northwest and west central Indiana[84]. There was still much land available from the government. In 1840, when Indiana had a population of 700,000, one fifth of the public lands were still for sale, mostly in north and central Indiana[85].

Timothy Flint, an early American geographer, described the Indiana frontier scene in the mid-1820's, combining the environment and man. The following statement describes the beginnings of the transformation of Indiana from a natural landscape to a cultural one, of which acquiring the land was the first step.

> If we could present a scenic map of this state. . .it would present a grand and very interesting landscape of deep forests, wide and flowering prairies, thousands of log cabins, and in the villages, brick houses rising beside them. . .We should see thousands of dead trees surrounding the incipient establishments. -On the edges of of the prairies, we should see cabins or houses. . .vast droves of cattle, ruminating in the vicinity of these establishments. . .There would be a singular melange of nature and art. . .the bark hovels of the Indians in many places would remain intermixed with the habitations of the whites. But the most pleasing part of the picture would be. . .independent and respectable yeomen presiding over these changes[86].

CHAPTER V

SOURCE AREAS OF THE MIGRANTS IN NORTHEASTERN INDIANA, 1850

Four primary streams of settlers flowed out from source regions to set up new homes in northeastern Indiana (Figure 3). The Census of 1850 provided data on the number of migrants in the study area from each of the source areas and by state. The main sources were the South, the Mid-Atlantic states, New England, and the Eastern Midwest.

The source region of the migrant is defined as the state or region of birth, regardless of his last place of residence before coming to the four-county study area. If a settler was born in New York, moved to Pennsylvania, then to Kentucky, Ohio, and southern Indiana before coming to the study area, the settler would be considered a native of New York. Children born while in Ohio would be considered Ohio natives.

Southern Stream

By 1820, the South had a long tradition of trans-Appalachian pioneering. Beginning after the French and Indian war, frontiersmen had moved over the mountains into the newly British territory, despite Crown laws reserving that territory for the Indians. Through Cumberland Gap, North Carolinans, Virginians, and some Marylanders came to settle Kentucky and Tennessee. Many of these people were

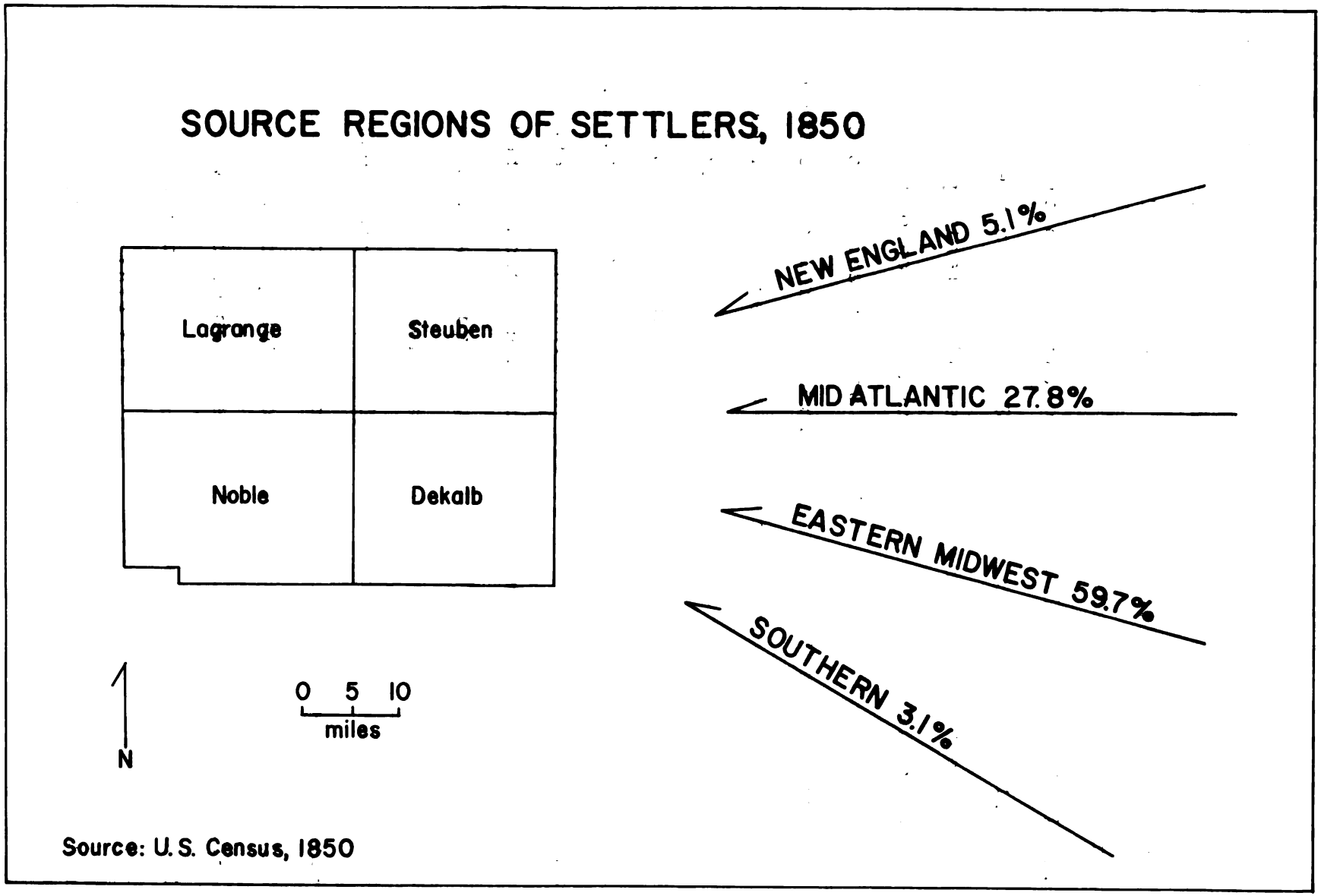

SOURCE REGIONS OF SETTLERS, 1850
Lagrange
Steuben
Noble
Dekalb
N
0 5 10
miles
NEW ENGLAND 5.1%
MID ATLANTIC 27.8%
EASTERN MIDWEST 59.7%
SOUTHERN 3.1%
Source: U.S. Census, 1850

FIGURE 3

SOURCE REGIONS OF SETTLERS, 1850

southern highlanders, pioneers in the western parts of their home states, who responded to the wilderness call. Thus, Kentucky and Tennessee were settled mainly from the Southeast, and in time these two states provided the bulk of the early settlers of Indiana, particularly in southern Indiana.

Indiana received more Southerners than Ohio or Illinois. This may be partially the result of Indiana's nearness to routes from the southern backcountry. The Ohio River swings southward along its contact with Indiana, making the state that much closer for Southern migrants[87]. The southern routes to Indiana opened up before the northern ones, helping to attract Southern settlers who were used to pioneering and might well have grown up in a frontier family. Because of these various reasons, the Southern character of southern Indiana was often noted. An old view has been that northern Indiana had no Southern settlers--they stayed south of the National Road. Work by Lang, using the 1850 Census, has shown that while Southerners far from dominated the settlement of the four-county study area, they were present[88].

The Southern migrants to the Old Northwest were primarily uplanders, not plantation owners. For those plantation owners who wished to move west and continue the plantation-slave system, routes to the Lower South, also a newly opened frontier area at this time, beckoned. The poorer southern uplanders left for a number of reasons. The soils in Virginia,

Maryland, and North Carolina were being exhausted. Settlement was not recent in these places, and as farmers saw decreasing returns from the soil they listened with increasing interest to stories about the west. The plantation-slave owners held the best land in the old South, poor upcountry farmers could not afford to buy parcels from them, so the new lands were the poor man's only hope. Those non-slave-owning farmers who had good lands near the plantations were faced with a dilemma. They were not producing or profiting much--they had only the family's labor available, and as land values rose, so did taxes. Under these conditions, when a purchase offer came from a plantation owner, the temptation to sell out and move west was great. It is possible that the free farmer who was forced out in this manner became disgusted by the slavery system, and would avoid it when deciding on a new location.

Besides those who felt the economic impact of slavery in this way, there were those who had religious objections to slavery. The fact that slavery was forbidden in the Northwest Territory helped attract both groups[89]. Further, the land in Kentucky and Tennessee, the original stopping place of many of these Southern migrants from North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland was filling up--at least in the definition of the day. The lands across the Ohio River were available for their sons and daughters to pioneer[90]. And, as always, there were those who left their homes for the west

for no exact reason and for no exact location--they were "bitten" by the urge to move on.

In 1835, a westward headed migrant from North Carolina was asked where he was going.

> "No where in pertick'lar. Me and my wife thought we'd hunt a place to settle. We've no plunder--nothin' but just ourselves and this nag--we thought we'd try our luck in a new country"[91].

Routes

There were two modes of travel for Southerners going to the Old Northwest--by river or by land. Often their route was a combination of the two. For those who had to cross the Appalachian Mountains to get to Indiana, the move was more difficult. The roads led through the major passes, but these passes were still high up in the mountains, and much effort was expended in the long climb up and down. To make use of the rivers, one had to cross the great drainage divide to find a west flowing stream. Once on that stream, rapids and falls were a problem. For those moving north from Kentucky or Tennessee, the trip was shorter and safer. Excellent water connections eased transport between states south of the Ohio River and Indiana. Roads were an important early improvement in the Old Northwest, and could also be used. For all of the migrants, travel westward was seasonal. The frozen rivers in winter brought water traffic to a halt, as did the late summer low water period. Roads were also dangerous in winter, and travel was curtailed.

The waterways provided the first transportation routes into the interior. The deep penetration north and south of tributaries of the Ohio River, the master stream for river travel, increased the amount of readily available land. Migrants from the Southeast came west on to the Ohio and then went up the Wabash or its tributary, the White, to get to interior Indiana. Settlers from Kentucky and Tennessee could float north on a river such as the Licking or Kentucky, join the Ohio River, and then float up into Indiana. The tributaries in Indiana served as interior extensions of the Ohio. Settlers and supplies arrived and surplus goods left via the rivers.

> During most of the second decade of the century, Indiana's settlement was roughly U-shaped, following the course of the Ohio and the Wabash, with the extremities separated by unoccupied wilderness, through which ran the east fork of the White. . . The Ohio River was the parent of the communities as yet[92].

Settlers from the South crossing the mountains by land on their way west generally used well known roads. Many of these roads converged on Pittsburgh, where river transport could be obtained. Roads such as Braddock's Trace (1755) and Forbe's Road (1758) were originally cleared and improved for military expeditions and later became turnpikes[93]. Other roads, such as Boone's Road, also called the Wilderness Road, went up the long valleys, crossed the mountains through gaps, and met the Ohio further downstream. Boone's Road was later extended

across the Ohio to Vincennes, Indiana, and Zane's Trace across to Zanesville, Ohio[94]. These were all long overland journeys. A trip from Philadelphia to Louisville, Kentucky, via the Great Valley and Wilderness Roads involved about 700 miles. Even though this was the longest route to the west, many Virginians used it[95].

Most of the older roads avoided striking out across Ohio. They stayed south of the Ohio River until they were at least to Louisville. Kentucky had been settling for years, and its road system was far better than that north of the Ohio. Migrants from further east joined those from Kentucky or Tennessee who were moving north using local roads to get from the old home to interior Indiana. They crossed the Ohio on ferries. These ferry boats, the best about twenty feet long, round bottomed with a keel, constantly took pioneers across the river. During seasons when the water was not too high or rough, "all day long, and frequently all night. . . the ferry men crossed back and forth, ferrying people over into the 'promised land'"[96].

In the early period, north of the Ohio

> no important land highway except Zane's Trace lay. . .Not until 1818 was the Cumberland Road finished to connect the Northwest to the East. . .The National Road, west of Wheeling, begun in 1825, was to serve the newest settlements that had worked so far inland that the tributaries of the Ohio were shrunk too small to be of help[97].

The coming of the National or Cumberland Road made land travel to the Old Northwest much easier. Even though the

road had its best eastern connection in the Mid-Atlantic states, the road was heavily used by Southerners, particularly Virginians and Marylanders[98]. Local roads headed north from the Ohio River and from the National Road helped Southerners migrate to the study area.

Amounts and Settlement

Using the Census of 1850 and Elfrieda Lang's article, the percent of the study area population from the South is given in Table 1[99]. In 1850, 3.1 percent of the population of northeastern Indiana was of Southern nativity. They came primarily from two states: Virginia, 1.6 percent, and Maryland, 1.2 percent, with Kentucky a distant third, 0.2 percent. Other states in the South were represented, but their natives were not numerous in the study area. There were more Marylanders than Virginians in Dekalb and Lagrange Counties; the situation was reversed in Steuben and Noble Counties. Noble County had more than twice as many Virginians as Marylanders, and was the only county where there was such a disparity between the two southern states. Steuben County shows a markedly lower percentage of Southerners than the other counties.

There is no evidence of specific towns settled by Southerners. The South lacked the urbanizing social forces present in New England and the Mid-Atlantic states. Southerners had been pioneering for years, and they likely retained

MIGRATION TO NORTHEASTERN INDIANA BY 1850

Source Region	% in Study Area	% in Dekalb County	% in Lagrange County	% in Noble County	% in Steuben County	Three Leading States in the Source Region and Percentage of Study Area Population from Each	
South	3.1	2.8	3.2	4.9	1.3	Virginia Maryland Kentucky	1.6 1.2 0.2
Mid-Atlantic	27.8	23.7	30.4	22.6	34.7	New York Pennsylvania New Jersey	16.2 10.5 1.1
New England	5.1	3.4	5.6	2.7	8.7	Vermont Massachusetts Connecticut	2.0 1.3 1.2
Eastern Midwest	59.7	66.6	55.5	65.7	51.1	Ohio Indiana Michigan	32.9 26.0 1.4

Source: Elfrieda Lang, "An Analysis of Northern Indiana's Population in 1850", Indiana Magazine of History 49 (March, 1953), pp. 30, 35, 40, 45.

TABLE 1

their pioneer independence when settling in northeastern Indiana by founding their own separate homesteads, as most of the pioneers did.

In 1850, Southern natives were only a small percent of the four-county population total, 3.1 percent, and at a maximum in Noble County of 4.9 percent. Some sources have suggested that areas above the National Road were too far north for Southerners to settle in any substantial amounts[100]. However, Lang claims that

> After 1830 the National Road no longer served as a dividing line for southerners, who now began to swing their axes to clear areas for settlement in the region north of the Wabash River[101].

Extensive areas in the Lower Mississippi Valley were opening up at this time. These areas were easily reached by Southeasterns, who moved to Missouri, Alabama, Arkansas, Texas, and even southern Illinois.

Sectional controversy between the South and North, New England especially, was escalating all through the study period of 1820 to 1850, and this may have helped keep Southerners further south among their own. Sectional conflict was seen in cultural conflict between the two groups. Some Southerners were apt to stereotype all New Englanders as wooden nutmeg peddlers, and some Yankees considered the Southerner lazy and uncouth.

The Census materials for 1850 suggest this enmity between South and North in the study area. Noble County, the southeastern one of the four had the most Southerners (4.9 percent) and the fewest New Englanders (2.7 percent), while Steuben, the northeastern county, had the most New Englanders (8.7 percent) and the fewest Southerners (1.3 percent). Though this may reflect the animosity between the two groups, it more likely reflects different transportation routes. Noble County was closer to the Wabash River water route from the southwest, and also had a local road connection, the Quaker Trace. This road went north from the National Road at Richmond to Allen County, just south of the study area. Also terminating in Allen County was Wayne's Trace, which went north through Ohio and was left from the military expeditions against the Indians in the 1790's[102]. Because ease of travel was always important in migrations, roads and rivers to northeastern Indiana that terminated just south of the study area would encourage Southern settlement nearby.

There was plenty of open territory in northeastern Indiana, so Southerners' dislike of Yankees need not have kept them away. But as Northerners migrated to the study area in increasing numbers, they competed with Southerners for the better lands. The availability of large areas of land in the Lower Mississippi Valley channelled much Southern migration west, perhaps in response to both competition for lands and northern settlers. The Southerners found it more to their advantage to move west, so they went, leaving the

northern portion of the Old Northwest to others.

It must always be kept in mind that direct Southern migration to northeastern Indiana was very limited, comprising barely over 3 percent of the total study area population. That the southern influence in northeastern Indiana was greater than this small percentage indicates should be realized. Many Southerners settled in Ohio or southern Indiana before they came to northeastern Indiana, but the Census data do not show this step in the migration from the South. According to Lang,

> As a rule, immigrants from the South reached Indiana by traveling through Ohio. Then, too, there were those who lived for a number of years in southern Indiana before removing to the area north of the Wabash River. Children were born in Ohio and in counties south of the National Road[103].

These people might be listed as Ohioans or Indianians, but they were really children of the South.

The Mid-Atlantic Stream

The people of the Mid-Atlantic states, like the Southerners, had a pioneering tradition. The excellent lands of upstate and western New York and of western Pennsylvania had attracted settlers as soon as the French and Indian War ended in 1763. Though the lands across the Appalachians were reserved for the Indians by the treaty that ended the war, pioneers moved there anyway. They often were massacred by Indians, particularly during the Revolutionary War, but the

attractions were great enough to overcome the dangers for some.

> Until the 1780's, the frontier line in New York, remained stationary at Rome, or the site of Fort Stanwix. Beyond were the villages and hunting grounds of the strong Six Nations . . .Reports filtering back. . . encouraged land seekers to believe that it was a fine country, as indeed it later proved to be[104].

As soon as the Revolution was over and the Indians were removed or put into reservations, the area expanded tremendously. "As early as 1791, it was reported. . .that 'immigrants are swarming into this fertile region in shoals like the ancient Israelites seeking the land of promise'"[105]. The years of pioneering helped nurture the idea of further expansion, so that once western lands opened, there were many in the population of the Middle States who were ready, willing, and able to pioneer in the west.

The Erie Canal had a strong impact on westward movement. After about 1830, not only did it ease the way to the west, but it also brought goods from the west to the East. The west was soon a grain exporter, and this cheap western grain pulled eastern prices down and changed farming practices in the east.

> The worn-out soils of New York and Pennsylvania proved incapable of competing with the virgin lands of the west in cereal production, forcing farmer after farmer into market gardening, cattle raising, or dairy industry.

> This agricultural upheaval released thousands of men for the westward migration[106].

Those who could not afford to make the change, or who did not want to, sold their land to the newly expanding farmers and moved to the cities or to new opportunities in the west.

Routes

Movements to the west from the Mid-Atlantic states was greatly helped by the improvement of routes to the west. Before the National Road, local roads through Pennsylvania, such as Forbes' or Braddock's, led to Pittsburgh, where the Ohio River could be taken to the West. Movers from New Jersey and Pennsylvania traversed these routes. New Yorkers arrived at Pittsburgh via the Mohawk and Genesee Turnpikes or by the Catskill Road to Olean[107]. These early routes depended on the Ohio River for the final leg to the west. The improvement of Braddock's Trace into the National Road in the East, and its extension to the west, provided another route to the interior. The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal also assisted movement to the west[108]. The Erie Canal was used the most, transporting an increasing number of people from the Mid-Atlantic states to the west.

> Some pioneers from the Middle States continued to use the old routes--the National Road, Forbes Road or the Catskill Turnpike, to reach the Ohio; then made their way down the river and northward. . .More took advantage of a newly completed all-water route between east and west, the Erie Canal. . .[109].

The canal changed the migrant's destination areas. The long journey to the west was made easier at the same time that lands closer home in upstate and western New York were filling. The Erie Canal opened an all water route to the lands further west. Because the canal emptied into Lake Erie, the Great Lakes became important routes themselves. At Buffalo, lake ships took migrants to western lake ports. The coming of steam to the Great Lakes increased the attraction of this route to the west. The Great Lakes areas of the Old Northwest drew many new settlers, and these people were mainly from the Middle States and New England. "The principal effect of (the Erie Canal) was to deflect the immigrant stream from the Ohio Valley to the Great Lakes"[110].

Western Lake Erie was a major landing area. Even in a steamer, the trip around Michigan was lengthy. Roads were built to cut across Michigan and open areas mainly west of the study area. Two of these from Detroit were the Chicago Road, completed in 1832 to Chicago, and the Territorial Road, open to St. Joseph, Michigan, by 1834[111]. Many travelers settled lands near these roads, so much so that Billington claims that the northern counties of Indiana were settled by the overflow of settlers moving west along the Chicago Road[112]. Another road was the Vistula Road, heading west from Toledo through the northern two counties in the study area[113]. The Wabash and Erie Canal, from the Wabash over to Lake Erie at Toledo, also helped move settlers west past northeastern

Indiana.

All of these northern routes attracted Mid-Atlantic, and New England, settlers to the west, reducing the Southern influence in the study area and making the Great Lakes area strongly Northeastern in outlook and culture.

Amounts and Settlement

Again, referring to the Census of 1850 and Elfrieda Lang's article, percentages of the study area population native to the Mid-Atlantic states is presented in Table 1. In 1850, 27.8 percent of the population in northeastern Indiana was of Mid-Atlantic nativity. New York (16.2 percent) and Pennsylvania (10.5 percent) with New Jersey a distant third (1.1 percent), represented most of the Mid-Atlantic population in the study area. Delaware, the other state in the region, had very few natives present. There were more New Yorkers than Pennsylvanians in Lagrange and Steuben Counties, while the situation was reversed, though not with such a large spread between the two groups, in Dekalb and Noble Counties. All four counties had natives of New Jersey present though they were few.

Mid-Atlantic statesmen, like Southerners, did not tend to move west to settle in town groups. New York and Pennsylvania had a tradition of western pioneering, as can be seen by the number of Mid-Atlantic natives in the study area. There were more urban centers in the Mid-Atlantic states than in the South, so townspeople were likely to move to new

western towns. Even New Jersey and Delaware were largely rural states at that time, so natives from those states probably were as likely to have been farmers as not.

Natives of Mid-Atlantic states represented over one quarter of the population of the study area in 1850. These people probably had, by sheer numbers alone, a substantial impact on the west. Often the settlement of the west is viewed as two streams, the Southerners versus the New Englanders. Yet the Mid-Atlantic states' natives far outnumbered those from New England and the South put together. Migrants from the Mid-Atlantic states did not represent the extremes of Americans, as did the New Englanders and Southerners, so they have been relegated to a secondary position.

All three of the major routes to the west passed through the Mid-Atlantic states--the Erie Canal through New York, the National Road through a corner of southwestern Pennsylvania, and the major tributaries of the Ohio River, the Alleghany and the Monongahela, in western Pennsylvania. The major routes to the west were easily reached by natives of all Mid-Atlantic states. The ready accessibility of these routes may be reflected in the larger number of Mid-Atlantic states' natives in the study area.

In each of the northern two counties of the study area, Lagrange and Steuben, there were at least twice as many New York natives as there were Pennsylvania natives in 1850.

In each of the two southern counties, there were slightly more Pennsylvania natives than New York natives. This difference in population seems to support Billington's contention that the northern counties were settled mainly from the overflow of the Chicago Road[114]. Since the Erie Canal went right through the heart of New York, it was very accessible to New Yorkers wishing to move west, more so than the National Road or the Ohio River, both south in Pennsylvania. Spilling over to the south from the Great Lakes-Chicago Road route, New Yorkers filled the northern part of the study area, closer to their routes, first. Steuben, the northern county with the greatest percent of New York natives present, bears the name of a New York county, another bit of evidence for the route segregation.

Pennsylvanians, having the National Road and Ohio River routes more available, took those ways west. These two routes entered the southern part of Indiana. Pennsylvanians worked northward toward the study area, and so were more prevalent in the southern part of the study area, closer to their routes. The data for the whole of northern Indiana support the notion of southward diffusion of New York natives and northward diffusion of Pennsylvania natives from their respective routes[115]. From routes preferred by natives of Pennsylvania or New York, their settlement concentrations diffused outward, with the most natives near their chosen routes.

The New England Stream

Many of the same forces that were at work expelling Mid-Atlantic states' natives were also forcing New Englanders west. Particularly after about 1830, the Industrial Revolution began to hit New England. Along with it came a revolution in agriculture. Between the two, conditions were ripe for a large scale movement to the West.

The growth of mill towns created an urban demand for grain and vegetables. Crop specialization resulted, especially a turn to sheep grazing for wool production. Pastures began to replace cultivated fields, and farms became larger. This freed many for movement to the west. Competition from the new grain production in the Old Northwest lowered the grain price in the east, making cereal production unprofitable and increasing pasturing and grazing.

New England had its own frontiers. Since colonial days, New Englanders had been moving out past the settled lands to settle new territory. This movement had been much different than in other areas because town groups settled the wilderness. Towns had grown at the same time that new lands had, so the increase of settled territory in New England had been slow. Northern and northwestern New England were frontiers in the period after the Revolution. But soils there were poor and rocky, unfortunately, and when the competition from the new, fertile, lands in the west hit the frontiers in the east, potential frontiersmen shifted their move to the

west. New Englanders felt a strong regional identity, and many still moved to the New England frontiers, rather than to the west. Those who did move west, sometimes went in whole towns, transferring adventuresome townspeople from New England to the west.

> Sheep grazing required little manual labor but much land. Hence farms increased rapidly as the fortunates who switched to wool growing early bought out their neighbors. Dispossessed farmers could move into the valley towns seeking jobs in mills or go west to the fertile lake country. . .
>
> (After 1840) the flood of cereals from virgin western soils lowered prices so radically that thousands of New England farmers gave up to the struggle, most of them moving west themselves[116].

Routes

At the same time that changes in the lives of New Englanders were going on--the agricultural and industrial revolutions--the transportation routes to the west were improved by the Erie Canal. New England is separated from New York by a broad mountain chain, and land routes across were very difficult in the past. The opening of the Erie Canal, connecting the Atlantic with the Great Lakes, made the journey west much easier for New Englanders. By roads to Albany, or sea routes to New York City, then up the Hudson River, to the Erie Canal and on to the Great Lakes, New Englanders came to the west in increasing numbers after about 1830. Of course, for years, New Englanders, though

in fewer numbers, had been coming west. The older major routes, the Ohio River and the National Road, were used by many. But from about 1830 on, conditions at home deteriorated and transportation routes improved, so that the new lands in the west were now much more attractive and available to New Englanders.

> The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, the extension of steam navigation on the Great Lakes in the thirties, and the railroad connections between Boston and the Lake ports early in the forties, opened to New England movers the rich and vacant lands of the North Central states, and, at the same time, poured a competitive and destructive flood of agricultural surpluses from these cheap, rich virgin soils upon the farmers of New England[117].

Local connections from the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes, as discussed above in the section on the Mid-Atlantic states, also gave New Englanders access to the interior. Because New Englanders relied most heavily on the Erie Canal-Lakes route to the west, these roads were very important to their migration. Another local connection was the Wabash and Erie Canal, begun in 1832 to connect Lake Erie via the Maumee River with the Ohio River via the Wabash. Though open for those on the Erie Canal-Lakes route to use, few did so, and the canal was gradually overshadowed by the railroads[118].

Amounts and Settlement

Table 1 presents the percent of New Englanders found in the study area from the Census of 1850 and Elfrieda Lang's

article. Five point one percent of the study area population was native to New England in 1850. Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut respectively had the largest percent of New England natives in northeastern Indiana: 2.0 percent, 1.3 percent, and 1.2 percent. The three other New England states also contributed natives, but very few. The whole New England region comprised a relatively small percent of the population. Steuben county, in the northeast, had the largest percent of its population New England natives, 8.7; while Noble, the southwestern county, had the least, 2.3.

New Englanders, unlike the two groups previously considered, sometimes moved to the west in town groups. This type of movement was a latter day manifestation of the first Puritan movements out of the Boston area. Religious consciousness had resulted in a social order that stressed the town unit. Religious and social control was made more effective by the town system. Within the New England town, like a township in the Old Northwest, several villages usually developed.

When population increase, declining agriculture, or missionary zeal dictated that a migration was necessary, a group of interested people from the town or a village in it would meet. They commonly formed an association or company, usually including a minister. Delegates were normally sent to look for land in the new area. Once land had been found and arranged for, the migration was thoroughly planned. This

usually included organizing a new church for the settlement. The minister of the new church, along with representatives of the most respected families who were moving, led the group. The settlers left for the west as a unit. On arrival, a church was built, shortly followed by a schoolhouse. The colonizing system that had settled New England moved west, settling large areas of New York, parts of Pennsylvania, Ohio (especially the Western Reserve), and further west[119]. Though in many cases the New England migration to the west did not take this form, the colony system was unique and identified New England or New England heritage settlers. With the help of this town settlement system,

> by 1850, in successive periods from the close of the 18th Century, parts of New York and Pennsylvania, the Western Reserve of northern Ohio, northern Indiana and Illinois, southern Michigan and Wisconsin, and north central Iowa, had become a Greater New England--the sphere of influence of the combined New England and New York stock of New England origin[120].

Two New England towns are found in the study area, Orland in Steuben County and Wolcottville in Lagrange County. Founded about 1837, Wolcottville settlement was led by George Wolcott who emigrated from Connecticut. Orland provides a better example of a New England town. John Stocker from Windham County, Vermont, came to Steuben County deputized to find good land for his and neighbors' families. The town was settled in 1834, a Baptist church for the settlers was set up

in 1835, and soon plans for the "Orland Academy" were drawn up[121]. This concentration of Vermonters may be responsible for the large percent of Vermont natives found in Steuben County in 1850.

Despite the fact that Indiana was right in the line of westward movement, few New Englanders settled there. "Paradoxically, although the state lay directly in the path of westward-moving thousands, thousands moved westward and never saw it"[122]. A number of possible reasons for this unusual happening can be suggested. Reports read back east dwelled on the wetlands of Indiana. Power, mentioned above, suggests that Yankees avoided Indiana because of this wetlands stereotype--Indiana was "passed off by contemporary eastern writers as being an unmitigated morass"[123]. These poor reports separated most people from any ideas they may have held about settling in Indiana, even though it was accessible along the way west. Those who did settle, either single families or groups of two or three families, mostly arrived

> between 1830 and 1837, settling the northern tier of counties from Steuben on the eastern border. . .going in smaller numbers to the second tier; and only here and there into the third. Certain counties came gradually during these years to be known as New England counties. These lay in general along the northern border, dipping south along the eastern border. . .[124].

This sorting out process, with more New Englanders in the north than to the south, suggests the settlement diffusion

process described for the Mid-Atlantic states. Moving out from their primary routes to the west, New Englanders settled in fewer amounts further away from them. New Englanders' primary routes were the northern ones: the Erie Canal, the Great Lakes, and northern roads such as the Michigan Road.

The nearness of routes to the west helps explain the concentration of 69.9 percent of the New Englanders in the northern two counties, Lagrange and Steuben. Fifty-nine point five percent of the New England natives were in the eastern counties, Steuben and Dekalb, showing the influence of the Lake Erie-Vistula Road route and the New England settlements in Ohio. Steuben County, the northeastern county, alone had 42.7 percent of the New Englanders, responding to the influences of both east and north and of Orland, a New England town, within the county. Noble, in the southwest, was furthest from the New England stream and only had 13.3 percent of the New England natives in the study area in 1850.

Another possible reason for the avoidance of Indiana by New Englanders was the presence of Southerners, mentioned above in the Southern native section. Different cultural backgrounds resulted in two peoples with differing views. New Englanders were methodical about farming, business, and education. Southerners in general less so.

> Southern settlers took life easy. . . they let their cattle forage and the weeds take their fields. . .While

> Yankee farmers planted grass seed, mowed hay, and rotated grain, their southern neighbors were content with a sequence of "corn, weeds, hogs, mud, and corn. . .". "Cow milking" Yankees built barns for their cattle and made butter and cheese. They planted fruit trees. . .They even cut firewood into regular lengths and stored it under a roof[125].

These are of course generalizations; there were shiftless Yankees and hardworking Southerners. But underlying these cultural variances were the increasing sectional differences that were surfacing with the slavery issue. This issue was a focus of many other differences, and may have caused the New Englanders to avoid Indiana, for it was the home of the Hoosier, and all the Southern influences that word conjured up.

Despite the relatively small amount of New England natives in northeastern Indiana, their influence was strongly felt. Schools, towns, businesses, and community leaders came from their ranks. Much of the early cultural life of the settlements came from the New Englanders' efforts. New Yorkers, because their state had been settled by many New Englanders, came to be identified with the Yankees.

> Interestingly enough, the counties, which were popular with New Englanders were also the choice of natives from the Empire State. One may, therefore, conclude that many of the ancestors of New Yorkers were Yankees. Probably 50 percent or more of the native New Yorkers who settled in northern Indiana were of New England extraction[126].

Eastern Midwest Stream

This section considers those who came to the study area in northern Indiana from Michigan, Ohio, or other parts of Indiana, defined as the Eastern Midwest. The 1850 Census located natives of other North Central states living in the study area, but their numbers were generally low. Of these, Illinois, the next state west, had the most natives in the study area. The retreat east from failure on the far frontier may account for those natives from western areas now in northeastern Indiana.

> A number of New Englanders and Southerners, as well as some foreigners, by-passed the Hoosier state for Illinois and lived there from five to ten years before retreating into Indiana[127].

During this stay, children born there were considered natives of Illinois. The settlers who were natives of Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana had family ties back to older settled areas in the East and South. Because the Census data reveal only the nativity location, and nothing about the past migrations of families previous to the birth of the interviewee, this paper only considers the listed place of birth.

Having been born in a frontier area, these people were full of pioneering heritage. They likely had grown up on the frontier, and subscribed to frontier notions of westward movement and pioneering spirit. Plenty of land was probably available near home, and many remained in the area of their birth. Some, however, felt the urge to move and start pioneering

on their own. People migrated west from Ohio or north from southern Indiana because the country was filling up, the best sites were taken, or the land that remained was too expensive. Land in northern Indiana was late in opening for settlement, so here was new land nearby. Other pioneers, who had been on the far frontiers of Michigan, Illinois, and the rest of the Old Northwest, may have fallen back to the east in retreat. Northern Indiana provided a frontier that was new, yet relatively civilized, and closer to markets and neighbors than areas on the settlement fringe. For those who were in retreat yet not beaten, the study area may have been just what was desired. A word of clarification is needed concerning the Indiana native figures. By 1850, the study area had been settling for thirty years, a generation. Natives of Indiana included those born in the study area as well as native migrants from Indiana. The Indiana native figures must be considered in this light.

Routes

The routes used by natives of the Eastern Midwest were the same as those used by many natives of other regions. Water transport, both the Ohio River and its Indiana tributaries and the Great Lakes brought Ohioans. Natives of southern Indiana could move north along the Wabash River and the Wabash and Erie Canal, also used by Ohioans.

Land routes were probably used by most migrants because they were more direct and the trip was likely to be short.

The National Road would bring Ohioans west, and the Michigan Road would take them north. Southern Indiana natives also took the Michigan Road to get close to the study area. The road from Indianapolis to Fort Wayne brought members of the two groups even nearer. For northwestern Ohioans, the Vistula Road went from Toledo right into Steuben and Lagrange Counties. The Chicago Road tracked west from Detroit, coming to within a few miles of the study area and giving Michiganders an easy route in. Local roads branching off from the main routes were very important in bringing settlers to the study area.

Amounts and Settlement

From the Census of 1850 and Lang's article, the percent of the study area population native to Ohio, Michigan, or Indiana is given in Table 1. In 1850, 59.7 percent of the population of northeastern Indiana was from Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. That the majority of settlers were native to the Eastern Midwest should not be surprising.

> The history of westward expansion demonstrates that proximity was of primary importance; unless nature's obstacles intervened, each new region was settled from neighboring areas rather than distant points. . . "In thirty states out of thirty-four", wrote the Superintendent of the Census in 1860, "it will be perceived that the native emigrants have chiefly preferred to locate in a state immediately adjacent to that of their birth"[128].

Indiana natives comprised twenty-six percent of the population, but what part of the population was native to the study area and what part native to the state is uncertain. There were more Ohio natives than Indiana natives in all counties except Lagrange, where native Hoosiers slightly outnumbered Ohioans. The southern two counties of the study area, Dekalb and Noble, had more Ohioans than the northern two, with Dekalb, the southeastern county, having the most Ohioans, 40.1 percent. Native Hoosiers comprised about a quarter of the population in all four counties. Michigan natives concentrated in the northern two counties, and over forty-nine percent of the Michigan natives in the four counties were in the northeast county of Steuben.

Ohio natives comprised nearly a third of the population of the study area in 1850. Because Ohio was one of the new western lands, it had been settled by people from many different source areas. "Many of the parents born in another section of the United States or in a foreign country had used Ohio as a stepping stone to the Hoosier State"[129]. The three sources of settlers described above, the South, the Mid-Atlantic states, and New England, also combined in Ohio. Thus, those Ohioans who came to Indiana were from as many varied backgrounds as the Hoosiers themselves. "Customs and traditions of other sections and countries continued to be a part of their lives and their children's lives"[130].

One of these customs was town founding. Some Ohio groups followed the New England tradition and sent delegates to find

land in Indiana for a migrating group from a town. Dekalb County, residence of the largest percent of Ohio natives in the study area, was first settled by an Ohioan, John Houlton, who arrived in 1833. A number of Ohio colonies settled in Dekalb County, helping to swell the number of Ohioans there. Groups in the county represented Morrow and Trumball Counties in Ohio[131]. Over thirty-seven percent of the population of Noble County had been natives of Ohio. As in all cases, most of the migrants came west singly or in families looking for better conditions. The migration of Ohio natives was, like all other migrations, not necessarily direct. "From the county histories, it is obvious that some families had lived in southern Indiana before removing to the northern part of the state"[132].

Michigan natives were few, and mostly concentrated in the northern two counties of the study area, Steuben and Lagrange. Parents of Michigan natives were likely to have come from New York or New England. Since Steuben and Lagrange Counties also had the most New York and New England natives present, Michiganders mainly moved to those counties in Indiana with the strongest Northeastern connections. Steuben and Lagrange Counties are closest to Michigan so local moves may have brought natives of that state to Indiana.

Those who were natives of Indiana fall into two categories. One category consists of those native Hoosiers who were born outside of the study area; the other of those who were born in the study area. By 1850, thirty years of

settlement had been going on, and many children and even grandchildren of original settlers had been born in the four counties. The age distribution of the population considered in Lang's "An Analysis of Northern Indiana's Population in 1850", assists in understanding the problem of the native Indianian population figures. Just how many Indiana natives were born in the study area is uncertain, but

> it should be noted that the majority of (the Hoosier natives in northern Indiana) were below ten years of age. For this reason, one might. . .conclude that the number of Indianians is not of any great significance, especially since the parents themselves had come from New England, from the South, from the Middle Atlantic States, or from foreign countries. It was, after all, the older generation that made the furrow which the children followed[133].

The Southern influence in southern Indiana is well recognized. The area settled early, before the large scale migrations of New Englanders and Mid-Atlantic natives to Indiana. For these groups, New York and Ohio were attractive frontiers in the first few decades of the 19th Century. Southerners had been settling Kentucky and Tennessee since well before 1800, and those states were no longer frontier. Across the Ohio lay Indiana, and many headed there and settled. Southerners, then, comprised the bulk of the Hoosiers in southern Indiana.

> The tide from the East was up to 1816 flowing into western New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio; and although southern Indiana was filling up with farms and towns, the new population was chiefly from Kentucky, Tennessee, or the Southern States along the coast[134].

The Southern influence went north with migrants to the study area. Thus, those who were not born in the study area, but were native Hoosiers were likely to have been of Southern stock. The nativity region previous to Indiana must be considered.

General Conclusions

In the Census of 1850, Southern natives comprised 3.1 percent of the study area population, Mid-Atlantic states' natives represented 27.8 percent of the study area population, New England natives 5.1 percent, and Eastern Midwest natives comprised 59.7 percent of the study area population. The 4.3 percent balance of the population were from other states or foreign countries.

Indiana was directly west for Ohio and Mid-Atlantic migrants. The large amount of Ohio and Mid-Atlantic states' natives suggests that migrants took the most direct and available routes to the new land, and so tended to move directly west. The time spread between the settlement of southern and northern Indiana made lands available for southern Hoosiers to move north to when the country at home began to "settle up". Direct migration from the South and New England was small, but the effects of the respective cultures were likely to have been stronger than the percentages alone indicate because of stops before migration to Indiana. Some of the characteristics and traits of their former region were passed on to their children.

Time and locational factors played a part in the destinations of migrants. Southerners as a group were the furthest west earliest, settling the Kentucky and Tennessee frontiers and crossing the Ohio River to southern Indiana, filling the state northward. Mid-Atlantic statesmen were west next, settling western New York and Pennsylvania and later, Ohio. Central and northern Indiana opened up as the pioneers began to search for new areas west of Ohio. The bulk of New England natives came west last. Frontiers in their own region attracted the expanding population until New York and Ohio frontiers opened up. Not until after 1830 did the great migration of New Englanders begin. At this time the more northerly areas in the Old Northwest were opening.

The three separate routes to the west, each one a bit further north than the last, helped distribute the migrants. Generalizing, the Ohio River brought Southerners and Mid-Atlantic statesmen west, the National Road brought Mid-Atlantic natives, and the Erie Canal-Great Lakes, New Englanders and Mid-Atlantic people. Ohioans were due east, and the bulk of Hoosiers due south, so short, direct movements brought them to the study area.

> Each entryway served a migration stream from a distinctive source region, and these streams remained remarkably separate as they continued westward across the Middle West[135].

CHAPTER VI

THE POST-FRONTIER LANDSCAPE

By shortly after 1840, settlement in northeastern Indiana had advanced to the point where the study area was no longer on the frontier. The frontier stage was ended, and advanced settlement stages had begun. This is not to suggest that the four counties were fully settled--the frontier actually was not far removed and many parts of the counties were still unsettled. But progress in settling the study area was being made and the study area looked far different in this period than it had in the pre-frontier, and even the frontier, stages.

The Settlement Progression

Northeastern Indiana had been unsettled by whites until about 1830. Soon thereafter, settlement began in earnest and the frontier stage commenced, lasting about ten years. As it continued, with varying periods of heavy migration and periods of limited migration, stages of increasingly heavy settlement evolved. From shortly after 1830 to shortly after 1840, the study area had been considered a part of the frontier, defined by Billington as

> a geographic region, adjacent to the unsettled portions of the continent in which a low man-land ratio and usually abundant, unexploited natural resources provide an exceptional opportunity for social and economic betterment to the small-propertied individual[136].

Before the early 1840's, the resources of timber, land, and animals were essentially unexploited, and there were few settlers. By 1850, the frontier had moved further west, and the study area was in a post-frontier stage, nearly surrounded by long settled areas. The man-land ratio was no longer low, by the standards of the day, and although abundant resources still remained, they were being exploited at an increasing rate. The changing man-land ratio is particularly useful for showing that the study area was no longer on the frontier.

In 1850, three of the four counties had populations near or above 8,000, and the fourth, Steuben, had over 6,000 people. In 1840, the first year the census was taken in the study area, only one county, Lagrange, had more than 3,000 inhabitants. Table 2 shows population and population density per square mile for 1840 and 1850. The population density increase between 1840 and 1850 was substantial. The Census of 1880 defined a density of over eighteen persons per square mile as indicating highly successful agricultural settlement. All four of the counties had over eighteen persons per square mile in 1850. An article by J.F. Hart[137] includes a map of the area that shows most of the study area with at least eighteen persons per square mile by 1860, with a portion of Noble County lagging, but at the level by 1880. Another map[138] suggests

POPULATION DENSITIES, 1840 AND 1850

County	Area mi^2	1840 Pop.	1840 Density	1850 Pop.	1850 Density
Dekalb	365	1968	5.4	8251	22.6
Lagrange	370	3664	9.9	8387	22.7
Noble	410	2702	6.6	7946	19.4
Steuben	310	2578	8.3	6105	19.7
Study Area Totals	1455	10912	7.5	30689	21.1

Source: United States Census, 1840, p. 370 and
United States Census, 1850, Table 1, pp. 755-756.

TABLE 2

that all of the study area except a part of Noble County had at least eighteen persons per square mile, and that part had reached the critical population density by 1860. The latter two maps appear to have been made with township data, while my chart uses county data, generalizing the county population over the county area. Either way, the level of eighteen or more persons per square mile was reached about 1850. The study area has by then become an area of permanent and sustained agricultural settlement. Successful agricultural settlement, as discussed in the introduction to the Census of 1880, implies that frontier conditions are no longer present, and pioneers have become settled farmers. Sometime between 1840 and 1850, rural conditions advanced beyond the frontier level and resulted in permanent and successful, though young, settlement.

Between the years 1820 and 1850, the study area passed through the frontier stage, changing from unsettled territory to the beginnings of highly successful agricultural settlement. Because there was no Census taken in the study area in 1830, the population density for that year cannot be found, but it can be estimated in other ways. By 1830, the Indians had just recently sold their lands. Noble County's first settler arrived in 1827, Lagrange County's in 1828, Steuben County's in 1831, and Dekalb County's in 1833[139]. White settlement was just beginning in 1830, and so the frontier period, with two to ten persons per square mile, began shortly

after 1830.

In 1840, the population density per square mile was an average of 7.5 in the study area. Lagrange County, with 9.9 persons per square mile, was the closest to the limit, and Dekalb, with 5.4 persons per square mile, the furthest. The frontier stage was nearing an end in 1840, and by 1850, as mentioned above, settlement had exceeded the ten to eighteen persons per square mile level that defined early agricultural settlement. This meant the study area had passed through this stage and into the next, the stage of settled agriculture (eighteen persons per square mile and over), because the average county population density per square mile in 1850 was 21.1. In the early 1840's, the frontier stage closed, and in the late 1840's, the early agricultural settlement stage was also over.

The Census of 1850 provides meaningful data on farms and farmed acreage that furnishes evidence of increased settlement (Table 3)[140]. All four counties had from forty-one to fifty-eight percent of their respective acreages in farms. Roughly half of the study area was still not in farms in 1850. Of those farmed acreages, roughly two-thirds were designated as unimproved--not used for crops. Traveling through the study area in 1850, one would see extensive tracts of unused land, testifying to the recency of the frontier stage. The land was claimed, but it was not yet farmed.

> Self-sufficiency, if attainable, was not the goal of intelligent farmers;

FARMED AND OPEN ACRES

County	Acres in County	Acres in Farms	% in Farms	Acres Open	% Open
Dekalb	233600	117308	50%	116292	50%
Lagrange	236800	138418	58%	98382	42%
Noble	262400	106960	41%	155440	59%
Steuben	198400	95314	48%	103086	52%

County	% Farm Acres Improved	% Farm Acres Unimproved	Farms	Acres Per Farm
Dekalb	27%	73%	831	141
Lagrange	38%	62%	1062	130
Noble	30%	70%	772	139
Steuben	34%	66%	586	163

Source: United States Census, 1850, Table XI, pp. 790-791.

TABLE 3

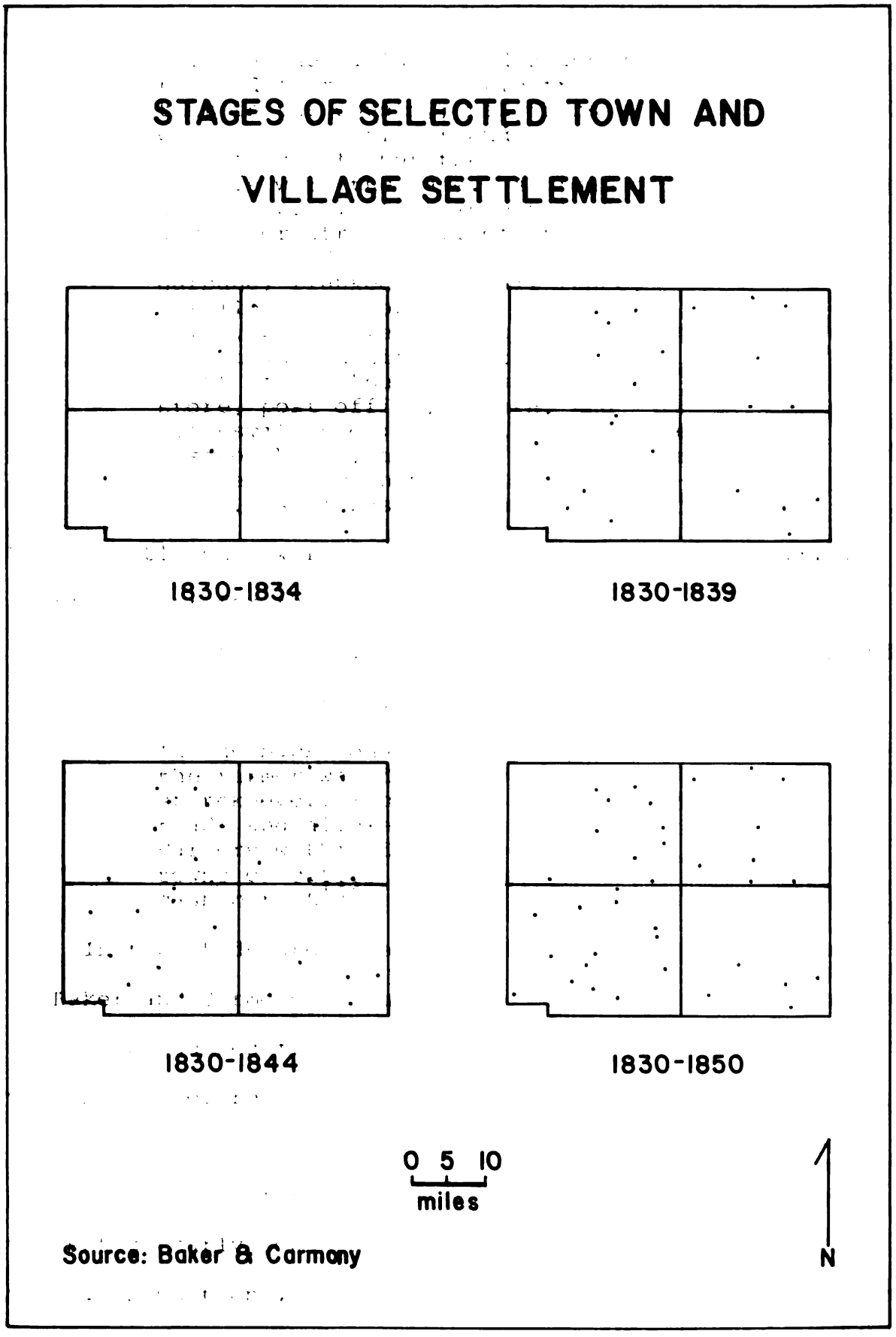
> instead, they planned to produce something they could trade--better still, something they could sell . . .they continually struggled to wrest from their land a marketable surplus[141].

To get that surplus, more acres of land were opened to farming as agriculture passed from the uncertainty of the frontier stage to the assurance associated with increasing settlement.

In 1850, Lagrange County seems to have been the furthest advanced away from frontier conditions of settlement and agriculture. Population density per square mile was 9.9 in 1840 and 22.7 in 1850. The county had 1,062 farms in 1850, over 200 more than the next closest county, Dekalb. Lagrange County had fifty-eight percent of its acres in farms, and thirty-eight percent of these acres were unimproved, both values the greatest in the study area. The average number of acres per farm ranged from 130 to 163, close to a quarter section per farm in each county. The farm data show that, though settlement was sparse by today's standards, the study area was filling in and frontier conditions of greatly scattered settlement were no longer present in 1850.

The founding dates of clustered settlements, not really towns but villages, can also be used to show the increase of settlement (Figure 4). These settlements from Baker and Carmony, consisted of grouped dwellings, usually with a store and sometimes a post office, that serviced the immediate surrounding area[142].

FIGURE 4


STAGES OF SELECTED TOWN AND VILLAGE SETTLEMENT
1830-1834
1830-1839
1830-1844
1830-1850
0 5 10
miles
N
Source: Baker & Carmony

STAGES OF SELECTED TOWN AND VILLAGE SETTLEMENT

> Life in the villages and country towns differed but little from that in the country; neighbors were somewhat closer and contacts more frequent, but the essentials of life were the same. A group of houses sprawling at intervals along a road or street full of stumps and seasonal mud holes, weeds, dust and garbage, flanked by a rail fence, paralleled by cow paths for sidewalks, with a few rods of wooden sidewalks and hitching racks in front of the "business section" of store, post office, tavern, and blacksmith shop; a couple of churches, a schoolhouse, a doctor's and lawyer's office, a few shops of local tradesmen. . .such was the country town[143].

These settlements were a market place for surpluses and a supply center for those items every farmer, no matter how self-sufficient, needed. Items such as salt, gunpowder, and lead were purchased there.

> In the back country and frontier areas the farmer was dependent on the country storekeeper, who took his surplus in trade and allowed him book credit. Farmers within driving distance of towns or cities of any size enjoyed a cash market[144].

In the study area there were thirty-seven towns listed in Baker and Carmony's study of selected Indiana place names that were founded from 1830 to 1850. No towns they listed were begun before 1830, another bit of evidence that the frontier period did not begin until after 1830. With the pioneers heading for homesteads also came the town founders who set up early towns and trading posts to serve the pioneers. Some towns, like Orland begun in 1834, were the focus

of a concentrated rural settlement on the New England town style. According to Baker and Carmony, from 1830 through 1834, seven towns in the study area were begun, two in each county except Steuben, which had one. From 1835 through 1839, seventeen towns were begun, the most during any part of the 1830 to 1850 time period. This reflects the heavy inflow of settlers that moved to the west in the late 1830's. Four towns were started from 1840 through 1844, and nine from 1845 to 1850. The founding of at least thirty-seven towns, present today, by 1850 indicates that settlement was well advanced by 1850, far from the frontier stages.

Clustered settlements grew at different rates. Some had advantages of location or function. Those towns on water-courses often supported mills for grinding meal to flour or cutting logs to saw timber. Wilmont in Noble County had a sawmill in 1848, and Wolcottville, on the border between Lagrange County, was settled in 1837 by George Wolcott who set up a gristmill, carding mill, sawmill, and distillery[145]. The establishment of a post office gave another attraction for business activity in a fledgeling town. Post offices were begun in eleven of the thirty-seven towns between 1830 and 1850. There was much competition between towns for the county seat location. Often the county seat became the main banking and commercial center, as well as the governmental center in the county, though it did not necessarily retain that dominance. Two of the four county seats were founded in the

previous or same year that the county was. But in the two other cases, four and ten years elapsed between the founding of the county and the county seat, suggesting a period when towns vied for the honor. Three of the four county seat towns were founded between 1835 and 1840, the period of heaviest town founding. Of those few towns where the founders' former home is listed, New Yorkers started three towns, Pennsylvanians one, and Vermonters one. As more towns sprang up, there were more locations to market surpluses, to purchase labor-saving devices, and to learn about new methods and equipment.

The frontier stage lasted about ten years in northeastern Indiana, from the early 1830's to the early 1840's, according to the population density limits and other evidence. But frontier conditions in many parts of the study area lasted beyond the early 1840's. Poor soils, poor drainage, or lack of diligence on the pioneer's part slowed progression. Poorly drained areas were avoided, especially when better farmlands were readily available[146]. Large areas in the four counties were waterlogged, so expansion by those farming there was limited until drainage projects were undertaken. The study area was settled unevenly, so that by 1850 or even later, portions of the counties were in an advanced agricultural stage while other portions were characteristic of frontier or pre-frontier conditions.

Connections with the east were constantly improving. The Erie Canal, and local canal projects such as the Wabash and Erie Canal, made trade and communication with the east much easier. New local roads were built and old ones repaired, in response to demands of farmers who needed better local roads to take their increasing surpluses to collection points for shipment east. The potential for growth and communication represented by the railroad was being recognized.

Northeastern Indiana was no longer an isolated frontier by 1850. The filling of the land with settlers and the opening of farms, the growth of towns, and the improvement of communication all heralded a new era. The shift from essentially self-sufficient agriculture to marketing surpluses indicates the change from frontier to post-frontier conditions.

The Living Landscape

Just as the landscape had been in a pre-frontier state before the great influx of settlers, after the frontier stage was over, the landscape began to exhibit evidences of permanent settlement.

Fauna

The overabundant fauna of 1820 were no longer as plentiful by 1850. The wild animals, particularly the larger ones that required much range and could not learn to adapt to settlement, were feeling the effects of clearing and farming.

Before settlement had become too thick and fences were required, domestic livestock had been allowed to root and forage in the woods. The "open range" system allowed livestock to destroy nesting sites and disturb the smaller game. The more dangerous wild animals, such as bears, panthers, and wolves, were hunted to reduce their depredations on livestock and to make the backwoods settlements safer for families.

The removal of only the predator animals normally would have resulted in a large increase in prey animals such as deer. But prey animals were an important source of meat for the settlers, and hunting reduced the population of game animals. The encroachment of settlement on the range also lowered the number of game animals, disrupting nesting sites and reducing food supply. Beaver had been present in great numbers in the lakes and swamps of northern Indiana until about 1840, when trappers had finally cleaned them out[147]. Deer were especially attractive for skins and meat, and they were extensively hunted. Small game, especially those such as squirrels and raccoons who were fond of corn, were hunted as pests. Hunting and settlement together made large inroads on the fauna in the study area. As farming expanded, many of these former game animals, no longer used for food, became pests and were hunted for entertainment.

Flora

The tremendous trees that covered most of the study area have been discussed in an earlier section. Because of these

extensive forests, "the pioneer was of necessity a woodsman before he could be an agriculturalist"[148]. The forests had to be cleared for farms, and the timber thus supplied was used in the "wood culture" of the frontier. Wood provided housing, fencing, and fuel. Pioneers knew how to remove the trees and how to convert trees to farmstead use. "Since the earliest settlements along the Atlantic Coast, Americans had been clearing the land and raising crops"[149].

There were two ways to clear the land for agriculture. One was to chop down the trees; the other was to girdle them and either let them fall naturally or slowly work at them. Felling trees with an axe was a very difficult and long task. Girdling trees was quicker, but the carcass of the tree remained standing longer. Most pioneer farmers cleared land using the two methods in combination. Clearing the land had seemed at the start to be an insurmountable task, but through time and small bites, it was accomplished.

Once the cabin site had been selected, the trees there were normally cut down and used to build the cabin. Trees in the soon-to-be fields nearby that were especially suited for the cabin were cut and dragged to the site. Because settlers preferred to get a crop started as soon as possible, they girdled most trees rather than remove them to make fields that were "cut smack smooth". "As a rule, the underbrush and trees under eighteen or twenty inches were cut, and the larger ones girdled"[150]. Girdling involved cutting a ring around the

tree, through the bark and into the cortex, wide enough so that the tree literally bled to death. Most trees never put out leaves again if they were girdled in mid-summer, but some, such as ash, hackberry, and sugar maple, also had to be burned deeply. Some farmers let the trees fall naturally, as wind, weather, and destructive insects took their toll, but others set the dead trees on fire the next winter. Most chopped the dead trees down as time allowed. The fallen trees were trimmed, cut into logs, rolled into windrows and burned[151].

The destruction of such beautiful trees, the likes of which are rarely seen today, seems almost criminal now. Yet the pioneer farmer had little else he could do with them. Trees needed to be cleared before farming could begin, and only so many could be used for housing, fences, and fuel. The woods provided for these needs, but because there was no way to transport logs, and really no demand for them (were not the forests inexhaustable anyway?), the only way the farmer could rid himself of the trees was to burn those he couldn't immediately use.

The clearing of these trees took a long time. After the initial harvest, the farmer cleared from two to ten acres per year, depending on the size of his family and other conditions. The newly opened ground was not farmed until the next year, as clearing and burning took the first year[152]. At this slow rate, even older, longer settled areas still had extensive areas of partially cleared fields. As late as 1840, many fields in Ohio were still cleared of only the underbrush and smaller

trees--the larger, girdled ones remained standing. Under the now lifeless trees the first crops were sown, often around the base of the trees. The trunks and limbs provided some shade even yet, and so the yields from these fields were not as high as possible once the field was fully cleared. The field eventually was completely cleared, because it was felt that five acres of a full, unshaded crop were better than fifteen acres of a partial crop raised in a field of girdled trees[153].

Jacob Schramm, a German immigrant looking for land north of Indianapolis in 1836, described the field clearing process.

> The destruction of the trees is done as follows: In May or in August, one cuts through the bark of all trees on the land to be cleared with an axe, with the exception of the oaks. This causes them to die in a few years. By the end of five years, the whole growth is dead, and many trees are blown down. . .Now, if one wishes to have the land cleared all trees which are standing are cut down, burned through into logs ten feet long then piled into heaps, and thus completely burned to ashes[154].

Prairies, though few and small, were also put to the plow. The tough prairie sod was the chief deterrent to opening the grasslands. The root structure of the grass was extensive and very deep, making plowing especially difficult. The sod had to be turned over when it was green, or it was certain to sprout again. Even then, often the plow did not dig deep enough and the grass grew back[155].

The Farmscape, 1850

Travelling through the study area around 1850, one would see farms at both extremes--from small clearings to large open fields--and every degree in between. Though considered as a group, the new settlers were also individuals. Some had been in the study area since the land was ceded by the Indians; others had just arrived. Some families were larger, more diligent, prosperous, or healthy than others. All of these things contributed to a diversity of settlement states in the study area.

Starting the Homestead

The new settler often came without his family in the spring, selected a site, and cleared and planted a small field. While this was growing, he built a house or a lean-to for the family. The lean-to, or "half-faced" camp was temporary. Two vertical forked poles held up a horizontal pole between them, and from this poles were laid to the ground. This "roof" was covered with poles and brush to keep some of the weather out[156]. Once the first crop was planted and progressing, the settler began to prepare for building the log cabin. These cabins, whose ancestry before coming to America is in doubt, provided the first permanent housing for pioneers in the study area.

As soon as enough logs had been collected; ash, beech, maple, or poplar of uniform size; they were cut to length,

notched, and arranged. To build the typical log cabin, the settler needed

> about twenty logs, each about one foot in diameter and perhaps twenty feet long, an equal number ten, twelve, or fifteen feet long. These were for the sides and ends of the house. Then came three or four, each shorter than the one below, to form the gables. Each log was notched at the end so the corners would not build up faster than the walls[157].

Usually neighbors came to assist in the "cabin raisin'", one of the social events on the frontier[158].

In the newly opened fields, still dominated by girdled trees, crops were sown. The preparation of the soil for planting was not an easy task. Roots dominated the soil, intertwined and very resistant to the plow. Stones and occasional boulders also awaited the plow. Grubs were the bane of the pioneer farmers, ready to catch and halt and plow, giving the plowman a case of whiplash. The grubs

> were the result of the accumulation of sprouts which, cut off or burned off for years, developed just underground around the taproot into giant toadstool shapes which could be removed only by direct attack with an eight pound grubbing hoe[159].

Often the first crop was planted by axe. The axe was swung into the soil and twisted slightly. Into that cut went the seeds. If a plow was used, it was a back-breaking task. Southerners tended to use a jumping shovel plow. This was an ordinary plow of wood with the moldboard partially covered with strips of iron; not a very satisfactory implement, but cheap and easily repaired[160].

The plow was set so that it would cut through the smaller roots and jump over the larger ones. The cutting, jumping, and jerking was very hard on both plowman and team[161]. This plow seems to have been well suited to frontier conditions, perhaps reflecting the long frontier heritage of Southerners.

New Englanders tended to use heavy cast iron plows that cut through most obstructions, even four-inch thick oak roots, and stuck fast in those larger, requiring much effort to dislodge the plow. The weight of this plow required a larger team[162]. This plow had replaceable cast iron parts. Broken pieces could be replaced, but this was costly[163]. Plows for breaking prairie sod gradually were designed and became available. These plows were extra broad to turn over wide strips of sod, and required expensive and scarce steel. Large teams, often oxen, were required to draw the plows, and this, added to the initial cost of the plow, made them uneconomical for most. Also, this type of plow was not ready until late in the study period, and then was mostly used further west where prairies were more extensive[164]. After plowing, harrows were used to further pulverize the soil. At first, these were just small cut trees, the branches serving as harrow teeth. Later, a heavy oak plank with teeth of hardwood or iron was used[165].

As the study area settled and more families and livestock appeared, fencing became necessary. The small prairies, like the woods, had served as natural pasture areas for livestock, but even here, as the study area settled, unrestricted grazing

could no longer take place. The number of settlements now meant that livestock had to be kept in enclosures to protect crops. Wood again supplied the material. At first, makeshift fences of brush and poles were built. Later, rails were split from logs, ten or twelve feet long, of white ash, oak, chestnut, poplar or walnut. Post and rail fences, and worm fences were built from these rails. Fences were a continual consumer of wood, for they were always deteriorating or breaking[166].

Farms grew and the amount of livestock increased, necessitating the construction of outbuildings for sheltering them. Many other needs on the farm were filled by handmade wooden items--gates, shovels, hay forks, carts and yokes to name a few. As the period drew to a close, transportation was much improved, surplus products were sent east, and manufactured goods came west. The farmer no longer relied only on his own skills for things he needed--he increasingly bought them. Sawmills appeared, cutting the farmer's own logs into lumber for building. New agricultural machinery was invented, and farms found they could buy machines that would allow them to increase their farmed acreage and save labor at the same time. At the beginning of the period,

> Land was plentiful and cheap in relation to labor. Excepting for a few favored regions there were no markets and hence no incentive to produce a surplus. Tools and implements were of the simplest sort, in fact had not been considerably improved upon since ancient times[167].

Much was changing by the end of the period. Agriculture in the study area was coming into its own. New farming machinery, methods, and crops were being introduced.

> It was the extension of the canals, later the railroads, which was responsible in a large measure for widening the market for farm implements by making it possible to ship (them) into regions previously cut off from main lines of communication and relatively inaccessible. But, more important, it was the canal and railroad which provided the necessary facilities to transport to market the growing quantities of wheat, corn, pork, lard, and tobacco that new implements were making possible[168].

Farming

For the pioneer, the few field crops garden crops, livestock, and the results of the hunt provided all his food at first. "He might borrow from or 'swap' with a neighbor, but there was no grocery"[169]. Depending on how far away the settlers' former home was, familiarity with agriculture in northeastern Indiana varied.

> The first season settlers had to depend largely on themselves. Friendly families along the road might give them a few seeds and tell them something of farming in the new home, but most of it was a great experiment[170].

The primary field crop of the first settlers was corn, and it retained its pre-eminent position for many years. Corn grew well in the partially cleared land, and could be ground into meal, flour, or made into whiskey. Corn ground

was prepared as soon as the soil thawed on farms where the field had been cleared the year before. The kernels were planted "when the oak or maple leaves were as large as squirrel ears or when the dogweed blossoms were fully expanded"[171]. The new settler made sure a crop was sown as soon as possible. Pumpkins and other squash were often planted in the cornfield after the corn had a good start. The squash used the cornstalks to climb on, and the small cleared fields could produce two crops.

Wheat was not usually grown in the first few years a field was planted. The soil was too rich and the wheat grew all to straw, with little grain resulting[172]. Once wheat could be grown, it became an important cash crop. Its surplus provided money for improvements such as machinery and better seeds and livestock[173]. The wheat harvest became a social event like corn husking bees.

Cultivation of crops depended on labor, time, and inclination. Many children spent hours in the clearings with a hoe, chopping weeds and keeping pests away from the ripening crops. At other farms, neighbors "sometimes remarked that they could take hold of the wild cucumber vines at one corner and shake all the corn in the field"[174].

The increasing livestock populations caused the farmer to turn to haying to supply winter forage. Marsh hay was the first source of supply, obtained from the wet prairies and

riversides[175]. Later, agricultural improvements introduced timothy and other grasses that were planted for pasture crops.

The garden was usually the responsibility of the women and girls. Here potatoes, onions, beans, peppers, turnips, and all sorts of other table crops were planted. Spices and herbs for cooking were also grown here, along with common flowers. All the variety of food other than corn and meat for the coming year came from the kitchen garden. Seeds from the garden crops were carefully saved for next year[176].

The change from producing only enough for the family to producing a marketable surplus shows the dissolution of frontier conditions. It was a gradual change in agriculture, because self-sufficiency ruled for many years.

> Poor transportation facilities and the resultant high costs left the western communities isolated to a certain extent not only from the East, but from each other as well. Scarcity of markets and money further contributed to the practice of a self-sufficient domestic economy. . .[177].

As settlement advanced, towns grew and communications improved in the study area, increasing the demand for more produce.

> A society in the process of establishment in a new region seeks to develop the most available resources of that region, at first for itself, then as communications and markets develop, for exchange with other parts[178].

Corn, because it was suited to the new fields and could be used as grain, livestock feed, or whiskey, was the major

crop in the study area. Livestock were marketed, moved by drovers to markets in the major towns in the Old Northwest. Grain, both corn and later the small grains, was reduced in bulk by grinding it into flour or producing whiskey in an attempt to reduce the high cost of transportation. Milk was churned to butter or made into cheese to increase its value[179]. Long distance transportation remained a problem beyond 1850. The roads were best in the summer when they were dry or in the winter when they were frozen. River transportation was worst then, and best in spring or fall when the water was highest[180].

Despite the difficulties, market agriculture was a goal of pioneers emerging from the frontier stage. Sales of surpluses gave the farmer cash he needed to pay off his land or add more, hire additional labor to increase his cleared acreage, and to improve his living conditions. Toward the end of the period, better livestock, improved seeds, horticulture, and new agricultural methods and machines were available. The land had been producing crops for years, so fertilizers and crop rotations began to interest the farmer. Almanacs were cherished information sources, and farm journals began to circulate, full of new ideas and new products and machines[181]. The improvements became self-sustaining, the cash from a small surplus funding the changes that would produce a larger surplus.

> Commercial farming developed rapidly in the Middle West. . .
>
> With the growth of markets and the expansion of agriculture, the machinery of buying and selling the farmer's produce became increasingly complex. Simple barter deals and sales by farmers to customers in nearby communities were displaced by sales to buyers, wholesalers, jobbers, drovers, and other specialists[182].

Conditions of Life

The conditions of life were much improved in the study area by the end of the period. Hardship had been the word for the life of the first settlers. Long hours of hard work were needed to clear land, build a cabin, secure food, and run the home. The first winter spent in the new land was often one of privation. If the family had arrived late in the spring, the first crop might not have been large. The cabin may not have been finished when winter began. Sickness and death were constant visitors. Accidents in field or forest, and fires in the cabin, often because of improperly constructed chimneys, were common.

Because of the heavy reliance on corn and meat for food, malnutrition was not rare. The garden produce, intended to help this problem, was often raided by wild animals or insects. By the close of the period, a greater variety of agricultural products were grown. Wheat, more garden vegetables, and fruits helped balance the diet. Salt, which was a problem on most early frontiers, and sugar were available from general

stores. Chickens could be raised now that most of the predators were gone, and there were more milk cows. Eggs, milk, butter, and cheese helped improve the farmer's diet.

Illness was a continual threat. Hard work outdoors in all kinds of weather, poor sanitary habits, bad drinking water, and a lack of knowledge about prevention and cure all contributed to illness among the pioneers. Undrained wetlands were breeding places for mosquitos, and the ague, or malarial fever, was one of the major summer health hazards, along with cholera and typhoid fever[183]. These problems gave the west its reputation for unhealthfulness[184]. Eighteen thirty-eight in northern Indiana was apparently one of the worst years for illness. There were long, continual rains that summer and fall. The result was that

> there never was another season as bad as that in northern Indiana, before or since that time, although malaria and chills continued to prevail to a greater or less extent every summer and fall, until the swamps, marshes, and stagnant pools were drained[185].

As the period ended, increased settlement, better living conditions, drainage, and improved knowledge all combined to reduce illness in the study area.

Scarcity of labor was always a problem on the farm. Pioneer families had to rely on themselves for most of the work, except house and barn raisings and harvest bees. Clearing, plowing, planting, cultivation, and gathering all took

much time. The longest hours were spent by the women, who were sometimes called on to help with the crops in addition to the work of keeping house.

> Areas of land reduced to cultivation and the amount of crops produced were limited not only by lack of transport facilities and markets, but by the scarcity of labor. . . Government land was within the reach of most, and squatting privileges open to all. Outside the family there was no certain labor supply. Neighbors co-operated. . .but when the need was most urgent, as in harvest, they were most likely to be needed at home[186].

This scarcity of labor made the use of machines in farming more attractive. The only way to produce large crops was to use machines to fill the labor requirements.

Education on the frontier was a sometime thing. Most recognized the need for it, some settlers more than others. New England natives in the west were said to be strongly in favor of education; southern natives less so. The population density had to reach a certain level before starting a school was practical. Children who were old enough to go to school also were old enough to give an important addition to labor on the farm. For this reason, frontier schools were usually held during the cold months, the slower season on the farm. Because of this, the school year was short, and likely to be interrupted by winter storms that kept the children at home. The route to school was often only a path through the woods on which many children travelled alone. As the area became

more thickly settled, the demand for schooling increased. Greater prosperity on the farms where the wolf was no longer "at the door", made parents more receptive to schooling, and improved roads made the trip to school much easier. By the end of the period, schooling was more available and more children were attending[187].

Religious and cultural activities increased as the frontier settled. Churches were built and revival meetings held. These meetings may have served spiritual needs, but they were also important social gatherings. Cultural activities, often centered around the schools, included adults in spelling bees and the like. Academies, such as the one at Orland in Steuben County, provided educational opportunities beyond the elementary schools[188].

Great changes occurred in northeastern Indiana between 1820 and 1850. In 1820, the study area was still Indian territory. By 1850, it was the home of over 30,000 settlers. Although there were large areas still in original forest or prairie, much of the land was being cleared for agricultural use. Farming had changed greatly since the beginning of the period, going from pioneer self-sufficient farming to production of surplus and cash grain farming. Nutrition, health, education, and living conditions generally improved, though variation in conditions occurred within the study area. Overall, in the space of a generation, the face of the study area was completely changed from wilderness through frontier to settled landscape.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

What had been unsettled wilderness in 1820 was a successful agricultural region by 1850. Between those two years, the frontier came and went in northeastern Indiana. In 1830, the Indian had recently sold his lands, and few whites were present. By 1840 the frontier period, as defined by a population density of two to ten persons per square mile, was nearly ended. Sometime in the 1840's, the early stage of agricultural growth began and ended, defined by population densities of ten to eighteen persons per square mile, because by 1850, the successful agricultural settlement stage was reached, over eighteen persons per square mile. The evolution of the northeastern Indiana landscape has been charted as it passed in to and out of the frontier stage.

The pre-frontier landscape was that present before white men entered the study area in great numbers. Successive glacial advances had enriched the mineral base of the soil and left a farmable topography. On this, a tremendous bounty of fauna and flora had developed. Fauna of great diversity and number provided the Indians, and the first settlers, with a good supply of food. Trees of a size and beauty rarely seen today covered most of the area. There were also small prairies of grass and wild flowers.

The Indians, who had lived for years little disturbing this paradise, were forced to cede their land and leave the area. Through a series of treaties with the Indians, the study area was gradually opened for white settlement. The Indian was felt to be an untrustworthy neighbor, and he owned the land the pioneers wanted, so he was removed. By 1850, the Census found no native Americans present in the study area.

This set the stage for entry of the pioneers migrating west and north from areas of decreasing possibilities. They entered a land soon defined as the frontier-abundant, unexploited natural resources and open opportunity. Their perception of the environment helped them decide whether and where to settle. The abundance of the woods, appealing to a wood culture, attracted settlers. Soils were judged by the vegetation on them--to the pioneers, trees generally indicated fertility, some species more than others. Prairies elicited a mixed reaction. Some felt that the lack of trees showed sterile soils, others that farming would be easier there because trees wouldn't have to be removed. Wetlands, for both health and agricultural reasons, were generally avoided, and the number of wetlands in the study area may have hindered settlement there.

The settlers could acquire land in a number of ways. The least formal was to squat on it. Others bought land from the government or a speculator and got legal title to it.

Land problems were always close to the settlers--controversies over survey lines, unclear titles, and squatter's rights abounded.

The white settlers began to enter the study area in large numbers about 1830. They arrived via three major routes: the Ohio River, the National Road, and the Erie Canal. These migrants came west to better themselves. Land was expensive or unattractive in the East and Old South. Economic conditions, associated with the Industrial and Agricultural Revolutions, were forcing many west where there were more and better opportunities. There were also some migrants who were just plain adventuresome or restless, and had to be off gaining new experiences. There were four major source regions of nativity as described in the Census of 1850.

The Southern natives comprised just over three percent of the population of the study area in 1850. They likely had moved west on the Ohio River or north along its tributaries on local roads. They moved into Indiana in its earliest settlement days, and few got as far north as the study area. Other areas west and south were also attracting Southern migrants, reducing the number who came to northeastern Indiana.

Over twenty-seven percent of the population in the study area was native to the Mid-Atlantic states. These movers went west on the Ohio River or later on the National Road. From the Road, through the center of the state, Pennsylvanians tended to fan out. New Yorkers often took the Erie Canal west,

and settled southward from the Great Lakes. The study area, closer to the lakes route, received more New Yorkers, from the north, than Pennsylvanians who tended to move up from the south.

New England natives made up only 5.1 percent of the study area population. They came west later in the study period, generally taking the Erie Canal and Great Lakes route. These routes took them further north and west, but some filtered south into the study area. New Englanders had a strong influence on the settlement of New York, and New Yorkers can be culturally lumped with New Englanders.

By far the largest portion, almost sixty percent of the study area population were natives of the Eastern Midwest. Ohio and Indiana provided the most migrants. These were western areas that had been formerly settled from elsewhere. The previous nativity location is important in trying to weigh the relative influences of the various cultures. Ohio had had a strong Mid-Atlantic and New England influence, while Indiana was settled much from the South. While western views were strong in natives from Ohio and Indiana who were living in the study area, the influence of their ancestors' native areas were also in their cultural traditions.

The passage of the frontier is defined by increasing population densities, town settlements, agricultural surpluses, and decreased isolation, brought about by improving transportation and communication with the older settled areas.

Prosperity gradually came with the surpluses, and goods could be purchased that formerly were made on the farm. New agricultural methods and improvements were tried.

The advance of settlement reduced the former abundance of the environment. Wild animals were hunted first for food, and later for pest reduction and sport. Trees were cleared for fields, and most trees, after saving those needed on the farm for fencing, fuel, and construction, were burned. The trees were in such abundance as to be thought inexhaustible. They had to be removed before agriculture could begin and there was no market for logs, so they were destroyed where they fell. The small prairies were plowed, with great difficulty, or used for natural grazing lands.

The new settlers gradually increased their fields, planting corn the first years. Corn, wild animals, and the small gardens supplied food upon arrival while the log cabin was built and life in the wilderness began. As the farmed acres expanded, more corn, larger gardens, and later wheat were planted. Wheat and livestock often provided the first salable surpluses, and the cash generated helped the farmers buy machinery and improve production.

At the end of the study period, life was much different in northeastern Indiana. Health was improving; education and general social and cultural conditions were advancing. Contact with the east was increased. The isolation of the frontier, both in markets and in society, was reduced. The Erie Canal had much to do with this. A route for agricultural

goods was opened to the eastern markets. There was now impetus to produce surplus for profit and to improve local transportation routes to decrease the cost of hauling the surplus. Information about agricultural improvement came west--new machines, methods, and improved seed and stock.

> The men who took up farm land in the Middle West were materialists, not escapists. They did not flee to the wilderness to get away from society, they came to the frontier to secure the blessings of the good life for themselves and their posterity. They were ready and willing to work hard, and all they needed was a commercial product, something they could send back to the older settled areas to pay for the goods they desired. They sought land and a farming system which would deliver such a product[189].

Though in 1820 the study area had seemed far from a place where successful farming could be done, those with foresight and determination could see it ahead. By about 1850, it was arriving; the frontier stage had been passed.

The major contributions of this study have been in environmental perception and analysis and in the movement of the frontier. The northeastern Indiana environment has been described and analyzed between the years 1820 and 1850. The quick passage of the frontier stage through the study area, involving about ten years, has been charted using settlement progression and environmental changes. Northeastern Indiana advanced from wilderness to successful agricultural settlement

through the frontier stage, and that advance and the associated changes in the landscape imposed by the settlers has been the subject of this study.

Many related topics for study remain. Whether the progression and dissolution of the frontier in northeastern Indiana was fast or slow could be measured by doing a similar study of another area. The sequence of man's impact is important, and a study of northern Michigan, for example, where logging preceded farming, might show settlement progressing at a different rate. A study of the retreat of unsuccessful settlers from the frontier might serve to bring the frontier closer to reality. The myth of the frontiersman rarely includes anything on those who failed, yet their abandoned homesteads helped others get ahead in settlement by providing farms that were already begun. There are many unanswered and unstudied aspects of the frontier that this work, and many others, may eventually fill.

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