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AGRICULTURE IN ILLINOIS DURING THE CIVIL WAR PERIOD, 1850-1870

BY

RUSSELL HOWARD ANDERSON

B. S., University of Illinois, 1923
A. M., University of Illinois, 1925

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORY IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, 1929

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I</td>
<td>The Physical State</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II</td>
<td>Farm Conditions in the 'Fifties</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III</td>
<td>Agriculture in the Early 'Fifties</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IV</td>
<td>The Boom of the Middle 'Fifties</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter V</td>
<td>Panic and Recovery</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VI</td>
<td>The Shock of War</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VII</td>
<td>The Progress of the War</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VIII</td>
<td>The Post War Reaction</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IX</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td></td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td></td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AGRICULTURE IN ILLINOIS DURING THE CIVIL WAR PERIOD,
1850 to 1870

CHAPTER I
THE PHYSICAL STATE

The state of Illinois is and has been since ante-bellum days one of the important centers of American agriculture. The story of its agricultural life has been similar in many respects to that of a large part of the belt in which it lies, but it has peculiarities of location, soil, and stages of development with relation to certain larger economic changes incident to the Civil War period that set it somewhat apart. So important are these background screens upon which the picture is thrown that they merit description.

The area of its 56,043 square miles lies within the parallels of 36° 59' and 42° 30' north latitude, giving the state a length of 386 miles, slightly over 5 1/2 degrees. Its extreme width is 216 miles. Not only has it a wide diversity of climatic and soil characteristics over its area but by virtue of its water boundaries it has a peculiar transportation situation, a fact of relatively greater importance in the 'fifties than now. The Mississippi furnishes a highway along its entire western edge, the Ohio and the Wabash give access by water to the southeastern section, while the Illinois pierces the center of the northwestern two-thirds of the state and furnishes a route by which the southern and northern water systems have been joined. Lake Michigan with outlets to the east has been of inestimable value to Illinois agriculture. It is scarcely too much to say that in
large measure it made that agriculture possible, particularly during the period under consideration.

Illinois is a part of a broad plain of great fertility. Its relief features do not set it off as a distinct unit or cause great influence on its climate. In general the state is flat, a fact of much importance to agriculture and transportation, but in detail it has some irregularities. Both at the north and the south points rise well above the surrounding levels, while between the state slopes imperceptibly southward about two and a half feet to the mile, broken only by valley trenches and glacial moraines.

Of vital importance to the farmer in the early days was the distribution of timber and prairie over this area. In general the northern part of the state was prairie and the southern timber covered. In the fifteen southern counties there was little prairie. Much of the upland was covered originally with a fine growth of white, black and red oak, hickory, walnut, beech, and sugar maple. The heavy timber on the bottom lands included much oak, cottonwood, bald cypress and tupelo gum. Further north the

1. See prairie-timber map in Gerhard, Illinois As It Is.
2. Illinois Central Railroad Company Offers.... 1,500,000 Acres.... Lands, p. 28; Cultivator, XXVII, (1860), p. 278.
3. Union County, of which about one-fourth lay in the Mississippi bottoms, was almost entirely timbered. Parts of the Mississippi bottoms as in Jackson County, were too wet for timber. Geological Survey of Illinois, I. p. 278-475; III, p. 54. 58. 52; Trans. of the (Ill.) Dept. of Agric., 1871, p. 207. Cf. Ferguson, America By River and Rail, p. 381.
prairies increased until in Clay and Richland Counties the prairie and timber were about equally divided while Jasper County had one-third timber. The early settlers came into Southern Illinois and chose timber land in preference to prairie. Elimination of prairie fires allowed new growth so that in some places there was probably as much timber in the seventies as at first settlement. As late as 1873 it was estimated that there was 43.5 per cent of the land south of the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad (from East St. Louis to Lawrenceville) classified as woodland, while between that railroad and 40° there was 28 per cent, and north of 40° there was 11.4 per cent so classified.

Further north prairies began to appear, usually covering the higher ground between streams while the timber growth hugged the water courses and adjacent bluffs. Occasionally there were "oak openings", which were thinly timbered local areas in broken ground. As far north as the center of the state the timber shrank to the streams and the prairie predominated. For example,

5. Ibid., p. 97.
6. Report Dept. of Agric., 1873, p. 50-51. The census of 1870 gives Southern Illinois 23.7 per cent, Central 10.8 per cent, and Northern 7.5 per cent. See U. S. Census, 1870, and Report Dept. of Agric., 1873, p. 306. Prof. Stewart estimates that in 1850, possibly 45 per cent of the land in farms in Illinois was "woodland". The census of 1860 classified 56.1 per cent of the land as unimproved and later census figures would indicate that three-fourths of this was woodland. By 1870 this percentage had dropped from 45 to 20 per cent. Stewart, "Land Tenure in the United States with Special Reference to Illinois". Univ. of Ill. Studies in the Social Sciences, Vol. V, p. 48.
Montgomery and Sangamon Counties had about one-third of their surface originally in timber. 6

Northern Illinois was predominantly prairie. There were few large bodies of timber but there were groves, some of which were several miles in extent, dotted here and there, furnishing timber and fuel to the settlers on the adjacent prairie. This timber was not sufficient for the country when fully settled and although much young timber, oak, hickory, walnut, poplar and other species sprang up the farmers soon began to plant locust trees for timber and shade. 9

Skirting the southern part of the state in a rough V is the strip of river bottom along the Wabash, Ohio, and Mississippi Rivers. This strip varies greatly in width as between the upper Wabash bottom and the American Bottom near East St. Louis and between adjacent sections of the same area. But it has a typical

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8. Geol. Survey of Ill., V, p. 306; VI, p. 148. Scott County seems to have been an exception to the general rule in the fact that it was heavily timbered except in the Illinois River bottom. C. F. Keener, Naples, Ill., May 3, 1856 to C. F. McCormick, MSS. Files McCormick Hist. Ass'n Library. Unless otherwise noted all later references to McCormick materials are to be understood as letters to C. F. McCormick or his company under various titles and will be referred to as the McCormick MSS.

form throughout. It was at the time of settlement largely covered with timber and much of it was too wet for cultivation even apart from the frequent overflows. In many cases these came in the early months and did not interfere with crops. Where it could be drained and cleared the soil was very rich, particularly in the low bottom. The second bottom was less subject to overflow but received less benefit from sedimentation and was less fertile. The bottom lands along the Mississippi varied in width up to six miles. In Union County they were four miles wide, and, when not too wet, were the best corn lands in the county. In much of this section the bottoms were covered with ponds, sloughs, etc., which remained throughout the year. 10

The best known and most fertile section of this region was the area known as the American Bottom. This belt commenced just below the city of Alton and extended to the mouth of the Kaskaskia River in Randolph County and contained some 200,000 acres. It varied from one to six miles, reaching its greatest width in lower Madison and upper St. Clair counties. Much of it was subject to periodical inundation and some was too wet for cultivation. The soil was a deep, mellow, sandy loam of great fertility and produced large crops of corn, oats, potatoes, etc. It was from the gardens of the higher parts of this bottom that St. Louis was

mainly supplied with vegetables in the 'sixties.\textsuperscript{11}

One of the most outstanding topographic features of the state is the Ozark Ridge, a spur of the Ozark Highlands which enters Illinois in Jackson and Union Counties and extends a distance of some seventy miles to the escarpment at the Ohio and Saline Rivers in Gallatin and Hardin Counties. Its northern edge crosses Jackson, Williamson, Saline, and Callatin Counties and its southern edge deploys irregularly over the southern parts of Union, Johnson, Pope, and Hardin Counties. This section is very rough, well dissected, and reaches a height of 1055 feet in Pope County—750 feet above the Ohio River twelve miles distant. It has an area of about 800 square miles. Numerous streams have eroded the area into rugged hills and ridges, with valleys too narrow in some places for farming. On the ridges many farms were early opened and these proved to be the most favorable for the coming staple, fruit, as well as the most healthful.\textsuperscript{12}

Lying to the north of the Ozark section is an area which might be designated the timber and prairie region, extending to the late Wisconsin and Illinois moraines, reaching to the north edge of Cumberland County, west to Christian County and thence southwest. For the most part this section is level with the exception of the old stream beds which dissect it, the chief of

\textsuperscript{12} Geol. Survey of Ill., I, p. 455; III, p. 61-62; Ridgely, The Geography of Illinois, p. 61-64. A physical map of the Illinois Ozarks is given by Ridgely, opposite page 62.
which are the Kaskaskia, called the Okaw, the Embarrass, and the Little Wabash.

The proportion of prairie varied in this section, increasing toward the north. They frequently the prairies were small, two or three miles across, and usually had a mound within them. They occupied the space between the streams while timber almost invariably lined the watercourses and adjacent bluffs. Occasionally there were prairies along the lower courses of the streams, called "bottom prairies" in contrast to the "ridge prairies" on the uplands.

Among the peculiarities of this section were the post oak flats. These occupied the land between the bluffs and the prairie flats and in some cases toward the south they crowded out the prairie completely. They were timbered with scattering post oak and black jack with very little undergrowth as a rule. There were also spots known as "scalds" which had a whitish soil requiring excellent culture to produce good crops.

Further north in the black dirt region east of the Illinois River the prairie continued to increase until it occupied over four-fifths of the land in the neighborhood of McLean and Logan Counties. The timber lay along the streams as further south.
The surface features here showed a marked contrast with those below the moraine. The glacier left the black soil which it brought scattered about in billowy waves giving a pleasing varied appearance to the section. This irregularity gave good drainage to some fields but left adjoining land as ponds to catch the run-off. The streams were younger and had not sufficiently dissected the surface to provide adequate drainage except in close proximity to the tributaries of the Illinois River, particularly the Sangamon. 19

A striking physical feature of the state is the Illinois Valley extending from Grundy County to the Mississippi. For the first sixty-three miles the stream flows westward in a narrow valley with a rather uniform width of a mile and a half, except in the Morris basin, and with a steep gradient. Below the "Great Bend" near Hennepin, where the stream turns southward, the flood plain broadens to from two to five miles and the river meanders over it in some sections, the gradient being less than that above. The middle section is unique in the variable width of the flood plain. The lower section is much wider than that further up, suggesting greater age. In its middle section the valley floor lies from 150 to 250 feet below the upland plain. It was originally timbered and subject to overflow. 20

19. Cf. Ibid., VI, p. 341
Between the Illinois and the Mississippi Rivers lay a section much like that east of the Illinois except that it had more original timber land, particularly toward the south. It was covered by the upper Illinois glaciation and was better drained than that east of the river by reason of its narrow width which enabled streams to cut more readily to its center. It contained oak ridges, timber skirted streams, and occasional barrens. Some of its area was too wet for cultivation. This part of the state was early settled and proved to be a rich farming section.  

Lying along its western edge were the upper Mississippi bottoms, possessing no peculiar characteristics. They were narrow, usually covered with timber, often subject to overflow, and commonly very productive when cleared.

The northwestern corner of Illinois, comprising Jo Daviess, and parts of Carroll and Stephenson Counties, formed a unique section. It was unglaciated and presented a ruggedness unknown in Illinois except in parts of the Ozark Spur. "Knobs" and "Mounds" characterised the surface. These rose to a height of 1241 feet, the highest in the state, at Charles Mound near the state line. It contained some level prairie, some rolling prairie, and rough lands of varying topography, giving occasional farming areas. In the early days it was largely wooded. It was one of the least desirable agricultural sections in the northern two-thirds of the state. It had the advantage of better health conditions than most

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That part of northern Illinois lying north of the upper Illinois River presented a varied surface with great fertility of soil. It was heavily glaciated, was usually rolling, with fair drainage, particularly near the Illinois and Rock Rivers. It was largely prairie except along the streams. Few sections of the state could compare as a farming region with the famous Rock River Valley. The generally level surface facilitated the building of railroads which opened this section for profitable commercial agriculture.

Upon the nature of the soil depends much of the agricultural life of a section. Illinois presents a variety of soils with varying origins. Many of the characteristics of the soils of the state are traceable to the ice sheets which covered, at different times, the entire state except parts of Jo Daviess, Carroll, and Stephenson Counties in the northwest, parts of Calhoun and Pike Counties, and all or parts of eleven counties in the southern tip of the state. Here are to be found the residuary soils which are covered in large part, however, by loess deposits. Only in the rougher portions are residuary soils exposed.

The early glaciation covered most of the state nearly to the tip with a coat of deposited material of varying nature. After a long period this was covered with silt deposits of loess and white clay which forms the surface of much of southern and western Illinois.

Illinois, including nearly all the unglaciated sections as well. Such deposits as were laid down further north were covered by the later glaciers. This later sheet reached the point known as the Shelbyville moraine where the drift deposits sometimes reached 150 feet. As this ice sheet withdrew other moraines were left scattered throughout central and northern Illinois. Some of this later drift was also covered with a loess-like silty material usually thinner than that further south and not continuous. In some cases, as in Bureau County, it reached a depth of eight feet.

Soils vary so much within relatively short distances that a detailed description or map of such is difficult to give. Soils may be classified roughly and their general location noted. Residuary soils, formed from the decay of underlying rocks are found in the driftless portions of the state where loess is absent. The character of these soils depends upon the nature of the underlying rocks. They are not considered as being as strong as the glacial soils but with rotation will yield well and have good staying qualities.25

Glacial clay soils cover a large portion of the new drift area between the Shelbyville moraine and Lake Michigan, largely in the northeast corner of the state. It is very productive, being composed of varied materials, much of which is finely divided. It forms much of the black dirt belt.26 Associated with this glacial soil and along the streams leading away from the Shelbyville moraine is a gravelly soil caused by glacial overwash, streams, and lakes. Where these deposits are capped with loam they

are very fertile. Of similar origin are the sandy soils laid down along old lake borders, streams, and, in some cases, on moraines. This sand, where coarse, is unproductive, but where fine as in the belt along the Illinois River in Tusheion and Mason Counties it is fertile.

Along the borders of the principal streams in the older drift area in Southern Illinois, and occasionally in the north, is a pervious loess, very porous, and producing good crops. Plant roots readily penetrate this soil to depths of thirty feet. In some cases this loess is a white clay. Less pervious is the silt covering the black soil district of the western part of the state north of the Alton-Pana line and west of the new drift area, and in some places small sections of the newer drift. This class of soil is commonly covered with prairie grass, giving a thick layer of humus.

Of the finer silts, nearly impervious to water, two classes, white clay and gumbo, are to be distinguished. The white clay covers much of Illinois south of a line through Alton and Litchfield to the state line at the northern edge of Clark County. Much of the water standing on the surface must evaporate while in times of drought little relief can come from below. This is less true of the southeastern part of the state than elsewhere. Over large areas this white clay is underlain by a refractory clay.

sometimes known as "hardpan", which is nearly impervious and which
in some places comes near the surface. This class of soil is of
great duration if properly handled but produces less abundantly
than the black dirt further north. Gumbo is to be found along
certain streams.

Peaty soils are more common in the north part of the state
than in the south and are found in poorly drained basins. Where
drained they often produce well but crops requiring large quanti­
ties of mineral foods seldom grow well on them.

Such is the distribution of soil types. The effects upon
agriculture will be determined somewhat by the plant foods avail­
able in these soils. Modern thought inclines more toward a dynamic
rather than a quantitative theory of soil fertility, but no amount
of good culture can make up for a lack of elements necessary for
plant growth. Of equal importance is the availability of the
plant food. The factor of good tillage is of great importance in
helping make available the latent elements and is equally applic­
able to most soil types.

Of the elements required for plant growth only three, nitrogen,
phosphorus, and potassium are so scarce as to be limiting factors
in crop production. For the most part the question of the best
means of retaining or replacing depleted soil elements was scarcely
a factor in the Civil War period. Farming then was an exhaust­
tive process in which the limitations on crops operated when

29. Geol. Survey of Ill., III, 1855, p. 85, 171; Prairie Farmer,

30. The preceding description of Illinois soil formations
follows closely Leverett, Soils of Illinois. The following treat­
ment of fertility is taken from Hopkins and Pettit, "The (cont.)
the available plant food fell below the amount required by the customary yields. The land might not be exhausted but under the existing practice it was often depleted. Throughout the period under consideration replenishing or conserving plant foods was almost unknown. Some attention was given after a time to better tillage which would do much to make the plant food available.

Quantitatively the grey silt loam of the lower Illinoisan glaciation, covering much of southern Illinois below the Shelbyville moraine and lying on tight clay, is deficient in phosphorus, and, compared with the black prairie soil further north, it is lacking in nitrogen and potassium. Much of it also needs lime to correct soil acidity. The brown silt and brown clay loams above this area are better supplied with all the elements. The hilly timber uplands throughout the state are deficient in phosphorus and nitrogen. The bottom lands with the exception of the sand dunes, are usually well supplied with food elements. In general the plant food content of Illinois soils increases from the oldest glaciated soils to the newest soils. The level prairies have suffered less from erosion and leaching than have the hilly timber lands.

The amount of available plant foods is of more importance than the aggregate content. On the basis of Dr. Hopkins' study, the prairie lands of the lower Illinoisan glaciation contain enough available plant food by practical methods of farming to produce thirty-two bushels of corn, fifty bushels of oats, and twenty-five

30. (cont.) Fertility in Illinois Soils. Univ. of Ill. Agric. Experiment Station Bulletin, No. 125, 1908. This bulletin contains a soil map of Illinois.
bushels of wheat. Production is limited by a shortage of phosphorus. The undulating prairie lands with brown silt loam of the north two-thirds of the state could, on this calculation, yield fifty to fifty-five bushels of corn, seventy-five to eighty bushels of oats, and thirty-five to forty bushels of wheat. They are also lacking in phosphorus. For the black clay loams of the flat prairies in this same area the figures would be from sixty to eighty-five bushels of corn, eighty to one hundred ten bushels of oats, and forty-five to sixty bushels of wheat. Phosphorus and potassium are the limiting elements.

On the hilly timber uplands the nitrogen supply limits the production. Comparable figures would be twenty to twenty-five bushels of corn, forty bushels of oats, and twenty bushels of wheat. The undulating timber uplands would have averages slightly higher while the bottom lands would compare favorably with the brown silt loam soils.

These figures are not given with the implication that they are exact for the present or past, but are given to show some relative strength of soil in various sections. According to the dynamic theory of fertility the tillage would be a vital factor and the absence of plant foods or decreasing yields would be no satisfactory criteria of soil exhaustion. This is granted but it might be expected that good or poor tillage would have an affect somewhat in proportion to the possible plant foods that could be liberated. It has, therefore, been thought wise to give these general figures. In most cases, particularly early in the period, the tillage was very carelessly and poorly done throughout most of the state and relative depletion may be considered in that light. Methods of farming will be treated later. Detailed descrip- tion of the soils is inadvisable for the reason that statistical and descriptive data on agricultural practice and results are not available for comparable detailed areas.
The climate of Illinois presents no unusual features. The rainfall is moderate averaging 33.48 inches in the northern, 38.01 inches in the central, and 42.19 inches in the southern section. The elevations in the state cause no apparent effect on the rainfall except in the Ozark Ridge where there is a heavier precipitation by some seven inches on the southern side than on the northern. Other areas of heavy rainfall are along the Wabash River and the Mississippi as far north as Madison County. The months of heaviest rainfall in the northern and central sections are May and June, and in the southern part March and June. Although occasional drouths and wet seasons occur the rainfall is sufficient and satisfactory for successful agriculture.

The temperature of the state is subject to extreme fluctuations. The altitude has slight influence on the temperature but the range from south to north averages about ten degrees. The temperature is more uniform in the south than in the north.

The length of the growing season varies from 150 days in the extreme northern part of the state to 260 in the southern tip. By districts the number of days between killing frosts is about 160 days in the northern, 172 days in the central, and 187 days in the southern. This is of slight importance in the culture of small grains but of more effect on corn and the length of the growing season sets a rigid limit to the culture of cotton in the state.

These figures are for the years 1872 to 1902. The meteorological data cited in this chapter is taken from Mosier, "Climate of Illinois", Univ. of Ill., Agric. Experiment Station Bulletin, No. 86, (1905).
Another factor of importance to the early settler was that of water. Those settlers who came to the southern part of the state stayed near the timber where springs were usually found. They feared the prairie partly because they thought water was not available. These fears were largely groundless as water was procurable from wells at depths of from twelve to fifty feet, usually less than thirty feet.33

33. U. S. Geol. Survey, XXXVIII, p. 550-767; Geol. Survey of Ill., IV, p. 125; VI, p. 182; Ferguson, America by River and Rail, p. 378; American Agriculturist, XVI, (1857), p. 252; XX, (1881), p. 175-173; The Illinois Central Railroad Company Offers... 1,500,000 Acres.... Lands, p. 28. 30. 44.
CHAPTER II

FARM CONDITIONS IN THE 'FIFTIES

Illinois opened the decade of the 'fifties with a population of 851,470. Three-fourths of the inhabitants lived north of Vandalia and were principally of northern or European stock. Forty-four per cent were in counties without railroads, canals, or navigable rivers.1 Nowhere was there a heavy concentration of rural population. Cook County led with 43,385, followed by Adams, Fulton, Madison and St. Clair, all with over 20,000. At the other end was Livingston County with 1,552, Piatt with 1,606, Alexander with 2,484 and Hardin with 2,887. There were ten incorporated towns in the state and there were villages of from 3,000 to 5,000 population where there had not been a trail ten years before.2

The immigration to Illinois was heavy by the early 'fifties. Most of the immigrants before 1850 had come from the laboring population of the older states and Europe and had been of limited means. They had settled along streams, near timber, where they built rude houses and lived a rough and hard life.3 Now men of greater resources were coming and buying land, some of which was partially improved.4

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2. Chicago Daily Journal, June 19, 1850; Illinois State Register, June 22, 1850; Ferguson, America by River and Rail, p. 294.
4. Springfield Journal, May 19, 1853; Illinois State Register, April 21, 1853.
This immigration infused new life into the farming population at the same time that the means of transportation that induced it allowed a commercial agriculture to develop. A writer in the early 'fifties confessed that "as a whole home bred farmers (were) necessarily among the most ignorant and bigoted members of the community''. They read little, travelled less, and were particularly slow to adopt improvements.  

The chief care of the new settlers was to provide for the first winter. If they arrived in time they customarily plowed a few acres in May and planted some sod corn, put out some garden, made some prairie hay, and sowed some wheat in August or September. By strenuous efforts they managed to secure enough "hog and hominy", which was their chief dependence, for the first year. Many came too late to make a crop and their needs created much of the demand that stimulated agriculture for several years.

Unfortunately the nativity of the residents of the state was not included in the census of 1850 except in general terms. In that year there were 353,753 who had been born in the state; 402,396 in the United States outside of Illinois; and 111,692 in foreign countries.

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7. In 1860 there were 1,357,304 American born in the state and 324,645 foreign born. This number includes the large German accession, (120,804 by 1860), and that from Ireland (87,573) and England (41,745). Of the American born residents 706,925 were born in the state; 131,887 in Ohio; 121,508 in New York; 85,628 in Pennsylvania; 62,010 in Indiana; 60,196 in Kentucky; 29,012 in Tennessee; 22,975 in Virginia; and 19,053 in Massachusetts. Some 175,000 were from the southern states, much less than from either two of the three states, New York, Ohio or Pennsylvania. United States Census, 1850, p. 717; 1860, Population, p. 104.
In southern Illinois the original settlers were mostly from
the southern states, largely from Kentucky, Tennessee, North
Carolina and Virginia. There were many also from Ohio, some of
whom had come from the South. These settlers brought with them
the modes of thinking and doing to which they had been accustomed
in the border South. Coming from a timbered section they preferred
timber land to prairie. They had "a heartiness of character in
lieu of the reserve of Plymouth Rock, minds of natural strength
and shrewdness, rather than cultivated cuteness and traditional
talent for trading.... The dollars (did) not haunt them as they
(did) most men".

In 1852 and 1853 the immigration into southern Illinois from
Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina was strong.
Many were crossing the Ohio River at Shawneetown and real estate
doubled in eighteen months in parts of the southern section.
As the Illinois Central Railroad reached the lower part of the
state a wave of immigration accompanied it. Other railroad projects
attracted many. These new settlers were largely "Yankees" and,
from their point of view at least, they were much more energetic
than the original southern stock. By 1860 these northern settlers
comprised about one-third of the population.

8. Emery's Journal of Agriculture. i, (1858), p. 182;
Johnson, Illinois in the 'Fifties, p. 110; Battey, Counties of
Cumberland, Jasper and Highland, p. 148-149; Ferrin, History of
Effingham County, p. 78.
9. Shawneetown Argus, cited by Chicago Daily Democratic
Press, Nov. 6, 1862; State Register, Feb. 24, 1853.
10. New England Farmer, XIV, (1862), p. 208; State Register,
Nov. 6, 1862.
These various elements did not always live in peace. They were of different minds politically and on election days mutterings, whiskey and fist fights enlivened the relationship of these groups. When the Germans, who were Catholics, settled new complications arose and in some sections a strong Know-Nothing feeling developed. The northern part of Crawford County was settled from Ohio and Indiana while in the southeastern portion there was a community from North Carolina and Tennessee. A resident described their relationship as that of "Jews and Samaritans."

The "Yankees" seem to have been welcomed by the more progressive "Egyptians" because they brought a new spirit of enterprise and education into that region.

The southern emigration pushed northward into central Illinois along the wooded rivers, avoiding the prairies. At the same time the northern movement met the oncoming wave and fused with it. Many also came overland from Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia into central Illinois. There were also many Germans, Irish and Scotch-Irish. In religion they were Lutherans, German-Reformed, Mennonites, Amish, Dunkards, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Catholics, and United Brethren. By the outbreak of the war this foreign immigration, New England, middle state, and southern mixture had been fairly well assimilated and unified.

11. Perrin, History of Effingham County, p. 78, 129-130; Samuel Park, Uticaville, Nov. 9, 1854, McCormick MSS.
12. An important English settlement grew up in Edwards and Wabash Counties. The population was thrifty and largely devoted to agriculture. Geol. Survey of Ill., VI, p. 62.
14. There was a heavy German immigration into the region around St. Clair County and east from 1836 to 1854. Trans. Ill. State Ag. Soc., VIII, (1869-70), p. 208; Belleville Advocate. (cont.)
Western Illinois had a similar mixture lacking in homogeneity to an extent that hindered its development. The native American population came from all the states. The immigration was heavy from Indiana and Ohio. There were also many frugal and industrious Germans who were excellent farmers.  

Northern Illinois was growing rapidly in population in the early 'fifties, with accessions from New England, the middle states, and Europe. There were many Irish, Swedes, Germans, and English, but few from the southern and border states. Some of the immigrants stayed in Chicago but most of them moved to the interior, particularly along the line of the Illinois and Michigan Canal, the Illinois River, and the Galena Railroad. In 1851 Chicago received and sent on at least three times as many immigrants as in any previous year. A large proportion of these were farmers from New York and New England who brought their implements and household goods with them. They were men of some means and high intelligence. Most of these farmers settled along the canal and the Illinois River where they enjoyed the advantage of both a northern and a southern market. Speculators who had been holding

16. Gem of the Prairie, May 31, 1861. A large Swedish colony was established in Henry County. They were industrious but had difficulty with their neighbors because of their retention of old customs. Illinois Daily Journal, April 18, July 31, 1850. Reaper agents in Ogle County found it necessary to take an interpreter who could speak German when selling reapers there. Wm. Marshall, Adeline, April 22, 1854, McCormick MSS.
large amounts of land were selling and the tide of immigration was strong. In the Rock River Valley most of the settlers were from New England, New York and northern Ohio. They were sober, moral, industrious, and enterprising.

The rural character of the population of the state was shown by the fact that of the 215,257 persons whose occupation was given by the census of 1850 over 140,000 were farmers. There were in addition many in other work closely associated with agriculture or dependent upon it.

While there was a heavy immigration from the East there was also a live emigration, particularly to the gold fields of California. The fever raged until 1852. Many forehanded farmers sold their farms and joined the rush. The price of horses and equipment rose as a result of the increased demand which occurred. In one day in April 1852 forty teams going to California crossed the Mississippi at Quincy and in 1853 plans were being made to

17. La Salle-Peru did not appear in the census of 1850 but in 1853 they had a population of 6,000. Ferguson, America by River and Rail, p. 394; State Register, June 5, 1851. Joliet Signal, March 30, 1852.

18. Rock River Democrat, Nov. 1, 1853; Prairie Farmer, XIV, (1854), p. 217 describes the mixed population of Whiteside County; Wm. C. Leyburn, May 27, 1856, McCormick MSS.

19. There were 46 nurserymen, 49 drovers, 14 cattle dealers and 23 milkmen in 1850. U. S. Census, 1850, p. 727-728. In 1860 there were among the 395,937 persons listed, 153,646 farmers, 4,472,217 farm laborers, 96 drovers, 26 cattle dealers, 60 herdsmen, and 16 dairymen. U. S. Census, 1860, Population, p. 78-105.
take a drove of cattle across the plains from Mason County. The great scourges of the state were the ague—the "ager" of the settlers—and malaria. At certain times of the year when sudden changes of temperature occurred the whole country shook with the maladies. The victims would sometimes shake an hour or two a day for a year before they would succeed in breaking the ague. Sometimes the chills would occur every second day or only at certain seasons of the year. A physician reported that every family in Clark County had been

20. Quincy Whig, Feb. 19, 1860; March 16, April 26, 1860; State Register, Feb. 19, March 7, 19, April 4, 1860; Joliet Signal, March 30, 1860; History of Will County, (1878), p. 220; Prairie Farmer, N. S. IX. (1862), p. 103; M. L. Dunlap, Leyden, March 21, 1852 to A. E. Baker, Lorraine, H. Y., Dunlap Letters. B. H. Galton, Bath, Jan. 5, 1852, to D. A. Scone, describes the projected cattle drive, Williams-Woodbury Collection. The Rockford Forum, March 20, 1850, reported that from 46 to 60,000 were expected to go from around that city. Evidently no such number went. Two-hundred-fifty left Adams County, said the Alton Telegraph, April 12, 1860. It was expected that from 400 to 500 would leave Pike County in two weeks. State Register, April 4, 1860. Cf. Johnson, Illinois in the 'Fifties, Chapter III.

21. A tabulation made by M. L. Dunlap in the Democratic Press in December 1866 from the census of 1860 shows the deaths in the United States to be 1 in 73, New York and Ohio 1 in 66, Massachusetts 1 in 53, and Illinois 1 in 73. In Perry County—timber and prairie—the figure was 1 in 99; Jackson County—with the Muddy River—1 in 73; Union County—settled mainly on the hills—1 in 94; Alexander County—river bottoms—1 in 31; and Pulaski County on the Ohio—1 in 41. Dunlap Clippings. In sickness, however, the showing was apparently not so favorable.

attacked by malaria in 1854.\textsuperscript{23} The bottom lands were especially subject to fevers as were the prairies which were often so poorly drained that large ponds stood on them all summer.\textsuperscript{24} There seems to have been a change in the late 'fifties from the periodic autumnal fever to the "continued fever", some of which may have been typhoid. Withal there seems to have been a decrease in the amount of malaria as compared with thirty years before.\textsuperscript{25}

There were other health difficulties. For example, Livingston County, in north central Illinois, which had the smallest population of any county in the state in 1850 was retarded in its settlement by the fear of milk sickness. The prevalence of this disease in the state was sufficient to cause a prospective settler to inquire whether Champaign County was a "milk sick country".\textsuperscript{26}

As cures for the diseases prevalent the doctors prescribed antimonial and arsenical poisons for pneumonia fever and calomel for the ague and malaria. Mothers prepared home remedies and the village store furnished a supply of patent medicines in great variety and quantity. The panaceas offered covered the whole

\textsuperscript{23} Rawlings, The Rise and Fall of Disease in Illinois, I., p. 40, 42.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 40. The Illinois-Michigan Canal materially improved the health of the section through which it extended.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 41 cites Report of the Illinois Medical Society, 1864; New England Farmer, XIV. (1862), p. 208. Rawlings, op. cit., p. 43 quotes with sanction the statement of Carr in The Illini, A Story of the Prairie, that people from southern Illinois spread fevers along the road to the Galena mines where they went to work each year after crop time.
range—elixirs, ointments, syrups, liniments, sarsaparilla, chologogue, catholicon, and resurrection pills. Ayers' Ague Cure soon disposed of that disease it was claimed, while Ayers' Pills were advertised under the heading, "The Poetry of Physic".27

The house in which the farmer of the 'fifties lived varied with age of the settlement, the prevalence of building material, and the prosperity and taste of the individual. Where timber was readily available the log cabin was the customary pioneer home but these were scarce enough in northern Illinois in 1860 to attract attention.28 In most parts of that section timber was scarce and many farmers were not satisfied with a log house. Many of the settlers lived in tents while breaking their farms and then built frame houses with lumber which was shipped through Chicago in most instances. A one-story house, fourteen by twenty-six feet, with two rooms, plastered and painted, cost from $225 to $250. Others were built at costs ranging up to $1,000.29 Fine sheeting was


28. Prairie Farmer, X, (1860), p. 266. C. W. Marsh describes a one room cabin in DeKalb County in his boyhood. It was fourteen by eighteen feet with an attic which was reached by a ladder. The floor was made of puncheons and the roof of oak "shakes". Clay filled the crevices. This house and forty acres was rented in 1860 for $50. Recollections 1837-1916, Cf. Johnson, Op. cit., p. 27-28.

29. Ferguson, America by River and Rail, p. 378; Illinois Central Railroad Co...... Offers...... 1,500,000 Acres...... Lands, p. 72; American Agriculturist, XVI, (1857), p. 352; Prairie Farmer, XI, (1862), p. 378; Trans. Ill. State Hist Soc., 1912, p. 51. The editor of the Prairie Farmer wrote, after travelling near Peoria, that the country was new and primitive and that there were many log houses, XI, (1861), p. 290.
rare enough in 1855 to cause much comment in Henry County by
eighbors who predicted that it would not hold shingles. All
too frequently the houses built in northern and central Illinois
were left without the protection and beauty of trees.

In southern Illinois where timber was more plentiful the log
cabin was to be found more frequently—perhaps most commonly.
These cabins were of the usual frontier description. They were
made of partly hewn logs, covered with clap-boards, floored with
puncheons and provided with a fireplace.

It must not be supposed that the type or size of houses was
uniform in any section or within any neighborhood. The houses
varied from one room log cabins with dirt floors to large frame
or brick houses. On the whole, however, it seems safe to say
that the houses were rough and ill-provided and that those in the
northern section of the state were better than those in southern
Illinois.

The log cabins and the frame houses that were rapidly suc-
ceeding them had furnishings in keeping. The fireplace where the
cooking was done was flanked by pots and pans hanging on pegs in
the logs and by a home-made cupboard. Stoves for heating and
cooking were being increasingly used, especially in frame houses.
A water bucket with a gourd dipper was to be found in every house.

30. Murphy, "The John Murphy Family as Pioneers in Illinois".
32. A good description of the log cabin as they were built
in southern Illinois and Indiana is given by Selon Robinson and
quoted by Regan, Western Wilds of America, p. 361-362. Cf. John-
Hanging on the walls were the guns, powder horn and bullet pouch. The dining table, with the leaves down, stood by the wall. The beds were provided with feather or shuck ticks, and often had a trundle bed beneath. Perhaps there was a chest of drawers and a hand loom on which much of the family clothing was woven. Screens were unknown and the children waved branches over the table to keep off the flies.22

Now nearly other more pretentious houses fit this description it is hard to say. The husk beds which had served the pioneer were passing and by the end of the ‘fifties corn husks ceased to have a market value for that purpose.34 Rag carpets, so common in a later day, were luxuries enjoyed only by aristocrats in the early ‘fifties. Brussels, Imperial Three-Fly and ingrain carpets were being advertised by the end of the decade.35

By the early ‘sixties sewing machines were described as common and were extensively advertised but they were sufficient

35. Illinois State Register, Jan. 9, 1859. M. L. Dunlap, Leyden, Cook County, a prominent figure in Illinois agriculture and nursery business, wrote in 1852, "When I tell you that we have no yarn carpets you will see that we do not belong to the aristocracy & when I go further & say we have no rag carpets you will pity us I suppose. Now I am a great admirer of rag carpets & look forward to the day when all our rooms will be covered with them." He said that his wife was too busy to prepare the rags even if there were any surviving the long and hard usage and the handing down process. They really wore their clothing out.

novelties that they were yet a necessary feature of every county fair. The close of the 'fifties saw such a change in farm life that melodions were beginning to find their way into the better appointed farm homes. The farm trade was of sufficient importance to cause them to be advertised in farm papers.

The lighting of farm homes by kerosene lamps instead of candle and grease oil lamps seems to have been introduced about 1853. However, it was several years before they became common. Kerosene was first used in Lee County in the school houses in 1857, replacing camphene. An advertisement in 1868 praised these lamps as follows, "We have used phosgene, rosin oil, camphene, and we don't know how many other 'fluids' but have never found anything cleaner and cheaper than the 'spirit gas' until we tried kerosene or coal oil... Coal oil is no humbug. It has been in use for a year or two and is rapidly taking the place of 'camphene' and 'spirit gas'."

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36. Prairie Farmer, XXIV, (1861), p. 230. The writer says, "The operators by their dexterity show how easy it is to stitch and crimp and fill and hem and gather, and fairly make the dull tired eyes of some farm housewife twinkle with hope that she may one day become the owner of such a wonder."

37. Illinois Farmer, V, (1860), p. 84, 115. Editor Dunlap rejoiced to hear of several sales of melodions to farmers. They cost $100 while pianos cost $300 and were thus out of the reach of most farmers.

38. Ottawa Free Trader, Sept. 11, 1856; Marsh, op. cit., p. 78; Smith, Recollections of the Pioneers of Lee County, p. 504. Johnson records that he first saw a kerosene lamp in 1859 and that all present were surprised and delighted. See Trans. Ill. State Hist. Soc., 1912, p. 51.
The dress of the farmer was plain. Home-made linsey for the women and jeans and hickory shirting for the men was the common dress and clothing was literally worn out with patch upon patch. Home knit woolen socks colored with copperas, madder or swamp oak bark were worn in summer and winter. Underclothing was worn only by the most fastidious. Working men wore jeans "breeches", hickory or jeans shirts, "galluses" and substantial cowhide boots or heavy shoes called "brogans", which were greased with beeswax and tallow in an ineffectual effort to keep out the water. On special occasions the men donned their "store clothes" with perhaps a pair of tight fitting boots.39

The fare was usually abundant but plain. Too often was there an excess of "hog and hominy" but with many white bread, beef, tea, coffee, fruit and vegetables varied the diet.40 Hogs were easily raised and fattened and bulked large in the larder. Early in the season a neighbor would kill a hog and divide it among his friends to be repaid later in the season in the same manner. It


40. Smith, The Settler's New Home or the Emigrant's Location, p. 56; Johnson, op. cit., p. 18-21; Springfield Daily Register, March 13, 1850; Trans. Ill. State Ag. Soc., I. (1853-4), p. 206. A Marion County correspondent wrote in 1858, "Wheat bread is little known or esteemed (in southern Illinois) and there is not an oven that I know of anywhere out of the railroad villages so that, though the wheat crops are everywhere most promising, men ask you what they are going to do for bread if the weather forbids the getting in of a corn crop." Emory's Journal of Agriculture, I. (1858), p. 356. Hominy was made by treating corn with lye, extracted from wood ashes, to remove the outer covering. It was then cooked.
was customary to salt down one hog for each member of the family. When the winter killing was done the salted pork was hung in the smokehouse where the smoke from a smothered fire, preferably of hickory wood, prepared it for the next season with a rare flavor. Travellers found at the taverns good food of a coarse variety. It was very poorly cooked, however, and was served at a cost of about twenty-five cents. Cunyaghame "had a very good supper of bread and milk and some of the finest potatoes (he) ever ate" at a farm house where he spent the night. Another writer, from central Illinois, recorded that about 1850, "The usual bill of fare was corn cake, fat meat and onions with biscuits for Sunday dinner... Both wheat and corn were ground... the flour taken home and the bran removed by running the ground product through sieves."

Game was plentiful in most sections and was often depended upon for food. The northern part of the state was well supplied with game which not only graced the farmers' tables but supplied the Chicago and New York markets in large quantities.

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41. Murphy, op. cit., Ill. State Hist. Soc., Journal, XVIII, p. 426; Johnson, op. cit., p. 19. A pork vs. no pork controversy was on in the Prairie Farmer in 1861, XXIII.
42. Prairie Farmer, XIV. (1854), p. 251; Ferguson, America by River and Rail, p. 376; Caird, Prairie Farming in America, p. 55 reports poorly cooked food in the homes.
43. A Glimpse of the Great Western Republic, p. 60. He describes on page 110 another supper consisting of meat, potatoes, bread, hot cakes, preserves, hominy and strong green tea.
Prairie chickens, geese, ducks, pigeons, quail, snipe, and plover were found in abundance. Further south as the prairie diminished the timber type of game such as deer, raccoons, opossums, and rabbits was common. Poutry was not commonly raised in the state in large amounts.

As a rule fruit and vegetables seem to have been scarcer than would be expected. A correspondent wrote from southern Illinois in 1858 that vegetables entered very little into the diet of the people generally and that gardens were scarce and confined to some cabbage and a few potatoes. The farm committee of the state agricultural society found no good vegetable gardens on its inspection trip in 1860. The scarcity was relative, however, and garden produce entered into the diet of the farmers generally.

Despite the apparent interest in fruit and the activity of nurserymen, fruit was in most cases lacking on the farms. A writer in the Chicago Tribune in 1850, referring probably to northern Illinois, estimated that there was fruit on less than

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45. Cunynghame, op. cit., p. 54-55; Marsh, op. cit., p. 41-42. Individuals shipped east several tons of quail and prairie chickens in the winter of 1856-3. See Prairie Farmer, XIII (1853), p. 69, 126, 441. Prairie chickens sold for $1.75 per dozen in Coles County in 1856, memorandum of Wm. B. Hart, HSS. See Smith, Recollections of the Pioneers of Lee County, p. 369; Gridley, Historical Sketches, I, p. 259; Hattey, Counties of Cumberland, Jasper, and Highland, p. 117-118; State Register, April 7, 1855; Chapman, History of Fulton County, p. 222.


one out of twenty farms. Where fruit was grown it formed a
callcome addition to the winters' food supply. Apples were kept
in a protected place in the house or barn, or in the ground "in
hills". They were often pared and placed on boards or low roofs
to dry, notwithstanding the swarms of insects. Very little can­
nning of the present day method was done but fruit both cultivated
and wild was made into preserves.49

Travellers could usually find food and lodging at any farm
home but the gratuity varied. Frequently lodging and meals were
given free but a charge was made for feeding a horse. At other
places tavern prices were charged. These, however, were moderate,
being commonly twenty-five cents for lodging with stabling for
a horse. The reports which have been left are by travellers who
were probably charged more frequently than farmers who may have
been travelling. Travellers, hired laborers and the family ate
together on a basis of equality.50

Among neighbors there was a generous helping hand ready to
aid in a house or barn raising, at moving time, butchering, etc.
Frequently neighbors worked together for sociability, going from
one farm to another. Exchanging work, tools and food was the
common rule. Vegetables and fruit were regarded as common prop­
Workers in the harvest fields were, in many instances, furnished with a lunch at ten o'clock and at four.

The entertainment and amusements of the farmers are described almost entirely by reminiscent materials and are somewhat uncertain. One of the authenticated special forms of amusement with a claim of practical value was the county fair. These were held widely throughout the state by the local agricultural societies and had for their primary purpose the stimulation of better agriculture both by precept and example. Addresses were given by leading agriculturists and exhibitions held at which stock, grain, machinery, etc. were shown by men, with linseys, flannels, jeans, etc., in the ladies' department. These fairs were well attended and served a useful purpose.

Besides the strictly agricultural features of the fair there were other attractions which often outweighed the original activities in popular interest. Of these horse racing was one of the most prominent. Introduced in the 'fifties under the guise of "horse improvement," it took a leading place at the fairs, much

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51. Gridley, Historical Sketches. I, p. 259; Ellett, Summer Rambles in the West, p. 221.
52. Trans. Ill. State Ag. Soc., V. (1861-4), p. 197. This custom is kept to-day among many German farmers in the state.
George Harper of Robinson told the writer of the first fair which he attended in Crawford County in the 'fifties. He an another young man hired a team of mules and a wagon with chairs and took their "girls" to the fair. The ladies' department was in the courthouse and the stock was tied to hitching racks around the public square. Usually the fairs were held in a grove at the edge of town.
to the horror of some of the pious who claimed that it was breaking the morale of their less firm brothers. The fair officials were roundly condemned by some for introducing it to swell receipts. The conservatives were further shocked by the appearance of horseback riding by women, called "lady equestrianism" which they deplored with energy but in vain.

Other features were varied. A fire company from Terre Haute performed at the Coles County fair and a group of German Turners gave an exhibition at the Macon County fair. At most of these fairs there was a full complement of side show features—bogus jewelry peddlers, five-legged calves, two-headed goats, fat women, Lilliputian men, large snakes, small monkeys, Zâuave Sisters, negro minstrels, stereoptican views, wax statues, lottery stands, etc. These shows were heralded by a vociferous hawker aided sometimes by a fiddler who helped keep up a constant bedlam to attract customers.

Different writers, including the editor of the Prairie Farmer, vigorously condemned as an outrage an sacred instincts another feature which was being introduced at the fairs—baby shows.

They decried them as demoralizing, as placing the animal above the spiritual, as merchandising parental love and corrupting youthful modesty and virgin shame. With a true rural attitude they consigned such shows to the city where "Haman (had) his heel on propriety".

The educational advantages in the rural sections of Illinois in the 'fifties were meager by our standards and even by theirs. Many sections were backward, particularly in southern Illinois. The schools in the early 'fifties were nearly all subscription schools and were in session but from four to six months. During that time they were attended by pupils from five to twenty-one years of age, particularly during the heart of the winter after the fall work was done. The teachers were but poorly prepared. In addition to a mastery of art of "whalin'" a fair knowledge of the three "R's" was considered sufficient and frequently the teachers had never "ciphered past the Single Rule of Three". They worked hard and earnestly but with poor results.

The type of instruction was memoriter and there was no classification of pupils. The textbooks were as numerous as the pupils in some cases. "Webster's Speller, Pike's Arithmetic, and McGuffy's Reader or the Introduction to the English Reader were the most common books. Where readers were not available the pupil brought what he could, the Bible, Robinson Crusoe, a life of Washington or Marion, or even old newspapers. Geography was studied and recited by the singing method in which the "Straits of Dover, twenty miles over" and other such bits figured. Recitation was individual except in spelling.

The teacher, who was poorly paid at best, "boarded 'round", staying in proportion to the number of pupils from a family. He lent a hand with the farm chores, helped the housewife pare apples, or cared for the babies. The life of the school was interesting if rough and crude. The recess diversions were sometimes rough but they also included kissing games participated in by the teacher. The teacher was looked out at Christman until he treated with apples, sugar or whiskey.

Where timber was available the school house was commonly a log one about fifteen by twenty feet, chinked in orthodox fashion, had a chimney at one end and a door of slabs hung on wooden hinges at the other. The roof was of clapboards and floor of puncheons or perhaps even of dirt. There were no desks except a slab placed on pegs along the wall for the pupils who practiced writing. The benches were made of slabs with uneven legs on an uneven floor. 59

Of the extent which the farmers subscribed to papers it is difficult to speak. There were in Illinois in 1855 some 154 papers including twenty dailies and 118 weeklies. Of these seven dailies and fifteen weeklies were in the city of Chicago. There were no daily papers south of Belleville but the weekly papers were widely

scattered. There were few Chicago papers taken in southern Illinois in 1860. Many farmers read the farm papers, particularly the Prairie Farmer, and the Illinois Farmer. The Cultivator, American Agriculturist, Country Gentleman, and the New England Farmer were also read, especially among recent settlers from the East. 60

Transportation was of vital importance to the farmers of that day. When and where the railroads came they brought welcome relief from isolation. But local transportation depended upon the common roads and these may well be described as universally bad. This was true of all sections of the state but was, perhaps, more so in the north than elsewhere. Here the flat prairies did not afford sufficient drainage for good roads. In the timbered sections further south drainage was much better but the streams, hills, and mud holes made travelling difficult. Furthermore there seems to have been little improvement during the whole period. A writer in 1870 made this comment, "We are now very little in advance of the roads as they were worked and managed twenty-five years ago". 61

They were never attended to until it was imperative. 62

It was on such roads that Fredrika Bremer's diligence overturned six times in one week in northwestern Illinois. 63 The roads

60. A list of newspapers of the state in 1865 by name and place may be found in the Dunlap Clippings, presumably from the Democratic Press. See also Scott, Newspapers and Periodicals of Illinois, 1814-1879: Prairie Farmer, XXII, (1860), p. 85.
across the prairies were more tracks by the most direct route. When a farm was fenced the road curved around. There were few bridges and many sloughs, especially in the north. In the winter and spring these became impassible and it was necessary to unload the sacks of grain and carry them across before a team could get the wagon across.64

Perhaps the conditions may best be seen by specific examples taken largely from the letters of McCormick's reaper agents. In November the towns about Kankakee were deserted by farmers because of the condition of the roads and they were impassible in all directions in Livingston County.65 A writer in January advised, "Never send a man by stage on that route above Rock Island".66

In February the roads were so bad in parts of central Illinois that a harse could not run to bury the dead and flour was delivered by hand and wheelbarrows. On February 10, the Jerseyville miller agent reported that the roads there had been impassible for five weeks and that the mill had not taken in a bushel of wheat for four weeks.67

Spring saw the conditions worse. In March Kewanee was isolated by the mud. No one was stirring unless it was necessary.

65. John H. Shaffer, Kankakee, Nov. 8, 1870; G. B. Ostrander, Hickory Point, Nov. 26, 1868, McCormick MSS.
66. John L. Wilson, Pleasant Valley, Iowa, Jan. 31, 1852, McCormick MSS.
business lagged and money was very scarce. The following month
the roads near Sycamore were impassable and those from Peoria
east were almost so. An agent mired his horse down in a slough
near Kankakee and broke his buggy.68

These conditions might have been expected in winter and
spring but they continued all too frequently into the summer. In
May the roads were "horrible" near Kankakee, "awful" around Sals-
burg, and nearly impassable at Monee while the cross roads from
Kankakee to Watseka could not be travelled.69 Roads were very
bad at Canton on June 1, and on June 16 they were impassable in
all directions from Pontiac.70 Even in August the sloughs were
so bad that it was necessary to abandon a buggy and travel between
Wenona and Chenoa by rail.71

The condition of the roads, particularly during the winter
months, was such as to put a virtual embargo on crop movements
for long periods. After the roads broke up in the fall it was
only when the ground was well frozen that more than the lightest
traffic could move. Business was dull because the farmers could
get no money with which to pay debts and the shipping merchants

68. C. H. Loomis, Kewanee, March 23, 1867; E. C. Beardsley,
Sycamore, April 15, 1867; John S. Wilson, Indianapolis, Ind.,
April 3, 1864; John H. Shaffer, Kankakee, April 22, 1867; McCorm-
Mick MSS. M. L. Dunlap, Leyden, April 28, 1863 to Mr. and Mrs.
C. Hotchkiss, Ottowa, Dunlap Letters,
69. John H. Shaffer, Kankakee, May 4, 1866; Watseka, May 1,
1867; C. F. Johnson, Salsburg, May 6, 1868; W. A. Spring, Monee,
May 6, 1868; McCormick MSS.
70. Canton Weekly Register, June 1, 1868; G. B. Ostrander,
Hickory Point, June 16, 1869; A. D. Rogers, Elmwood, June 26, 1869;
W. S. Gregory, Lacon, June 1, 1868, McCormick MSS.
71. George Menard, Wenona, Aug. 2, 1869, McCormick MSS.
An attempt was made about 1850 to lift the state out of the mud by means of plank roads. These were projected throughout the state but particularly in the prairie sections of northern Illinois. These roads were built by toll companies under the Plank Road Corporation Act of 1849. The greatest activity was in the neighborhood of Chicago where there were fifty miles of plank roads built by the end of 1850, extending northwest, west, and southwest from the city. Others built or projected were those from Olney to the Wabash River, Pekin to Bloomington, Pittsfield to Florence on the Illinois River, Pulaski to Springfield, and St. Charles to Sycamore. There were 600 miles of plank road completed or under construction in Illinois in 1851. These roads were made sixteen feet wide, of two by six planks laid on square wooden stringers at a cost of from $1,500 to $3,000 per mile.

The financial history of these roads varied somewhat but they commonly ended in disaster. The Northwestern Plank Road out of

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77. Chicago Daily Journal, Dec. 18, 1850; State Register, Jan. 24, 1850; Chapman, History of Fulton County, p. 1014; Bateman, Selby, and Heylin, History of Fulton County, p. 704; Baltimore American, quoted by Illinois Register, IXXV. p. 221.
Chicago paid forty-two per cent during the first six months. The Western Plank Road caused the price of land along it to almost double but before long the enterprise was in difficulty due to competition from the railroad, the building of a steam saw-mill, and a flood. An increase of thirty per cent in the toll rate caused dissatisfaction but under it the road showed some signs of paying. This prospective profit did not materialize and the stock dropped to almost nothing. By 1855 the road was out of repair and M. L. Dunlap wrote from Leyden, sixteen miles from Chicago, "I am again out of humanity's reach."

The ordinary means of transportation was probably by horseback or in wagons. Buggies were to be found but they were not used as much by farmers as by travelling agents, doctors, preachers and the like. Spring wagons were more used by farmers. Stage coaches ran in many parts of the state for the accommodation of travellers. During the winter sleighs and sleds were commonly used. The trusty wagon probably carried most of the people and

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78. State Register, Jan. 31, 1850.
79. M. L. Dunlap, Leyden, March 21, Nov. 28, 1852 to A. E. Baker, Lorrain, N. Y.; Nov. 30, 1852 to Alva Dunlap, Mt. Nowley, Illinois; March 21, 1853 to C. E. Webb, N. Y.; Dec. 28, 1853 to S. Baker, Lorrain, N. Y.; Sept. 5, 1855 to B. Hodge, Buffalo, N. Y.; Dunlap Letters. Mr. Dunlap lost $2,000 on the Western Plank Road, for which he was secretary.
certainly the loads except in showy winter. 80

60. Little was written in the period concerning means of transportation. See Caird, op. cit., p. 49; Mt. Potts, Wheaton, Frank E. Stevens, Sycamore; Bateman and Selby, History of Ogle County, p. 648; John Wilson, Burlington, Iowa, Feb. 6, 1852; T. K. Waite & Bros., Sycamore, Jan. 15, 1867; Hiram Austin, Peoria, Jan 23, 1864, McCormick MSS. So far as the writer knows there is no adequate contemporary material describing the actual life of the Illinois Farmer in the everyday activities of himself and his family.

for the prosperity of Illinois, etc. Indeed, for the whole Western part,

The completion of the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the beginnings of the railroad system had important effects on Illinois agriculture. They opened up to the possibilities of economic agriculture large areas which had hitherto been occupied by subsistence industry. The raising of transportation meant increased immigration. Yet another cause that a writer began was given in crop production to supply the needs of an increasing population of town and the cities of the East. New available of corns.

This development was hindered by a continued and persistent financial condition under the "Illinois Tariff," taxes many of doubtful value at during the gold money era miners. This generally too uncertain, in the requirements that there should be paid in gold. It was a common practice to have all cash money to meet such obligations. So many into owing at times that railroad funds were
CHAPTER III

AGRICULTURE IN THE EARLY 'FIFTIES

Illinois in 1850 was distinctly an agricultural state. By far the larger part of her population was engaged in farming, and, of the remainder, many were in pursuits closely allied to or dependent upon agriculture. The manufacturing which existed was largely based on agricultural products or needs, packing, milling, brewing, tanning, manufacturing of implements, etc. As agriculture prospered so did these industries. Agriculture was the weathervane for the prosperity of Illinois, and, indeed, for the whole Northwest.¹

The completion of the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the beginnings of the railroad system had important effects on Illinois agriculture. They opened up to the possibilities of commercial agriculture large areas which had hitherto been confined to subsistence industry. The opening of transportation meant increased immigration. It meant also that a strong impetus was given to crop production to supply the needs of an increasing population at home and the cities of the East, now available as markets.

This development was hindered by a confused and uncertain financial condition during the 'fifties. Paper money of doubtful value was abundant but good money was scarce. This scarcity was accentuated by the requirement that taxes should be paid in coin. It was a common practice to hoard all such money to meet that obligation. So scarce was money at times that railroad fares were

frequently paid in butter, eggs, etc. In fact, produce was quite generally taken at par and bank rage at their worth.2

Scarcity of money varied with the season. There were generally two flush times, when the crops of wheat and pork were sold. At other times there was little to sell and payment was difficult. Much of the financial practice was regulated by this seasonal factor.3

Western bankers often declined to lend money or credit to buy produce beyond their own neighborhood. This fact and the inadequacy of the local supply of currency in produce movement periods caused a demand for outside money. This came largely from Ohio, Indiana, and the eastern states, and was of varying reliability. Eastern banks were usually sound but many in Ohio and Indiana were doubtful. But so great was the need for money that the farmers received this currency, such as it was, with open arms.4

Times were frequently dull, the farmers were often poor, and it was claimed that ninety-five per cent of them were in debt. They ordinarily paid ten per cent interest on the money they were forced to borrow, but sometimes rates were fifteen per cent or higher. Under these circumstances it was not surprising that many farms were for sale.5

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To satisfy the monetary needs of the state and eliminate the existing confusion, the legislature passed a general banking act in 1851. This act provided that the auditor of public accounts should issue circulating notes to persons meeting the provisions of the law. Any group of persons who sold a minimum of fifty thousand dollars worth of capital stock might secure notes from the state by depositing bonds with the state auditor. Notes up to the market value—not above par—were issued upon receipt of the bonds of the United States or any non-defaulting state, except Illinois. The issue was restricted to eighty per cent of market value in the case of this state. Banks which had complied with these requirements were authorized to do a general banking business. They must provide sufficient specie at the specified place of redemption to cover notes presented. Failure to redeem protested notes put the bank into liquidation and the law prescribed that the auditor should sell the deposited bonds and redeem outstanding notes.

The law provided for supervision of the banking system by commissioners. It was their duty to inspect the accounts and bond deposits of each bank annually. They should require the deposit

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5. (Cont.) citing Home Missionary, 1851; Cunynghame, A Glimpse of the Great Western Republic, p. 105; M. L. Dunlap, Leyden, Aug. 18, 1852 to R. L. Dunlap, Dunlap Letters; Marsh, op. cit., p. 49.
of additional security in case the fall in value of the bonds on deposit endangered the safety of the notes. They cooperated with the state auditor in the general oversight of the system.  

Despite the need for more sound money, little advantage was taken of the new act at first. The requirement of bond deposit was relatively stringent and bankers were reluctant to organize under the law. During 1862, however, seventeen banks were organized with a note issue of $1,189,622.  

This banking system was an improvement over preceding conditions but it had a number of defects which soon became evident. It had not been provided that the amount of capital stock should be fully paid in and frequently it was not done. Some banks organized and acted as agents for banks beyond Illinois and its jurisdiction. The amount of note issue of a bank might bear no relationship to the needs of the community and the place of redemption might be in a remote part of the state.  

Bankers saw these loopholes and proceeded to take advantage of the defects in the law. Illegal note issues were continued and in some cases these were used to buy bonds to base a state issue upon. There was no way to prevent the introduction of notes from outside the state and bankers did a thriving business on such money. Prominent among the bankers who engaged in this practice was George Smith who opened two banks in Georgia where he could  

operate under more liberal laws and issue notes to circulate in Illinois. The law had done little to better the general situation.10

The legislature attempted to correct the mistakes in the law of 1851 by an amendment in 1853. This later act made it necessary that at least $50,000 in bonds should be kept in the auditor’s hands to validate a bank’s charter. This eliminated many small banks which were operating on non-Illinois paper money, and insured that those operating would be note issue banks with a reasonable amount of capital. Foreign notes in circulation in the state were restricted to denominations of five dollars or more issued by a specie paying bank. This provision was not enforced because of the need for small bills and the discount at which such foreign notes were taken up by banks. In general, however, the monetary situation improved within the state although the secured local notes amounted to less than one third of those in circulation.11

Transportation was another factor upon which the development of the state was dependent. The change from subsistence to commercial agriculture must wait upon an outlet for surplus produce. Only then could the soil pay for itself even at the moderate price at which it sold. Until transportation came commercial grain farming was impossible and hog raising handicapped.


11. Laws of Illinois, 1853, p. 30-33; Springfield Journal, Nov. 1, 1853; Ottawa Free Trader, May 20, 1854; Bankers’ Magazine, IX, p. 109-113; Chicago Weekly Democrat, April 2, July 2, Aug. 6, 1853; Rockford Virum, Oct. 12, 1853; Belleville Advocate, July 15, 1853; Illinois State Register, June 15, 1854.
of a lack of transportation facilities hindered the development of much of western Illinois. Until the railroads reached the Mississippi in 1854 that region was dependent upon the steamboat on the river for an outlet. Some produce went to the newer settlements above Galena but most of it went to St. Louis and New Orleans. When the market at Chicago rose sufficiently the Illinois and Michigan Canal reached out to the Mississippi and took some produce north. The river outlet served only a narrow strip of some thirty to fifty miles, however. Beyond thirty miles corn became unprofitable because of the cost of wagon carriage. The higher value of wheat enabled it to pay transportation much further but the interior sections were beyond the wheat belt. Agriculture there was yet of the subsistence type except where live stock was raised and driven to market.

The section west of Chicago was poorly supplied with transportation facilities until the railroads came. Commercial agriculture was restricted to the region about Chicago and near the Illinois River and canal. Here there was a market and agriculture flourished, but in the interior development lagged. There was a sparse population in the region and the increase was slow. There was, indeed, little except the rich soil to attract settlers. Transportation costs consumed such a large proportion

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of the value of produce that only the most urgent needs induced the farmers to haul it to the distant markets at Chicago or along the canal. They needed money for taxes, coffee, sugar, salt, etc. To secure this they loaded wheat or dressed pork on their wagons and started to Chicago. As many as fifty wagons might have been seen in a line going across the prairie on this trek. They travelled together for the sake of company and mutual aid in crossing the sloughs where they pulled wagons out of the mud or carried the sacks across. After a laborious journey of perhaps ten days the weary farmer returned with ten or twelve dollars in money, groceries, or store finery for his labor. Progress purchased at so high a cost could be but slow.\(^{14}\)

This situation was relieved by the extension of the railroads into that region. The first four years of the decade saw a network of roads built in this section that opened it up and heralded a new day. The first of these outlets was the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad which reached Elgin in January 1850, Rockford in August 1852 and Freeport in September 1852. In the meantime the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy was extending southwestward through LaSalle County toward Galesburg. By 1854 the Chicago and North-western had reached Ogle County and the Chicago and Rock Island had touched the Mississippi. These roads were crossed by the Illinois Central line at LaSalle, Mendota, Dixon and Freeport to

\(^{14}\) Cleaver, "Early Chicago Reminiscences", Fergus Hist. Series, No. XL, p. 51-52; Frank E. Stevens, Sycamore; Jacob, Deiley, Malta; James Tilton Rochelle; Samuel Clark, Princeton; Kett, History of Ogle County, p. 507; Marsh, op. cit., p. 65.
form a network that was to do much to transform the section.15

The effect of these railroads was soon evident. A market was brought within reach and grain was sold at the railroad stations at about ten cents below the Chicago prices. A moderate producing power was on hand on a subsistence basis awaiting an opportunity. The railroad furnished it, and produce began to pour into Chicago. For example, the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad brought to Chicago some $60,000 worth of produce in February 1853. Farming, which until the coming of the railroad had furnished only a comfortable living, now yielded profits and a period of speculation was at hand.16

It was the Illinois River and its extension in the Illinois and Michigan Canal that furnished the great highway for commerce in Illinois in the early 'fifties. Before the opening of the canal the trade of the valley went southward through St. Louis. After that date the tide turned and, to an increasing extent, the region was tributary to Chicago. The advantage which Chicago had in attracting this trade lay in the lower freight charges to eastern markets as compared with those of the southern route. Grain could be shipped to New York as cheaply from Chicago as from New Orleans. So strong was this advantage that a clear margin


of from five to eight cents per bushel was needed to draw corn to St. Louis from the Illinois Valley. This price differential did not always exist and St. Louis dropped behind. In 1851 DeBow complained, "The Illinois Canal had already carried off the contents of the enormous granaries on the banks of the Illinois River... and the pork and beef of the same line will take the same route this spring." 17

The canal directed to the northern route with its cheaper freight eastward, the wheat and the pork then commonly sold. It also stimulated the production of corn and added it to the staples of commercial agriculture. Hitherto corn had had slow sale because it could not well withstand shipment through high southern latitudes and wagon transportation to the north was prohibitive. Now the corn trade through Chicago furnished a new market factor in addition to some southern demand and use for feed. 18

The opening of the canal soon produced a marked effect in the towns along the route, reflecting a corresponding change in the adjacent farming sections. Bustling towns were lining the banks at every few miles and furnishing a ready market. News of the opening of navigation on the canal caused strong reactions in


18. Springfield Daily Register, July 10, 1852; Canton Weekly Register, April 10, 1852.
the river grain markets. 19

The growth of the canal trade to Chicago can be seen by the following table covering only a part of the items shipped.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Flour (bbl.)</th>
<th>Pork (bbl.)</th>
<th>Wheat (bu.)</th>
<th>Corn (bu.)</th>
<th>Oats (bu.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>9553</td>
<td>3428</td>
<td>404111</td>
<td>516230</td>
<td>76659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>9076</td>
<td>2398</td>
<td>579526</td>
<td>754289</td>
<td>61969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>43212</td>
<td>1233</td>
<td>417027</td>
<td>316674</td>
<td>159859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>9799</td>
<td>8253</td>
<td>73268</td>
<td>2878550</td>
<td>199025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>6430</td>
<td>4119</td>
<td>117441</td>
<td>1610880</td>
<td>846566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>9220</td>
<td>11554</td>
<td>340277</td>
<td>2490675</td>
<td>1042036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>17310</td>
<td>21969</td>
<td>500977</td>
<td>4501203</td>
<td>1543230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It will be observed that the greatest increases were in corn, oats, and pork, the new staples of commercial agriculture. 20

Due to the extension of the transportation systems in northern and central Illinois, the grain trade of Chicago was of growing importance during the early 'fifties. This city suffered a momentary decline as a wheat market in 1849 and 1850 but it quickly recovered and by 1855 shipments east were over five times those of 1850. Corn shipments which began in 1856 and amounted to but 252,013 bushels in 1850, jumped the following year to 3,281,317 bushels. Shipments grew steadily to 1866 when they were over

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20. Andreas, History of Chicago, I, p. 577. Cf. Chicago Board of Trade Report, III, (1860), p. 62; Western Journal and Civilian, XIII, (1853), p. 50-51. The decline in shipments of corn and wheat in 1850 was due in part to crop shortage in the South and the demand for supplies for the West. This illustrates one of the phases of the fluctuating conflict of Chicago and St. Louis for the Illinois River trade. Gen. of the Prairie, Jan. 11, 1851.
eleven million bushels. 21

The live stock trade of Chicago showed a steady growth in these years. The number of hogs packed in that city in 1860-1 was 20,000. Consistent gains had brought that figure to 73,694 in 1864-5. However, this gain is not a true index of the growth of Illinois pork packing because of the wide dispersion of that industry. Packing of beef did not show gains similar to those of pork. This fact is to be accounted for by the shipment of cattle eastward and the drives to eastern markets. 22

21. Gen. of the Prairie, Jan. 11, 1851; Andreas, History of Chicago, I. p. 577; Chicago Board of Trade Report, III. (1860), p. 62; Trans. Ill. State Ag. Soc., VI. (1866), p. 452; Hunt's Merchant's Mag., III. (1865), p. 193; see tables in appendix. A fairer comparison for corn shipments would be 1849 when 644,646 bushels were sent East. The large increase in 1861 may be accounted for in part by the interval necessary between the opening of the canal and full production by the farmers already there. It was due in a slight degree to the extension of the railroad. Prices ranged lower in 1861 than in 1860 but a stimulus probably came from the 1860 level.

22. Prairie Farmer, E.8., XXI. (1868), p. 152; The number of hogs packed in Chicago was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850-1</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851-2</td>
<td>22,056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852-3</td>
<td>44,156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853-4</td>
<td>52,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854-5</td>
<td>73,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855-6</td>
<td>80,360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cincinnati, which drew some Illinois hogs, increased its packing but to a lesser extent. St. Louis, which packed many Illinois hogs, increased its packing but slightly. Industrial Chicago, III. p. 626-627. An undetermined part of the increase of packing at Chicago came through the extension of the railroads rather than through an increase in the number of hogs raised. Of. Springfield Journal, Feb. 26, 1861. Beef packing increased slightly but this is no guide to the extent of the industry since many cattle were shipped or driven east.
Although the trade of Chicago showed a steady increase in general, it fluctuated with the season. This was an inevitable consequence of the fact that both the canal and the lake were frozen for months. With the opening of lake navigation trade felt a new stir. Money began to move and employment increased. The summer was a season of great activity but with the approach of the close of the navigation the markets were much affected. This was particularly true of corn since its relatively low value could ill afford to carry winter storage charges if not forwarded. During the winter some wheat was brought in by wagon and railroad, and some milling was done from store, but operations were generally suspended. 23

Although Chicago was soon to cut distance to St. Louis as a grain market, particularly as a depot for the upper Illinois Valley, the importance of the latter as an Illinois market should not be overlooked. Naturally the wheat from the rich district opposite came to that market. At the same time St. Louis maintained a lively competition for the Illinois River trade. Of the 2,900 steamboats arriving in 1850, some 788 came from the Illinois River and 635 from the upper Mississippi, perhaps largely from Illinois. Of the receipts of wheat in 1850 well over one-half came from the Illinois River and more than one-fourth from the upper Mississippi. The same trend continued. In 1865 the Illinois River furnished one-third of the bacon, nearly half of the beef, five-eighths of the pork, over three-fourths of the corn, and over one-third of the

23. Prairie Farmer, X. (1850), p. 40; XIII, (1853), p. 205, 481. In addition to the demand for shipment east there was a call for meat products from the lumber districts to the north. Gem of the Prairie, May 25, 1850.
wheat on the St. Louis market.24

The preceding data show that in the early 'fifties, Illinois, particularly the Illinois Valley, was an important factor in the St. Louis grain trade. The relative importance of St. Louis and Chicago to the grain shipper on the Illinois River is likewise shown by trade statistics. Little grain reached Chicago from that section except by way of the canal until the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad was built. The canal and river shipments, therefore, measure the trade. In 1850 the canal took to Chicago 417,037 bushels of wheat and 43,216 barrels of flour. The same year St. Louis received from the Illinois River over 1,000,000 bushels of wheat, and some flour. In 1853 this region furnished Chicago 2,490,675 bushels of corn, 1,042,036 bushels of oats, 340,277 bushels of wheat and 9,320 barrels of flour. It sent to St. Louis 375,000 bushels of corn, 775,000 bushels of oats, 900,000 bushels of wheat and 45,113 barrels of flour in the same period. St. Louis was drawing heavily on wheat and flour while Chicago had the

24. State Register, March 13, 1851; Western Journal and Civilian, V. (1851), p. 257, 258; VII. (1852), p. 266, 267; XV. (1856), p. 263-266; DeBow's Review, XVI. (1854), p. 404-406; Report of the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad, 1851, p. 9; Sam of the Prairie, Jan. 11, 1851. The Illinois River shipments were heaviest in November. It was estimated that two-thirds of the receipts from the upper Mississippi came from the Illinois side. By 1855 the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad through Southern Illinois was bringing large quantities of grain to St. Louis.
advantage in corn and oats. 25

The competition which St. Louis was able to give to Chicago was spasmodic, depending upon the relative needs of the southern trade, navigation difficulties, etc. These factors determined the price differential between the two markets.

A price difference was necessary to attract grain to St. Louis and always existed with varying magnitude. During 1850 and 1851, for example, the St. Louis price on corn was from three to fifteen cents above that in Chicago. The difference was from five to forty cents on wheat, about twenty cents on oats, and from twenty-five cents to a dollar and a quarter on flour. 26

The fringe of the southern end of the state had good transportation facilities by river. The river trade flourished and... 

25. Western Journal and Civilian, V, (1861); p. 257; XV, (1856), p. 263-265; Andreas, History of Chicago, I, p. 575; DeBow's Review, XVI, (1854), p. 404-406; Chicago. Her Commerce and Her Railroads, p. 5. Some came to Chicago from the Illinois River district by rail in 1855, but some coming over the canal originated above the river. In 1855 the Illinois River took to St. Louis more flour and wheat than the canal took to Chicago but Chicago had the greater part of the corn trade. Except for an occasional drop as in the years 1861 and 1862, the market receipts of wheat showed a steady gain in the period at St. Louis. There was also a steady increase in the amount of milling done at St. Louis during the 'fifties. See Window Report, I, Appendix, p. 22; Hunt's Merchandise Mag., XXX, (1854), p. 452; XLII, (1860), p. 329-330.

Shawneetown and Cairo were bustling towns, collecting produce for the southern market. The hinterland contributing to this trade was limited in most cases to hauling distance from the Mississippi and the Ohio rivers. Some attempts were made to use the Embarrass and the upper tributaries of the Wabash, but with slight success.27

The whole interior of the state from the Illinois and Mississippi rivers to the Wabash was cut off from commercial agriculture until the railroads came. The effect of the isolation was shown in the price of produce. In July, 1850, corn, which was worth forty-five cents in Chicago, sold in Coles County for twenty-five cents. Oats were thirty to thirty-five cents in Chicago and twenty-five cents in Coles County. The farmers in this section, like those further north, were hauling some produce to distant markets with slight returns. Farmers in Cumberland County found the value of their produce consumed by a wagon trip to St. Louis even on the new National Road. From east central Illinois farmers were making the long drive through unsettled prairie to Chicago with grain, apples, hams, bacon, etc. Obviously only necessities could be secured under such circumstances.28

The development of transportation facilities increased the demand for land. The type of land sought varied with the previous experience of the settler and nature of the country. The new-

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27. State Register, June 1, 1850; May 5, 1851; Gem of the Prairie, Mar. 15, 1851; Battey, op. cit. p. 151, 712; Coffeen, Vermillion County, Historical, Statistical, and Descriptive, p. 19.
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comers in southern Illinois, having come from a wooded section, chose timber in preference to the prairie. It furnished fuel and lumber and provided a relatively healthful home site. They avoided the prairies as unhealthful and because they did not have the equipment with which to farm them successfully. Further north the incoming settlers had little choice. Timber was scarce and was soon taken up. If they settled they must locate on the prairies; and they began to nibble at them. With the coming of transportation which brought settlers, the lack of fuel and fencing which had held the prairies back was partially relieved.29

Southern Illinois lagged behind the remainder of the state in development. The larger part of the land in that part of the state was held by the government in the early 'fifties. The country was thinly settled, with the farms mostly in the timber, and real estate was cheap. The all-important market awaited the development of railroads, and activity in "Egypt" was slight.30

Less land was available in the central and northern sections than in the south, but in 1850 there were few counties in which desirable land could not be purchased at first hand. Although government land was being taken up rapidly in some regions and property values near Chicago were rising, both speculator and

29. Canton Weekly Register, May 28, 1855; Prairie Farmer, XII, (1852), p. 373; Stewart, op. cit., p. 32-33. Swamp lands in Livingston County could scarcely be given away. Bateman and Selby, History of Livingston County, p. 628. There were 2,370,636 acres of swamp lands given to the state. The Shawneetown, Danville, Dixon and Vandalia land districts led in the number of acres in the order names. U. S. Statutes at Large, 1850, Ch. LXXXIV; Western Journal and Civilian, XII, (1854), p. 43.

30. Prairie Farmer, XI, (1851), p. 56. The original entry books in Jasper County show most of the land there to have been entered about 1853 to 1855, by which time it was almost all taken.
Mottlor had staple room in northern Illinois. This was true in spite of the demand which caused a sale of 284,080 acres in the state in fifteen months in 1861 and 1862.31

A conspicuous feature of the land sale was the extensive use of warrants. Holders of these instruments were swarming into Illinois in 1861 and 1862 to enter government land. A Danville land agent wrote in October, 1862, "It seems all creation is coming here with warrants." Some 35,000 acres of land were taken up in the state in three months in 1861 on Mexican War land warrants alone. Great excitement prevailed; the market was glutted with warrants, and the price was forced down to about one dollar per acre.32

31. In 1863 it was reported that there was no land to enter in Winnebago County. Vacant lands near the projected railroads were taken up rapidly. Rock River Democrat, Nov. 1, 1863; Chicago Cultivator, IX, (1863), p. 236; Waterman, Belby, and Allensworth, History of Tazewell County, II, p. 682; E. L. Dunlap, Leydon, Feb. 21, 1863 to Preston Wood, Dunlap Letters; Gem of the Prairie, June 22, 1860. Peru Daily Chronicle, Jan. 21, 1863, citing Report of the General Land Office on sale of land. School lands were being sold at auction on six, twelve, and eighteen months time at six per cent interest and not less than $5.00 per acre. Beardstown Gazette, Dec. 17, 1861; State Register, Aug. 21, 1861; Prairie Farmer, XI, (1861), p. 20, 292; Illinois Daily Journal, July 13, 1860; Marsh, op. cit., p. 36, 40.

32. J. A. B. Scoon, Danville, Oct. 5, 1862 to Folsom Dorsett; E. W. Chase, Lafayette, Ind., Nov. 6, 1862, to J. A. B. Scoon; Wm. Woodbury, Danville, Nov. 20, 1862, to Folsom Dorsett; Dec. 14, 1862, to H. Coffman. A regular business in land warrants had grown up. They were bought in the East and sent to established agents in Illinois with power and instructions for entry. Sometimes they were sold to prospective settlers. Folsom, Dorsett of Delavan wrote to J. A. B. Scoon on Sept. 14, 1862 that 160 acre warrants were selling in New York at $150 and that he would take $160 for them at Danville where the regular price was $170. Williams-Woodbury Collection.
The railroads and the canal greatly stimulated the sale of land. Indeed, it was only through these that an agriculture that could pay for land was possible. Along the railroads settlement was active and land values were rising. Speaking of conditions in northern Illinois, M. L. Dunlap said that all desirable lands within six miles of the railroads were taken up before the close of 1852. He wrote, "The railroads are making vast changes with us. property of all kinds are on the rise & produce brings very high prices."33

Further south a similar effect was felt. Thousands of acres along the Alton and Terre Haute Railroadd, which could have been secured in 1850 by land warrants were held at from three to ten dollars per acre in 1853. In January 1855 the State Register said, "The Alton and Springfield road passes through a country rich indeed but hitherto almost unbroken prairie without farms or houses and where land three years ago was subject to entry by whole townships... (Now along the road) there is no land to be entered anywhere near it." The railroad had brought this about by providing a market, particularly for corn. Before the coming of the railroad corn had been so low that stockmen from the river counties drove stock to the interior to be fattened. Now there was a market and the price of produce and land rose strikingly.34

34. Daily Democratic Press, Dec. 6, 1852; State Register, Nov. 11, 1852; Jan. 6, 1853; Ottowa Free Trader, May 14, 1853; Cultivator. N.S., VIII, (1851), p. 355. Much of the newly purchased land in central Illinois was owned by Illinois farmers who had caught the land fever and extended their holdings.
The railroad lands of the Illinois Central were held above the government price and were taken only after corresponding public lands were occupied. The settlers welcomed the railroad but hated the land monopoly of the company which they thought hindered the development of their neighborhoods. So strong was this feeling against the company that a public meeting was held in McLean County to protest against the situation. 35

For the most part, however, the railroad company seems not to have deserved censure. The mistake which the company made was rather in the other direction. The attempt to build the road on credit was not successful and the plan to pass credit to purchasers was overdone. The low rate of interest, set by the company at two per cent at a time when speculation was rife, encouraged speculators who frequently purchased large tracts. 36

Certain land companies were entering the lists with private speculators. The Mann Land Company bought land in the Military Tract from soldiers at from five to fifty dollars per quarter section, and sold it at a neat profit. In 1851 a Boston company held an auction of Edgar and Coles county land at Terre Haute, Indiana, at which an average price of two dollars was obtained. In 1853 an act was passed by the legislature incorporating the Calhoun County Agricultural Company to hold land and to construct

36. This situation was corrected later. Report to Illinois Central Railroad Co., 1852, p. 1. Much land was located by the employees of the Illinois Central for themselves and friends at the time they were locating the land for the company. M. L. Dunlap, Leyden, Nov. 8, 1852, to Benj. Hodge, Dunlap Letters.
a fence from the Illinois River to the Mississippi to keep out stock.37

With so much land yet unoccupied the cultivated portions could command but little rent and tenantry was not common in the 'fifties. Land values and rents were low, an inevitable circumstance in a new country of this description. Occasionally farms were rented from non-residents for as much as one-half the crop in the shock. This was probably exceptional.38

Fencing was always a problem for the settler. In the early 'fifties this problem was aggravated by the absence of a general law restraining the practice of allowing stock to run at large. This situation had been handed down from a time when the settlers used the open range and it was easier to fence the crop than the pasture land. With the settling of the country this became less advantageous but the practice was established and difficult to dislodge. The problem was one of cattle improvement as well as

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38. McCormick Extension Case, U. S. Patent Office, 1869, p. 93096; Prairie Farmer, XI, (1851), p. 172; Stewart, op. cit., p. 43-44. Cunningham gave an example of land being sold under bond to a settler who improved it and paid for it at the end of three years at $2.50 per acre. The holder paid $1.25 to the government. A Glimpse at the Great Republic, p. 106-107. Land values varied so widely that statement is almost worthless. Quotations can be found in the newspapers of the day from twenty-five cents for swamp land to an uncertain upper limit. For the valuations given in the U. S. Census of 1850, p. 722-729, see map page. Some of the farms were large. Isaac Underhill had 2,200 acres in Henry County and Thomas Hoopes owned nearly 8,000 and J. Goodwine held 8,000 acres in Vermilion County. The farm of A. Holderman in Kendall County contained 2,660 acres and that of Jacob Straw n in Morgan County had 10,000 acres. Prairie Farmer, XII, (1852), p. 423; Jones, History of Vermilion County, I, p. 181. 186; Chicago Daily Democrat, Mar. 25, 1852, Quincy Whig, July 3, 1854.
crop protection. With scrub bulls running at large, progress in cattle breeding was difficult.39

The difficulty and solution of the fencing problem varied with the nature of the topography and vegetation. In the timbered districts, particularly in the southern part of the state and along streams elsewhere, there was an abundant supply of timber at hand. Everywhere in such regions the Virginia worm rail fence enclosed the farms. The rails could be bought for about two cents each or made for one cent from timber that was of slight value. There were laid up in fences seven or eight rails high and commonly staked and ridered, either single or double. They lasted well and made a very satisfactory fence.40

Further north where the prairies were more extensive it was difficult to secure material for wood fencing. Some was available locally, and in such cases the early settlements clustered close to the timber. They grew into the prairie, tier on tier, until the floodgate of immigration was opened by the development of

39. Prairie Farmer, XV, (1855), p. 34. By the middle of the decade petitions to the legislature asking for a stock law were being circulated. By the outbreak of the war some townships had local stock laws and others were showing an interest in the subject. Urbana Union, Dec. 28, 1854; Prairie Farmer, XXI, (1860), p. 82-83; Illinois Farmer, XI, (1851), p. 290; XII, (1852), p. 187; XIV, (1854), p. 66-67, 166; Gerhard, Illinois As It Is, p. 312; American Agriculturist, XVI, (1857), p. 258, 277; Illinois Central Railroad Company Offers...1,500,000 Acres...Lands, p. 30, 41. The Illinois Central contracted for an eight rail stake and ridered fence in Effingham County at fifty cents a rod. Such a fence was made by crossing stakes at the corners and laying rails in the forks. A double ridered fence had a second rider, one end of which also rested in the fork.
improved transportation routes. As these railroads grew, the need for fencing increased and the lumber to supply it came in through Chicago. Fences were made by using pine or cottonwood plank on substantial posts or rived palings nailed to crossbars on posts.41

Besides wooden fenced the settlers tried various expedients. Ditching and banking were used but were abandoned as failures. Then came the hedge, particularly the Maclura or Osage Orange, which was brought from Texas. The introduction of this hedge was due in large measure to J. B. Turner, the teacher, farmer, inventor, and horticulturist of Jacksonville. He began to experiment with this hedge in 1844 and by the early 'fifties he had succeeded in hedging and in inducing others to try it.42

The hedge spread rapidly throughout the prairie region. Nurseriesmen advertised plants in lots as high as $2,000,000, and companies were engaged in the business of setting out and caring for the plants. The common charge was sixty cents per rod for completed hedge cared for until the end of the fourth year. The


42. Prairie Farmer, XV, (1855), p. 266-270; Illinois State Journal, July 12, 1860; Trans. Ill. State Agr. Soc., VIII, (1869-70), p. 257. So famous was Turner in connection with the Maclura hedge that in 1885 he received an inquiry concerning it from Hawaii. D. L. Gregg, Honolulu, Hawaii, Aug. 12, 1855, Turner Letters. Prairie Farmer, XV, (1855), p. 167-168, 272, 335, 343, places Turner's part in a less favorable light. E. Harkness of Peoria County claimed that he began to experiment with the Maclura hedge in 1841. Certainly, however, the spread of the hedge was largely due to Turner. Osage Orange seed was scarce in Illinois and (cont)
plants were often not well cared for and were not entirely satisfactory as a fence. It was customary to resort to plank fences until the hedge attained its growth and these were frequently retained for adequate protection. But with all its defects the hedge did good service and made stock raising profitable on much land not otherwise of much value.43

Some interest was shown in wire fences as early as 1850 in northern Illinois. Some wire fence had been built and letters of inquiry and articles on such fencing appeared in the farm papers. This interest increased and discussion of the relative

merits of wire and other fencing continued throughout the 'fifties.

Another problem of the prairie was that of drainage. Much of the northern two-thirds of the state was too wet to farm satisfactorily. In many places water stood throughout the year. It remained a problem during the 'fifties with little having been done to solve it. Interest lies more in the crude attempts at drainage than in the accomplishments.

Some surface drainage was done, of course, but under-drainage was in an experimental stage. Mole drains were tried with some success. They were made by drawing a heavy wedge-shaped iron through the soil. This packed the earth compactly around the channel and was successful in stiff soils with much water, where they sometimes lasted for years. Other expedients included board drains, either as a box channel or a covering for a dirt channel. Split timbers or poles, irregular stones, and brush, either alone or wound with straw rope were used but with slight success.

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45. Prairie Farmer. XIV. (1864), p. 456; XV. (1855), P. 211, 205; XIX. (1859), p. 268; Trans. Ill. State Ag. Soc., III. (1855-9), p. 117-119; Illinois Farmer. VI. (1861), p. 99. 150. The tile drain which was later to redeem much of the wet lands of the state was manufactured at Joliet, Will County, and Glencoe, Cook County, in 1865. However, they were very little used until long after the Civil War. Emery's Journal of Agriculture. I. (1858), p. 410; M. L. Dunlap, Gazette and Register, July, 1858; Dunlap Clippings; Prairie Farmer. XXI. (1866), p. 131; Illinois Farmer. VI. (1861), p. 99, 150; Samuel Clark, Princeton.
In common with all new developing regions, Illinois suffered from a shortage of labor in the early 'fifties. This seems to have been true throughout the state where commercial agriculture was possible. It was probably more true in the northern section than in the south. Railroad construction in northern Illinois absorbed much of the mobile labor including the immigrants, particularly the Irish.46

The rate of wages paid to farm laborers ranged from eight to twenty dollars per month with board and washing. The wage level was much the same over the state with some increase in the northern part. There, due to the better opportunities of market along the transportation lines, the demand for labor was greater than elsewhere and the wages higher.47

The labor shortage and the expansion of grain farming under the stimulus of the new outlet had not reached the peak to which it was to mount after 1854 but the demand for machinery was increasing. McCormick reapers were being introduced into northern Illinois in the late 'forties and Haines' Harvester was being used.

46. Annual Report ... of the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad, 1859, p. 7. Illinois Central Railroad Co... Offers... 1,500,000 Acres... Lands, p. 32; Prairie Farmer, XV, (1855), p. 225; Regan, op. cit., p. 222; H. D. May, Belvidere, June 13, 1854. McCormick 1883.

47. Regan, op. cit., p. 227-228; Gerhard, Illinois As It Is, p. 316; Patent Report, 1850, p. 245; 1851, p. 443; Gridley, Historical Sketches, I, p. 71; Illinois Central Railroad Company Offers 1,500,000 Acres... Lands, p. 31. Farm hands almost invariably lived with their employer, ate with the family, and shared the home life on a basis of social equality.
New machines were springing up like mushrooms in spite of threats of patent infringement suits. In 1860 there were at least thirteen harvesting machines being sold in Illinois. Of these the most prominent were McCormick's, Hussey's and Henny's reapers, and Maines' and Esterley's headers.

The reapers were similar in general. As a rule they required two horses, sometimes four. The cutting bar was usually at the side but some were pushers. In the early 'fifties the reapers were of the hand-raking type but during the later years of the decade the self-raker was coming into use.

By 1860 the cradle was being replaced quite generally by the reaper, at least in the northern part of the state. The cradle provided the cheapest means of cutting in some cases but the reaper put the wheat in the stack at less cost. In the more progressive communities the cradle was relegated to the fields where a reaper could not be used profitably because of stumps, wet ground, small fields, etc. The extent of the use of the reaper is difficult to

48. Prairie Farmer, X, (1850), p. 19-20, 30. Cf. State Register, Nov. 6, 1851.marsh recalls that the first reaper was introduced into his neighborhood in DeKalb County in 1849 and that it was not well received. At that time they did not raise enough wheat to need it. Cp. cit., p. 44. 60. A more detailed account of the development of the reaper will be given in Chapter IV in connection with the great expansion of grain growing and the use of machinery.

49. Cultivator, N. S., VIII, (1851), p. 41; Prairie Farmer, files 1850-3; various illustrative and descriptive materials in the McCormick Historical Association Library.
The editor of the *Prairie Farmer* wrote in 1850 that reapers were almost universal in northern Illinois. It was claimed that seven-eighths of the grain in the western part of the state was cut and threshed by machinery in 1850 and that the river counties were full of machines in 1852.50

One might easily conclude from positive evidence that reapers were almost universal in the northern half of the state. However, certain facts lead one to suspect that correspondents of the day were over-enthusiastic and that the progress in that direction was not as great as pictured, particularly in the districts yet some distance from market. This conclusion is supported by the later development of the reaper trade in which the leading manufacturer, McCormick, sold 12,000 machines from 1854 to 1857, as compared with 6,00 from 1849 to 1853, and by the general slowness of farmers to adopt innovations.51

Southern Illinois was evidently far behind the north in the use of reaping machinery. Not only do the reaper sales for that section appear very low, but the correspondence of agents and others indicates a lack of trade in "Egypt". For example, a writer from that section, near the Mississippi, stated that there were no machines in his county or further south, of which he knew.

50. *State Register*, July 31, Aug. 1, 1850; July 31, 1851; *Prairie Farmer*, X. (1850), p. 267, 269; XI, (1851), pi 9; *Patent Report*, 1850, p. 242; John Wilson, Burlington, Iowa, Feb. 6, 1852; McCormick MSS. Competition among reaper agents was keen and close business practices were resorted to. Phelps and Borrland, Peoria, June, 1850, McCormick MSS.

51. A large part of the increase in reaper sales was due to the increase in the number of farmers after 1864, but that does not account for nearly all of the increase. McCormick sold about 30,000 machines and other manufacturers about 150,000 in the (cont.)
Where wheat growing was profitable the economies to be affected with reapers were such as to greatly encourage the use of such machines. A Putnam County farmer estimated in 1850 that the use of harvesting machinery saved one-third on the cost of caring for the grain. Two men with four horses could now cut from twelve to twenty acres per day. The machine used sold in 1850 for about $130 and freight, and rented at from fifty to seventy-five cents per acre. The cost of harvesting grain was $1.00 to $1.50 per acre in 1851 with the cost of threshing three cents for oats and five cents for wheat. The saving made through the use of reapers made it possible for farmers to greatly extend their grain growing.

The old method of threshing on a floor and winnowing wheat without mills was still in use in the 'fifties but threshing machines were common. Some of these were small and merely beat...
the grain from the straw. Those had been largely superseded by 1850 by the combined threshers and separators, which were of two types. The tread mill thresher commonly used two horses and threshed about 150 bushels of wheat per day. The sweep machines were larger, using six, eight, or ten horses, and threshed from 200 to 300 bushels. The larger machines commonly went from farm to farm and threshed by the bushel. The smaller outfits were often owned by the individual farmer who sometimes threshed, as opportunity offered, for weeks, even into the winter.54

The development of haying machinery was yet young. Reapers were commonly combination machines. They were supposedly adapted to either mowing or reaping, but as a matter of fact they mowed but poorly. Imperfect mowers were being introduced but much of the hay was yet cut by scythes. Horse rakes were used in some places but were not common. Such as were used were made of a piece of timber three by four inches, and twelve feet long with teeth an inch and a quarter in diameter and sixteen inches long. By the middle fifties revolving wooden rakes were frequently found and some steel wire tooth rakes were used. The first successful effort to stack hay by horse power was made in 1850 in McLean County but was not long continued.55

Small grain was commonly sown by hand but much corn was planted by machines. For planting, the ground was laid off by markers for the purpose of checking. This was done by drawing across the newly worked field markers made with sled runners properly spaced or wagon wheels arranged on four and twelve foot axles. The corn planters, of which Brown's was the best known, were coming into use in the early years of the decade. They gave fair satisfaction although they did not check well. They resembled the present day planters closely except in the amount of wood used and the checking device. A small boy usually rode on a seat on the machine and operated a lever to drop the corn when the planter crossed the market tracks referred to above.

Plowing was done with varying equipment. The original prairie breaking plow was a cumbersome implement, with a beam about fourteen feet long attached to a pair of wheels. It was about five feet from the point to the end of the moldboard and cut a shallow furrow from eighteen to twenty-seven inches wide. The motive power was furnished by from four to eight yoke of oxen. Prairie breakers used such equipment and charged $2 or $3 per acre. It was soon discovered that smaller plows drawn by two, three, or four horses could successfully break prairie and these were increasingly used. The plows used for common work had been rapidly improved.

The ill scouring wooden plows with iron points were passing rapidly, and steel plows were coming into common use.57

Other machinery to be found on the farms included "A" harrows which were used to work ground down and, with the front teeth removed, to cultivate corn. These were followed in cultivation by a single shovel twice in a row, a bull-tongued plow and the single shovel again. Corn shellers were known, but scarce, and chain pumps, and windmills were in use.58

Agriculture in the upper mid-west was on the verge of striking changes at the middle of the century. Wheat, the great exchange crop of the northwest that paid for land, groceries, clothing.


2,400,000 Acres.... Lands, p. 27; John Deere made his first steel plow in 1837 at Grand Detour and W. F. May perfected one in 1841. The Deere shop was moved to Moline where 4,000 plows were manufactured in 1851. Prairie Farmer, XI, (1851), p. 139; Ohio Cultivator, IX, (1853), p. 147; Gridley, Historical Sketches, I, p. 259; Bateman, Selby and Gale, History of Knox County, p. 625-629; March, op. cit., p. 44. Parlin and Crendonoff were making plows at Canton early in the 'fifties and peddling them by wagon to farmers and country merchants. Some of these trips took days and one was as far as Knoxville, Iowa. HIK. Parlin and Crendonoff Co. Papers.

58. Prairie Farmer, XI, (1850), p. 269, 290, 416; XI, (1851), p. 222; State Register, May 1, 1851. Marsh cites the tools and implements used by three hands on a prairie farm, as a stubble plow, a breaking plow, a harrow, two hoes, two forks, two rakes, a scythe, a cradle, a spade and a scoop. op. cit., p. 45.
etc., as no other crop did, was soon to suffer a temporary partial
collapse and a brilliant return. Corn, which had been second to
wheat as a mortgage lifter, was to come into its own to an in-
creasing extent both directly, and in connection with live stock.

The census of 1850 credited Illinois with 9,414,747 bushels
of wheat, which placed her fifth in the nation in aggregate pro-
duction. She ranked third in per capita output with eleven bushels
which was a very marked increase over 1840. This production was
largely concentrated in the northwestern half of the state above
a line drawn from Will County to Alton. In that section most of
the counties produced over 100,000 bushels, and few less than
50,000. The southeastern half of the state, yet distant from
market, produced comparatively small amounts. Over half of the
counties produced less than 10,000 bushels and the remainder,
except the region about East St. Louis, from 10,000 to 50,000
bushels. The per capita production varied in much the same way.

But now at a time when immigration was coming heavily to the
state, and the development of transportation systems made com-
mercial agriculture a greater possibility, a change was at hand.
There was a tendency away from the cash staple that apparently was
on the high road to complete dominance. There was scarcely an
abandonment but there was a check in the expansion rate and a loss
in comparative standing with other grains and live stock.

"The present period constitutes an important crisis in the agricu-
laral interests of our western states. They may be said to be
in a kind of transition state..... between limited means and an
enviable abundance and independence." Trans. Ill. State Ag. Soc.,
I, (1853-4), p. 456. See also Proceedings Ill. State Dairymen's
Ass'n., I, 1874, p. 10.
The change in the standing of wheat was brought about by frequent crop failures within recent years. These were due to varying causes—winter killing, particularly in northern Illinois, Hessian fly, rust, and in some places to a measure of soil depletion. Spring wheat was being substituted in some sections of the north to save the staple. This was not entirely successful and spasmodic failures continued. With these production difficulties and a low price of wheat in 1851, the farmers began to feed wheat to hogs and to experiment with new lines of production.

The large fields of wheat began to give way to feed grains and live stock. A writer said in 1852, "So long as the relative values of grain continue as they have been for the last two years our farmers will prefer to cultivate corn and oats which will afford a better compensation for the labor bestowed upon them and are besides more certain crops." Not only feed grains but hay was becoming of increasing importance in connection with live stock.

The change from wheat was particularly true of northern Illinois. Throughout the area came repeated reports of crop fail-

60. Prairie Farmer, X, (1850), p. 18, 259, 276; XI, (1851), p. 27, 55, 90, 335, 366, 361, 395, 429, 529, 578; XII, (1852), p. 74; Chicago, Her Commerce and Railroads, (1852), p. 3; Cultivator, N.S., VIII, (1850), p. 356; Memoirs of the Prairie, Nov. 8, 1861. The soil was described as good but the climate as not suitable for wheat, the former staple.

61. Prairie Farmer, XII, (1852), p. 134, 538. It was claimed in 1851 that corn was often raised in Illinois at or below five cents per bushel. Bantoul, Letter to Robert Schuyler, Esq., on the Value of the Public Lands of Illinois, p. 5.

ures. West of Chicago there had not been a full wheat crop from 1847 to 1851. Winter killing was blamed for most of the difficulty but complaint was also made of rust, blight, fly, chinch bugs, poor culture, and soil depletion. Soils which when new produced good crops were now falling in yield to an extent that caused much comment. New land held up for a time but old land required better culture than it received. As a result of these causes the growing of wheat was regarded as particularly hazardous. Farmers in northern Illinois reached the conclusion that

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<th>Year</th>
<th>bushels</th>
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<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>2,286,000</td>
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<td>1849</td>
<td>2,192,000</td>
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<td>1850</td>
<td>1,387,987</td>
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<td>1851</td>
<td>799,360</td>
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<td>1852</td>
<td>941,470</td>
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<td>1853</td>
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<td>1854</td>
<td>2,744,860</td>
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<td>1855</td>
<td>7,110,270</td>
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64. Prairie Farmer, X. (1850), p. 315; XI. (1851), p. 10, 381. There was less wheat raised in the Rock and Fox River region in 1851 than in 1845. See also Western Journal and Civilian, VIII. (1858), p. 66; Daily Register, Aug. 4, 1851. Shipments east from Chicago were:
it was not a wheat country and that it could not compete successfully with southern Illinois, Ohio or Michigan. Many farmers were raising wheat because they knew not what else to do. But they were looking for relief. The editor of the Prairie Farmer wrote, "Wheat growing has made them poorer and the question now among farmers is what shall we turn our attention to that will remunerate us for our capital and labor." The direction in which they turned was toward feed grains and stock. Coarse grains were valuable for stock feeding and also profitable as cash crops in some places since the improvement of transportation. Of the feed grains corn was the most important and increased attention was given to it. The corn crops of northern Illinois during 1850 and 1853 were bountiful, that of 1853 being the


67. Prairie Farmer, XI, (1851), p. 27; XII, (1852), p. 529. "Wheat growing as at present prosecuted throughout this region, partakes far too much of the reckless character and spirit of speculation... Certain it is that unless a radical change is soon affected in our present system we must abandon the cultivation of (wheat)... Farmers are impressed with the importance and necessity of a diversity of pursuits." Ibid., X, (1850), p. 278. It must not be assumed, however, that wheat was abandoned or that any sudden change occurred.

greatest ever known. These large crops were reflected in the corn and livestock trade of Chicago. Corn shipments east from Chicago in 1861 were five times those of 1849 and those of 1854 were ten times as great. A part of this increase came through the extension of railroads but much resulted from a shift of farming emphasis. When a corn crop shortage occurred in northern Illinois it was shown in the half-fatted hogs sent to the Chicago market.

The diversification program gave places to other crops than corn and wheat. Cattle yielded well and were usually profitable either as a cash crop or as feed. Grass and hay came into greater prominence also in the shift toward livestock. Some attention was being devoted to broom corn and flax but they were not crops of any great importance.

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70. Hunt's Merchants' Mag., LIII, (1855), p. 462; report of the Chicago Board of Trade, 1873, p. 30-39; M. L. Dunlap, Democratic Press, Dec., 1854, Dunlap Clippings. Prices ranged from thirty to fifty cents at Chicago and it was sending more money into the farming districts than wheat ever had. Prairie Farmer, XIII, (1853), p. 89. "Corn is now getting too valuable to be allowed to stand out during the winter losing half of its value thereby. The fodder is also of more importance since the rise in beef and butter." M. L. Dunlap, Democratic Press, 1853, Dunlap Clippings.
In the region west of the Illinois River the production of wheat was waver-ing. This may have been due in part to the cost of transportation. Whereas with improved facilities the less valuable grains such as corn and oats would pay transportation charges from northern Illinois to Chicago and compete with wheat, it was much less true in the western counties. The evidence is conflicting but it betrays a state of uncertainty with a gradual reduction of wheat growing. In Adams county, where wheat was said to be increasing in 1850, a farmer wrote in 1851 that the high price of machinery, liability of winter killing, and the market fluctuations were making it an unprofitable crop. In 1852 a McCormick general agent reported that wheat had been generally abandoned in the Mississippi River counties and that corn and pork had been substituted.

Corn was a good crop in this section with reasonable remuneration, particularly on bottom ground. Oats, however, were less favored, being regarded as exhausting and relatively expensive to raise. An estimate made in 1852 in western Illinois placed the cost of an acre of wheat, oats, and corn at $3.62 1/2, $6.15, and $8.35, respectively. At those costs and the current yields and market prices wheat showed a loss of thirty-seven and a half cents, while oats gave a profit of $1.85 and corn returned $4.15 per

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72. Patent Report, 1850, p. 244-245; 1851, p. 444; 1852, p. 323-325; John Wilson, Burlington, Iowa, Feb. 6, 1852, McCormick MSS. The crop of 1851 was poor, yielding only ten to fifteen bushels instead of the usual fifteen to twenty-five. Wheat yields had been falling for some time and no serious steps had been taken to help the situation.
Along the Illinois River the fortune of wheat varied. While some sections were turning to wheat others were shifting to corn and stock as more certain and profitable. For example, Jersey County farmers were making $12 per acre on wheat while in LaSalle County they were turning to feed grains and stock. Various reports from the section and shipment figures indicated that while wheat was by no means given up, it suffered a setback and moves for diversification were made.

As in most parts of the state, corn was the crop which received the greatest attention in the new program. The soil was well adapted to its growth and large crops were raised at a relatively low cost. The railroads, river and canal took the corn, packed meats and live hogs to the Chicago market. If corn, with its ally, stock, was not the greatest staple of the valley, it certainly shared that honor with wheat. Hemp, flax and potatoes received some attention but were of minor importance.
The same uncertainty existed in central Illinois away from the Illinois River. Wheat was less liable to winter kill than in the northern part of the state, and in some sections was as sure a crop as corn. There was evidence, however, that at the existing price levels the crop could not be relied upon for certain profit. James N. Brown, of Sangamon County, wrote in 1853, "Our soil produces wheat well but owing to the character of our winter, I do not look upon this portion of Illinois as a first rate wheat county... My experience is that wheat cannot be relied upon as a safe crop." A similar note came from Vermilion County, further east. "The wheat crop is beginning to fail in this vicinity and farmers in some cases are abandoning its culture to engage more extensively in the production of Indian corn, which is by far more valuable and productive." 76

As wheat faltered corn advanced, with stock as a partner. E. Hall of Menard County wrote in 1851. "Corn is emphatically our crop. We rely on it for our profits, not to sell, but to feed to stock—cattle and hogs... It is cut and shocked in the field and hauled when wanted for use and fed to cattle whole and on the stalk." "Corn is the staple of this county", wrote a Vermilion County farmer in 1853. Corn was able to take such a commanding place partly because of the splendid yields. These ranged from forty to seventy bushels per acre and would have been better with

The ground was plowed from three to five inches deep with much cutting and covering and the corn was but poorly cultivated.77

Throughout most of southern Illinois there was less change in the relative importance of crops than in northern Illinois. One of the reasons for this was the fact that transportation lines had not reached the interior of this section and commercial agriculture was less developed. Much of southern Illinois agriculture was but little above a subsistence level in the production of wheat. Hence the farmers there were less affected by price fluctuations than were those in the north. Being further south, this section suffered less from winter killing, particularly in the timbered sections where there was some protection. The best wheat growing districts were in the barren and the more heavily timbered lands extending from the Mississippi eight to twenty miles into the interior.78

77. Patent Report, 1851, p. 44, 443; 1853, p. 106. The yield in Vermilion County was forty bushels and the price ranged from twenty to thirty cents. It was estimated that three-fourths of the crop was sent out of the county. Its transportation route and destination were not specified. Ibid., p. 105-106, 130. Chicago shipment figures indicate that much was being shipped from regions with transportation. See also Trans. Ill. State Ag. Soc., 1, (1852-4), p. 430. Carts were commonly raised in the new stock-grain regime and yielded well. Ibid., p. 429; Patent Report, 1851, p. 448; 1853, p. 159. A broom factory was established at Springfield but the brush was bought from Ohio. Illinois State Journal, Jan. 4, 1850.

Along the fringe of the southern part of the state wheat raising was increasing under the stimulus of a better market. This new outlet came about the beginning of the decade when additional flour mills were erected on the Mississippi, and Cincinnati and other towns east and south entered the wheat market there. As a result of these new market factors wheat was selling at a remunerative price in the river counties in the early 'fifties. The interior felt this stimulus but little, however. There was less wheat in southern Illinois to be adversely affected and less cause for change there than in the more accessible sections to the north. This part of the state continued on its tranquil way with but slight interruption. There was some diversification but it was brought about more because of the lack of transportation facilities than from crop failure, depletion of soil, etc. Corn and oats could not pay wagon transportation far and as settlement and production of crops slowly increased more of them were fed to stock which walked to market. Some sections with favorable transportation prospered by producing hay which was

79. Prairie Farmer, XI, (1861), p. 265. Wheat raising was becoming precarious in the wheat district east of St. Louis from 1836 to 1854 as compared with what was done after the introduction of the wheat drill, according to W. C. Flagg, of Nore. Trans. Ill. State Ag. Soc., VIII, (1869-70), p. 208. Cf. Gem of the Prairie, June 8, 1850; Prairie Farmer, XII, (1852), p. 315. Some sections of the interior, such as Effingham and Cumberland counties raised little wheat. The settlers thought the soil was not adapted to wheat and that the drainage was not sufficient. The first crop was usually corn. Perrin, History of Effingham County, p. 235, 266; Battey, op. cit., p. 276.
pressed and sent down the river to the southern market.

Castor beans were extensively and profitably grown in much of southern Illinois where a market was available. Farmers near Shawmetown, where many were raised, sold their crop to mills at Cincinnati. Those nearer St. Louis took their beans to that market. Many were brought there from as far as Randolph, Jefferson and Bond Counties. The crop was raised much like corn. The yield ranged from ten to twenty-five bushels per acre, and the beans sold at from fifty cents to $1.50 per bushel. Further production was hindered by the lack of castor oil mills nearby.

Another crop of some minor importance to this section was tobacco. In 1850 Illinois produced 841,394 pounds of that product, largely in the southern part. With the price at six cents per pound it was the most profitable crop grown in some districts, as Union County and surrounding territory.

The complement of the decline or arrest in wheat is to be found in the increased interest in live stock and the grain feeds in connection with it. The following description of the change.

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62. Gem of the Prairie, May 24, 1851; State Register, Dec. 11, 1851.
lacking some needed qualifications, perhaps, was written in 1851:

"Until 1860 the farmers of Illinois devoted their capital and farms mostly to raising grain. Years of experience, however, have satisfied the great majority of them that though the soil is possessed of a fertility equal to the agricultural districts of the Mississippi valley, the climate is not adapted to the growing of wheat, heretofore the staple article of agriculture, while as a grazing country it possessed qualities equalled by none in the West. At last, however, after a series of disasters to their crops and the manifest overproduction of their principal staples, they have commenced giving it up and as rapidly as their circumstances will permit are turning their attention to stock raising." 63

While wheat prices dropped slowly during the early 'fifties those of live stock rose. In January 1853 hogs sold for double the price in 1850, and in July 1852 cattle were more than twice the price in January 1850. With stock prices booming in an era of virtually free pasture, and with wheat yields and prices dropping, the stockowner came into his own.64

The scattering farmers in the isolated region of east central Illinois had already found that when they could raise a crop of wheat the cost of carriage ate up the profit. They had early turned their attention to the raising of live stock that could walk and eat its way to market. Now other parts of the state followed. An increasing number of farmers found it more remunerative to produce horses and mules for the southern market and beef, pork,

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83. Gem of the Prairie, Nov. 8, 1851.
84. See the files of the Prairie Farmer for market quotations; Aldrich Report, p. 26, 20. In January 1850 hogs were quoted in Chicago at $2.50 to $3.25. They maintained this price until December when they went to $3.25 and $4.25 during the packing period. The season of 1851-2 saw the price range from $3.75 to $6.00, while that of 1852-3 saw hogs selling at from $4.50 to $6.00.
wool, butter and cheese for the East and Europe than to raise wheat. Unfortunately, statistics are not available for comparison for the immediate period. The census of 1860 showed a marked concentration of hog raising in the two areas. The greatest center was a large section in the west central part of the state. It extended from the north line of Knox County southward to well below St. Louis and reached eastward to the center of the state. Within that large area the heaviest concentration was along the Illinois River. Here was a soil eminently suited for raising corn to feed, and a transportation route to market for packed meat and hogs.

A second hog raising area extended from East St. Louis southward around the edge of the state as far as Edgar County near the upper Wabash. The local centers in this belt were in the lower Wabash valley and the Ozark hill region. Here the number of hogs was much less than in the Illinois River region, but locally the pork trade was of considerable consequence. The remaining portions of the state were not yet producing pork on a commercial scale, except in a few localities. The few hogs found in these counties were largely needed to supply the home demand.

With a rising pork market farmers generally found it profitable to feed hogs. The price of corn was advancing also, and at times the ratio between hogs and corn became so wide that it was advisable to sell corn rather than to feed it. Many of the hogs were fed in a slipshod manner. Some of the better farmers pastured their stock hogs on clover and oats during the summer and finished

then off on corn by the first of November.\footnote{86} Hogs were usually fed to the age of twelve to twenty months and marketed at heavy weights, usually above 250 pounds. This heavy feeding was encouraged by a price differential in favor of heavy hogs, amounting to from twenty-five cents up. In some cases heavy hogs sold at double the price of light ones. Buyers based such prices on the supposition that the meat of light hogs was not good because of the method of feeding, and on the fact that "clear pork" could be obtained only from heavy hogs.\footnote{87}

Large numbers of live hogs were sent east by railroad as soon as connections were made, but by far the greater part of them were marketed in Illinois or at St. Louis. The packing season began in November and continued through the winter, closing with the end of cold weather. The limitations on the time of packing caused a seasonal concentration which not only set limits to the time of feeding but determined financial customs in regard to seasons of payment.\footnote{88}

In 1851-2 the number was 231,515 and in 1852-3 it rose to 324,656.

Packing was widely scattered over much of the state. Chicago was rapidly expanding her packing industry in which she was to take first place in 1861-2 by passing Cincinnati. At the beginning of the decade, however, Chicago stood eighth among Illinois cities in that industry. By 1855 Chicago with some 40,000 hogs eclipsed Beardstown and Peoria with about 38,000 each. Most of the hogs came by the railroads after they were opened, but some came by canal and many on foot from some distance.

Although Chicago took the lead in Illinois packing in 1855, the number of hogs cut up there was small compared with the number packed elsewhere in the state. The transportation conditions, methods of packing, and nature of the meat trade gave the local centers the advantage, which they continued to hold through the 1860s and 1870s.

Although Beardstown packed 31,000, Alton 20,000, Quincy 29,000, Peoria 21,000, Springfield 12,500, Shawneetown and Oquawka 12,000 each and Chicago 11,000. The technique of early packing is described by Clemn. Pork was packed for shipment in 200 pound barrels of fifty pieces. Beef for the English market was packed in 204 pound pieces holding thirty-eight pieces put down in salt and pickle. Some was packed in barrels. See cit., Chapter V.

In 1849-50 Beardstown packed 31,000, Alton 20,000, Quincy 29,000, Peoria 21,000, Springfield 12,500, Shawneetown and Oquawka 12,000 each and Chicago 11,000. The technique of early packing is described by Clemn. Pork was packed for shipment in 200 pound barrels of fifty pieces. Beef for the English market was packed in 204 pound pieces holding thirty-eight pieces put down in salt and pickle. Some was packed in barrels. See cit., Chapter V.

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The hog raising districts were also pork packing centers. During the winter season the Illinois Valley towns were bustling with packing activity. One man on that river was said to have cleared $10,000 in that business in the season of 1850-1. Such profits portended competition. Beards town was the center and during the early 'fifties packed from 30,000 to 40,000 each season. St. Ton, Peoria, and Pekin on the river and Canton and Springfield further back packed heavily. In fact, there was scarcely a town on the river which did not engage in the business which was thriving. This activity bespeaks the healthy tone of the hog raising industry in these years.91

Hogs were driven to the river towns from some distance. Beards town, for example, drew hogs from Sangamon, Menard, Logan, Christian and McDonough counties. Col. Judy drove in as many as 1,500 from Menard County at one time in the early 'fifties. The owners waited, sometimes for two or three days, until their turn came to have their animals slaughtered and weighed.92

In addition to those driven in, large numbers were slaughtered by the farmers and brought to the river to ship when navigation opened. The pork shipped on the river went both north and south. Some of that shipped down the river went to Pittsburgh, but the

91. Gem of the Prairie. Aug. 16, 1851; Patent Report, 1850. p. 544; 1851, p. 445, 541; Prairie Farmer, x. (1850), p. 166; Western Journal and Civilian, xi. (1851), p. 191; State Register, Dec. 12, 1850; Quincy Whig, Jan. 10, 1852. There was an increase in the number of hogs packed in the inland towns along the Illinois River about 1850. Chicago Daily Democrat, Mar. 7, 1850.
larger part found its way to the South.\(^{92}\)

The same activity was shown on the Mississippi on the western edge of the hog raising section and near the Wabash. The river below Keithsburg in Mercer County was dotted on both sides with packing centers which furnished a good local market. Many hogs were sent to the Iowa towns and about half of the hogs packed at St. Louis were furnished by ten counties south of the Illinois River. The hog raising belt below St. Louis was sending its supplies to such towns as Sparta, Chester and Shawneetown. On the Wabash many were packed and shipped on the high waters in the spring.\(^{94}\)

In 1850 Illinois stood seventh in the number of neat cattle with 541,209. By 1860 she had advanced to second place with 970,789. Of the increase in the decade the most notable was in the northern section with 174.4 per cent. The increase in the central part was 29.9 per cent, and in the south 51.3 per cent. It is impossible to say what part of this increase came in the early 'fifties, but it seems probable that during the period of high priced cattle and low priced wheat much of the progress was made.

Cattle raising was less subject to transportation developments than hogs and there was less concentration than in the case of the industry. In 1850 there were centers of slight prominence around Chicago, along the Illinois River, and along the Mississippi.

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\(^{92}\) Springfield Daily Register, Jan. 29, 31, 1850; Gridley, Historical Sketches, 1, p. 10.


Farmers in western Illinois lost many pigs from the depredations of the wolves. In 1849-50 Chester packed 1,000, Sparta 1,500, St. Louis 124,000, Quincy 29,000, Warsaw 3,000, Burlington 29,000. (cont.)
from Rock Island to Jackson County. The northwest corner of the state and the eastern section south of Will County had a comparatively small number of cattle.95

The western part of the central section of the state was the greatest cattle country in Illinois. Not only were cattle sent to Chicago and the East, but large numbers were marketed at St. Louis. For example, in one week in 1851 Sangamon and Morgan Counties sent 4,000 to St. Louis by boat alone. As a rule cattle were profitable in this section and feeders and breeders were active.96

Most of the cattle were but little improved although there was more progress in this section than elsewhere in the state.

To James H. Brown, Sangamon County, belongs the honor of founding the first herd of Shorthorn cattle in the state. He drove his herd from Kentucky in 1854. Through the years to his death in 1869 he was prominently connected with cattle breeding as well as general agriculture. Sangamon and Morgan Counties had many breeders of improved stock during the period.97

94. (Cont.) Keokuk 19,000, Oquawka 12,000, and Keithsburg 4,000.
95. U. S. Census, 1850, p. 728.
another prominent cattleman and perhaps the most romantic figure of the period belonged to this section. The man was Jacob Straw of Morgan County, the cattle king of Illinois. He was the largest dealer and feeder of cattle in the state and probably in the United States. He bought cattle far and wide and his coming was awaited by many farmers who had confidence in his judgment and honesty, and who held their cattle for him. He later came to dominate the St. Louis cattle market.

McLean County was another center of cattle raising. In 1850 it was claimed that one-fifth of the cattle sold at Chicago were from that county. A McLean County farmer wrote in 1853, "Cattle raising is the great business of Illinois. The Durham is preferred to any other breed. The cost of raising a three year old steer is from $12 to $15 and brings from $18 to $25." The cattle kings of the county were the Funks, who sold cattle in large droves on the Chicago market. About 1850 Isaac Funk frequently drove herds of 1,500 cattle and 1,000 hogs to that market. In 1851 Jacob Funk sold 1,000 cattle averaging 700 pounds, which was considered heavy.


99. Gem of the Prairie, Nov. 16, 1850; State Register, Nov. 20, 1851; Patent Report, 1853, p. 6. Almost no fat cattle were sold under three years. Four years was the common age for selling. For the operations of the Funks, see Gem of the Prairie, Nov. 8, 1861; Trans. McLean County Hist. Soc., II, p. 503-514; Trans. Ill. State Hist. Soc., 1902, p. 159-170. Wentworth relates that Lafayette Funk at an undated early time rested his cattle and watered them on the site of the present Montgomery Ward and Company's main building on Chicago Avenue at the river. The Portrait Gallery of the Saddle and Sirloin Club, p. 267.
There were some parts of the northern section, as in Bureau County, where the land was too wet for farming. Here much attention was given to stock. Cattle could be readily purchased and easily cared for. Much of the swamp land was used and cattle were watched from towers. In feeding cattle, what was known as the "Ohio and Kentucky system" was used. Corn was cut and shocked in the field and hauled to the feedlots as needed. In this way the cattle, which were followed by three or four times the same number of hogs, could be wintered for $2.00 or $2.50 and pastured through the summer on nearly free range. 100

The cattle market for northern Illinois was Chicago, both as a packing center and as a shipping point to the East. The packing of beef remained about stationary during the early 'fifties, at about 20,000 to 25,000 head. Most of the cattle supplying this market were fattened in Illinois. Some came from Iowa and Indiana. Beef was shipped from Chicago to New York and Boston where it sold above the general market because of its high quality. 101

Of growing consequence was the eastern trade in live cattle. Shipment by lake was an important item in 1851. Part of the cattle shipped in this way went all the way by water to New York, while others were taken from Buffalo to Boston and New York by rail. By 1852 the number sent East had reached 5,000. With the opening of the railroad in that direction the number was further

100. Patent Report, 1851, p. 404; 1853, p. 6; Samuel Clark. Princeton; Frank E. Stevens, Sycamore. Jacob Deiley of Malta. DeKalb County, says that in his section cattle were not fed well during the 'fifties and that as a consequence many of them became so poor that they had to be lifted up. Neighbors went from farm to farm for this purpose.

101. Prairie Farmer, X, (1860), p. 18, 382; M.S. XXI. (1866), p. 153; Gen of the Prairie, Nov. 16, 1850; March 4, 1861; (Cont.)
increased and the packing of beef fell off slightly at Chicago.102

Perhaps a greater number of cattle was sent East from Illinois direct than went through Chicago. Most of these were driven to market. In parts of Illinois and Indiana there were buyers who collected droves of feeder cattle which they herded through the summer on the prairies and sold to feeders from Ohio and Pennsylvania who drove them east. The Philadelphia Ledger said in 1850, "The cattle of Indiana and Illinois (on the Philadelphia market) are mostly fatted in Ohio and brought by Ohio men", and claimed that 7,000 such cattle were fed in Pickaway County alone.103

In March 1850 a drove of 150 cattle from Morgan County passed through Springfield on the way to the Philadelphia market. In 1861 a Washington County drover planned to start with 350 cattle for Ohio and to drive a like number later. The same year a herd of 116 Illinois cattle which had been on the road one hundred days was shipped from Albany to New York.104

Dairying, a specialized feature of the cattle industry, was making some slight progress by 1850. An examination of the census

103. Quoted by Daily Register, May 31, 1850; Patent Report, 1853, p. 6. Cattle drives to the East were probably much less frequent after the railroads were opened in that direction.
104. Daily Register, March 9, 1850; June 17, 1851, citing Nashville Era; Sept. 19, 1861, citing Albany Journal; Gem of the Prairie, Nov. 8, 1851; Gridley, Historical Sketches, I, p. 8, 14.
of that year fails to show any extensive concentration of the industry although there is some evidence of progress around Chicago and the west central section. It seems probable that the dairy cows to be found elsewhere supplied the needs of only the local population and that the slight increase in the dairy sections represented the surplus—the commercial aspects. Only in those sections of even slight concentration was dairying a cash business. Descriptive data tend to bear out that deduction and place a real commercial dairy concentration in the Chicago area, the Illinois River region and about St. Louis.

The growing population of Chicago induced the development of the milk trade to that city. This began in 1851 or 1852 when Phineas H. Smith sent a can of milk from Elgin over the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad to the Adams House. Other hotels soon made contracts with Kane County farmers and by 1853 a considerable trade had sprung up. 105

Many good dairies were being established in the northern part of the state in the period. The owners usually paid close attention to their business and found the production of butter and cheese to be profitable. 106 Throughout the dairy districts of the

105. President Molcan of the Illinois Dairymen’s Association placed the date in 1851. Proceedings Illinois State Dairymen’s Association, II, (1875), p. 10. Bateman and Selby place it on Feb. 12, 1852. History of Kane County, p. 652. The Prairie Farmer in August, 1853 said, “A very considerable trade has sprung up during the present season in milk which is brought into Chicago from the line of the Galena Railroad.” It attributed the first shipment to Shepherd and Webster, XIII, (1853), p. 317.

106. Prairie Farmer, x, (1850), p. 74; XII, (1852), p. 20. The reader is cautioned to remember that the progress noted was relative and that except for limited localities dairying was a minor factor in this period. The rise of dairying came after the Civil War.
state cheese was being produced, but in quantities insufficient by far to supply the local demand. Western Reserve cheese was being sold in the interior towns of Illinois as well as in Chicago. Due to lack of care and experience on the part of the makers, Illinois cheese in this period was much below the eastern product in quality. It was sold much below eastern cheese but was profitable in some sections. Some sections in the central part of the state carried on a limited dairying which was incidental to general stock raising. Southern Illinois, except near St. Louis, was not engaged in commercial dairying. 107

The sheep industry in Illinois had made notable progress during the 'forties. Due to an increased weight of fleece and to the greater number of sheep the wool production in the state in 1850 was three times that in 1840 and was apparently increasing, particularly in the northern section. Sheep were being driven from Ohio in large numbers. For example, a flock of 5,000 was driven from Cadiz, Ohio to Springfield in 1853 and 10,000 were brought from that state to Shelby County in the same year. 108

Although the price of sheep kept up well for several years the increase in wool did not continue. In fact, the state dropped from eighth to eleventh place by 1860 with a 7.4 per cent decline in wool production. Relatively, hogs, cattle, corn and, later, wheat paid better. At the beginning of the decade, however, it was considered profitable by most men of experience. Such was the

view commonly held in most parts of the state, both north and south although dissent was expressed. 109

Wool growers suffered severe losses from the wolves. They were numerous in most parts of Illinois in 1860 and it was a common occurrence to hear wolves howling around the house within forty miles of Chicago. Wolf hunts were organized and the evil partly abated, but in places all the sheep were sold because of the losses. 110

The wool marketing system was apparently satisfactory in most places. Wool-buyers in large numbers went to the farthest parts of the state and gave the farmers in most sections a satisfactory price through the ensuing competition. The chief complaint was that the buyers did not make enough difference in price to

109. Cunynghame, op. cit., p. 61-62; Illinois State Register, Feb. 19, 1862; Prairie Farmer, XII. (1862), p. 329; Gem of the Prairie, Nov. 23, 1860. From Menard County came this comment, "No interest of the farmer pays so well as that of wool. The few who have engaged in the business extensively have realized the largest profits. Every farmer, however, has a flock principally to afford wool for home consumption; any surplus is sold in the nearest market but is not thought to pay well in this way." Patent Report, 1861, p. 440. The following report came from Bond County. Further south, "The raising of sheep is the most profitable branch in which the farmer of this region can engage in. One hundred percent with certainty can be realized in raising wool and lambs on any investment... with proper care, shelter and blue grass pasture for winter feeding." Ibid., 1863, p. 153. Cf. Ohio Cultivator, IX. (1853), p. 152. For dissenting view see Patent Report, 1860, p. 404; Prairie Farmer, XII. (1862), p. 198-199.

110. Joliet Signal, Dec. 21, 1862; Le Baron, History of Livingston County, p. 457-458; Cunynghame, op. cit., p. 59-60; Marsh, op. cit., p. 65-66; Prairie Farmer, X. (1851), p. 81, 82. In 1864 a wolf, hard pressed by hunters, was seen running the whole length of Market Street in Urbana. Cunyngham, History of Champaign County, p. 700.
encourage the production of good wool. Depending upon dissatisfaction with this system, a wool depot was established at St. Louis in 1850. Due to poor management it was not a success. John S. Wright established a wool depot at Chicago in 1852 but that city never became a great wool center. 111

The wool of the state went chiefly to eastern mills, but Illinois factories were using an increasing amount. For example, the Joliet woolen factory received wool from adjoining states. They bought 10,000 pounds of wool in one week and on one day teams from Iowa, Indiana, and seven counties of Illinois brought wool there. They manufactured for cash or toll or exchanged, as the customer desired. 112

Despite its great utility, fruit seems not to have received much attention in Illinois in the early 'fifties. In 1850 there was not a man in the state who devoted his whole attention to any branch of horticulture for profit. There were many nurserymen and much talk of the interest in fruit but the progress was slight. The farmers in northern Illinois were devoting their attention to general farming and thought they could not wait for fruit. 113 Central Illinois was poorly provided even for home use. Many of the settlers were new and consequently without bearing fruit trees.

111. Ohio Cultivator, IX, (1853), p. 150; Prairie Farmer, X, (1850), p. 161, 161. Wright is a prejudiced witness against the wool buying system then used inasmuch as he is boosting his own wool depot.


Further south commercial agriculture had not developed to such an extent as in the north, and a greater interest was shown in fruit. The little commercial horticulture that was to be found in the state was largely centered in the Ozark region on the hills where such an important industry was soon to arise. Every farmer in Union County was reported as having a large apple and peach orchard and three thousand bushels of dried fruit were sent from Jonesboro in 1852. During the latter part of the decade, after the railroads came, this industry grew into proportions of some importance. One farmer on the hills near Makanda made forty hogsheads of peach brandy annually about 1855 and the region was becoming the seat of commercial orchards and vineyards.

114 Illinois Daily Journal, Feb. 16, 1850; Prairie Farmer, XIV, (1854), p. 362. “We rode over many miles of prairie... in Sangamon, Macon, and Madison counties where there were no fruit trees, and but few for any purpose. What is true thereabouts is true in every section of the West in a greater or less degree.” Ibid., XV, (1855), p. 57. Even as late as 1856 we read, “Traveling over the prairies (of central Illinois, we) were struck by the wonderful destitution of fruits that everywhere prevails, and on inquiry, were informed that generally they will not thrive—nothing except apple trees, and those in but few places.” Cincinnati, Ill, (1856), p. 488.


116 Ferguson, America by River and Rail, p. 362; Illinois Farmer, XI, (1861), p. 2-5; State Register, June 1, 1854; Springfield Journal, Nov. 20, 1855; Rockford Free Press, March 12, 1851. An interesting item was the apple seed trade which existed among nurserymen. M.J. Dunlap, one of the prominent nurserymen was buying apple seeds in New York in large quantities. For example, in the season of 1855 he bought eighty-eight and a half bushels of seed from one firm there. Each seed was also being sent to Chicago from Michigan. Dunlap sold apple seed by the bushel in Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota and he had an inquiry from Yazoo, Mississippi. He paid about $6 per bushel and resold at $8. In 1855 he received an order, later cancelled, for 50,000 apple trees from (cont.)
The first fruit growers association in the state was the Northwestern Fruit Growers Association, founded in 1847. The Alton Horticultural Society was organized in 1850, and an exhibition was held in Sangamon County in that year. The Illinois State Horticultural Society was incorporated in February of 1857 and the Pomological and Horticultural Society of Illinois held its first meeting at Jonesboro in 1859. These organizations give evidence of a growing interest in the subject of fruit.

The chief agricultural organizations were the county agricultural societies and the central body, the Illinois State Agricultural Society. This state body was organized January 5, 1853 with James N. Brown of Sangamon County as its first president. It was incorporated in February of that year with an appropriation of $1,000. It held its first fair in October, 1853, and annually thereafter, except in 1862, at various places.

Preceding the state society were numerous county organizations. The formation of these societies indicates that a need for improved agriculture was recognized. The brief minutes of the meetings of the society will be found in Transactions of the Department of Agriculture, its successor, 1871, p. 212-255 in Illinois Reports, 1871, p. 528-571. Illinois was not represented at the formation of the National Agricultural Society at Washington in 1851. DeBow's Review, XXVI, (1859), p. 512-513.
agriculture was already felt. The first of these local bodies was the Fuel Institute founded in Putnam County in 1846. From that time forward there were repeated calls for the organization of similar county societies. These calls continued throughout the 'fifties. Thirty-three county societies reported to the state organization in 1854 and in 1858 Illinois led the nation in this respect with eighty-six. State aid to the amount of fifty dollars annually was given to these societies. They held fairs with varying success in a large proportion of the counties. 119

Another common form of organization was the anti-horse thief association to combat the prevalent stealing of horses. These associations were formed under various names and dealt with general thieves and counterfeiters also. The mere existence of such bodies is a telling commentary on the rough, semi-frontier life. 120

Although the spirit shown in the formation of agricultural societies was commendable, little can be said for the methods used by the prairie farmer of that day. Carelessness and prodigal waste were the common rule. The farmer found a soil of great natural


120. Illinois Farmer, IV, (1859), p. 363; Jones, History of Vermilion County, I, p. 191; Hicks, History of Kendall County, p. 278; Belleville Advocate, March 9, 1855; July 31, 1857; Alton Daily Courier, July 26, 1854; Rock River Democrat, July 6, 1852.
fertility, in most cases, and, as frontiersmen have always done, he proceeded to turn the resources at hand to those things which would raise his standard of living. Poor economy though it may seem to us in retrospect, for them it was the economical thing to do, and they made the most of their opportunity.

The editor of the Prairie Farmer wrote in 1852,

"We can now bear a review of some of our old errors... among the first of sins... is our wastefulness. It is too often the case in our prairie lands, where land is easily put into tillage, that our farmers put in more grain than they have the ability to cultivate and gather. A Yankee coming among us from his native hills is amazed and tortured by the unexampled slackness and wastefulness which everywhere confronts. In seasons of great plenty and prices low or normal... it is human nature to be negligent. But now (with better prices) there is no excuse." 121

The state of agricultural development may be seen from the comment of a Winnebago County farmer in 1853,

"The phrase, 'Improved Farm', means something in Ohio where it costs ten dollars an acre to clear land. In Illinois it means practically nothing. I would rather have a quarter section of virgin prairie to make a farm of than one that had been broken and cultivated just long enough to take the cream out of the land and let the weeds in. It costs but two dollars per acre to break up new prairie. It costs one dollar per acre to plow old land. The first crop is quite as good as any that follow and then you have the land fresh, rich, mellow and free from weeds." 122

In other parts of the state conditions were no better. From Hancock County in Western Illinois, a correspondent wrote,

"This section of the country is an old settlement and yet it is in a more backward condition than it was fifteen years ago; for the community have lost that energy and activity which generally characterizes a new settlement. Indolence and impudence are now the order of the day."

122. Ohio Cultivator, IX, (1853), p. 338. Samuel Clark of Princeton recalls that there were no weeds for several years after breaking.
From Gallatin County, on the Ohio River, came a similar plaint.

"We have no established principles of farming, every man setting up for himself, on the broad platform of independence; not being willing to profit by the experience of others more observing than himself." 123

Plowing was usually poorly done. Shallow plowing was the rule and deep plowing the exception. It was a skimming, cut and cover process that left much to be desired. The prairie sod was hard to break due to roots, but was easily plowed after the first breaking.124

In their desire to convert the soil into money the farmers usually drove it to the limit in producing the favored cash staple. Continued cropping was the common practice with very little variation. The same story was told over the whole state. Farmers in Bond County in southern Illinois had commonly cut grass or harvested corn from the same fields without change since they commenced farming fifteen or twenty years before. "Corn, corn without manure is their rotation." There was very little rotation in the Rock River basin in 1852. The farms there were new but they had borne wheat crops since first breaking. From Fulton County on the Illinois River came this: "I can hardly say we have rotation in crops, it is corn and wheat alternately." Further west, in Adams County, some attention was being given to rotation after a few farmers had successfully introduced it.125

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In keeping with the practice of continued cropping without rotation was the neglect of manuring the land. It was thought to be inexhaustible and little heed was given for the morrow. The farmer of that day could see little advantage in expending labor where it was apparently needed so slightly.

We will let the farmers themselves tell the story. A Putnam County farmer wrote in 1850, "Very little exertion has yet been made to increase the natural fertility of our soil." McHenry County reported, "Much has been said of late about manures. On our rich prairie soil we have no need of manures other than what we can readily make from the stock which every farmer should keep." But every farmer did not make use even of that. For example, a Lockport farmer wrote, "On my farm not a load of dung has been put out since the land was first broken--about twenty years ago--and the accumulation of it around the farm yard is immense. In some places I have seen dung set fire to in order to save labor."

From central Illinois a Macon County correspondent said that they used no manure there in the production of wheat. Few farmers there had ever seen guano, much less used it. In Adams County, western Illinois, the situation was described as follows: "We employ no manure, of course, on our prairie lands, for none is wanted in the production of a wheat crop." A statement from Fulton County on the Illinois River said, "Our land being prairie, we have not yet used any fertilizers." In Vermilion County on the eastern state line, no manure except muck or straw was used.127

CHAPTER IV

THE BOOM OF THE MIDDLE 'FIFTIES

The early fifties had been a period of moderate expansion, with new and improved transportation systems, enlarged markets, and the introduction of labor saving machinery. But with all the apparent advantage, agriculture had experienced a period of uncertainty. The production of wheat, hitherto the staple with the advantage of relatively high value for shipment, was waver ing and in some sections receding. Continued cropping, relative soil depletion, low price levels, etc. had made the crop uncertain and there was a marked shift toward stock and mixed farming.

No sooner was this well under way, however, than war opened on the steppes of Russia. While men went to battle in Europe, farmers on the Illinois prairie stopped to take account of the new turn of events. The pendulum swung in the other direction and the boom of the middle 'fifties was on. It will be sufficient to point out at this time that the effects of this boom did much to prepare the state and the Northwest for the economic stresses of the Civil War soon to come. It meant increased settlement, transportation facilities, production, and the increased use of labor saving harvesting machinery. The temporary overdoing of these things was to have its reaction in the panic to follow, but the reserve power for carrying the nation through the Civil War was being developed.

The western farmers were in touch with the European situation and news from abroad produced immediate reaction at home. Winter wheat which in 1852 had sold at Chicago for from fifty to seventy-five cents had risen to from seventy-eight cents to a dollar and
thirteen cents during 1853, reflecting, perhaps, the European situation, which, however, was not yet acute. A reaper agent in Belleville wrote in February 1854 that the news indicated that Turkey and Russia would soon conclude a peace and that prices would fall and be but a slight stimulus to agriculture. He added that he would put up as good a front as possible to the farmers but that they were "generally pretty well posted up." 1

Facts belied this appearance of an early peace however, and the war spread by the entrance of England and France in March of 1854. Soon marked advances occurred in the markets of the United States. Winter wheat sold in Chicago in January of 1854 at $1.06-$1.15; in April at $1.12-$1.20; in July at $1.15-$1.20; in October at $1.30-$1.40; and in April of 1855, a year from the receipt of war news, it sold for $1.45-$1.60, an advance of over fifty per cent within the year. The same wheat had sold in April 1852 at from sixty to seventy cents. Corn advanced at the same time from thirty-three to forty cents in January 1854 to a high point of seventy-three cents in July 1855, while oats were but slightly affected. 2

Apparently several factors produced this advance. The wheat harvest in the United States was short in 1854 so that little could be spared, particularly in the face of a larger home demand due to large immigration and railroad construction. Immigration was heavy—some 1,000,000 arriving from 1853 to 1855. Many of

1. Prairie Farmer, market quotations; Aldrich Report, p. 2; Wholesale Prices, Wages and Transportation, 1893, p. 61; Thos. J. Walker, Belleville, Feb. 25, 1854, McCormick MSS.
2. Aldrich Report, p. 9, 34, 61. Winter wheat prices continued to a high point of $1.60-$1.85 in July 1855. For details see price tables in appendix. Spring wheat made similar advances.
those went west to work on railroads and farms. The food required for these immigrants reduced the amount available to send East until the new farms were under production. Railroad construction drew much labor and absorbed some $600,000,000 in capital, and speculation was rife. The European market and supply was unsettled but the price ranged upward. France, which from 1850 to 1852 had exported wheat, suffered crop failure and throughout the Crimean War she imported wheat largely. The year 1855 saw a partial failure of crops on much of the continent. This led to increased demands from that region, particularly from France which bought in the Chicago market and shipped direct. Spain, ordinarily a wheat exporting country on a small scale, had but limited supplies. In the United Kingdom the wheat acreage increased throughout the war and yields were above pre-war figures. The imports were much less than before the entrance into the war but with an increased home crop the amount available for consumption was normal. This was not true of Ireland, where the crop was decreasing. The exports of wheat from Russia to the United Kingdom fell off from a high point in 1853 to a negligible quantity in 1855. Imports from the United States declined decidedly in 1855, despite high prices in the

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United Kingdom, but went back to a very high figure in 1856. The exports of wheat from the United States increased in 1854 to a high point of 21,238,897 bushels, two-thirds of which went to Great Britain. The European demand set in as the crop of 1853 was coming to market and under a speculative boom a very large amount was exported—more in fact than could well be spared. This produced a shortage of wheat for home consumption. Despite the apparent market the exports dropped one-fourth in 1855. This was the crop of 1854, which was short. With a decreased crop and hold over supply, and an increased demand at home, little could be sent abroad in spite of higher prices there. In the four years ending in 1857, England and France bought 269,800,000 bushels of wheat, of which the United States supplied 67,000,000, or about one-fourth. Thus, while the United States was pre-eminently an agricultural country, she was not a dominant factor in supplying the European demand even in time of stress abroad.

Whatever the relative importance of these various influences, the fact remains that prices of wheat and corn in the Chicago


Unfortunately available figures are not always comparable or in agreement. It is interesting to note that corn exports from the United States increased steadily from 2,274,909 bushels in 1853 to 10,292,280 bushels in 1856. In 1854 the United States exported
market ranged high during the Crimean War. That disturbance undoubtedly had an important effect and there is no doubt of its influence on the market psychology. The increase in the prices and general prosperity was almost universally laid at the door of the war—perhaps too much so. A part of the boom in prices was undoubtedly the result of speculation, but the effect upon the farmer was the same from whatever cause it arose. With the approach of peace prices of wheat dropped. Farmers were unwilling to take the reduced prices offered and held their wheat. As a result the receipts of wheat at Chicago in the winter of 1855–6 were small.

Added to the causes cited for the boom of the middle 'fifties was the development of transportation facilities. Not only did
the construction give employment to many men and provide a local market of much consequence, but the railroads furnished an ingress for settlers and an egress for produce. By the opening of 1854 there were in Illinois numerous railroads recently built or in the process of construction. There were ten trunk lines and three branches and extensions reaching Chicago in March, 1854. These lines had a total mileage of 1,626 and ran ninety-four trains a day.

The influence of the railroads was marked. M. L. Dunlap wrote in 1855, "Previous to the opening of the Central R. R. a large part of the corn left the state in the form of Beef & Pork but now the grain itself will go." Ferguson gave evidence in regard to the influence of railroads when he said, "An indication of what may be expected is had in the fact that this year (1855) the farmers on the line of the Illinois Central railway have sold their wheat for one dollar twenty-five cents per bushel; while formerly when there was no means of getting it to market, they were content to take forty or fifty cents per bushel for it."

Stock had been less dependent than grain upon the railroad, but a competent observer in Champaign County thought that the Illinois Central had increased the price of stock and grain by ten


per cent within a year. Ohio drovers were buying cattle in Champaign County at the same price as in central Ohio because it was cheaper to ship to New York from central Illinois than from Columbus, Ohio.  

The improved market situation which existed during the Crimean War opened up new possibilities for western farmers. The greatest opportunity which was at hand was to revive and expand wheat growing. It was estimated that the crop of wheat in the state in 1855 was three times that in 1850. The export of wheat did not increase in that proportion because of the temporary crop shortage of 1854 and of the home demand of immigrants.

Northern Illinois which had reached the conclusion that wheat growing was unprofitable, now found that with wheat well above a dollar a bushel it was a paying crop despite weakening soils, declining yields, insects, etc. Although occasional complaint was made of these hindrances the tone of the agricultural press was

10. Prairie Farmer, XV (1855), p. 207, quoting Chicago Tribune. Ibid. p. 205, cites a pamphlet of the Illinois Central Railroad claiming that construction demand along that road in southern Illinois had increased prices nearly one third. "A man can now come into (Illinois in 1855) and buy land even as high as $15. per acre and make them pay for themselves more easily than I could when I bought lands at $2. to $3. per acre." Illinois Central Railroad Co. Offers.... 1,500,000 Acres.... Lands, p. 34.

11. M. L. Dunlap, Leyden, Aug. 16, 1855 to B. F. Johnson, Dunlap Letters. He estimated that operators on railroads and in manufacturing establishments would consume one sixth of the increase.

12. Patent Report, 1854, p.139; 1855, p.193; Quincy Whig, June 23,1855; Cultivator, XXIII, (1856), p.355; M. L. Dunlap wrote on August 16,1855 to B.F. Johnson, "In the spring wheat range say north of 40° corn not being so sure a crop wheat and oats are more popular and pay better for the past year or two, hence the increase of these in the north has been greater than that of corn." Dunlap Letters. Cf. Illinois Central Railroad Co. Offers.... 1,500,000 Acres.... Lands, p. 45.
hopeful and optimistic about wheat production. Instead of the wail of recent years, came reports of profits to be made, and certainty of crops. One LaSalle County farmer reported a net profit of $26.75 per acre on wheat in 1855 on land which cost $4. per acre in 1851. Gerhard cited an instance of a gross return of $1750 on eighty acres of land which cost $1200 and on which the total cost of the first crop including land, fencing, and production was $2127.00. One crop of thirty-four acres paid for the cost including the land and yielded $321.50 in addition. Similar reports of high profits, extended acreage, and large wheat shipments came from various parts of the section. Ferguson, writing of the area from Princeton to Galesburg, said, "I saw at nearly every station piles of bags of wheat waiting to be carried East." There was at the same time a rapid shift toward spring wheat as compared with winter wheat. The price and yield were less but the freedom from winter killing was regarded as the determining factor.

Central Illinois showed the same feverish return to wheat as did the northern part of the state. Wheat was now thought to be a

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13. *Prairie Farmer*, N. S. IX, (1862), p. 34. He adds, "But I did not escape the mania to run in debt, etc."
certain crop south of 40°30' by N. L. Dunlap. With the new prices and extending railroads wheat was now profitable and a large acreage was sown. A correspondent wrote, "During our wheat mania of 1855 and 1856 I am satisfied that had it not been for even the trifling expense of Shanghai fences, all the prairie sod in central Illinois would have been turned bottom side up."

Some specific examples will show the trend. "Wheat is the crop," wrote the editor of Prairie Farmer in 1854, speaking of Pike County. Fulton and Warren counties reported increased spring wheat crops in that year. Men were coming forty miles to Belleville for reapers in 1855 and were insistent that their orders be filled. Higher profits were a strong stimulus. A Sangamon County farmer claimed that his wheat netted $20 per acre above all expenses. Twenty acres in De Witt County produced $1,400 worth of wheat in 1855 and 1856 and the profit on wheat in Vermilion County was over $7 an acre in 1854. The same flurry was evident in the

23. Springfield Journal, Aug.27,1855; Trans. Ills. State Ag. Soc., III, 1858-9, p. 420; Patent Report, 1854, p. 139. Gerhard, op.cit., p. 305, cites a renter in Peoria County who cleared $1,000 on eighty acres in one year. A Coles County farmer in 1855 wrote, "If a man can't come here and clear the whole cost of his land, improvements and all expenses from two or three crops he ought to be hooted out of the state as not fit to be called a farmer.... A neighbor of mine sold the crop off of fifty acres of land as it (cont.)
local marketing. Foreign buyers produced a grain fever at Peoria where in 1855 over $1,150,000 of wheat, whiskey and alcohol were handled. The wheat coming to market in 1856 was so heavy that it taxed the railroads severely and some of it remained for weeks at the stations awaiting shipment.

Southern Illinois felt the same energizing effects except in a milder degree perhaps due to inferior transportation facilities. As recounted above, this section had been far behind the remainder of the state in wheat production. Commercial agriculture came to parts of southern Illinois along the Illinois Central Railroad about the same time that the stimulus to production came in increased prices. Under this incentive the farmers began to increase their wheat acreage and came to regard the section as being particularly suited for the crop. Where transportation was available the crop was profitable and the section followed the same path as the remainder of the state.

23.(Cont.)stood for $1,500 cash." Illinois Central Railroad Offers.... 1,500,000 Acres.... Lands, p. 34. A work of caution is needed here, however.

sown yet in 1856, and in others it had been but recently intro-
duced. Here, as elsewhere, hindrances occurred in the form of drouth, pests, etc.

With this revival of wheat came the remarkable expansion in the use of harvesting machinery. It has become commonplace to ascribe to the reaper a prominent part in the winning of the Civil War, but sufficient attention has not been given to the expansion following 1854 in preparing the way. The increased use of machinery necessitated by the demands of that crisis could not have been met overnight. It was only through the number of machines placed in farmer's hands, the manufacturing establishments developed, and the familiarity with such methods of harvesting that the demand for wheat was so easily met in the face of the scarcity of labor.

The allotment of credit for the invention and development of the reaper is difficult although in the popular mind the name of Cyrus Hall McCormick nearly excludes all others. The definition of invention has much to do with the assignment of the honor. If invention is taken to mean the practical combination and working of various elements hitherto worked out, but impractical, the inventor of the reaper is McCormick. If it is considered to be the discovery of the mechanical principles involved, the credit is widely diffused and McCormick's name drops in importance. As a matter of fact,
the British had, from 1799 to 1826, developed all of the main features of the reaper except the rake's seat. They had produced the reaper in principle but it remained for others to make it work well.

The development was transferred to America where some early patents were granted. These early machines were not successful and the American reaper made its real appearance in 1833 and 1834 in Virginia. There Obed Hussey and Cyrus H. McCormick had been working on reapers. Priority of actual practical construction is difficult to determine. McCormick's father had experimented with a reaper in 1816 and again in 1831 but had decided to abandon the scheme. The son became interested and produced a reaper in the season of 1831 and cut some oats with it. He continued to improve the machine in 1832 and 1833 and was aroused to patent the machine in its imperfect state by the news that Obed Hussey had patented a reaper on December 31, 1833. McCormick's patent was granted on June 24, 1834 and the McCormick-Hussey controversy was on.

No McCormick machines were sold until 1840 and they were of little practical value until the improvements of his second patent were added in 1845. The legal battle between the two men raged but Hussey was unable to sustain his claims of infringement against McCormick. Hussey's machines continued to be manufactured and sold until his death, although hindered by the manufacturer's refusal to add any devices which he did not invent, notably the reel.

Withal it seems fair to say that both men developed a workable

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machine at about the same time, and that from Hussey's machine came the principles later developed in mowing machines, while McCormick combined and made workable the basic principles of the later reaper.

The technical developments are hard to determine and follow. Controversy was strong over the form of the sickle end guard. The form of the shallow scalloped, serrated sickle moving at a relatively low speed and with a double open guard open above came into universal use in reapers while the deep scalloped sickle with straight edged sections running at high speed became the approved form for the mower. The later successful reapers followed the McCormick master wheel model while the later mowers resembled the Hussey two wheel machine.

Although reapers were being manufactured and sold in the East, particularly in New York and Virginia, and further west, in Ohio, the notable growth took place after McCormick came to Chicago in 1847 and built his factory, foreseeing that the Mid-West and not the East was to be the battleground of the reapers. During the 'fifties new reapers sprang up in great profusion. Two hundred reapers had been patented in England and America by 1854, and some

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31. Report of the Juries (London) Exhibition I, p. 496; Farm Implement News, XVIII, (1897), p. 14-15. Rugg failed to make good his claim to the development of the guard and serrated sickle. However, his hinged reach, while never patented, was used on all later machines. See Supplement to Daily Republican Times, Sept. 14, 1913, p. 135. Much data on reaper development may be found in the McCormick Historical Association Library.
ninety machines were in actual use in Illinois during the 'fifties. Of these a number were of importance. McCormick's was, perhaps, the leader, but it did not have the market to itself, selling only about one-sixth of the reapers sold in the United States up to 1860. Atkin's Automaton or Self-Raker, the reapers of Seymour and Morgan, John H. Manny, Hussey, Rugg, Danford, and the headers of Esterley and Haines were the rivals that made McCormick fight for his trade.

During the 'fifties these machines were largely hand-rakers and were followed by corps of binders who bound as of yore. Atkin's Automaton led the way to a development of the self-raker which needed one less hand and eventually reached a workable state of development. Throughout the 'fifties the self-raker, the hand-raker, and occasionally the cradle were used in the same neighborhood. Attempts made at machine binding were not successful, but in 1858 the Marsh Harvester was invented and was widely used in the

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32. U.S. Census, 1860, Agriculture, p. XXI; MSS. in the McCormick Historical Association Library. "We often sell yearly 100 to 120 machines per county in Ills. & it is here on the prairies the great battle is fought by which the merits of the reapers are thoroughly tested. There are many more reapers sold in Ill. than any other state." Wm. S. McCormick, Mar. 5, (1860) McCormick MSS. Letter book 30, p. 683.


succeeding years. It had the accepted single wheel form but it
introduced a travelling conveyor which elevated the wheat over the
master wheel and delivered it to two binders who rode on the
machine and bound the grain as rapidly as it was cut. 36

Mechanically all these machines were weak and gave frequent
trouble. The correspondence of McCormick's agents reveals constant
complaint of weak parts, imperfect manufacture, etc. Other manu-
facturers heard the same story. The reapers were undergoing a
laboratory test from which the more successful later machines were
to come. 37 The prices at which the machines sold varied but usually
ranged from about $125 to $175 for reapers, with time payments in
part. Headers sold for about $300. 38

Farmers generally cut grass and grain with a combined reaper
and mower during the middle 'fifties. Indeed, manufacturers con-
tinued to make combined machines until 1862 or 1863, but by 1864

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36. Ibid. XXII, (1860), p. 56; Farm Implement News, XVII,
(1897), p. 23; Marsh, op. cit., p. 80-90. The Deering binder was
the descendent of the Marsh Harvester.

37. Hiram Austin, Peoria, Jan. 22, 1854; W. H. Fells, Ridge-
way, Dec. 25, 1852; memorandum Wm. Berryhill, central Illinois
to C. H. McCormick, 1853, McCormick MSS. Numerous letters from
W. L. Dunlap, Leyden, to C. H. Rugg complained of mechanical im-
perfections in his reaper and of the difficulty in persuading
farmers to take the machines. Dunlap Letters. See letter Oct. 19,
1853; and Illinois Farmer, I, (1856), p. 133.

38. Prairie Farmer, XIV, (1854), Adv't section; XIX, (1859),
p. 331, 407; Illinois Farmer, I, (1856), Adv't section; III, (1858),
p. 95; Daily Democratic Press, Feb. 21, 1856; John Wilson, Geneva,
Jan. 2, 1852, McCormick MSS.
only separate machines were on the market. These combined machines did not work at their best either as mowers or as reapers. Different conditions and needs had to be met and the result was a weak compromise. With the small crops farmers could ill afford separate machines and the combined machines served a useful purpose.

The extent of use of reaping machinery may best be seen by specific examples. It was claimed in 1852 that DeKalb County was supplied with reapers for five years to come. A McHenry County farmer wrote in 1854, "Nearly all our (grain) harvesting is done by machinery, the grain being secured in stacks and threshed in the field." In the same year Russell wrote of northern Illinois, "The cereals are chiefly cut by machinery and mowing machines are coming into use." In 1857 it was reported at Monee that reapers were everywhere used and cradles seldom seen. It was said, but was probably not strictly true, that all the small grain in Rock Island County was cut by machinery. A Boone County agent wrote in 1854, "The coming harvest bids fair to be a very heavy one and

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44. Illinois Central Railroad Co. Offers.... 1,500,000 Acres Lands, p. 46. A machine followed by six binders cut ten to fifteen acres per day. The price of cutting was from sixty to seventy-five cents per acre. Binders were paid $1 to $1.50 per day. The threshing cost five cents per bushel for wheat and half that for oats.
secured sold at low prices and live stock offered no relief. 38 Citizens petitioned the legislature for a moratorium and a judge in Mercer County refused to give judgment because of the distress that would be caused by the numerous suits then pending. 39

So hard was the situation bearing on the farmers that they were moved to make formal and collective protest, the faint beginnings of a movement that was to assume large proportions some ten years hence. In June 1858 the farmers of DeWitt County met and passed resolutions condemning banking and mercantile institutions. They urged the formation of farmers' clubs to be conducted as a Lyceum "to elevate themselves mentally and socially, and to assume a more high moral and intellectual position among the classes of mankind." They sensed a deep seated cause for their distress and sought an impractical visionary means of relief.

The farmers' congress held at Centralia in September was more definite. It expressed the belief that non-producers could not be relied upon to establish rules of dealing or laws and that necessity demanded closer co-operation of producers and consumers.

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38. Illinois Farmer, III, (1868), p. 135; Hicks, History of Kendall County, p. 291; Knapp & Goodrich, Jerseyville, Aug. 25, Sept. 26; Geo. Preston, Mazon, Sept. 1; Isaac Kirkpatrick, Freeiland, Oct. 19, 1858, McCormick MSS. The situation in Chicago was easing up. October when Eastern money was coming in and real estate was scaling for cash. During 1858, 1859 and 1860 the usual terms on reaper notes of one-third cash and the balance in six months was widely deviated from due to crop failures and increasing competition. The amount of cash received diminished to about five per cent and the time given increased to two or three years. Patent Office Records, McCormick Extension Case, 1861, p. 52. McCormick's agents at Cordova held $200,000 in paper in November 1858 for reaper sales. Wm. S. McCormick to C. H. McCormick, Nov. 30, 1858. 39. Canton Weekly Register, June 27, 1858; L.T. Ball, Keithsburg, Nov. 3, 1858, McCormick MSS.
to eliminate middlemen. It too recommended that farmers' clubs be organized and that a farmers' wholesale purchasing and selling agency should be formed.  

The agricultural depression which seems to have reached its greatest depths in 1858 continued into the following year but the situation was brightening by the end of the season. Until harvest there was little chance for relief from the effects of the preceding crop failure, except in the slight rise in prices which occurred. This helped, but little relief could come from the new price level in view of the fact that the receipts of wheat at Chicago for the first seven months of 1859 were less than one-fourth those of the corresponding months of 1858. The price situation was relieved by the shortage of wheat in store and hindered by the lack of a strong foreign demand for provisions and bread-stuffs. Later in the year the prices of wheat and oats fell and the corn crop, which was large, was not in the market until late in October.

40. Our Constitution, June 26, 1858; Rockford Register, Oct. 16, 1858; Buck, The Granger Movement, p. 74. This movement became important some ten years later.

41. Report, Chicago Board of Trade, 1859, p. 38-39, 43-46; 1860; p. 25; 1873, p. 34-35, 38. The exports of flour, wheat and corn for years ending August 31st, were:

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<td>1856</td>
<td>3,399,673</td>
<td>10,566,495</td>
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<td>1,342,944</td>
<td>10,345,053</td>
<td>5,309,833</td>
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<td>1858</td>
<td>598,550</td>
<td>6,846,071</td>
<td>3,332,650</td>
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<td>1859</td>
<td>172,845</td>
<td>496,355</td>
<td>367,532</td>
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<td>1860</td>
<td>766,379</td>
<td>4,916,745</td>
<td>2,241,215</td>
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Ibid, 1873, p. 34. The decline in traffic from the crop shortage of 1858 was reflected in the earnings of the Illinois Central Railroad Company which fell sharply in the six months ending April 30, 1859. The loss was regained in the next period when the new crop came to market. Ibid, 1872, p. 41. See also Report... Galena and Chicago Union Railroad, 1859, p. 7.
The same complaints of hard times and scarcity of money continued to come from all parts of the State in 1869 although the situation was improving. Business had been so deranged that more than a fair crop with moderate prices was necessary to put the farmers on their feet again. The accumulation of debt by the western farmers had largely stopped when the bubble burst but the creditors who had been stayed off in 1857 and 1858 demanded payment from the new crop. So great was the demand that in spite of a fair crop there was a scarcity of money. Taxes bore heavily upon the distressed farmers and the delinquent tax lists were long.

The farmers cast about for a way out. A meeting of debtors was called in October 1869 to consider indebtedness and means of relief. The uncertainties of the foreign market caused attention to be directed toward the creation of a home market by developing manufactures. The suggestion was made in the press in 1869 that Illinois join Pennsylvania in asking for a high protective tariff to provide a home market. The editor of the Prairie Farmer urged this as a solution of the farmers' marketing problems through the year 1880. The Republican platform of that year made use of the feeling that was growing in the West to tie the agricultural West and the industrial East together in the campaign. Some practical minded farmers were organizing union stores which were sceptically

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43. Presbytery Reporter, V, (1869), p.662; Central Illinois Gazette, May 16, 23, 1860. The delinquent tax list for Champaign County for the tax year of 1869 covered more than two pages.
Such improvement as was made was due in part to the improved crops of that year. The crops in the United States in 1859 were, perhaps, the largest ever produced up to that time. The Chicago area showed a prosperous grain trade. The amount of flour manufactured and received at Chicago was one-third greater than in any previous year. The wheat receipts of the crop of 1859 were sixty per cent larger than for the preceding year and were exceeded only by the tremendous crop of 1867. The receipts of the corn crop of 1859, (marketed in 1860), were nearly three times those of 1858 and far larger than the record crop of 1857. The grain trade at Chicago of the crop of 1859 was larger than ever before in the history of that market.

Grain prices during 1859 fluctuated widely. During the early part of the year they were favorable due to the shortage of the 1858 crop and the Franco-Austrian war which broke out in April of that year. Market speculators expected the same effect on wheat prices in this country as had occurred at the opening of the Crimean War and they sent the market to new heights. Although there was no unusual inquiry for wheat the price advanced rapidly in a

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45. Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1866, p. 1-11; 1860; p. 23; 1873, p. 39. Cf. Flite, Social and Industrial Conditions in the North During the Civil War, p. 2. Wheat statistics are available by crops. Corn receipts for any year consist almost entirely of the crop of the preceding season. From 1859 the grain receipts by months and sources are given.
period of speculative trading. The anticipated demand from abroad did not materialize. In fact the crops in most of Europe were good and the war did not seriously interfere with the movement of grain. At the same time the extent of the American crop became evident. These factors forced down the prices which declined as much as in 1867 although more gradually. The advance of about sixty cents was wiped out and before the close of the year wheat sold for about half the mid-May price.

It was in this setting that the 1869 crop of Illinois wheat was placed. Although the crop in the West was the best ever raised, Illinois was not favored with more than a fair crop over the state as a whole, and the price received was low. Fortunately the quality was good.

Throughout most of central Illinois the wheat crop was very poor. Yields were low and the familiar refrain of an earlier time that the section was not a wheat country was heard. With both yields and prices low, wheat was unprofitable unless better methods of farming could be introduced.

The northern and southern sections of the state were more fortunate. The crop was spotted, varying from complete failure to a good yield, but the average was fair. Even here there was an uneasiness among wheat raisers who frequently complained of wheat as uncertain. With the prices low when the 1859 crop went to market the farmers were again turning toward corn and stock. 50

The corn farmer of the Northwest enjoyed a bumper crop in 1859. The surplus sent to market at Chicago exceeded that of any previous year and was nearly three times that of the worst crop of 1858. Of this large crop southern and central Illinois shared largely. The crop there was almost uniformly good and supplied the deficit caused by the wheat shortage. The northern third of the state on the other hand suffered a severe failure. Frost in June and September ruined much of the corn throughout the section. So great was the shortage that corn was shipped in from the south to

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49 (cont'd) (1859-60), p. 35. Uncertain shipping statistics seem to bear out descriptive data on the wheat failure in central Illinois. Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1858, p. 18; 1859, p. 42; 1860, p. 16.

meet local needs.\textsuperscript{51}

Those farmers who were fortunate in raising a corn crop found it worth but little when they were ready to sell. Corn which sold at 30\$/bu in October was quoted at 43\$/bu by the close of December and below 50\$/bu through most of 1860. Thus what might have cleared the financial situation for the farmers proved a mild disappointment.\textsuperscript{52}

Stockmen found the prices of their product to be relatively much better than those of grain and were able to make a profit despite the moderately high corn price during the early feeding season. The outlook was relatively favorable to stock and a shift in that direction was in progress.\textsuperscript{53}

One of the difficulties which greatly hindered the stockman was the lack of feed during the winter of 1858-9 particularly in northern Illinois. As a result of the lack of forage and corn many cattle and hogs starved before grass time while all came through the winter in very poor condition. To add to these difficulties cholera did heavy damage in some sections. The need of money in 1858 had tended to induce selling of stock and to cause


\textsuperscript{52} Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1860, p.24; Aldrich Report, Pt. 2, p.9; Prairie Farmer, market quotations.

a shortage.54

The stock shortage in the spring of 1859 induced the importation of feeder cattle and hogs from other states. Hogs were sent in from Ohio and Pennsylvania to be fattened in the corn raising section of central Illinois. Cattle from Mexico and Texas were brought to the state although this movement was hindered by the scarcity of grass along the trail and the opposition of Missourians to the passage through their state.55

The moderate improvement in the financial condition in 1859 did not bring any marked activity in land buying. The spirit of speculation was broken. The Illinois Central held its lands at the former price but extended the period of payment to enable the purchaser to pay from the returns from the land. But even with this concession the land sales dropped to nearly one-half in 1859. The land policy of the company was now avowedly to sell small tracts to bona fide settlers. The trustees of the Illinois and Michigan Canal likewise found few buyers at their annual land sales. Among those who bought were numerous farmers and tradesmen.


from further east, notably Ohio. 56

Although a complete recovery had not been made the agricultural situation was improving in early 1860 and was much more favorable than at any time since the crash. The outlook was encouraging and the farmers were looking forward with renewed hope and a determination to make up for the losses of the preceding period. 57

Unfortunately the situation did not continue uniformly good. The grain market had a healthy tone during the early months of 1860 even at a relatively low price level. As harvest approached the magnitude of the coming crop was clear and the slowly improving price broke under the prospective heavy receipts and closed the year at a low level with the largest crop in the history of the West pressing to market. 58 Additional disturbing factors were the
threats of secession which rocked the market following the election, and the advance of freight rates.\textsuperscript{59}

In the uncertainty following the election crisis and the drop in prices there developed a mild panic. With the threatened secession of states whose bonds were used as a basis for Illinois currency there was considerable anxiety felt about the solvency of Illinois banks. The notes of several banks were discounted during November and December and a call for additional security was made in November.\textsuperscript{60} Rates on eastern exchange in November and during the remainder of the year ranged from three to twelve per cent. This high rate acted as heavy tax upon the West which felt a drop in net returns by that amount. Merchants in Chicago were sending produce to the East to make exchange rather than pay the high rates demanded. They also asked relief through a new banking law that would base note issues on United States and Illinois stock and would require notes to be redeemed at Spring-

\textsuperscript{59} Prairie Farmer, XXII, (1860), p.183; XXIII, (1861), p.25; market quotations in issue of 1860; Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1860, p.21,24,26,28,32,34; Marsh, op.cit., p.105-106. One fortunate circumstance was the strong southern demand for grain. Report...Illinois Central Railroad Co., 1860, p.1; Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1860, p.25.

field or Chicago at not more than one per cent discount.\footnote{61}

The unsatisfactory price and monetary situation late in 1860 prevented the farmers of the West from profiting much from their bumper crop of that year. Wheat which had declined after 1857 came back with the largest crop ever raised up to that time. With the exception of 1868 the receipts of wheat at Chicago in 1860 were not equalled until 1873.\footnote{62}

Illinois shared in this large western crop only in part. The northern part of the state had a good crop. Here, more than anywhere in the state, the position which wheat had gained in the boom days was maintained. Western Illinois was having the same experiences with wheat which it had in the early fifties and was turning from the crop as unprofitable. The central part of the state east of the Illinois River had a fair crop but even here rumblings of dissatisfaction appeared and wheat was evidently losing some of its grip. Southern Illinois on the other hand was holding up well in wheat production and in places the crop was increasing.\footnote{63}

\footnote{61. \textit{Prairie Farmer, XXII, (1860), p.313,329,345,361,377,392-393; XXXIII, (1861), p.9.} In the face of the disturbance a writer from Chicago on Christmas Day 1860 said, "There is a comparatively healthy tone in financial circles—currency is abundant, debtors prompt, and creditors generally happy—as happy and merry...as it is possible for business men to be with eastern exchange firm at 10-11 per cent." \textit{Ibid., XXII, (1860), p.407.}

62. \textit{Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1876, p. 38.}

The failure to secure satisfactory prices prevented the corn farmers from realizing a reasonable return from their corn crop. A large crop and low price in 1859 caused a large supply to be held. Higher prices did not come and the large crop of 1859 was forced upon the market. By the end of the summer a large corn crop of the Northwest was assured. The receipts of the crop of 1860 at Chicago were sixty per cent larger than those of the preceding crop and more than five times those of 1858. The large supply on hand, the crop prospect and the crisis caused by the election broke corn prices and they closed the year at about thirty cents.

Only this slump in price prevented the farmers of northern and central Illinois from realizing good profits on their large crop. Southern Illinois was less favored by weather conditions. Little could be spared for shipment and nearly all of this went South.

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65. Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1860, p.24; 1861, p.23; Prairie Farmer, market quotations; XXIII, (1861), p.9,77,88; Country Gentleman, XV, (1860), p.276; Illinois Farmer, VI, (1861), p.231. About nine million bushels of the crop of 1860 was marketed in Chicago in that year. However large shipments were to the South where there was a drouth, and to Missouri and Kansas. Ibid., Prairie Farmer, XXII, (1860), p.120; Report... Illinois Central Railroad Co., 1860, p.1.
There was again a change in the offing for Illinois agriculture. Wheat was by no means abandoned but there was evidence of a drift away from that crop as prices dropped and marginal wheat land became unprofitable. Corn was increasing rapidly both as a cash crop and as a feed for stock to which the farmers now turned to an increasing degree. The cycle had nearly run its course and the diversified farming of nearly a decade before began to re-appear. 67

Stock feeders in 1860 found themselves on a rising market with corn, their principal feed, at a low figure. Hogs and cattle sold at good prices throughout the year and feeding was profitable. Never before had such a large number of hogs or cattle been sent to the Chicago market. Pork packing increased by nearly eighty per cent over 1859 and the lack of banking accommodations hindered further development. 68

The feed and market conditions were such that stock was being


brought into Illinois from distant states to feed. Hogs were again being shipped from Ohio and Pennsylvania in 1860 and 1861 to consume the large corn crop.69 Cattle listed for taxation increased in 1860 but in many places feeder cattle were relatively scarce and in demand. Cattle could be purchased cheaper than they could be raised in some sections and they were being driven in from the southwest to make up the shortage which existed.70

Dairying did not experience the same invigoration that beef cattle raising felt during the last years of the decade. Except in a small area west of Chicago the industry was but slightly developed. Illinois butter and cheese had a poor reputation because of the lack of care used in its manufacture and shipment. Illinois sold beef, pork, and wheat and bought much butter and cheese in Ohio and New York.71

Wool growing had likewise not felt any renewed life. Many farmers found sheep raising profitable and kept large flocks, but for the most part sheep were gradually losing ground until the
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opening of the war caused a strong demand for woolen cloth for
army use. Wool was a relatively small item in the agricultural
life of the West, furnishing only one per cent of the export of
that section.72

The improved economic conditions in the state were shown by
an increased demand for land in 1860 and early 1861. The tide
of immigration was becoming strong again and the newcomers were
buying land for settlement, with but little speculation. The net
sales of land by the Illinois Central in 1860 were three times
those of 1859 and the government sales were large compared with
the land available. Much land held by private persons who had
been able to weather the crisis were not put on sale at the in-
creased prices which now prevailed. It is impossible to give an
accurate estimate of the immediate rise in land but President
Osborn of the Illinois Central Railroad Company estimated that
the land values quadrupled from 1860 to 1861. It had become
scarcely and valuable enough for renting to become more common.
Land in various parts of the state rented at from $2.50 to $5.00

p. 393; XXII, (1860), p. 266; XXIII, p. 401; Secretary's Journal of
Agriculture, and Prairie Farmer, III, (1859), p. 135, 186-187; IV,
Under the low tariff of 1857 the imports of wool and woolen goods
increased about one-third by 1860. Wright, Wool Growing and the
Tariff, p. 101, 152. Receipts of wool at Chicago fell off sharply
The recovery of agriculture just before the outbreak of the war was not accompanied by any striking improvements in methods of culture. Some progress was being made particularly in the northern part of the state but generally culture was poor. Little attention was paid to manure, rotation, good plowing, or improved cultivation. Farmers were in many cases still extracting money from the soil to pay for land and generally they did realize a necessity of husbanding their resources.

The extent of the dependence of the South upon northern agriculture and the importance of the southern trade and market to the North is very uncertain. It must remain so until much difficult work had been done on the subject. Certain facts may throw some light on the problem however.

A differentiation must be made between the southern trade and

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and southern market. Let us first consider the southern trade. How much produce went south and how important was that outlet to the North? Since it was only at the close of the period that rail connection was made between the Northwest and the South, the trade of New Orleans furnishes the best gauge of the southern outlet. The following table will show the approximate amounts received at New Orleans and those shipped East from Chicago. It will be seen that Chicago drew away from her southern rival and in 1860 handled more than three times as much grain. At the outbreak of the war perhaps one fourth of the surplus produce of the midwest went to market by the Mississippi River and three-fourths by the northern route.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>CORN BU</th>
<th>WHEAT &amp; FLOUR BU</th>
<th>OATS BU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Orleans</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>New Orleans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>2890</td>
<td>2991</td>
<td>4785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>2485</td>
<td>2369</td>
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<td>8532</td>
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<td>8690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>1523</td>
<td>5401</td>
<td>5515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>4850</td>
<td>15862</td>
<td>4891</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

75. Thousands are omitted. The figures for New Orleans are for years ending August 31. Those for Chicago are for calendar years. Statistics on meat products are not sufficient to warrant extensive quotation. DeBow's Review, XIII, p.511; XV, p.527-529; XVII, p.394,550; XXIII, p.366; XXV, p.469; XXVII, p.477-479; XXIX, p.521; Window Report, II, p.647; Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1873, p.38. Western produce amounted to eighteen per cent of the receipts at New Orleans in 1857-8, whereas it was sixty-one per cent fifty years before. Flat boats arriving at New Orleans from Illinois during the 'fifties were less than three per cent of the total arrivals. Commerce and Navigation of the United States, 1887, Pt. II, p.210,222.
The southern market for northwestern produce is another matter. How much of the produce which went south was consumed there and how much was sent on to the North or to foreign countries? It is difficult to say. The following figures will indicate the importance of the local consumption and export trade in flour at New Orleans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Local Consumption at New Orleans</th>
<th>Exports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>382,501 bbls.</td>
<td>544,711 bbls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>288,267</td>
<td>535,969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>391,522</td>
<td>729,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>486,996</td>
<td>1,052,756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>537,239</td>
<td>326,611</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1852–3 New Orleans received from the interior about two and a half million bushels of corn and exported 868,117 barrels. It received 320,000 barrels of pork and exported 200,000. In 1853–4 about 250,000 barrels of pork came down the river and 150,000 went out. In 1854–5 the city received about 1,000,000 bushels of corn and exported virtually all of it. From these figures it is evident that the export trade was an important part of the produce business of New Orleans. 76

It is virtually impossible to trace the destination of produce from New Orleans. Some of it went to Europe and the West Indies. Some went to American ports both North and South. Much was sent into Alabama through Mobile and to the territory along the Mississippi River. Some produce was reshipped up the river to plantations and some was stopped on the way down. The extent of ship-

ment to the various places is uncertain.77

Another angle of approach to the problem is a comparison of production in the South with that of other parts of the country and with consumption. Here we are unfortunately restricted to the census years and figures. In 1849 the per capita production of corn in the middle states was 9.11 bushels, in the western states 44.14 and in the South 32.76. The figures for 1859 are not materially different. The production in the South was well above the per capita average of 26 bushels of both 1850 and 1860. Since less than two per cent of the corn of the country was exported the consumption figures would not differ materially for the United States.

In the production of wheat the middle western states produced 7.5 bushels per capita in 1849 and 10 bushels in 1859 while the South produced 2.5 and 3.5 bushels in those years. The average was 5.5 for the United States in 1859. If three bushels per person be considered normal consumption the southern states produced less than enough to supply them in 1849 and slightly more in 1859.

77. Of the 1,000,000 bushels of corn exported in 1850 about 270,000 bushels went to United States ports. In the same period Mobile received about 50,000 bushels, possibly from New Orleans. DeBow's Review, IX, (1850), p.659-660. Most of the 130,000 bushels of wheat received in 1852 went to Alabama and Georgia. Ibid., XIII, (1852), p.607. See also p.532. Of the flour exports in 1851 a little less than half went to coastwise ports. Ibid., p.532. Some of the up river shipments went as far as four hundred miles. Commerce and Navigation of the United States, 1857, Pt. II, p.221. In 1851 there were 20,945 barrels of flour, 22,225 bushels of corn and 34,480 pounds of meat shipped east from Vicksburg on the railroad which did not yet reach Jackson. DeBow's Review, XI, (1851), p.595. St. Louis was shipping to New Orleans, Natchez, Vicksburg, Nashville, and other inland towns. Ibid., XII, (1852), p.613.
Some of the southern states as Louisiana and Mississippi, produced very little wheat and these were no doubt largely supplied with northern wheat along the easy transportation lines. On the other hand, Georgia produced more than enough for her supply and Tennessee had a large surplus. An estimate made in 1855 placed the deficit of wheat in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana at 4,000,000 bushels or one-fourth of the Illinois crop. 78

No safe inferences can be drawn from the fact that, except for a short time at the beginning of the war, very little effects were felt on northern agricultural prosperity as a result of closing the Southern outlet. So unusual were the circumstances of production and of domestic and foreign demand that effects are scarcely traceable to separate causes.

The trade south just before the outbreak of the war is of particular interest. The corn crop of the South was short in 1860 and in the latter part of that year and up to the closing of the river in 1861 the shipment of corn and other supplies to the South

was heavy. The Illinois Central shipped to Cairo in January and February 1861 some 2,500,000 bushels of grain. Corn was being extensively purchased in Illinois for the southern market. Fifteen heavy laden trains per day were carrying produce south to Cairo. All the rolling stock of the Illinois Central and some borrowed from other roads could not meet the demands for transportation.

A line of eight regular steamers took about 5,000 tons per week from Cairo and independent boats also engaged in the trade. How much of the southern demand came from a shortage of crops and how much from anticipation of future developments it is impossible to say. The very fact of the tremendous shipment South at that time, however, made the closing of the river noticeable.

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The coming crisis had been foreshadowed for some months before war actually occurred. Perhaps most of those who saw the likelihood of a clash hoped that it would somehow be avoided. However, the possibility of a break, especially after the election of Lincoln, was sufficiently great to cause apprehension among business men. The shock of war, in a financial sense, came early in the winter of 1860-1 and the farmers soon began to feel the effects of the situation.

At the first tremors of the quake the banking structure began to crumble. Under the Illinois banking act the bonds of the United States or any interest paying state could be used as a basis for note circulation. On January 1, 1861, Illinois banks had a circulation of $12,320,694, secured by stocks with a par value of $12,510,941. Of these stocks some nine and a half million dollars were those of southern and border states. The largest amounts were those from Missouri and Tennessee. The confidence in the stocks of the slave states fell rapidly as their threat of secession began to turn into a reality. As the Confederacy took shape southern stocks continued to drop and in February, the nine and a half millions of doubtful stocks were worth less than seven million dollars. A war, a division of the union, or both seemed almost certain, and even United States
bonds declined.¹

The result was, of course, inevitable. One after another, Illinois banks saw their securities fall below their circulation with no immediate hope of recovery. When this occurred the state auditor called for additional security, in accordance with the provisions of the banking act. Under the circumstances it was difficult for any but the strongest banks to provide such security. Some were able to make good their bond deposits and maintain their standing. Most banks were unable to do so and their notes were discounted in proportion to the drop in the value of their deposited bonds. In due course these banks were forced into liquidation. Banks and railroad companies issued lists of banks with the current discount quotations on their issues. A list of this kind about the first of June 1861 showed six banks whose notes were taken a par, sixteen at ninety cents, nineteen at eighty cents, ten at seventy cents, nine at sixty cents, and fourteen at fifty cents. Many banks were not even recognized. The situation was made worse by the fact that when the banks refused to redeem their notes the auditor had no choice but to force the doubtful stocks on a demoralized market to secure the means to partially

So severe was the crisis that on January 1, 1862 only nineteen Illinois banks were in good standing. Their circulation of less than a half million dollars was largely based on Illinois, and Illinois and Michigan Canal bonds. At that time thirty-six banks with a circulation of $1,415,076 were in liquidation with the pro-rata payments not yet determined. The securities of fifty-seven banks had been sold and redemption rates had been announced. The small outstanding circulation of three of these banks was taken at par. The notes of the remainder were redeemed at from fifty to seventy-three per cent.

The amount of the loss due to the collapse of the banking system, which finally went down in May 1861, is difficult to determine. It was estimated at the time that the loss in the Northwest would be from fourteen to thirty million dollars. The Editor of the Prairie Farmer said in July, "Half of our banking capital has been swept away and the other half suspended." The loss in Illinois due to depreciation of currency was estimated at from $5,000,000 up. A forty per cent discount on the retired Illinois currency would cause a loss of nearly five million dollars on local issues alone. It is impossible to say how much Illinois residents lost on the depreciated currency of other

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Certainly the loss was heavy. 4

The loss occasioned by the failure of the banking system and the shortage of currency which resulted, produced a serious derangement of business. Farmers, seeing the banks failing, began to reject the unsound currency in payment for grain before the Chicago banks refused it. The supply of sound money was insufficient to meet the needs of trade and grain shipments declined for a time in April. By the middle of the summer, however, the financial conditions had begun to improve. Much of the discounted paper had been retired and coin and sound paper money from the East were sent to the West to pay for grain. 5

By October business had revived noticeably and money was more plentiful. Gold and silver were flowing westward and the new treasury notes were providing an adequate and apparently safe currency. On the whole the outlook was brightening although prices were low, money was scarce in some localities, and packers

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4. Prairie Farmer, XXIII. (1861), p. 273, 357, 368; Rockford Republican, July 4, 1861; Ottawa Free Trader, May 11, June 22, 1861; Country Gentleman, XVIII. (1861), p. 32; Champaign County Democrat, May 22, 1861; Illinois State Register, April 6, 1861; Report ... Illinois Central Railroad Co., 1861, p. 1; Report Galena and Chicago Union Railroad Co., 1861, p. 6. Notices of thirty-eight sheriff’s sales and two mortgage sales appeared in one issue of the Central Illinois Gazette, January 23, 1861. The estimate of forty per cent discount is based on data cited in the preceding footnote.

hesitated because of the uncertainty of the market. A railroad report dated October 1st said, "None of this irredeemable currency is now in circulation and its place is occupied by gold; and although the effect of this had been to make apparently lower prices for the products of the farmers it is much more satisfactory and business is beginning to flow in its regular and legitimate channels."6

The disruption of the southern outlet for mid-western produce caused a marked change in the course of trade. It turned to Chicago and the northern route all the large surplus of the remarkable crops of 1860 and 1861. The shipments by this route had been increasing during the years before the war. Now that the railroads were able to give the lake route effective competition a large part of the increase might have come had there been no war. In any event, the large supply, which included much that would normally have gone South, crowded the northern trade channel. From 1859 to 1861 the shipments of wheat more than doubled while those of corn increased nearly six-fold even though the price was low and freight rates were high. The total grain shipments in 1859 were less than seventeen million bushels. In 1860 they were thirty-one millions and in 1861 they passed the fifty million mark.7

Fortunately the railroads of the Northwest had been overbuilt during the period preceding the Civil War. They were now in position, after a period of adjustment, to handle the enlarged volume of traffic. They were aided, of course, by the augmented lake fleet which soon included nearly all the vessels on the lakes capable of carrying grain. For a time in 1861, however, the transportation system was clogged and all available means could not move the large crops.8

The rapid growth of the grain trade found Chicago without adequate facilities to properly handle the flood of grain. The elevator storage capacity in the city had been increased by more than one-third during 1860 but it was yet deficient and building was continued. New elevators erected in 1861 brought the storage capacity to nearly seven million bushels but even this was not enough to care for all the grain offered. Again it is a question of the relative importance of the war and the normal expansion of grain growing as a cause for the congestion.9

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9. Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1860, p.29; 1861, p.9; 1862, p.9; 1864, p.15; Prairie Farmer, XXIV, (1861), p.152, 271, 342, 359; Chicago Daily Tribune, Mar. 15, 1861. Cf. Fite, op. cit., p.15. Not all the grain diverted from the river came through Chicago. Elevators at Chicago were full at the opening of navigation in 1861 and remained nearly so throughout the season. Receipts of grain in August frequently amounted to 500,000 bushels per day. Several large warehouses were built at Lane, Ogle County, in 1861 to forward the heavy grain crop.
The effect of the concentration of large agricultural surplus was a disturbance of freight rates. The navigation season opened in April 1861 with moderate rates to the seacoast, very little above those of a year before. Through the early summer the freight rates fluctuated with the relative demand for transportation but they gradually declined as in previous years until the middle of August. At that time they were slightly above those of a year before. Although the receipts of grain at Chicago and the shipments East were heavier than ever before, the transportation systems were able to handle the traffic during the early season with such comparative ease that freight rates had as yet been advanced but little. 10

When the new crop began to move, however, the competition for freight accommodations became sharp and lake freight rates to Buffalo doubled within a week. This was in itself not unusual at that season but the rates for the remainder of the season ranged higher than ever known before. Late in October freight rates on wheat to Buffalo reached twenty-three cents and those on corn twenty cents per bushel. Rates on flour, which in early November of 1860 were fifty cents per barrel, were eighty cents at the same time in 1861. Rates on meat were sixty cents per barrel in November of 1860 and $1.15 a year later. Railroad rates showed a similar increase and averaged about fifty per cent above those of 1860 by the close of 1861. The rise in freight rates caused a corresponding reduction in the net returns of the western farmer on his  

produce and, combined with other factors, reduced profits to a very low point. With the new net price levels much land that had heretofore been profitable now became sub-marginal because of distance from market and low yields, or both. 11

In view of the comparatively good crop which was harvested, the western farmers would have been in fairly prosperous circumstances had even moderate prices been maintained. The large crops throughout most of the Northwest in 1860 and 1861, together with the depressed state of business and the freight rates caused prices to decline and remain low throughout 1861 notwithstanding a fair foreign demand. Wheat sold during the year at from twenty to twenty-five percent below the prices for 1860. Corn declined even more. The extraordinary crop of 1860 was followed by another large one and corn, with a light demand and high freight rates, sold for ruinously low prices. It opened the year at Chicago at thirty cents and closed at twenty-three after having sold for twenty cents in September. Cattle were low and both cattle and hogs sold for from twenty to forty per cent less than a year before. 12

Prices at local shipping points were correspondingly low.


Wheat sold throughout the state at from fifty to eighty cents and was, at even these low prices, the best paying product of the farm. Corn, which was very abundant, sold at widely divergent prices, ranging from five to thirty cents according to local demand and transportation charges. It was scarcely worth while to shell and haul corn at such prices and it was burned in central and northern Illinois for fuel. With prices at the levels maintained during 1861, farming with the possible exception of wheat raising, was certainly not profitable. Necessity, however, forced the farmers to sell at whatever price could be secured and produce went forward in large quantities. This movement enabled business to maintain a semblance of prosperity.13

The war situation apparently had but a slight effect upon the acreage and kind of crops raised in Illinois in 1861. This was particularly true of small grain which, with exception of spring wheat, was largely sown before the war actually started. It is true that the likelihood of war had already produced marked financial reaction but these had not been an encouragement to enlarge the grain acreage. At sowing time in the autumn of 1860 prices

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were so low as to afford little inducement to sow winter wheat. In the spring the outlook was even less favorable with still lower prices and an uncertain currency. As a matter of fact, however, the grain acreage in 1861 was larger than ever before but the increase is scarcely traceable to the war. It seems to have been due rather to the reserve farming power which, with even a fair price, would produce enormous crops as was true in 1860. The corn and much of the spring wheat was yet to be put in when the war began. The prospective demand for grain which farmers had come to associate with war conditions and the exhortation of the press probably induced the farmers to increase the normal acreage of these crops.14

If the yields of wheat obtained in 1860 had been maintained in the following year the production of wheat would have exceeded that of any previous crop. In most of Illinois, and in fact the whole Northwest, unfavorable weather, rust, and insect pests caused such diminution of yield that it was below that of 1860. Conditions were not uniform over any large area in the state but the aggregate wheat production fell from the high mark of the preceding year. The shortage was sufficient to cause the receipts of wheat at Chicago from the crop of 1861 to be less than from the previous crop, even with the addition of the supplies usually sent south.15

The amount of corn from the crop of 1860 still in the west in the spring of 1861 was very large and the price was low. Notwithstanding the apparent discouragements the largest acreage of corn in the history of the west was planted. The increase in Illinois was a little over two per cent. Although corn in parts of northern and southern Illinois was hurt by adverse weather conditions the crop produced in the Chicago area was nearly as large as the record crop of 1860. Unfortunately the price was so low that little if any profit remained after production costs were met.16

It is not easy to trace the effects of the outbreak of the war on the livestock industry. Prices of both cattle and hogs were lower during 1861 than during the preceding year but the causes for this are not clear. Whether this was due to large supplies, to the closing of the Mississippi, to the financial distress or to other causes cannot be determined. Receipts of cattle

16. There seems to have been little correlation between the supply and price, and the acreage of corn planted in following seasons, with all the variations in price which occurred the acreage of corn in the state remained fairly constant throughout the war. The urging of the agricultural press may have had something to do with the increased acreage in 1861. The increased corn receipts at Chicago of the crop of 1861 is not a certain indication that the crop was larger. The corn which had previously gone south came to Chicago. On the other hand an uncertain amount was held and an unusual amount was fed to hogs because it did not pay to ship it directly. Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1861, p.23-25; 1862, p.23-25; 1863, p.28,38,39; Illinois Farmer, VI, (1861), p.133,140,141,146,167,232,332,571; VII, (1862), p.24; Prairie Farmer, XXIV, (1861), p.9,73,89,120,175,224,333,367,389, 395,422; Central Illinois Gazette, Jan. 9, May 30, 1861; Illinois State Register, Sept. 9, Nov.11, 1861; Annual Report Galena and Chicago Union Railroad Co., 1860, p.7; Hunt’s Merchant’s Mag., XLVIII, (1863), p.400.
and hogs at Chicago and the amount of packing at that point increased sharply in 1861. It is unsafe to lay the increase to the war changes, however, since it was a continuation of a trend in existence before the war was considered probably. The price of corn, particularly at some distance from Chicago, was so low in 1860, that stock feeding was encouraged. The low price in 1861, which late in the year was partly due to high freight charges, gave the same impetus to feeding during that year. The shortage of breeding stock that had resulted from forced sales during the panic had been in large measure overcome. Feeding stock was now available in ample quantities. The chief effects of the war situation on live stock seems to have resulted indirectly in uncertain financial conditions from the high freight rates which lowered the price of corn and caused it to be fed in increasing quantities to stock. 17

The congestion of the grain markets and the lower prices paid in 1861 worked a severe hardship on the farmers who had purchased lands from the railroad company and who still owed $12,000,000 for them. Many of these settlers had struggled for years to provide a home and now when prospects for paying for their land had

17. Prairie Farmer, XXIV, (1861), p.230,275,343,359,369; Illinois Farmer, VII, (1862), p.35; Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1860, p.32,37; 1861, p.32-37. Dairying was much depressed during 1861 except among some dairies which began making "Hamburg" and "Western Reserve" cheese. The government bought many cattle for the use of the army. Many cattle were shipped to Illinois from Missouri to avoid confiscation. Chicago passed Cincinnati as a pork packing center in the winter of 1861-2. Industrial Chicago, IV, p.360. When navigation to the south closed early in 1861 there was no shipping demand at St. Louis and drovers brought in only enough for immediate consumption. Prairie Farmer, XXIII, (1861), p.25.
looked bright they were again reduced to a condition of distress. The railroad company wisely decided to extend aid to these debtors rather than to dispossess them. Beginning in July or August 1861 the company received grain, principally corn, at a slight advance from current prices. The first corn taken was shipped to New York and netted a small profit. Soon, however, the advance in freight rates absorbed that profit and left the company with a loss of about $75,000 as a result of the years buying operations. It was found inadvisable to compete with commission men and by the following year the company changed their plan to allow thirty per cent drawback on freight on grain, which was sold through commission houses. In the meantime the company was receiving from ten to fifteen thousand bushels of corn per day. This was shipped East until lake navigation closed and was then stored in cribs which lined the tracks for miles near Chicago.

The scarcity of labor in the West caused by the drain of men to the armies was to become a serious factor during the war but in the early months of the conflict the farm labor situation was not serious. Much of the early spring work had been done before Governor Yates asked for six thousand men to answer President Lincoln's call for troops. The small grain was sown before any large number of the succeeding regiments entered the service and harvest was well over by the time the troops which were called for after the battle of Bull Run left their homes. A part of the

troops called into service were from the larger towns and cities and their absence affected labor supply on the farms but little. In some parts of the state farm labor was undoubtedly scarce but not unusually so. It was not until harvest that the number of men called to the army began to affect farming operations appreciably. So widespread was the use of harvesting machinery that the grain crop was cared for with comparative ease. Reaper agents anticipated a labor shortage and were very active in supplying the needs of the farmers.

When the war began there was a widespread feeling that the time and energy usually given to agricultural society meetings and county fairs should be devoted to actual farming operations or to the war itself. Many county societies suspended activities in 1861 and some did not resume their work for several years. Many of the fair grounds were converted into military camps. However, most of the counties continued to hold fairs with some success. The state fair was held in 1861 but was not a success. Its failure was apparently not due to the war, however. The following


year the state fair was postponed and the grounds were used by the army, but it was held regularly beginning with 1863. 21

CHAPTER VII

THE PROGRESS OF THE WAR

The currency supply in the early days of 1861 was ample but the value of most of the money was doubtful because of the decline in the price of southern state bonds. Most of the Illinois currency was heavily discounted and was finally retired leaving less than $500,000 in accepted issues outstanding. For a time during the summer of 1861 the West felt a scarcity of money which was relieved during the later months of the year by the receipt of coin, eastern bank notes, and treasury notes authorized in July. This westward flow of money relieved the financial strain of the West and trade moved more easily.1

The confidence of the West in the notes of Eastern banks was sufficient to keep their notes at par. Eastern banks had been more conservative than those in the West and the confidence felt in them was probably justified. As the shortage of money to move the crop of 1861 drew an increasing amount of Eastern currency to the West, the farmers began to suspect the soundness of some of the later issues. They turned to the treasury notes for relief and asked for them for their produce. A large part of the $50,000,000 of treasury notes issued in the late summer of 1861 had found its way into the West to buy produce late in that year. These notes were legal tender for all public dues and were eagerly sought. Further issues of legal tender notes beginning in

1. See Chapter VI.
February, 1862, materially improved the currency situation.²

It is true that specie payment had been suspended at the close of 1861 and that even the demand notes already issued dropped below par. As greenbacks were issued under the acts of February 25th and July 11, 1862, and the military situation continued dubious, the depreciation continued. Greenbacks were quoted at 87 in July and 76 as a December average. The depreciation varied with the outlook of the war but the price of gold mounted until July of 1864 when it reached 285 and greenbacks touched the low point of 39. This situation aided rather than hindered the farmer because it helped bring a higher level of prices for farm products. The western farmer was heavily in debt and the depreciation of the currency enabled him to discharge his obligations with cheap money. He was not slow to take advantage of the opportunity, and during the course of the war paid his creditors "without mercy," as one of them wrote.³


After midsummer in 1862 money was abundant in the West. In addition to the greenbacks there was much bank currency of varying value. Eastern "stump-tail", or doubtful money, continued well into 1864 in the West. By the end of 1863, however, Illinois bank conditions had perceptibly improved. There were at that time twenty-five banks operating under the Illinois law with a circulation of $1,066,679. This currency was well secured and passed at par with greenbacks. After the passage of the National Banking Act in June 1864 there was the additional supply of national bank notes.

For the farmers one of the encouraging features of the war time was the improvement in prices of farm products. True, prices remained low during 1861 and until August 1862 when they began an advance which continued until about September 1864 when the peak of war time prices was reached. For example, spring wheat sold in Chicago in September 1861 at 60¢ to 70¢ per bushel. At the same time in 1862 it sold at 95¢, in 1863 at 91¢, in 1864 at $2.05, and in 1865 at $1.32. Corn prices rose from 24¢ in early December 1861 to 97¢ in 1864, and dropped to 73¢ a year later. Oats sold in September 1861 at 18¢ per bushel and in August 1864 at 32¢.

The best grade of flour on the Chicago market sold in September

1861 at $5.00 per barrel and three years later at $12.40. Livestock prices did not start upward as soon as did those of grain but the advance was nearly as great. Beginning early in 1863 prices ranged upward and closed that year at a little more than twice the price two years before. In December 1861 cattle sold at $2.50 and hogs at $2.80. During 1864 cattle prices rose to $8.50 and hogs to $10.75. These prices were in paper currency.

It is true, but such money paid debts which had been contracted on a specie basis before the war. The causes for the rise in prices are not simple. Perhaps the greatest factor was the depreciation of the paper currency which brought with it a corresponding increase in prices. The rise and fall of gold in response to war news was not followed on the produce market by exactly similar changes in prices but changes in the gold rate seldom failed to affect the market. Sometimes the effect was marked. The Prairie Farmer recorded of the market in June 1864—

"The past week has been one of the greatest excitement ever known in our markets. Gold has been perfectly rampant. . . . With this rise all markets have advanced at rates almost startling. The transactions have been very large in all grains and produce and we quote large

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5. The figures cited are from the market reports of the Prairie Farmer for the first issue of each month. See also Chicago Board of Trade, during the period for weekly quotations. The Aldrich Report, Pt. 2, contains an excellent set of quarterly quotations. Much local price data may be found in the news columns of the agricultural papers and the general press but it is scattering and not always comparable.
advances in all departments which in wheat, when transportation and commission are added, carry prices far above New York quotations, showing that it is the wildest kind of speculation."

All the rise in prices cannot be attributed to the depreciation of paper currency however. From 1863 to 1866 gold prices in the United States rose about forty-seven per cent. Furthermore, it seems probable that with the increased quantity of money in circulation there would have been a rise of prices even if the greenbacks had not depreciated. 6

A decline in aggregate production was probably one cause for the higher price level, particularly in the case of wheat. Receipts at Chicago show a steady decline of wheat and, during 1863 and 1864, a marked decrease of corn. The acreage in crops in the state dropped about fifteen per cent from 1861 to 1864 and the aggregate production also declined, especially during the disastrous year of 1863. It was the rapid increase in oats shipped that kept the total shipments close to the peak reached in 1862. 7

Another factor of some importance in producing the upward trend of prices of grain was the foreign demand. The export of wheat from the United States more than trebled in 1861 and increased again by eighteen per cent the following year. It declined slightly in 1863 and rapidly thereafter until 1867. The

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greatest increase was to Great Britain and Ireland in 1861-3 and to France in 1862. Corn exports much more than doubled in 1861, increased by over sixty per cent in 1862 and remained high until the short crop of 1863 came to market. The exact effect of this large export of grain cannot be determined. It probably caused a slight rise in grain prices during the first part of the war or at least arrested the downward trend in 1861. During the period when the export demand was strongest, the increase in freight rates deprived the western farmer from much of the advantage which resulted from it. During the later part of the war when freight rates were declining the foreign demand was also less and the increase in prices in the West was probably due largely to depreciation and, to a lesser extent, to declining production and lower freight rates.

As noted above, the congestion of the northern route to the seaboard had resulted in unprecedented prices for transportation to the east. These increased charges hurt the entire West but particularly the areas some distance from Chicago and which had hitherto depended upon the Mississippi for an outlet. The transportation lines to the East were for a time unable to handle

the large amounts of grain offered and shippers clamored for freight space. Freight rates naturally went up. But it was not the lake freight rate alone that hurt the western farmer. At a time in 1861 when he was paying fourteen cents per bushel on corn from Chicago to Buffalo, he paid four cents per bushel per hundred miles to Chicago. The result was that corn in many remote sections was worth from eight to twelve cents per bushel and was used for fuel.

Throughout 1862 the transportation lines were crowded with produce and there were many complaints that they could not carry the freight offered, particularly after the close of lake navigation. Nevertheless, freight rates on the lake, on which most of the freight was carried, were well below those of 1861. Railroad rates eastward during the summer were also below those of 1861, and but slightly higher in December. From the high point late in 1861 freight rates eastward continued to decline until

10. Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1861, p. 56-57; 1862, p. 55-58; *Freieie Farmer*, N.S. IX, (1862), p. 34, 41; N.S. X, (1862), p. 264, 387. "Other things being equal, farmers get higher prices for their produce on the canal and navigable river towns than railroads, as canals charge less freight." *Ibid.*, N.S. IX, (1862), p. 195. "We are completely blockaded in Southern Illinois, while our Eastern friends are getting $1.50 per bushel for wheat we can get only $1.37... Before the war we could ship flour from St. Louis to Boston for 20 cents per barrel; now they charge $2.50... Cannot Congress do something to compel these railroads to carry freight at reasonable prices? I think it time for them to begin to look after the white man's interest a little and let the eternal nigger question rest for a while." *Ibid.*, p. 41, (January 1862.)
in September 1864 wheat was being carried from Chicago to Buffalo for six cents per bushel. Four years before the rate had been thirteen cents. This decrease came in the face of an increase of fifty per cent in the cost of labor and material to the railroads. Still the West was not satisfied. The decline in rates was only on competing routes, chiefly from Chicago east. On the non-competing railroads bringing produce to Chicago, the rates remained high.\(^\text{11}\)

The West, particularly those parts some distance from lake navigation, was looking for relief to the southward. E. L. Dunlap, editor of the *Illinois Farmer*, wrote in January 1863, "With the opening of the Mississippi we may expect an advance on the price of our farm products, the profits of which are now swallowed up by the eastern lines of transportation... This state of things cannot long continue and the great river must be opened. We do not believe the temper of the river states can much longer be safely tampered with. It may suit the Eastern railroads, and...

Eastern manufacturers to continue this state of things but it is our duty to tell them that every day's delay is estranging the West from them. He was destined to be disappointed in the results when Vicksburg was taken but the statement shows his attitude. Little effect was felt from the opening of the Mississippi. The remarkable prosperity which the West enjoyed during the latter part of the war was due rather to the higher price levels prevailing and the lower freight rates to the East. 12

The railroads, which played such an important part in handling the produce of the West enjoyed unusual prosperity during the war. The Illinois Central trebled its gross earnings during the war, notwithstanding the loss of its southern trade. Operating costs increased by about one-half and freight rates were in some cases lower, but net returns were greater than ever. 13

The labor situation on the farms had not been disturbing in 1861 but in 1862 the drain of men from the farms became serious. Calls for troops during the early months of that year took many men from the farms before the farming season began and complaints of a scarcity of labor came from all over the state. On many farms women and children were doing all the work. The crop acre-

age decreased but still the shortage of labor at harvest time was great. Harvest wages increased greatly and were as high as three dollars per day. The scarcity was relieved to some extent by the increasing use of machinery but in some neighborhoods there were not enough hands to run the harvester and some grain was left in the field. Some relief was secured from the white immigration from the South and East. Farmers in the southern part of the state were hiring the "contrabands" who were coming north but they found them to be unsatisfactory laborers.

As the war continued, the labor shortage became gradually more severe. The immigrants and machinery aided but they only lessened the burden carried by those who remained on the farms. As more and more troops left the state the farm operations slowed down. Plowing which was sometimes done in the fall was often left undone because of lack of labor. The crop acreage in the state declined fifteen per cent during the war. In view of the inducement offered by the high prices after 1862 this must be accounted for largely by the inability to harvest the crops because of the shortage of farm labor. Wages rose steadily until by 1864 they were


from $20 to $25 per month or from $2 to $5 per day during harvest. During the latter part of the war refugees swarmed into Illinois and relieved the labor shortage in the southern part of the state. When the war broke out there was a widespread feeling that the withdrawal of large numbers of farmers for army service would result in a greatly decreased production of food-stuffs. The prospective shortage of labor caused the Illinois State Agricultural Society to make an effort to stimulate the invention of labor saving machinery. Large premiums were offered by the mechanical department of the state fair and numerous machinery trials were held. However great or small the inducements offered by such societies may have been, inventors were not slow to attack the farm problems and the number of patents on agricultural machinery increased rapidly. The number of patent applications on such machinery exclusive of reapers and mowers nearly

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17. Prairie Farmer, N.S. XIII, (1864), p. 209, 324, 325; N.S. XIV, (1865), p. 165. Immigration to the state was heavy during the middle period of the war. Aurora Beacon, March 10, 1864; Prairie Farmer, N.S. XII, (1863), p. 340; Fite, op.cit., p. 10.

doubled during the war period. In 1863 there were 490 patents issued on farm machinery and only 240 on firearms.\textsuperscript{19}

Never before had the state been more dependent upon machinery than in 1862 when the labor shortage became acute. The increase in the use of reapers and mowers was less, perhaps, than that of planting machinery, but it was a factor of importance and was highly regarded. The manufacture of these machines more than trebled from 1861 to 1864 and the total number built during the four years was over twice that in the ten years preceding the war. Of the 70,000 manufactured in 1864 about one-fifth were made in Illinois. The sale of machines and repairs meant an outlay of nearly $11,000,000 in the United States in the one year of 1864 for harvesting machinery alone.\textsuperscript{20}

The labor shortage made it necessary to eliminate as much hand labor as possible. The use of the self-raking reapers aided in this respect. These had been used for several years before the war but now they were more widely manufactured. In 1861 McCormick built one of these machines for every five hundred hand-rakers, and in 1862 one to every twenty-five. In the following year one-half of their machines were of this type and in 1864 two-thirds of their stock were self-rakers. The greatest need for improve-

ment was in binding. Both twine and wire were tried on mechanical binders but only wire was found to be moderately successful and even it was not widely used. 21

The use of tilling and planting machinery was greatly increased during the war period. The number and variety of plows increased rapidly. Drills and planters were in demand and two-horse cultivators appeared in great numbers. Twenty-five different patterns of such cultivators were made during the season of 1861. These implements cut the cost of cultivating corn to half and offset in part the lack of laborers. The rapid increase in the manufacture and use of machinery during the war crisis was made possible by the development of machinery during the preceding decade. 22

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21. Illinois Farmer, VI, (1861), p. 360; VII, (1862), p. 272, 280; Hicks, History of Kendall County, p. 294-296; Prairie Farmer, N.S. XI, (1863), p. 193; N.S. XIII, (1864), p. 239. See also N.S. X, (1862), p. 16; N.S. XI, (1863), p. 313; N.S. XII, (1863), p. 21, 136; N.S. XIV, (1864), p. 33-34, 113; 132; hand rakes were little used in haying. Revolving rakes were very common and continued in use on the smaller farms. Wire tooth sulky rakes were used on large farms. Report Department of Agriculture, 1863, p. 430-431. Marsh harvesters which had been developing since 1862 were put on the market in limited numbers late in the war.

Among the changes wrought by the war time conditions was a slowing down of nearly all agricultural activities, a slight tendency toward diversification and mixed farming and the introduction of specialized crops such as cotton. High transportation rates by rail together with production hindrances caused a decline in corn raising in the southern part of the state and change to wheat, cotton, tobacco, and fruit. Toward the north a slight change from wheat to corn and stock occurred. Despite the improved price of wheat during the middle period of the war, farmers in the northern half of the state were finding that crop less satisfactory than formerly and were beginning to turn to mixed farming with increased attention to corn and live stock.23

One of the striking developments in Illinois agriculture produced directly by the war was the attempt to raise cotton in the southern part of the state. This was not a new crop for that section. It had been raised for home use since about 1817 but had been unable to hold its place in the face of cheap southern cotton in the 'thirties and 'forties, and had almost disappeared from the state.24

When war came, the farmers of southern Illinois anticipated higher prices of cotton and began to return to that crop. Little
was planted in 1861 owing to the difficulty of procuring seed and
the short time available before planting. Much enthusiasm was
aroused, however, over the possibilities of Illinois cotton, which,
it was claimed, equalled that from Tennessee. Notwithstanding the
interest in the crop little progress was made in 1862 because of
the lack of seed. Congress appropriated $5,000 to buy seed for
northern districts and government agents bought some in Tennessee.
however only 150 bushels arrived in Illinois. A great many farm-
ers planted cotton with the seed available but the fields were
very small.

The deficiency of seed had been overcome by 1863 by home-
grown seed and large quantities brought from Tennessee. A com-
paratively large acreage was planted and farmers generally found
it profitable with the price at from sixty to seventy cents per
pound.

But it was in 1864 and 1865, with cotton selling in New

25. Illinois Farmer, VI, (1861), p.371; Illinois State Journ-
al, Nov. 30, 1861; Prairie Farmer, XXIV, (1861), p.359; 418-419;
Rock River Democrat, Dec. 31, 1861. Little increase in cotton
prices occurred until October 1861 when it sold at New York at
21½ cents, or twice, the price of a year before. On Jan. 1, 1862
it sold for 37½ cents, January 1863 at 67½, January 1864 at 81 and
in January 1865 at $1.20 per pound. Aldrich Report, Pt.2, p.11.
VIII, (1863), p.29,40,44-45,89,107,345; Illinois State Journal
Jan.22, March 10, May 12, 1862; Prairie Farmer, N.S., XX (1862),
p.66,106,177,216,345,359; N.S. X (1862), 257,312; N.S. XI, (1863),
p.2-3,313,371; Champaign County Patriot, Nov. 6, 1862; Central
Illinois Gazette, Jan. 15, 1862; State Register, Feb. 11, 1862; Cultiv-
p.108; Report Department of Agriculture, 1862, p.110.
27. Illinois Farmer, VIII, (1863), p.21,82; Chicago Tribune,
April 6, 1863; Rock River Democrat, March 25, Aug. 12, 1863;
Illinois State Journal, Jan. 1, 1863; Prairie Farmer, N.S., XI,
(1863), p.100, 313, 328,404; N.S. XII, (1863), p.9,18,75,116;
York at from eighty cents to $1.20 that southern Illinois came into real prominence as a cotton producing area. Cotton was highly profitable at that price. Yields ranged from 800 to 1,500 pounds per acre and the cotton sold in the seed for about nine of ten cents, giving a return of from $50 to $150 per acre. With such prices and profits the acreage of the crop increased. Shipments of cotton on the Illinois Central Railroad were 1,400 pounds in 1862. In the following year they were 100,000 pounds, in 1864 they reached 184,000 pounds and in 1865 they amounted to 1,625,500 pounds. The crop of 1866 yielded probably about 10,000 bales and was worth about $1,500,000.

Another of the minor crops which was more largely grown as a result of the war was sorghum. This had been introduced into the state in the 'fifties and was widely grown before the war. It was so extensively raised that from 1857 to 1858 a number of sorghum growers associations were formed. Sugar was brought from

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29. Central Illinois Gazette, March 23, 1866; Chicago Post, March 14, 1866. One plantation of 280 acres was reported. Jacksonville Journal, Nov. 24, 1864. Carbondale, Jackson County, was the center of cotton production. That county had 3,280 acres in 1865 from which $378,000 was realized. Ten gins with a capacity of about fifty bales a day were running in December of that year. Trans. Ill. State Ag. Soc., VI, (1865-6), p.66, 192, 185; Prairie Farmer, N.S. XV, (1865), p.88, 267; Chicago Tribune, Nov. 14, Dec. 28, 1865. Early in 1865 a paper called the Southern and Cotton Planter was proposed at Cairo. Cairo Daily Democrat, Feb. 22, 1865. See also Trans. Ill. State Ag. Soc., V, (1861-4), p.31-32, 351; VI, (1865-6), p.66, 67.
Cuba and Louisiana but much of the molasses consumed was home grown. 30

The closing of the Mississippi cut off a part of the normal supply of sugar and caused farmers to give more than usual attention to sorghum. Most farmers in all sections of the state raised at least a small patch of sorghum in 1861 and most localities were able to supply the local demand for molasses. 31 The acreage of the crop was greatly extended in 1862 when it was estimated at from fifty to one hundred thousand acres yielding a product worth $1,000,000. Illinois was now exporting molasses instead of importing from twelve to fifteen thousand barrels annually as before the war. 32 The crop continued to receive a great deal of attention throughout the remainder of the war period. For the most part it was grown for home consumption but in


some places it was a commercial crop. The increased acreage of cotton and sorghum was unusual but was of minor importance when compared with corn, wheat and live stock. Corn, which was important both as a cash crop and as a feed, had a varied fortune during the war. Prices were low throughout 1861 and 1862 at central markets and corn was so low at local shipping points that it was used as fuel. This low price was caused in part by the large production in 1860 and 1861 and by the increased transportation charges. Much corn was held on the farms, in cribs along the railroads, or along the rivers where farmers hoped for an early opening of the Mississippi.

In 1863 inflation began to have its influence on prices and the situation of the corn farmer seemed to improve. The acreage of corn in 1863 dropped slightly, due perhaps to labor shortage, but prices were about double those of a year before. Then came

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the killing frosts in August over northern and central Illinois and the crop was severely damaged. Those farmers who were fortunate enough to have a surplus to sell received as high as $1.30 per bushel at Chicago in the following summer. Stimulated by the high prices and aided by more machinery, the farmers increased their corn acreage in 1864 and harvested a large crop. Although the price broke sharply in November 1864 it was yet high enough to make corn raising very profitable during the remainder of the war.

Both the acreage and aggregate production of wheat during the period gradually shrunk in Illinois and in the Chicago trade area despite the rising prices and the increasing use of machinery. The wheat acreage in the state fell every year and in 1865 was only about seventy per cent of what it had been in 1861. According to the estimates of department of agriculture the wheat production in the state dropped nearly twenty per cent from 1863 to 1865.

Receipts at Chicago declined nearly forty per cent during the war. This decrease in receipts came in spite of a slight extension of railroad lines in the newer wheat growing areas in the Northwest. The smaller amount of surplus wheat sent to central markets does not indicate a similar decline in aggregate production, however,

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since the home consumption probably remained about the same.

The acreage and aggregate production of wheat in Illinois was well maintained as in most parts of the Northwest. The crop suffered severely at times and in some sections however. Most of southern Illinois raised a good wheat crop in 1862 but the wheat in the northern half of the state was light. In 1862, when the farmers lost much corn due to the frost, the wheat crop was light all over the state, particularly in the south where many fields yielded but three bushels per acre. In some sections of the northern part of the state, as near Kankakee and Dixon, the wheat crop was heavy but the general average was comparatively low.

Much the same condition prevailed in 1864 when chinch bugs, rust, blight, drouth, etc., caused an uneven but light crop over most of the state.

Among the minor crops oats were prominent. The demand for them for the army aided in raising the price to more than eighty

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cents during the war. The production increased rapidly, due in part to increased yields however. Broom corn raising was also stimulated by a rise in price from $0.25 per ton in 1861 to $2.00 in 1865 and a large acreage was planted. Some farmers raised as much as 1,000 to 1,500 acres and found it profitable. Tobacco was another of the secondary crops which was favorably affected by war conditions. It was extensively planted in southern Illinois and to a lesser extent further north, particularly along the Illinois and Mississippi rivers. The crop of 1864 was worth over three million dollars and about one-fifth of it was shipped from Carbondale, which was also the cotton center.


The slight tendency toward diversification of agriculture in Illinois during the war brought with it a greater interest in stock in some sections. This does not mean that there was an actual increase in the number of stock raised. In fact, the numbers of all kinds of stock decreased with the exception of sheep which increased rapidly. The prosperity of the stock raiser fluctuated with the changing prices of feed and fat stock. The generally rising prices caused the value of Illinois live stock to increase from $72,500,000 in 1859 to $116,500,000 in January 1865.41

When the war came there was a slight drop in the price of live stock, especially hogs. The inducements to feed would have been less than before had not the price of corn fallen to an unusually low point. It was so low that in remote sections it was not profitable to ship it and even near Chicago the net return was greatly reduced. Under these conditions stock feeding became relatively very profitable. Feed was abundant and cheap and stock prices were relatively good. An unusually large number of cattle and hogs were fattened and sent to market leaving the farmers with a shortage of breeding and feeding stock which continued until 1865. During that year prices began to advance and the inducement to sell was strong, but the numbers of all kinds

of live stock increased. In the case of horses, mules, and sheep the market did not call for breeding stock and in that way interfere with the future supply.42

Sheep raising felt the stimulus of the war more than any other major agricultural activity. It entered the 'sixties in an unprosperous condition. Wool prices were low in 1860 and sheep raising was on the decline, the number in Illinois decreasing from 769,000 in 1860 to 731,000 in 1861. But the outbreak of the war brought about a change. The shortage of cotton left a gap to be filled by other materials, chiefly wool. Furthermore the soldiers were clothed in wool to much greater degree than they were in civil life. In view of the prospective demand for wool, prices began to advance. Wool which sold in New York at 30 cents in July 1861 was 47 cents in 1862, about 70 cents in 1863 and $1.00 in 1864. This rise occurred in the face of an increase in the world's supply of wool. In fact it seems probable that had the war with its cotton shortage and woolen demand not occurred there would have been a drop in wool prices. The rise was partly due

42. The numbers of all kinds of stock except sheep declined sharply in the state in 1865. Horses and hogs fell below the number in 1860. In the northern states the number of horses, mules and hogs declined. Cattle and oxen increased to 1864 and in 1865 dropped below the 1860 figure. Cows in the North as in the state increased to 1864 and then declined in numbers, but not to the number in 1860. Sheep in both the state and the North about doubled during the war. See price data in Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1861 to 1866; Aldrich Report, Pt. 2; and the market reports of the Prairie Farmer. See Monthly Report Department of Agriculture, March 1865, p. 19-21; Country Gentleman, XLIX, (1867), p. 97; Prairie Farmer, N.S. XIII, (1864), p. 377; N.S. XV, (1865), p. 3; Illinois Farmer, (1861), p. 117. "Every stock man in the West has made money", wrote Wm S. McCormick to C. H. McCormick, March 3, 1865, McCormick MSS.
to depreciation and inflation during the latter part of the war. As a matter of fact, gold prices of wool in the United States increased but five per cent during the war. Market needs might have been responsible for the arrest of a possible drop in prices and for the increase up to five per cent leaving depreciation and inflation to account for the remaining rise in price. With prices advancing, the number of sheep in the state increased rapidly. The number listed for taxation increased from 564,000 in 1860 to 913,000 in 1862 and to over 2,100,000 in 1865. In 1861 and 1862 Western stockmen were inquiring eagerly in the East for sheep. One farmer wrote, "We want 5,000-10,000 sheep in this county immediately. Where can we get them and at what price?" Throughout the state, particularly in the north and central portions there was a feverish demand for sheep. The number of sheep doubled in McLean County during twelve months in 1863-4, and in Randolph County, in southern Illinois, during the war. In DeKalb County in the northern part of the state, the increase was from thirty to fifty per cent yearly. These were ex-

43. Market quotation, Prairie Farmer, Wright, Wool Growing and the Tariff, p. 348-349, citing figures of Mauger and Avery; also p. 167-165; Salmon, Special Report on the History and Present Condition of the Sheep Industry of the United States, p. 593; Illinois Farmer, VII, (1862), p. 34; Trans. Ill. State Ag. Soc., V, (1861-4), p. 26; Report Department of Agriculture, 1862, p. 285-287; Canton Weekly Register, Feb. 5, 1863. The increase in the freight rates in the early months of the war worked to the advantage of wool since with its relatively high value it could bear increased transportation costs better than corn for example.
ceptions, no doubt, but the increase was large in most parts of the state. Many flocks of 1,000 were held and from 25,000 to 30,000 were owned by the McConnell family in Sangamon County.47

Sheep came west in large numbers from New York, Ohio and Michigan, to areas of cheaper pasture and grain feed. They came not only to Illinois but to Iowa and Nebraska as well. Some were driven and others were shipped on the railroads. In 1861 the number of sheep sent East over the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad was nearly equal to the shipments West, but by 1862 the westward shipments were nearly ten times as great as those to the East. In 1864 they were seventeen times as great. Sheep were going to low cost areas and only those that were useless for breeding purposes came East to market.48

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The hog raising industry varied in its prosperity during the war. The first year saw the price of hogs drop in the general depression which came with the currency troubles, change of trade routes and congestion of traffic. This fall in prices continued to midsummer of 1862 when an upward trend commenced. This continued fairly regularly until in January 1865 the top quotation was $12.50 as compared with about $5.50 four years before. The rise in price was not a reliable index of profits in feeding however. To be sure the farmer who raised corn and fed hogs received more for his labor late in the war than in 1861 but the increase was not all to the credit of feeding. A large part of it was due to the higher price of corn.

Relatively, feeding hogs was very profitable during the first two years of the war because of the low price of corn. Whereas in March 1860 a hundred pounds of live pork at Chicago was worth 11.1 bushels of corn, it was worth 17.4 bushels in 1861 and 18.7 in 1862. As the price of corn relative to hogs declined hog feeding became even more profitable than selling corn direct, especially in remote regions where transportation charges to central markets were very high. The result was a rapid increase in the number of hogs marketed in Chicago from 675,000 in 1861 to nearly two million in 1863. Part of this was doubtless due to a

49. Market reports, Prairie Farmer; Reports Chicago Board of Trade; Aldrich report, Pt. 2.
natural increase and to the stopping of the Southern trade. It was only indicative of the trend. 50

During 1863 hog prices did not advance as rapidly as did those of corn. In March of that year a hundred pounds of pork was worth 9.6 bushels of corn, and in 1864 it was worth even less. Thus it became less profitable to feed corn to hogs and in 1864 the receipts of hogs at Chicago declined. Although feeding as a separate operation was less profitable than formerly, the raising of corn and feeding it was very remunerative and the farmers who did both shared in the general prosperity of the time. 51

The number of hogs in the state appears to have increased during the first two years of the war while feeding was relatively profitable. Beginning with 1863 there apparently was a decline and the number in the state at the close of the war was less than at its beginning. The short corn crop of 1863 compelled the farmers to sell their breeding stock in large numbers and thus


51. Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1872, p.47. A part of the decline in hog receipts at Chicago may be attributed to the short corn crop of 1863. The supply of feed was short and the price was high. Prairie Farmer, XXIII, (1861), p.235; N.S.VIII, (1861), p. 9, 345, 385; N.S. X, (1862), p. 275; Monthly Report, Department of Agriculture, March 1865, p. 21; Trans. Ill. State Ag. Soc., V, (1861-4), p. 27.
contribute to the decline in 1864 and 1865.52

Unfortunately statistics on the production of beef during the war are not available in accurate detail. No marked changes in cattle prices occurred until 1865. Whatever advantage cattle feeding derived from the situation was relative and was conditioned upon the low price of grain, notably corn. By 1865 beef prices were advancing with the general price level and the gross returns to cattle feeders increased correspondingly. Instead of raising cattle to send to Ohio and Pennsylvania to be fattened for the Eastern market the stockmen of Illinois were now driving cattle from Indiana and Ohio to be fattened in the Illinois corn belt. The corn shortage in 1863 hindered this movement in 1864 and caused an undue dependence upon grass to fatten the cattle. Receipts of cattle at Chicago increased until 1865 when there was a slight drop. Shipments East and beef packing increased through-

out the war but the import of these facts is not clear.

Dairying was not a leading branch of agriculture during the war period. The industry was gaining but Illinois was not yet feeding herself with dairy products. Butter and cheese were imported from Ohio, Indiana and Wisconsin. The amount of cheese sent west over the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad in 1861 was sixteen times the shipments eastward. The same situation continued throughout the war. The first cheese factory in the state was started in 1863 and a small amount of cheese of a good quality was produced. Near Chicago nearly all of the surplus milk was shipped to that city as milk. The industry especially in Northern Illinois, was gaining slowly but was not prominent. 54

Southern Illinois, which was the center of cotton, tobacco,

53. There appears to have been a decline in the number of cattle on the farms of the state during the war. U.S. Census, 1880, Agriculture, p.30-35. Trans Ill. State Ag. Soc., VI, (1885-6), p. XXIV-XXXI. Census and assessors' returns are not strictly comparable and have a different bias of error. On the source of feeder cattle see ibid. V, (1861-4), p.22-23; Prairie Farmer, N.S. X, (1862) p.356; N.S. XI, (1863), p.377; Country Gentleman, XIV, (1865), p.68; Monthly Report, Department of Agriculture, Nov. 1863, p.6; March 1865, p. 21; Gridley, Historical Sketches, I, p. 292. Illinois was credited with supplying New York City with about half of its beef supply. However, "Illinois" cattle may have come from anywhere south and west of Chicago. Atlantic Monthly, XV, (1865), p.83; Illinois State Register, July 15, 1862; March 23, 1864; Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1864, p. 52; Rockford Register, Feb. 17, 1865; Illinois State Journal, May 12, 1864.

and castor bean raising, was also the most important fruit growing region in the state. This section had become the seat of commercial orchards before the war. Little change occurred in 1861 but during the next year an extensive boom in fruit growing developed there. The center of this activity was in Union and Jackson Counties. Here among the hills fruit lands were purchased in large quantities not only by native Illinoisans but by "Yankees" who came down the Illinois Central in large numbers. Fruit, particularly peaches and strawberries, and large quantities of vegetables were shipped to Chicago in increasing amounts. It was highly profitable and the industry continued to thrive through the war period and beyond.55

The effect of the war was soon felt in the land market. For a time in 1861 and 1862 it appeared that there was little hope of profit in western agriculture, especially in grain farming. It did not seem possible any longer to buy land and make the purchase price from the land within a few years. As a result the sale of land by the Illinois Central declined in 1861 and cancellations on old contracts exceeded new sales. In 1862 sales declined still more and again did not equal cancellations. Prices gave little encouragement to land purchase.56

With 1863 there came a change for the better due to a number of factors. Prices were now rising rapidly due to inflation and other causes. The re-opening of the Mississippi during that year aided the marketing of produce to some slight extent. By this time the transportation systems had become adjusted to the traffic and freight rates were falling with a resultant gain to the western farmer. Due to these factors the land sales of the Illinois Central increased to 114,000 acres, as contrasted with a net loss of 38,000 acres in 1862 through cancellations. As prices mounted and more money became available, the land sales increased. Many were distrustful of the currency which was depreciating and sought to avoid loss by investing in real estate.

Part of the increased demand for land beginning with 1863 came as a result of the heavy immigration into the state. This began in some strength in 1862 and increased in the years following. The early immigration came from the South and included many dependent refugees. Soon, however, settlers began to come by the northern route. Among these immigrants were many New Englanders who were particularly enterprising, and large numbers of

thrifty and industrious foreigners, especially Germans.

An interesting reflection on the prosperity of the Northwest, particularly as it affected the farmers, is to be found in the experiences of C. H. McCormick and Brothers who were busy replacing men with reapers. Their sales increased slightly in 1861 and 1862 but declined to pre-war figures in the two years following. The prosperity of the company outran its current sales, however. Their collections were good even in the confusing year of 1861 and in 1862 the farmers poured the greenbacks into the company's hands in large quantities. In four months in the summer and autumn of 1862 the company collected nearly a quarter of a million dollars.

Wm. S. McCormick, the treasurer of the company, and the financial genius of the family, wrote in October 1862 to his brother Cyrus, "If we have made a handsome fortune and several hundred thousand dollars in the last three years it is mainly in farmers notes to

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The policy of the land Department has been liberal to the party actually settled upon and working the land. Great care has been taken not to dispossess any man making an honest effort to work his farm and this course has established confidence in the Company." Report Illinois Central Railroad Co., 1865, p. 1. Rents dropped in 1862 as a result of the low prices of grain and the high price of labor. Country Gentleman, XIX, (1862), p. 260; American Agriculturist, XX, (1861), p. 173.

59. Financial estimate, 1867, McCormick MSS.

60. Wm. S. McCormick to C.H. McCormick, July 20, Nov. 9, 1862, McCormick MSS.
be paid in greenbacks.\footnote{61}

The inflation and depreciation which was impelling the farmers to pay caused the McCormicks to seek to "sell on the ten years time & jump the depreciation."\footnote{62} Farmers were aware of their advantage, however, and pressed their creditors hard. Wm. S. McCormick wrote in November 1862, "Farmers are debtors. They will pay you in depreciated currency. If we could renew notes on 5, 7 of ten years it would do. I am trying this (but hard to do).... Depreciation makes wheat, pork, oats beef & C high and farmers are paying well."\footnote{63} "Farmers will pay us & we can't help it" he wrote a few days later and in the following February he said, "Farmers are paying us without mercy."\footnote{64}

Business continued good and in June 1863, Wm. S. McCormick could say, "the amount of business crowded into the last 12 months greatly exceeds any former year."\footnote{65} In February 1864 he wrote, "These times have enabled us to collect up our assets on a big scale... We may expect, I think, if these times continue very large collections.... Only as a desperate resort would it do to say to men who buy our reapers you must keep our money & pay us in future years."\footnote{66} By March 1865 times had changed and he said,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{61}{October 12, 1862, McCormick MSS.}
  \item \footnote{62}{Wm. S. McCormick to C H. McCormick, Sept. 27, 1862, McCormick MSS.}
  \item \footnote{63}{To C. H. McCormick, Nov. 9, 1862, McCormick MSS.}
  \item \footnote{64}{Ibid., Nov. 19, 1862; Jan. 25, Feb. 15, 1863. "All want to pay" he wrote on Nov. 23, 1862. He was apprehensive of the future. "We will have a paper currency & inflation. We will have good collections but be only able to make poor use of our money." Nov. 19, 1862, McCormick MSS.}
  \item \footnote{65}{To C. H. McCormick, June 7, 1863, McCormick MSS.}
  \item \footnote{66}{ Ibid., Feb. 28, 1864.}
\end{itemize}
"Collections are not good now- prices down much. Real estate not selling.... General holding off in everything & looking for lower prices." 67

The disposition of the unwelcome money was a serious problem. Cyrus H. McCormick was in London and his brother William implored him in vain for advice. Being thrown upon his own judgment he first turned to grain buying and even thought of building an elevator. He finally decided that this would not be a profitable venture and gave it up. 68 He then gave his attention to real estate. Some of the leading financiers of Chicago, such as Ogden and Newberry, had nine-tenths of their fortunes in real estate which was advancing rapidly in price. The decision to buy real estate was influenced by the belief that it would be taxed less than anything else. Wm. S. McCormick was thinking of the possible action of the farmers in the years to come. He wrote on November 7, 1862,

"The farmers would certainly repudiate if taxed largely- they have the balance of power & would in the end vote down high taxation. Your income may be heavily taxed but this could at most not exceed your income while other capital might be taxed though you had no income from it. Your specie on deposit will probably not be overlooked this winter in the amendments to be made. I think Real Estate will be favored comparatively in taxation." 69

67. Ibid., Mar. 28, 1866.
68. To C. H. McCormick, Oct. 19, Nov. 9, 1862, McCormick MSS.
69. To C. H. McCormick, Nov. 7, 1862. "Then should we not buy quick at least a million dollars worth of Real Estate.... But I tell you this indecision of yours will force us I fear. I fear its now too late." Nov. 9, 1862. 668. Letter of Nov. 19, 1862. On March 29, 1862 he commented on the fact that a farm which they had bought could not be burned or destroyed by mobs." McCormick MSS.
Not only was the prospective advance in the price of real estate an inducement to invest in it, but the current return was high. Throughout 1863 and a part of 1864 business real estate investments returned ten percent or more and business was active. A farm which the McCormicks bought in Pike County was rented in March 1863 for a term of five years at nearly seven percent of the cost per annum. Late in 1864 a reaction caused a decline in real estate values which continued into the following year.70

Perhaps never before in the history of the state had the farmers been in such favorable circumstances as during the Civil War. It is true that during the first year and a half of the period the depressed prices and trade derangement had worked to the disadvantage of the farmer. The crops of 1860, 1861 and 1862 were good and much produce was on hand when the upward turn of prices brought unprecedented prosperity. Labor was becoming scarce and aggregate production of crops was falling but the higher prices received for that sold much more than made up for these factors. With the exception of the year 1863 crops were good and farmers made good use of their opportunity to pay off old debts. The end of the war saw nearly all of the pre-war debts paid. Lucky was the farmer who had not been tempted by the prosperity to extend

70. Em. S. McCormick to C. H. McCormick, March 29, May 31, July 12, Sept. 27, 1863; Feb. 21, 23, 1864; March 29, 1865. Much of the foundation of the McCormick family fortune was in the real estate investments in Chicago during the war. Em. S. McCormick deserves the credit for the decision to make these investments. The first cost of real estate bought by C. H. McCormick and Bros. was $810,022.65. By 1868 the value had increased by nearly $900,000. Financial State, C. H. McCormick & Bros., 1867, 1868, McCormick MSS.
his activities by means of borrowed money. 71

In September 1864 the editor of the Prairie Farmer wrote,

"There must be something radically wrong with the farmer that does not now free himself from debt. Never in the lifetime of the present generation will such another opportunity present itself. Every cultivated product of the temperate climate bears a highly remunerative price. Every fruit of our trees finds a ready market. Every domestic animal ... finds a ready purchaser. Animals, vegetables and fruits alike are in demand.

"It matters not for the purpose of paying debts, whether the money received for farm products be fifty, sixty, ninety or more cents below par, a dollar cancels a dollar's worth of debt, contracted in the good old day of specie for which men sigh. ... A time has come, though its pathway be through blood and carnage, when the farmers can rise in their might and free themselves from every feather's weight of burden that former commercial failures and revulsions have placed upon them.

"To be sure the clothes they are forced to buy may have advanced in greater proportion than the produce they have to sell. Their grocery bills may have augmented wonderfully. The help they must hire or the machinery they must purchase, may cost much more than ever before, but above and beyond all expenditures, after the fall crop is sold there will be more money in the pockets of the people of the West than at any time since its settlement. There can be no doubt of this. If a man's crops and stock last year brought him $1,000 dollars and his expenses were $500, this year his receipts will be $2,000, while his expenditures, even allowing them to have doubled -- which they have not done in one case in ten, will allow a profit double that of last year." (1863) 72

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CHAPTER VIII

THE POST WAR REACTION

The period following the war was one of readjustment to the new conditions brought by peace. The South turned to the production of cotton again and the price of that product fell with deflation and peace time trade conditions. The high prices of wheat led to extended production, especially beyond the Mississippi, and to the breaking of the market by the flood of wheat from that section. During the war the farmer had paid with cheap money debts which had been contracted on a specie basis. Often he had not been satisfied. He had contracted debts on the inflated price level and now stood to lose as contraction of the currency helped to make money dear. The shortage of labor which was so acute late in the war was relieved by the disbandment of the army and the immigration of the period, but in most cases, perhaps, the new laborers were engaged in competitive production, much to the detriment of the established farmers.

The readjustment came in different ways and at different times for various branches of agriculture. But in general the story of the agriculture of the state following the war is one gradual recession from the prosperity of the war time until the depths of the depression of 1873, despite seeming contradictions. During part of the later 'sixties the foundations of prosperity seemed secure but farmers complained almost continually. In 1865 there was a period of stress when the prices dropped markedly in anticipation of a violent readjustment. Fortunately the high
prices during the latter part of the war had enabled farmers to pay off a very large proportion of their debts. But there was a feeling of uncertainty existing which made buyers cautious. "It is now time to take in sail and keep close to the shore," wrote the Prairie Farmer in April 1865. "If out of debt, keep out. If not out of debt speedily get out. Get affairs in such shape as not to be obliged to sell when the first buyer comes around and at such prices as he may offer."

Added to the hindrance of low prices were the high post-war taxes. Not only were the federal taxes high but the local governing bodies were asking for more money. Grain prices were low until 1867 and it was only the live stock outlet which enabled farmers to maintain a semblance of prosperity. In 1867 and 1868 the price level, except for live stock, was high but complaints of hard times and shortage of money continued to come in. The credit system had begun to fasten itself upon the country again. This extension of credit was encouraged by the manufacturers and wholesale dealers who had large stocks on hand at the close of the war. Taxes continued high and there was an ominous feeling of uneasiness.

1. Prairie Farmer, N.S., XV. (1865), p. 236. O. H. Loomis of Kewanee wrote on January 4, 1866, "It is too foggy ahead to run very fast without whistling often." McCormick MSS., F.D. Armour foresaw the drop in prices and made a fortune selling pork short in the spring of 1865. Andreas, History of Chicago, II, p. 331. "Prices of all farm products having been high farmers have generally got out of debt and are now independent — and if prices rule low they will be free from a burden of interest and duns of creditors." (Montgomery County), County Gentleman, XXV, (1865), p. 321. See also Marah, op. cit., p. 131-132; C.A. Spring Jr., Oct. 26, Dec. 13, 1865; McCormick MSS.; Prairie Farmer Jr., N.S. XV, (1865), p. 434.
During 1867 and 1868 farmers had had the advantage of good prices, except for live stock. In 1869 and 1870 this prop failed and the financial situation of the western farmer began to grow worse. An agent at Kewanee wrote in May 1869, "Collections are

2. "Business is prostrated. The city can't pay for the country can't collect. Meantime corn rolls into market and brings 42c., but the tax collector clutches the proceeds. Hogs and cattle go forward but the collector dogs their heels and in fine the whole business of the country is suspended for three months while the (farmers)....are paying their taxes.... These are hard times indeed and yet everybody expects to see them harder." Country Gentleman, XXIX, (January 1867), p. 97. "The financial crash so long predicted seems now inevitable. The times are hard; money close and commanding high rates of interest. The contraction of the currency has led to a stringency in the money market and consequently business has become stagnant. Produce of every description within the last thirty days has rapidly declined... Grain dealers are afraid to purchase; pork packers are loth [die] to launch out; wages of laboring men are going down and the demand for labor growing less." Rushville Times, Nov. 5, 1868. "If we don't have a grand smash up we may thank the good sense of the American people & a kind providence.... Fair honorable business is a farce in this country- The gaster & speculator riots on the ruin of honest industry...." O. H. Loomis Kewanee, Oct. 31, 1868. McCormick MSS. See Prairie Farmer, N.S. XVII. (1866), p. 253, 305, 406; XXI. (1868), p. 159; Country Gentleman, XXIX, (1867), p. 20, 84; C. H. Ray, Chicago, Feb. 8, 1867 to (Lyman Trumbull), Transcript Trumbull MSS.; Cairo Weekly Democrat, April 26, May 23, 1867; John H. Shaffer, Kankakee, May 6, June 3, 10, Nov. 11, 1867; Jan 13, 1868; Momence, Aug. 19, 1868; C. A. Spring, Jr., Jan. 9, Aug. 9, 1868; D. W. Fairbank, Concord, June 18, 1867; J. B. Rentchler, Jan. 15, June 23, Aug. 12, 1868; Blake and Stowell, Mt. Carroll, Jan. 10, 1867; June 19, 1868; W. J. Hays, Clinton, Aug. 15, 1867; S. A. Flickinger, Lanark, Dec. 22, 1868; T. D. Waite, Sycamore, Aug. 4, 1868; H. S. Prier, Danville, Feb. 23, 1867; W. H. Barnhill, Flora, March 9, 1867; J. H. Osborne, Mattoon, Nov. 2, 1868; H. O. Goodrich, Jerseyville, Sept. 18, 1868; W. A. Willey, Flora, March 21, 1868; C. F. Johnson, Monmouth, Nov. 5, 1867; W. H. Prescott, Galesburg, June 3, 1870; O. H. Loomis, Kewanee, June 4, 1867, McCormick MSS. Some allowance must be made for a tendency on the part of McCormick's agents to exaggerate the stringency of the times to excuse their failure to collect. However, the tenor and insistence of their complaints must lend much weight to their evidence.
exceedingly dull. Farmers are holding corn, wheat and cattle. We are selling nearly everything on time. We never had such a time since in business." In October he said, "The farmers hereabouts who raise grain & depend upon it have no money... It is not here... Men who raise pork or cattle will have money by & by. I never saw anything like the present Stringency in the money market here... We have thousands due us against the very best men in our county. They come in & say, 'We cannot get the money.'"

From La Prairie, in northwestern Illinois, an agent reported, "It is certainly the hardest time to collect money since 1857." A dealer at Jerseyville further south, wrote early in January 1869, "Thear has not been as tight times in money matters Sense 1857 or 1858... I have never had the trouble in making collections as at (present)."

Farmers near Woodstock were holding produce early in 1869 for higher prices and business was duller than for ten years. John H. Shaffer of Kankakee wrote in December 1869, "Every time I come home my P.O. box is full of letters from framers begging for time to make another crop." Similar reports came from other parts of the state where the prosperity of an earlier day had vanished. With declining price levels from whatever cause, high

4. Wm. Burke, La Prairie, Nov. 3, 1869; H. O. Goodrich, Jerseyville, Jan. 1, 1869. McCormick MSS.
5. G. W. Russell, Woodstock, March 1, 1869; John H. Shaffer, Kankakee, Dec. 25, 1869. See also E. Healy, Earlville, Nov. 4; Taylor Flick, Wenona, June 10, 1869. Bad collection cases "some times require a little sharp practice & looking after..." wrote D. W. Cobb, Belleville, Dec. 6, 1869, McCormick MSS.
taxes and the burden of new debts the farmers of the West were in distress at the close of the decade. 6

When the price break came at the close of the war grain suffered more than stock, and stock farmers were in a relatively good position. The western states turned to wheat rather than to corn because of the high freight rates to market. They were not yet ready to fatten hogs or cattle. At the same time that the western states sent wheat east to compete with the Illinois crop they sent feeder cattle to be fed on the corn crop of Illinois and sent to the nearby market. While all agriculture was becoming less profitable the relative advantage lay with live stock and the tendency shown late in the war to turn to stock and grain feeds was continued.

Sheep raising was the first and heaviest sufferer among the branches of the live stock industry in the post-war period of readjustment. The price of wool had risen during the war to unusual heights due to the demand for wool for army use and as a general substitute for cotton, and, late in the war, to depreciation. The situation appeared favorable to sheep raisers and the number of sheep increased rapidly in the North. But the situation contained factors that were to lead to a reaction. At

the same time that the rapid increase in the number of sheep in the United States occurred there was an increase in the world's sheep and wool supply by over twenty-six per cent. This increase did much to make up for the shortage of cotton during the Civil War. It also helped to keep the price of wool from rising in the London market by more than five or ten per cent on a gold basis during the war. Prices in the United States during that time increased by about five percent on a gold basis.7

It is true that currency prices of wool rose to unusual heights and these prices encouraged sheep raisers to expand their operations. For the purpose of paying debts the cheap paper dollar was as good as a dear gold one. Wool growers did not analyze the situation and take into account the effect of the increase in the world's supply. They did not realize that if the peculiar circumstances existing in the United States should disappear the price of wool would drop to new low levels. These circumstances did cease to exist and a disastrous drop in prices occurred. With the close of the war the price of gold dropped and this tended to bring currency prices down. The army demand for

woolens stopped. The cotton production recovered slowly in the South but with what came from that section and other parts of the world the cotton manufacturers were soon back to normal production. The supply of wool was still increasing (though not as rapidly as between 1860-1865) and there was an over production of textiles.

At the close of the war there was a drop in the price of wool in the United States but it was still profitable and sheep raisers continued to expand the industry. As prices dropped slightly in 1866 they looked to tariff protection, which had taken a firm hold on the United States, to give them some relief. In anticipation of higher wool duties in the United States foreign producers dumped large quantities of wool on the American market in 1866 and early 1867. This tended to delay the wool crisis abroad until 1868 and 1869 but it had the effect of helping to break the market in the United States. Wool prices here dropped rapidly and the wool panic was on. The increase in the world's wool supply was less than in the early 'sixties but this was not enough to avert a crisis. The tariff of 1867, the passage of which had led to the price breaking importation of wool before it went into operation, came too late to save the wool growers.


9. The Illinois Wool Growers' Association in February 1866 asked for a higher tariff on wool and the wool growers were well pleased with the act of 1867 as passed, Chicago Evening Journal, Feb. 22, 1866; Chicago Post, March 4, 1867; Prairie Farmer, N.S. XVII, (1866), p. 130; N.S. XIX, (1867), p. 1.
in the United States. 10 Illinois had shared in the prosperity of the sheep raising industry and she was to be caught in its ruin. The estimated average price of sheep in Illinois on February 1, 1866 was $3.77. A year later it was $3.33 and in 1868 it had dropped to $2.20. The price continued downward until in February 1870 it reached $1.65 or less than one half the price of four years before. 11 In 1864 wool had sold at Chicago at as high as $1.10. In 1868 it sold at from one-third to one half that figure. 12 The result was a reduction of flocks with a heavy loss. The estimates of the number of sheep in the state are not satisfactory but the decline in numbers was evidently large. 13 Many were driven west to Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado in search of low production cost areas where they might be profitable. 14 Furthermore, sheep

14. Prairie Farmer, N.S. XVI, (1865), p. 304; XLI, (1870), p. 13. "The decrease in the sheep in McLean County will amount to 1,000 by emigration to Missouri and Kansas. 100 years ago farmers ceased to breed and to a much greater extent this year. Besides the removal of sheep will be large this year."
Bloomington Leader, quoted by the Chicago Tribune, July 24, 1869.
by the tens of thousands were slaughtered in the West for tallow
and Illinois furnished many of these sheep. The sheep raiser
who had seen his investment value increase up to 1866 now saw it
cut in half. The reaction carried the price below the point
probably warranted by circumstances. There was some sign of re-
covery by the end of the decade and wool growing was somewhere
near normal again.

Hog feeders found themselves in a favorable position at the
close of the war. Corn, their principal feed, dropped in price
through 1865 and 1866 while hogs maintained the war level of
prices. Thus the feeder who purchased his feed found it more

15. Rept. Dept. of Agriculture, 1869, p. 7. The decrease
in the number of sheep was estimated at twenty per cent per annum
in 1869 and 1870. Trans. Ill. State Ag. Soc., VIII, (1869-70),
p. 180-181. "In the whole history of...American industry there
never has been a more disastrous record than that presented by
the Department of Agriculture for March and April 1867 some seven
pages of which are occupied with a detailed statement of the
conditions of the sheep industry in 170 counties of 21 different
states, in only one of which, Missouri, is there anything which
indicates a condition of even moderate prosperity for this partic-
ular branch of industry." Report of the Special Commissioner of
Revenue, 1869, p. XCV, quoted by Wright, op. cit., p. 200-201.
The number of sheep declined fifty per cent in two years in
Stephenson County. Trans. of the(Ill.) Dept. of Agric., 1871,
p. 201.

16. Losses from dogs were heavy. State Journal, April 25,
1867; Jacksonville Journal, April 30, 1866; Rept. Dept. of Agric.,
1868, p. 43; Monthly Report Dept. of Agric., March 1867; p. 35-36;
Prairie Farmer, N.S. XVII, (1866), p. 131. At the beginnings of
the war manufacturers bought wool at the farms. During and after
the war they bought in the East as needed. Prairie Farmer, N.S.
XVI, (1865), p. 236. See ibid., N.S. XVII, (1866), p. 296; N.S.
XX, (1867), p. 65-66, 194, 201; XII, (1870), p. 176; Country
Gentleman, XXIX, 1867, p. 269; Trans. Ill. State Ag. Soc., VII,
(1867-8), p. 274.
profitable to fatten hogs than while corn was very high during the war. The farmer who raised corn and fed it to hogs found that he was able to maintain his income from grain and stock in that way. In 1867, however, the situation was reversed. Hog prices dropped to the lowest level since early in 1864 while corn went above one dollar per bushel. Farmers preferred to sell corn rather than to feed it and hogs went to market but poorly fattened. By 1869 the circumstances had again changed and hog feeding once more became profitable.\(^{17}\)

When the war closed the hog supply in the West was short. The high prices had caused the farmers to send all available animals to market. The result was that receipts at Chicago were small in the season of 1865-6. The trade recovered the next year and continued through the 'sixties at about the level reached in 1863. Pork packing in the Mississippi Valley showed the same trend. The number of hogs on the farms of Illinois had declined during the latter part of the war and according to the assessors' reports there were 1,743,000 in the state in 1865. These figures were probably too small and the census figure of 2,700,000 in 1870 may have been too large but they indicate the recovery of the industry during the later 'sixties. This growth occurred in nearly all the counties of the state. Central Illinois had the largest number of hogs but there was no heavy concentration in any part of the

Cattle men were in much the same situation as the hog raisers in 1865. The war demand had reduced the number of cattle in the country to a comparatively low figure. Corn prices dropped while cattle sold on about the same level through the remainder of the decade. It thus became especially profitable to feed cattle, which could walk to market if freight charges were excessive. This condition continued through the late 'sixties except during the short period of high corn prices in 1867 and 1868 when it was more profitable to sell corn direct than to feed it. Even in this period the freight differential in favor of cattle was sufficient in remote districts to off-set the increased corn losses from hog cholera were heavy during the later 'sixties, particularly in 1866. Trans. Ill. State Ag. Soc., VI, (1865-6), p. 565-567, 569, 574; Report Lept. of Agric., 1869, p. 45; Prairie Farmer, N. S. XVI, (1865), p. 253; N. S. XVII, (1866), p. 153, 249; XLI, (1870), p. 133; Jacksonville Journal, Aug. 31, 1866; April 18, 1867.
price in central markets. So profitable was cattle feeding and so scarce was feeder stock following the war that cattle were brought in from other states in large numbers. The war had interrupted a thriving cattle business from the Southwest. In 1866 this trade was resumed. Large numbers of Texas cattle came up the river to Illinois and many were driven through Missouri. Some ten thousand Texas Longhorns were sent to Chicago in 1866 and it was claimed that there were between fifty and seventy thousand Texas cattle.

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19. Prairie Farmer, N.S. XVII, (1865), p. 301; N.S. XVIII, (1866) p. 9, 273; Country Gentleman, XXVII, (1866), p. 292; XXIX, (1867), p. 20, 301; New England Farmer, IV, (1870), p. 416; State Register, July 8, 1867; Chicago Evening Journal, Nov. 20, 1866; Trans. Ill. State Ag. Soc., VI, (1865-6), p. 582. "As we get further from the war period...the exciting influences it created are fading one by one and disappearing from view altogether. In regard to the Northwest, stock growers have each year since the close of the war been better able to supply the eastern and western markets with well fed cattle. So thoroughly, however, was the West drained of matured and unmatured cattle by the active demand which was kept up for nearly four years that it has not even yet in some more important sections recovered itself."

Ibid., VII, (1867-8), p. 411. "For years stock men have been in the habit of taunting grain men for raising, hauling and selling grain and getting for the whole labor what seemed to be small pay for hauling alone. The tables are turned now and stock men are feeding three and four year old steers with the prospect of getting less for them than the cost of feeding for one year. For two years now, it is the grain raisers that have made the money, and there are flattering indications that they will have a third. But for seven years previously [1859-1865] the bulk of the profit of Illinois farming went into the hands of the cattlemen."

Country Gentleman, XXXI, (1868), p. 113. The Alexanders of Champaign County fed 16,000 cattle at one time and sent 30,000 to New York in one year, in lots of 500 weekly. None of these cattle were sent through Chicago. Ibid. XXIX, (1867), p. 301; XXX, (1867), p. 237; State Register, Nov. 3, 1866. The statistics of Illinois cattle at New York market are nearly useless. Over 65,000 cattle were shipped from Morgan County in twelve months in 1868-9. Chicago Tribune, Aug. 20, 1869.
in Illinois and adjoining states ready for market late in that year.

This cattle movement continued. In 1867 nearly forty thousand Texas cattle were received at Chicago and Illinois dealers contracted with the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad Company to transport over seventy thousand of these cattle. The following year cattle poured into Cairo from the steamboats at the rate of two thousand and more weekly. At times during the season as many as sixty cars a day were sent north. The best of these cattle were shipped to Chicago but most of them were in very poor flesh and were sent to pastures and feed lots along the Illinois Central Railroad. That railroad shipped about forty thousand of these cattle during 1868. One of the centers of concentration of these cattle for grazing was Tolono, Champaign County, where the Illinois Central built stock yards to hold four thousand cattle. Fifteen thousand Texas steers were unloaded there in June and July 1868, and the number grazed in the vicinity during the

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22. Cairo Daily Democrat, June 18, July 14, 1868; Prairie Farmer, XXXIX, (1868), p. 8; Country Gentleman, XXXII, (1868), p. 15. See also State Register, July 10, 1868; Hicks, History of Kendall County, p. 379; It was reported in May 1868 that there were ten thousand cattle enroute from Kansas City to Southern Illinois. Jonesboro Gazette, May 30, 1868.
summer was estimated at from fifteen to thirty-five thousand head. In 1869 and 1870 the tide of southwestern cattle was less, partly due, perhaps, to the outbreak of Texas fever which decimated herds of native cattle and caused an outcry against Texas cattle.

Texas fever seems to have been introduced into Illinois in 1869 but no heavy losses were suffered from it at that time. The war stopped the cattle trade but when it was resumed after the close of the struggle the disease reappeared. Much complaint was heard of the disease as early as 1866. The imported cattle were immune from the disease but native cattle which came into contact with the Texas stock or grazed in pastures following them were infected. The protest against the importation of southwestern cattle was so strong that a law was passed on February 23, 1869./qt. 

23. Trans., Ill. State Ag. Soc., VII, (1867-8), p. 133, 143; Prairie Farmer, XXXIX, (1868), p. 38; State Register, July 1, 1868; Champaign County Gazette, Nov. 24, 1869; Cairo Daily Democrat, June 1, 1868. The Cairo Bulletin on February 25, 1869 stated that between sixty and seventy thousand Texas cattle had arrived in Cairo in 1869. Quoted by State Register, March 3, 1869. A writer from Champaign County said in October 1868 that there was not less than fifty thousand fat and fattening cattle in a radius of twenty miles from his farm. He also stated that there were thirty thousand Texas cattle in Illinois ready for market in September and that as many more were enroute from Texas, via Abilene, Kansas and the Pacific Railroad. Country Gentleman, XXXII, (1869), p. 243, 293.


25. Prairie Farmer, N.S. XVIII, (1866), p. 120.

26. State Register, Nov. 19, 1866.
1867 prohibiting the importation of such cattle. The claim was then made that there was no danger from such importation after frost came and the act was amended in 1869 to allow Texas cattle to be imported between October 1st and March 1st.

In the meantime Texas cattle continued to come in despite the law and losses from the fever were heavy in 1868. Farmers met and protested against the Texas cattle on the railroads and against the grazing of such cattle. Feeders were anxious to secure this stock and in some cases agreed to pay for losses resulting from the importation of infected cattle. The losses from the disease continued for a number of years but they were lighter and the excitement died down.

The period from 1865 to 1870 was one of many changes in the means of handling live stock and meats. In 1865 the group of comparatively small stock yards in Chicago were replaced by the Union Stockyards which far surpassed any yards then in existence. They cost over $1,000,000. They had five hundred yards and pens floored with three inch plank, suitable barns, water supply, hotel, etc.

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About 1865 there came also a change in meat packing methods. Up to this time packers had been chiefly slaughterers and made very little use of the by-products to manufacture glue, gelatin, fertilizers, etc. The packers now began to utilize the by-products to a much greater extent than ever before. The introduction of cold storage in 1865 caused a marked readjustment in the industry also. Salt packing began to give way to ice-packing and the packing season now extended throughout the year. Refrigerator cars had been used experimentally in the early 'sixties and were used in 1865 to ship butter, eggs, and poultry from Chicago to the East. These early cars were only partially successful and it was not until September 1869 that the first successful shipment of meat was made and the foundation of the dressed beef industry was laid. 30

Dairying, which had begun to be of some importance in Northern Illinois before and during the war developed rapidly in that section in the latter half of the 'sixties. The center of

this thriving industry was in the Fox River Valley, near Elgin, Kane County. Some figures will suffice to show the increase in the amount of dairy products. The cheese produced in Kane County in 1866 amounted to 564,000 pounds. Two years later it was 857,000 and in 1869 it had increased to nearly 4,000,000 pounds, worth over $500,000. Besides the cheese trade the milk trade to the city of Chicago was of rapidly increasing importance. Further west, at Rockford, the dairy products sold increased from $20,000 in 1859 to $200,000 in 1866.31

The early dairy industry around Chicago was largely built upon the milk trade with that city. This trade continued to grow. In 1866 there were some 296,000 gallons of milk shipped to Chicago from Elgin and Dundee. In 1870 Elgin shipped 480,000 gallons, and Dundee 684,000 gallons. Algonquin in McHenry County shipped 236,000 gallons and ten towns on the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad shipped 683,000 gallons. These shipments of milk were made at the same time that large quantities were used in the production of butter and cheese.32

The next branch of the dairy industry to increase largely was cheese making. In the early days, before the close of the war, Illinois cheese had a very poor reputation. It was usually made on the farms and under widely different circumstances. The quality was not good and Illinois cheese was quoted low in the market. It was with difficulty that this handicap was overcome. Even before the days of cheese factories some of the best dairies were producing cheese which equalled the famed brands of New York or Western Reserve cheese. However, it was bought at reduced "Illinois cheese" prices and renamed and resold at much higher prices along with a large quantity of eastern cheese which was sent west. 33

It was the cheese factory which put the making of that product on a sound basis. The first factories were established in 1863 or 1864. As the advantage of the economies to be affected and the improved quality of the product became evident, other factories sprang up rapidly throughout northern Illinois. For example, in McHenry County there was not a factory in 1866 but in 1868 six factories and fourteen farmer dairymen used nearly six million pounds of milk in cheese making. A farmer wrote, "The rapidity with which the cheese making business has been built up in the Northwest during the past year is remarkable. New

factories will be built and in operation in the present year."

The next year eleven factories in McHenry County made 1,600,000 pounds of cheese from about 3,400 cows. Nine counties in northeastern Illinois produced over $2,000,000 worth of cheese in 1870. Among these Kane County with twenty-two factories produced $548,000 worth of cheese, McHenry County $486,800, and Dekalb County $295,132. There were in the nine counties some 111 factories and the number of cows per factory ranged from fifty to thirteen hundred.

Butter making did not receive a large amount of attention during the middle 'sixties. It was usually made on the farms and the facilities for caring for milk and butter were generally not good. The large part of the farmers produced no more butter than their families used. The little that reached the market was of a very poor quality and was poorly packed. Like western cheese the butter from Illinois sold much below the New York product that was shipped west. As time went on, particularly after the introduction of factories which produced butter as well as cheese, the quality of western butter improved markedly. Some of it was sold as New York butter. Many of the factories produced butter only when the market or the factories were glutted with milk. The

35. Ottowa Republican, Nov. 4, 1869.
amount produced increased but Illinois by no means supplied its own butter in 1870. 37

Another development in the dairy industry was that of the condenseries. They were introduced from the East in 1865 and by 1870 they were doing a good business. The condensery of Gail Borden and Company at Elgin employed fifty hands and used eighteen hundred gallons of milk per day. 38

Among the crops it was cotton that had been most stimulated by the war and it was cotton that suffered most from the coming of peace. In the first three months of 1865, when the end of the war was nearly in sight, the price of cotton at New York dropped from $1.20 to forty cents. When it became evident that the South was not in position to produce large amounts of cotton at once the price rallied slightly and then dropped until in January 1868

The acreage of cotton in Illinois in 1865 was little affected by the drop in price and the crop was large. There was not sufficient time in which to arrange for a shift to other crops and the low price of corn and wheat rendered a change to those crops scarcely advisable. Even with the lower price of cotton the crop was relatively more profitable than corn in 1865. When the price continued to fall, however, the marginal cotton farmers quit the business and the production fell off. For example in the area about Jonesboro there were one thousand bales raised in 1865 and sold for $200,000. In 1866 the crop of four hundred bales sold for $50,000. In some sections the crop was the most profitable that could be grown but in general the production declined until by the end of the 'sixties little was raised beyond the needs of home consumption. As early as 1867 the price at DuQuoin had fallen to below three cents and at that price only the most favored sections could meet the rising southern competition.

Sorghum was another crop which had come into prominence because of the war conditions. As soon as the more normal state of trade was restored at the close of the war the need for molasses to replace sugar was lessened. Many farmers continued to raise

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small patches for home consumption but the crop soon disappeared as a commercial one. By 1868 the enthusiasm over sorghum had vanished and few if any large fields were to be seen. Attention was turned from sorghum to sugar beets. An agent was sent in 1865 as a representative of the state to investigate the manufacturing of beet sugar in Europe. His report was favorable and much enthusiasm was shown over the project. The Germania Beet Sugar Company was formed with a capital of $165,000. The factory and machinery were ready for the season of 1866 and six hundred acres of beets were grown. The production of sugar in 1866 was about 100,000 pounds and in 1867 despite a dry season, some 65,000 pounds were made. The auspicious beginning of this venture was not sustained however. In 1868 the production dropped to six hundred barrels and in 1869 to one hundred thirty barrels. A factory which cost $200,000 could not be profitably run on a production basis of that kind and it was abandoned.


Tobacco continued to be an important crop in southern Illinois where about 20,000 hogsheads were produced annually in the late 'sixties. It was little raised in other sections of the state. Cairo Evening Bulletin, June 19, 1867, May 24, June 5, 1869; Chicago Tribune, July 20, 1869; Prairie Farmer, XLII, (1870), p. 41, 133. Broom corn was a crop of minor but growing importance.

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Grain farmers at the close of the war found themselves to be in a less favorable situation than the stock men. Particularly was this true of corn raisers. The corn crops of 1864 and 1865 were heavy and the amount on hand was large. The price dropped over forty per cent during November 1864 when the crop of that year began to reach the markets. This decline continued until in December 1865 corn sold at Chicago at forty cents. The price ranged low until late in 1866 when it started upward, reaching a price of over one dollar during 1867 and 1868. This boom was temporary and 1869 and 1870 saw corn down to the level of 1865. The lack of foreign demand for corn in 1865 had contributed to the decline of prices. From 1866 to 1868 the large export demand and short crops stimulated the market. When this foreign demand declined in 1869 and 1870 it contributed to the decline of corn prices in those years. In a vain effort to make up for lower yields and prices by increased acreage the farmers of Illinois planted more corn every year from 1865 on into the seventies. The aggregate production increased but the corn farmers slowly dropped from their wartime condition of prosperity.

Despite the low prices during much of the later 'sixties corn was an important factor in the agriculture of the state. Those who from necessity had to sell their corn in 1865 suffered from the low price. Those who were fortunate enough to be able to feed it to stock realized a good profit because of the good prices of hogs and cattle. During 1867 and 1868 when stock prices were relatively low the farmers who had a surplus of corn were able to market it directly at highly remunerative prices. With the return of lower corn prices feeding again offered opportunities for profit. The result of the fluctuating conditions was that corn, while relatively less profitable and less productive than formerly, entered more into the diversified stock and grain farming. Corn was of much more actual importance in central and northern Illinois than in the southern part of the state.\textsuperscript{44}

The wheat farmer likewise saw his product drop in price in 1865 and then recover and go to new heights in 1867. At its low point wheat barely dropped below a dollar a bushel and at one time in 1867 it sold for $2.37, higher in fact than at any time during the war. Through 1869 and 1870 the price ranged around a dollar per bushel and the wheat farmers began to be dissatisfied. They began to complain as in the early 'fifties that wheat was no longer profitable.\textsuperscript{45}


\textsuperscript{45} Prairie Farmer, market quotations; Aldrich Report, Pt.2.
For the first three years after the war Illinois wheat farmers did not feel the western competition in wheat to any great extent. There was a heavy movement of population into Iowa, Nebraska and Minnesota, and an extension of railroads in that direction. It required some time for the immigrants to get on a producing basis and until they did so a part of the grain was used to feed the newcomers who were not yet established. This, of course, lessened the amount of wheat that could be sent East. By the last years of the decade, however, the West was under production and the increase in wheat raised was out of all proportion to the population. In 1859 the state west of the Mississippi harvested about twenty-five million bushels of wheat or fourteen per cent of our total crop. By 1868 the product was seventy million bushels of wheat or thirty per cent of our crop. The effect of this increase added to the slightly larger production in Illinois was to break the market in 1869 and 1870. In 1867 the Department of Agriculture estimated the value of wheat to be $1.97 and the total valuation of the wheat of the state at $55,000,000. Two years later the unit value was seventy-nine cents and the total valuation $22,000,000.

46. Report Dept. of Agric., 1865, p. 58; 1866, p. 59; 1867, p. 77, 85; 1868, p. 29; 1869, p. 29; 1870, p. 31; Monthly Report Dept. of Agric., Oct. 1870, p. 221; Pierson, "The Rise of the Granger Movement," Popular Science Monthly, XXXII (1887), p. 203; Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1865-1870. "The wheat production of [Iowa, Minnesota and California] ... is mainly the growth of the past twenty years; that of Illinois, so rapidly progressive between 1849 and 1859, has made a slow advance since." Illinois produced 22,837,000 bushels in 1859 and 28,560,000 in 1868. Report Dept. of Agric., 1868, p. 17-18. The westward movement of wheat raising is shown by the fact that the center of wheat production shifted from eighteen miles northeast of Indianapolis (cont'd)
The year 1867 saw the high tide of prosperity for the western wheat grower. His crop was larger in 1868 but the reduction in price was such that the aggregate return was less than in the previous year. Southern Illinois which had acquired a reputation as a good wheat country was less sure of a profit after the price dropped in 1869 and 1870. Again the complaint was made that wheat was no longer profitable. The area about East St. Louis, long one of the best wheat sections of the state, suffered a crop failure in 1868 and 1869 and with the decline in price the farmers there were finding their favorite crop to be a doubtful one.

(Cont'd) In 1860 to eighty-two miles northeast of Springfield, Illinois in 1870, U.S. Census, 1900, VI, p. 32. For the settlement of Minnesota and the increase of wheat raising there, see Larson, "The Wheat Market and the Farmer in Minnesota 1858-1900," Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, CXXII, (1926), No. 2, p. 55 ff. The decline in the price of wheat in 1869 and 1870 came in spite of an increased demand from Europe in those years. We sent over 35,000,000 bushels of wheat and flour to Europe in 1870 and less than 7,000,000 in 1867 when prices were very high. Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1877, p. 43, 51. At the same time the movement toward inflation had been stopped and the prospect of immediate resumption of specie payment lessened. Cf. Dewey, Financial History of the United States, p. 343-344. These facts place greater responsibility upon western competition as a cause for the price decline in the late 'sixties. Cf. Holt, The History of Wheat Growing in Illinois, 1840-1870, p. 73-83, manuscript.

47. Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1877, p. 52; Report Dept. of Agric., 1867, p. 85; 1868, p. 29; 1869, p. 29; 1870, p. 31.
The same uncertainty existed during these years in western Illinois where there was a tendency to turn from wheat to other grains and stock. East central Illinois began to decline in wheat production as early as 1867 and 1868 and when the lower prices of the following years came that section followed the remainder of the state in a slight reduction of wheat raising and a tendency to turn to other crops and stock. The same trend was in evidence in northern Illinois at the end of the decade.


51. J. H. Osborne, Mattoon, April 20, 1868; C. W. Davenport, Cambridge, Nov. 19, 1869; J. W. Hays, Champaign, April 26; Lexington, June 1; Bloomington, Dec. 7, 1869, March 31, 1870, McCormick MSS.; Geol. Survey of Illinois, VI, p. 192, 196; Country Gentleman, XXIX, (1867), p. 230; XXXIII, (1869), p. 154, 354; XXXIV, (1869), p. 94. "The high price of labor and the difficulty in obtaining it at any price at certain seasons of the year is fast changing us and our systems of farming from a grain growing to a stock raising community. The whole sentiment of the county may be summed up in the sentence, 'Raise not a bushel of grain that cannot be consumed on the farm', wrote a Champaign County farmer. Ibid., XX, (1867), p. 65.

52. Monthly Report Dept. of Agric., Oct. 1867; W. N. Spring, Manteno, July 18; C. H. Loomis, Kewanee, July 22, 1869; McCormick MSS; Prairie Farmer, XII, (1860), p. 30; Aurora Beacon, June 20, 1867; Trans. of the (Ill.) Dept. of Agric., 1871, p. 180. No unusual development occurred in the raising of other crops, Much data may be found in the files of the Prairie Farmer, Country Gentleman, the general press, Reports of the Chicago Board of Trade, Trans. Ill. State Ag. Soc., and the Reports of the Dept. of Agric. The following description is of Will County in 1866, "Our style of farming may be called mixed; the bulk or a large majority of the farms being less than a quarter section each. The tendency is to raise as many varieties of stock, grain, fruit, etc. as will make the quickest return with the largest profit. From our immediate vicinity to the great market of the northwest, Chicago, we are from year to year diversifying our productions. The raising of cattle, horses, sheep, hogs, fowls, and dairying, the production of wheat, corn, oats, rye, barley, potatoes, and other vegetables, and flax... (and) small fruits... enables the farmer to so vary his crops as to afford a ready market, at good cash prices for all he can raise." Trans. Ill. State Ag. Soc., VI, (1865-6), p. 254.
Southern Illinois found it profitable to expand its favored industry of fruit raising at the close of the war. The Ozark ridge which in the early 'fifties had been an almost unbroken wilderness with an occasional backwoodsman's clearing was now the location of a prosperous fruit growing industry. The fruits most extensively grown were peaches and strawberries. Fruit raising was profitable and was rapidly increasing. There were near nine stations along the Illinois Central in southern Illinois some 105,000 apple and peach trees in bearing in 1865. In 1866 there were 371,750 in the same area. It was estimated that the shipments of peaches from southern Illinois in 1867 were five times those of 1866 and that the strawberry shipments were probably doubled. In 1867 there were shipped from a strip six miles wide and a hundred miles long some 556,000 boxes of peaches.

54. One orchard near Cobden, Union County, which was the center of the industry, had 20,000 peach trees, 7,000 apple trees, 5,000 grape vines and seven acres of strawberries. A fruit raiser near Makanda, nearby, sold $12,000 worth of peaches from the first crop, paying three times the whole outlay to that time. Prairie Farmer, N.S., XV, (1865), p. 413; Prairie Farmer, N.S. XV, (1865), p. 413; Trans. Ill. State Ag Soc., VI, (1865-6), p. 200, 429, 430.
55. Ibid., VII, (1867-8), p. 527-528. There was a thirty per cent increase in planting in 1867 over 1866 in the southern Illinois fruit district. Ibid., VI, (1865-6), p. 430. See also State Register, Aug. 9, Sept. 1, Nov. 14, 1867; Cairo Daily Democrat, Dec. 19, 1867; Jonesboro Gazette, July 11, 1868.
This rapid expansion of the fruit raising industry continued to the end of the decade when there was some evidence that an over expansion had occurred. Cobden, in the first week of the shipping season of 1869 sent forty-one car loads of strawberries to Chicago and seven car loads direct to New York in refrigeration cars. Even with the heavy shipments thousands of bushels of berries wasted because of a scarcity of pickers.

With the growth of the fruit raising industry came changes in the means of marketing. The first fruit was sent to Chicago by express but this was not satisfactory to the growers and the railroad company was induced to run a special train beginning in 1867. This train was run at night during the fruit season and delivered fruit to Chicago in time for the early morning market. The cars first used were ordinary freight cars but in 1868 some refrigerator cars were used. In 1869 the service was extended to St. Louis also. At this time the schedule was changed to the daytime to the great inconvenience of the fruit growers.

56. Cairo Evening Bulletin, June 8, 1869. Over four hundred tons of strawberries were sent from Cobden up to June 9, 1869, which was nearly five times the amount shipped in 1868 and twice that of 1867. Jonesboro Gazette, June 12, 1869.
57. Cairo Evening Bulletin, May 1, 1869; Jonesboro Gazette, June 5, 1869. See also Champaign County Gazette, Jan. 19, 1870; Geol Survey of Ill., Ill., p. 82, 218; Trans Ill., State Ag. Soc., VI, (1865-6), p. 430. The cabbage trade was of considerable importance by 1867. Cairo Daily Democrat, Nov. 19, 1867; Eiram Brown, South Pass, Oct. 18, 1870 to C. A. Spring, Jr., McCormick MSS.
58. Prairie Farmer, N.S. XX, (1867), p. 8; State Register, July 15, 1867; Aug. 4, 1869; Country Gentleman, XXXIV, (1869), p. 179; Report...Ill. Central R. R. Co., 1869, p. 3; Jonesboro Gazette, July 31, 1869.
Some interest was shown in fruit outside of the southern section but there was no striking developments. The wheat raisers of St. Clair County were becoming interested in grape culture and the farmers of the western part of the state, near Hancock County, were raising apples and grapes in large quantities. Here and there in other parts of the state commercial horticulture was of minor local importance but in general it attracted little attention. The effect of the economic conditions on the sale of lands is difficult to determine exactly. The government land was almost all gone and the land holdings of the Illinois Central were very much reduced. That company which up to 1865 had sold nearly 1,600,000 acres had about a million acres on hand. Their sales increased during the continuance of prosperity through 1868. In 1869 when the prices dropped the land sales fell to less than one half of those of 1868 and in 1870 they were less than one-fourth of the sales of that year. It would be difficult to ascertain the amount of land sold by individuals during the period.


60. Report Illinois Central Railroad Co., 1865, p. 3; 1866, p. 3; 1867, p. 3; 1868, p. 4; 1869, p. 4; 1870, p. 4. Of the 868,941 acres held in January 1867, some 313,987 were south of the present Baltimore and Ohio Railroad through Marion County. From that point to Decatur there were 95,384 acres; from Decatur to Dixon 85,393 acres; from Dixon to Dunleith 33,962 acres; on the branch line from Centralia to Tolono 85,903 acres; and from Tolono to Chicago 254,204 acres. Ibid, 1866, p. 2. Only 2,846 acres of government land was sold during the year ending June 30, 1870 and only a few scattered parcels of land remained unsold. Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, 1870, p. 68-69, 294-296.
The amount of the increase in valuation of farm lands in the state following the war is uncertain. There are no adequate statistics for 1865 to compare with the census figures of 1870, defective as those may be. The increase in value from 1860 to 1870 ranged from six to one hundred per cent. It is impossible to say how much of the increase came after the war. Furthermore it is not feasible to attempt a detailed statement of land values since these varied so widely even within small areas. It seems probable that the value of land in the state increased through 1868 but fell in the years following as the value of produce declined.

Some distinction may be made between the wheat producing counties and those which raised corn largely. Due to the profits of feeding and the improved farming, the corn producing countries showed a greater increase in value than those where wheat was more common.61

The fencing problem which had troubled the farmers of Illinois since extensive settlement began was still seriously considered in

Rail fences continued to be the most important fence in southern Illinois and elsewhere if timber was available. In central and northern Illinois there was a revival of Osage orange hedging and hedge plants were advertised by the millions. Agents canvassed the farming districts thoroughly and did a good business setting out and caring for hedges. There were also many wire and plank fences built.  

Much stress had been laid upon the war as the cause for the labor shortage late in that period. No doubt it was an important factor in producing that shortage but the close of the war was to see but little change. The troops were again home but new demands for labor offset that supply. Industrial developments and railroads took many men and the growing West attracted others. Wages continued high, frequently being from two to four dollars per day during harvest. The laborer had not received wages in keeping with the increased cost of living but beginning with 1869 his real wages advanced as the cost of living fell. The level of prices tended sharply downward while wages dropped but slightly. The highest wages paid were in St. Clair County near St. Louis. With

the exception of that area the southern part of the state paid about fifteen per cent less wages than did the state as a whole. 63

The increased use of machinery which had been stimulated by the war conditions continued after its close with no unusual phases or developments. Hand-raking reapers were nearly displaced by self-rakers and Marsh harvesters whose use was widely extended. Grass was almost entirely cut by mowers which by this time had a folding bar and very closely resembled modern machines. Sweep rakes, harpoon hay forks and hay loaders were in use but were by no means common. The heavy prairie breaker had given way to the light steel plow, which, however, usually had a wooden beam.

Instead of several yoke of oxen, two or three horses were used to draw these plows. Corn was planted quite largely by two-row planters and, except in backward communities or among the stumps, it was commonly cultivated by two-horse cultivators instead of by single or double shovels. Grain drills were coming into common use in most parts of the state. There was no unusual develop-

ment in types or extent of use but the economies to be affected lead to continually greater use of machinery. 64

The farmers of Illinois after the war continued as before to impoverish their soils. Some improvements in agriculture were being made but the fertility of the soil was gradually and continually exhausted. 65 There was some discussion in the farm papers of the use of manure but in many places it was allowed to accumulate and waste away, or was thrown into streams or into holes in the roads. 66 Much was available in some places, but "in the present state of prairie agriculture it was not in demand." 67


65. Prairie Farmer, N.S. XX, (1867), p. 20; N.S. XXI, (1868), p. 129, 218; Monthly report Dept. of Agric., Jan. 1871, p. 17; March 1873. Some claimed that the soil was holding up well under continued cropping. New England Farmer, III, (1869), p. 127; Geol. Survey of Ill., V, p. 266; VI, p. 188.

66. Country Gentleman, XXIX, (1867), p. 36; Geol. Survey of Ill., V, p. 304; Prairie Farmer, N.S. XVII, (1866), p. 275; N.S. XXI, (1868), p. 244; History of Gallatin, Saline, Hamilton, Franklin and Williamson Counties. (1867), p. 357. A tenant near Griggsville wrote that there were two thousand loads of manure to be hauled on his farm and asked whether he was to stay on the farm long enough to pay him to haul it. L.W. McMahon, Griggsville, Dec. 30, 1868, McCormick MSS.

In the working of the soil the same lack of care was shown. Frequently the farmers attempted to care for more acres than they could properly farm. As a result the work was poorly done and the crops suffered. The yields were slowly dropping as a result of the lack of manure, poor plowing and cultivating, continued cropping, and burning of stubble. A state geologist wrote in 1866:

"I may as well make some remarks... on the unscientific, slovenly and wasteful modes of cultivating the virgin soils of our broad prairies. The unripe peat and muck remain undisturbed in their beds; trenching and subsoil plowing are never resorted to; annual fires consume the surplus stubble and stalks left from last year's crop; ashes bones, lime, the barn yard and stable manures, if distributed at all are raked to some convenient out of the way place; and the farmer generally cultivates so much that he cannot half cultivate anything at all.... Our soils when new used to return average crops of forty bushels per acre; now fifteen is a good crop on the older cultivated lands. In the corn field seventy, eighty, and one hundred bushels to the acre were not an unusual yield; now thirty-five or forty is oftener the exception than the rule. At this rate our land will rapidly become exhausted."

Although no striking developments in methods came in the late sixties there was an increased interest in improved agriculture. It was in this period that the college of agriculture was established as the Illinois Industrial University, later the University

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69. Geol. Survey of Illinois, V, p. 122-126. This was apparently written in 1868.
of Illinois. The opening of this institution came at the end of a long period of agitation for such an institution.

Through the 'forties there was an interest in agricultural societies and farm papers, and some attention was given to an agricultural school. As early as 1848, Jonathan B. Turner of Illinois College proposed a plan for such a school. The agitation took very definite form at a convention at Granville in November 1851. Further conventions were held in 1852 and 1853 but no definite progress was made. Turner, Dr. John A. Kennicott, Bronson Murray and others kept up the agitation, partly through the Industrial League, both in the state and in Congress.

Beginning in 1860 other conventions were held to urge the founding of such a school. In the meantime the land grant bill had been introduced in Congress in December 1867 by Justin S. Morrill of Vermont. Interest was growing in a number of states for such a plan but President Buchanan vetoed the bill. Little was done in Congress for agricultural education for some time but the movement continued in the state. The "Illinois Agricultural College" was incorporated and established at Irvington, Washington County, with the aid of the seminary funds granted by the state. It opened for instruction in 1866 but it soon proved a failure. The state recovered the seminary funds and the school closed in 1879 after a lingering existence.

The land grant bill was signed July 2, 1862 and the struggle in Illinois was on. The grant was accepted on February 14, 1863 and the disposition of the grant was taken up. Several of the colleges already established were suggested as the nucleus of the
proposed school. An active fight was waged over the point but the friends of a separate institution won. Then came the fight between Champaign-Urbana, Jacksonville, Bloomington, and Lincoln for the location of the school. After a period of animated political activity the act locating the college at Urbana was signed February 23, 1867. The school was opened for instruction March 2, 1868. The work in agriculture was soon organized but was of an elementary nature during the period under consideration. But the importance lay not in the character of the early agricultural education as in the fact that it was once started.  

Transportation continued to be a vital problem for the farmer. Little improvement seems to have been made in the roads during the 'fifties and 'sixties. McCormick's agents in northern Illinois made the same complaints that they made in the 'fifties—roads were nearly impassable during long periods in the winter and frequently bad even in the summer. Less data exists on the roads in the southern part of the state but there is nothing to indicate

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conditions there were better than further north. 71

When peace came the same complaints of high freight rates which had been heard in 1861 reappeared. The cause of the distress lay in several factors. The higher prices for farm products during the latter part of the war enabled farmers to pay the freight charges (which were in some cases dropping) with little inconvenience. When the price level dropped in 1865 and 1866 even the same freight charges would have appeared high. For a short time the profits in western agriculture seemed likely to disappear. There was in fact a slight rise in freight rates to the east but the increase was small. The advance of freight rates on stock in 1865 and 1866 caused much stock to be shipped east without going through Chicago and impelled the railroads to introduce the drawback system. Shippers who did a large business signed a contract for a certain number of cars to Buffalo at $115 per car and then received from $10 to $15 per car as a drawback.

The occasional shipper did not receive this advantage however. 72

71. "The roads are frightful, however, I shall start with my Horse & Buggy this forenoon & travel if we dont dround", wrote a chronic grumbler, John H. Shaffer, Kankakee, June 3, 1867. Wm. F. Carr of Freeport wrote June 25, 1869, "Roads un navigable owing to the shoal water on them." Farmers could not market their crops and travellers frequently were forced to abandon their buggies, J. N. Van Hoesen, Macomb, Feb. 16, 1867; H. O. Goodrich, Jerseyville, March 24, 1867; John H. Shaffer, Kankakee, May 13, 1867; D. W. Fairbank, Concord, May 11, 1868; W. N. Sprig, Manteno, June 1, 1868, July 19, 1869; Gardner, July 8, Joliet, Aug. 21, 1869; W. J. Hays, Lexington, June 1, 1869; Stacey and Warren, Princeton, July 28, 1869; Jacob Zimmerman, Chenoa, July 10, 1869; A. D. Rodgers, Elmwood, July 16, 1869, McCormick MSS.

72. For freight rate quotations see Prairie Farmer, especially N.S. XVIII, (1866), p. 241; Report Chicago Board of Trade, 1867, p. 83; 1868, p. 88-90; 1869, p. 80-81; 1870, p. 81-83; Windom Report.
But the rates from Chicago east were not the only ones which affected the farmers. Competition between the lake and the different railroads helped keep rates down but beyond Chicago to the West and South it was seldom that the farmers could profit by the presence of competing lines. In early November 1865 when corn could be shipped from Chicago to Buffalo for ten or eleven cents per bushel it cost fourteen cents to send it 128 miles from Champaign to Chicago. There was a charge of two cents for selling, five cents for shelling and handling, and five cents for profit, making twenty-six cents to be taken from the price of corn which was already low. The western part of the state suffered in the same way. For example, the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad charged eighteen cents to carry wheat from Galva to Chicago, a distance of 125 miles. The lake freights to Buffalo at the same time were also eighteen cents. Due to the high freight rates to the East farmers on the Mississippi could not afford to ship to that market via Chicago and they began to turn to the river for an outlet south. However, the old river trade down the Mississippi never returned.

The low grain prices and the high freight rates seriously hurt the western farmer. The *Prairie Farmer* said in September

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"The greatest obstacle to the further development of the grain growing capabilities of the west is the restricted means of transportation to the seaboard. It would seem that with the present facilities, the maximum profit in grain growing has been reached. The lines of rail leading eastward can carry no more. The result of this not only prevents the growing of a greater surplus, but it at once prevents all competition between the different lines and allows the companies to adopt such rates of freight as they may choose so that when foreign demand is light our grain does not pay the producer the cost of growing.

"The result is, that though our fertile fields could produce...sufficient to feed the balance of the world our farmers are being driven to abandon grain growing and turn their attention to stock raising, in which form they can market their grain without paying such enormous tribute to the transportation companies. As at present situated our farmers can not afford to raise grain to sell.... The only course left open to secure any adequate reward is to consume as great a share of his product as possible upon his own premises and to market in the concentrated form of beef and pork. The real relief of the western agriculturist lies in one of these two directions. The establishment of manufactures of all kinds that shall bring with them a population to consume, and thus save the cost of transportation, or an enlargement of rail and water facilities, increasing in capacity and cheapness of freight..... Our great need, as agriculturists is cheap transportation to the seaboard." 76

Beginning with 1867, however, the transportation rates to the East began to drop and in comparison with those of times past, they were fairly reasonable. As a further aid the prices of grain were much improved during 1867 and 1868 and grain could more

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76. M.S., XVI, (1865), p. 232. The statement that competition between railroads to the east was not effective is very doubtful.
easily bear the transportation charges. This advantage was absent in 1869 and 1870 and the farmers began to complain again. Now as before it was frequently the local rates to Chicago that bore most heavily. In 1867 the Illinois Central charged twenty-seven cents for hundred-weight for carrying corn from Champaign to Chicago and fifteen cents for carrying it nine miles south to Tolono. Teamsters hauled corn from Champaign to Tolono parallel with the railroad track while the railroad hauled empty cars. In 1868 the Illinois Central charged $40 per car for the ten miles from Macon to Decatur and $55 per car for the 200 miles to Chicago in an attempt to prevent shipment east over a competing road. In 1869 it cost twenty cents per bushel to ship wheat 200 miles to Chicago. This charge plus storage, insurance and commission equalled half the total charges to New York. 77

St. Louis and Chicago again came into competition for a part of the Mississippi Valley grain. St. Louis had improved her facilities for handling grain and she secured much grain from along the Mississippi and beyond because of the high freight rates east. In addition much grain was being sent to Cairo from Illinois and Iowa to be shipped south. These shipments gave some relief to favored sections but they did not shake the hold which Chicago had secured on the grain trade. Most of the western grain went by the northern route and an increasing amount of this

77. Country Gentleman, XXX, (1867), p. 65; State Register, May 20, 1859; Trans. of the (Ill.) Dept. of Agric., 1873, p. 277.
went over the railroads. The Report on the Internal Commerce of the United States, 1879, said,

"The diversion of grain and other products of the west from the lake and canal route to the various rail routes connecting the west with the seaboard constitute one of the most important features of the internal commerce of the United States. This diversion began about fifteen years ago." [1864] 78

Not only were the farmers being hurt by a general declining level of prices and from local injustices in freight rates but they were subject to abuses in the grain trade at Chicago. The warehouse men attempted to avoid inspection out of store and thereby escape responsibility for deterioration of grain in their hands. 79 Frustrated by the rules of the Chicago Board of Trade they adopted other means. It was difficult to detect the fraud then but indications pointed to much irregularity. It was alleged, apparently with much reason, that the warehousemen were in league with the railroads to control the grain trade. It was claimed that false statements of the amount of grain in store were made and that large amounts of fraudulent warehouse receipts were issued and bought back at a profit after the market had been broken. It was further alleged that the warehousemen gave short weights coming in and long weights going out and that they attempted to bribe inspectors. 80

By the end of the decade the railroads had secured more than one-half of the warehouses and elevators, it was claimed, and they used them to increase their own railroad business by increasing the cost of transferring grain from canal boats. Some railroads refused to take up grain at points where there was an elevator unless the grain had passed through it and paid charges. It was asserted that they refused to deliver grain to any consignee before it passed through an elevator belonging to the combination.

The stockmen suffered with the grain growers from the abuses at Chicago. In 1866 a number of the commission houses entered into an agreement to withhold the prices paid for stock from the public. They were doubtless trying to control the market but they gave as the reason for their action the fact that if farmers knew of the prices paid at Chicago, the drovers who assumed a shipping risk could not make a legitimate profit. The Prairie Farmer actively opposed this ring, denouncing and naming the firms involved, and they succeeded in securing the price information for their market reports. While the abuse existed much stock went east without passing through Chicago.

The farmers were not slow in voicing protest against the


exactions of the grain and stock rings and against the transpor-
tation monopolies as well. The drop in the price of produce
in 1865 hit the farmers hard and they sought relief from the
railroads. "The people of the Northwest are rousing to action
on the subject of railroad freights. Farmers' conventions are
in session and announced in various sections of the country.....
It is agreed by all that freights on our westward roads between
Chicago and the Mississippi are outrageous", wrote the Chicago
Tribune on December 13, 1865. Some of the conventions were
called by agricultural societies and some by boards of supervi-
sors. 83
Through 1866 farmers' clubs were organized in various
counties in the state to work for relief in transportation, and
county societies were also active. The Prairie Farmer wrote
in 1866,

"The storm of indignation against the transpor-
tation and warehouse monopolies increases in intensity. Its mutterings are being heard all
over the West. At Elkhart, Morris, Bloomington,
Mattoon, Sterling, Freeport, and in Jo Daviess
County the cries for relief and reform have gone
out......

"At each succeeding meeting higher ground is
being taken and more specific charges of extortion
are being made...... There are evidences... that
these popular demonstrations are having an effect
upon the railroad managers... The Mississippi
and Missouri railroad had reduced its rates for
shipping grain two cents per cwt... The people
want not only a reduction of tariff but a guar-
antee that there shall be no extortion in the

83. Chicago Tribune, Dec. 11, 13, 23, 1865; Chicago Evening
future. They want such restrictions that no combinations or consolidations however powerful can overcome them. Everything seems to indicate that the next political campaign is to be fought on this ground.... We believe that the anti-monopoly banner will float triumphantly over the State capitol at the next session of the legislature." 84

The tenor of the demands for relief may be seen from the resolutions of the Stark County Agricultural Society early in 1866.

"Resolved, That we enter our solemn protest against the extortion of railroads, whereby the business of farming is made unprofitable, it requiring three-fourths of the crop to get the remaining fourth to market; and we deplore the course of the railroads in refusing to deliver grain only to favored warehouses in Chicago where rates of storage are increased at pleasure and taxed on us.

"Resolved, That we are of the opinion that the grain inspection business is so conducted as to be entirely unjust and injurious to our best interests.

"Resolved, That we consider it a great imposition by our home railroads to oblige us to pass our grain through local warehouses and pay a heavy percentage for the privilege and that we consider it the extreme of injustice that the C.B. & Q R.R. should charge extra freight on its line where there is no competition.

"Resolved, That we will support only such men for the next legislature as are known to be opposed to railroad, warehouse, and other monopolizing combinations; and who are pledged to correct the evils of which we now complain so far as it is within their power." 85.

Meetings, conventions, etc., continued through the 'sixties and beyond. The conventions protested against the alleged transportation and warehouse monopolies and suggested remedies. There

were protests against the tariff and movements looking toward the improvement of navigation on the Illinois and Rock Rivers. An anti-monopoly meeting in Champaign County proposed to erect a farmers' warehouse store and a similar meeting at Pontiac demanded regulation of railroad rates by the legislature.86

Under pressure of an outraged public opinion the legislature took up the question of the regulation of monopolies, particularly elevators. The warehousemen joined the railroads to defeat the early attempts at legislation. There were hints of corruption but nothing irregular was shown. However, in February 1867 the Eastman warehouse bill was signed. It regulated both public and private warehouses and prescribed the manner of keeping grain. It made it unlawful for a railroad to deliver grain to any other warehouse than the one to which it was consigned, prohibited the sale of contracts for future delivery, and provided penalties for issuing receipts in excess of grain actually in store. This bill corrected most of the evils of the


grain trade and comparatively little was heard of them thereafter. Efforts to curb the railroads were not so successful, and the fight for their regulation was to be waged in the following decade.*

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87. Public Laws of Illinois, 1867, p. 177-182; Chicago Tribune, Feb. 8, 11, 13, Aug. 16, 17, 1867; Country Gentleman, LXXIX, (1867), p. 107; Chicago Post, Feb. 23, 1867; Ottawa Republican, Aug. 22, 1867; Rockford Gazette, Feb. 21, 1867; Hutt's Merchants' Mag., XLIII, (1870), p. 436. "Bills looking to the regulation of rates of freight are now before the Wisconsin and Iowa legislatures. The Iowa bill provides a schedule of tariffs to govern them, the Wisconsin bill leaves the rates to be regulated by a board of commissioners. In the meantime meetings continue to be held in various localities in Illinois, moulding public opinion preparatory to work upon the next session of the general assembly."

Illinois was predominantly agricultural in 1850. In the areas removed from transportation lines the industry was of a subsistence nature due to the remoteness of markets and the costs of transportation. Near the navigable rivers and the Illinois and Michigan Canal there was a commercial agriculture of growing importance. The cash crop in these sections was chiefly wheat, which could be easily raised and transported and which commanded a ready sale. The wheat crop was largely concentrated in the northwestern half of the state and along the Mississippi south of East St. Louis. Because of the relatively low price of corn and the high transportation charges that crop entered into cash farming only to a small extent.

During the early 'fifties the railroads were extending, bringing large numbers of settlers, and opening to commercial agriculture new sections, particularly in northern Illinois. The demand for land was strong, settlement was rapid, and large quantities of grain poured into Chicago. But now at a time when new transportation systems seemed to assure wheat of supremacy in Illinois agriculture there came a change — a check to the expansion of wheat growing and a shift toward other grains and livestock. This change was brought about by lower wheat prices and by frequent failures of that crop due to winter killing, rust, Hessian fly, and soil depletion. The shift away from wheat was particularly prominent in northern Illinois where corn could bear
transportation costs, but it was in evidence all over the state. In the diversification which came corn and oats were cash crops as well as the feed for a growing live stock industry. While wheat prices were dropping in the early 'fifties those of live stock rose and stockmen were prospering. The most important live stock sections were in central and western Illinois.

As the change from wheat to feed grains and stock was well under way it was halted by the Crimean War and other circumstances, such as the large foreign immigration and the rapid railroad building in the west. The price of wheat rose sharply in the American market and the Illinois farmers turned back to that crop. Wheat at the new price level was profitable with even moderate yields. Live stock and feed grains were relatively neglected while wheat was given the principal attention in the West. The farmers there drove their soils hard in the production of that crop and rapidly opened new wheat growing areas along the expanding railroads. Lands were eagerly sought and values rose rapidly. Settlers came in large numbers and the established farmers added to their holdings. Much of the land purchased was held on very slender margins and the owners were faced with distress when the reaction came. Agriculture and the trade which was dependent upon it took on a highly speculative character with an unstable basis.

With the coming of 1857 the circumstances which had led to the boom of the middle 'fifties were gone. Europe was at peace and wheat production and distribution resumed their normal course. Not only had immigration fallen sharply during the Crimean War but the immigrant farmers of an earlier day were now in production and out of the buying market. Railroad construction in the West had
ceased and the stimulation from that source had stopped. Thus the foundations of the prosperity of the boom of the middle 'fifties had gone and the continued stimulation needed to sustain the speculative feeling in agriculture and trade disappeared. The bubble burst late in the summer of 1857 when a series of mercantile failures precipitated a crash. Prices fell under the large production, weak market, and financial uncertainty and trade came to a standstill. The western farmers who had gone in debt for land and machinery were in distress.

The panic which thus broke late in 1857 was to last in varying degree to 1860. The year 1858 was the most disastrous of the decade. Crops in Illinois were the worst in years, prices continued low, and much of the available currency was of doubtful value. 1859 saw an improvement in crops and prices and a better general situation. By 1860 conditions were near normal again.

The crop of that year was good and prices were fair. Agriculture in Illinois was again in a fairly prosperous condition with a mixed type of farming in the place of the grain growing of the boom period.

This new prosperity was soon to be rudely shaken. As the southern states seceded the economic effects began to be felt in the North. Southern state bonds had been largely used as a basis for the note issues of the Illinois banks. As the price of these bonds fell during the formation of the Confederacy the bond reserves of these banks fell below the legal requirements. Most of them were unable to maintain the needed reserves and closed their doors. The wiping out in this manner of nearly all the Illinois bank notes partially paralyzed the trade in the state because of the
direct losses and the shortage of currency. Prices dropped because of the financial uncertainties, the large crops, the closing of trade routes, and the high freight rates to the seaboard on the congested lake route. Despite the unfavorable outlook in 1861 the crop acreage increased.

The depression of 1861 continued into 1862. But beginning late in that year western agriculture entered a period of unexampled prosperity. The financial situation was relieved by the introduction of greenbacks, national bank notes, and notes of other sound banks, particularly those in the East. Under the influence of the army and foreign demands, decreasing production, inflation, and depreciation prices rose rapidly to a peak late in 1864. Freight rates, which had gone to a very high point after the large crop began to move in August 1861, now declined and by the middle of the war were below those of 1860. This meant an added return to the farmers and aided the ruling prosperity. Although the labor situation was relieved by the widespread use of labor saving machinery, the shortage became serious after 1863 and resulted in decreased production. The higher prices more than made up for the lessened production, however, and the western farmers, more prosperous than ever in their history, paid off their debts with cheap money. Wheat, corn, and live stock continued to be the dependence of agriculture in the state, except in southern Illinois where cotton raising was revived.

The period following the war was one of readjustment and recession from the war time prosperity to the depths of the panic of 1873. This change was the result of numerous factors. Just as the farmer had gained by the rising prices resulting from war
time conditions, he was now to suffer from the reversal of these circumstances. The demand for agricultural products fell markedly with the return of peace. The appreciation of money which had begun in 1864 and the deflation which was started after the close of the war also helped drive the prices down.

A panicky feeling developed early in 1865 as the end of the war appeared near. The price of cotton fell rapidly in anticipation of peace but recovered for a time when it became evident that the South could not immediately supply the market. The wheat farmers were hard hit. Not only was the price falling under the light demand and the improvement in the money situation, but the farmers west of the Mississippi were now in production and were helping break the market. A revival of the foreign demand in 1867 and 1868 brought a temporary return of prosperity but in 1869 the distress became greater than ever. The stockmen and their allies, the corn farmers, fared better than the grain raisers at the close of the war because the West was not in competition in livestock. Farmers had paid even the high freight charges on the non-competing western roads during the high price period late in the war with but little complaint. But when low prices came the farmers were in a serious situation. The high freight rates were denounced as unfair and organized efforts were made to secure relief.
# APPENDIX

## SHIPMENTS OF FLOUR AND GRAIN FROM CHICAGO

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>100,071</td>
<td>883,644</td>
<td>262,015</td>
<td>168,084</td>
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<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>72,406</td>
<td>437,660</td>
<td>3,221,317</td>
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<td>4,646,831</td>
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<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>61,196</td>
<td>636,996</td>
<td>2,757,011</td>
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<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>70,984</td>
<td>1,208,163</td>
<td>2,760,328</td>
<td>1,749,493</td>
<td>6,298,233</td>
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<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>111,627</td>
<td>2,306,925</td>
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<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>163,419</td>
<td>6,298,155</td>
<td>7,617,625</td>
<td>1,888,528</td>
<td>16,622,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>216,389</td>
<td>8,364,420</td>
<td>11,189,468</td>
<td>1,014,627</td>
<td>21,610,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>289,646</td>
<td>9,816,062</td>
<td>6,814,615</td>
<td>506,778</td>
<td>18,832,479</td>
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<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>470,402</td>
<td>8,890,287</td>
<td>7,706,264</td>
<td>1,619,069</td>
<td>20,567,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>686,235</td>
<td>7,166,696</td>
<td>4,349,760</td>
<td>1,185,703</td>
<td>16,784,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
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<td>12,402,197</td>
<td>13,700,113</td>
<td>1,091,096</td>
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<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>1,603,920</td>
<td>16,835,955</td>
<td>24,373,725</td>
<td>1,635,837</td>
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<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>1,729,949</td>
<td>15,606,698</td>
<td>29,452,610</td>
<td>3,112,566</td>
<td>56,477,110</td>
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<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>1,322,085</td>
<td>10,793,285</td>
<td>25,061,450</td>
<td>2,234,285</td>
<td>54,887,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>1,285,343</td>
<td>10,285,026</td>
<td>12,323,452</td>
<td>16,567,680</td>
<td>46,718,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>1,293,428</td>
<td>7,614,687</td>
<td>25,437,841</td>
<td>11,142,140</td>
<td>52,268,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>1,961,885</td>
<td>16,416,907</td>
<td>22,753,181</td>
<td>9,961,15</td>
<td>65,466,323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>2,016,455</td>
<td>10,567,123</td>
<td>11,267,205</td>
<td>10,336,026</td>
<td>55,187,909</td>
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<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>2,359,619</td>
<td>10,370,603</td>
<td>24,770,826</td>
<td>14,440,830</td>
<td>63,688,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>5,329,063</td>
<td>12,244,049</td>
<td>21,586,608</td>
<td>8,800,966</td>
<td>56,759,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>1,705,977</td>
<td>16,433,585</td>
<td>17,777,377</td>
<td>8,007,725</td>
<td>54,745,903</td>
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<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>1,287,574</td>
<td>12,905,449</td>
<td>26,716,030</td>
<td>12,161,247</td>
<td>71,800,769</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table is from the Report of the Chicago Board of Trade, 1871, p. 37. The shipments are those to the eastern seaboard.

## RECEIPTS AT CHICAGO OF TWENTY-TWO CROPS OF WHEAT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Harvested</th>
<th>Total Bushels</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>2,539,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>8,338,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>8,938,418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>14,085,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>5,404,596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>8,955,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>17,986,699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>17,781,459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>14,831,929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>13,880,228</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Harvested</th>
<th>Total Bushels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>9,666,204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>6,506,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>10,704,673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>14,786,661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>18,865,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>16,461,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>16,496,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>11,687,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>17,528,565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>35,138,479</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Ibid., 1874, p. 38.
### ACRES UNDER CULTIVATION IN ILLINOIS: ASSESSORS' RETURNS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Wheat</th>
<th>Corn</th>
<th>Other Field Products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>2,259,648</td>
<td>4,020,399</td>
<td>1,684,579</td>
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<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>1,965,328</td>
<td>4,119,620</td>
<td>1,035,673</td>
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<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>2,546,409</td>
<td>4,812,696</td>
<td>1,105,148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>2,447,103</td>
<td>4,014,077</td>
<td>1,245,735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>2,243,885</td>
<td>3,949,288</td>
<td>1,350,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>1,978,588</td>
<td>3,970,218</td>
<td>1,535,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>1,761,268</td>
<td>4,340,111</td>
<td>1,551,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>1,829,737</td>
<td>4,789,283</td>
<td>1,632,286</td>
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<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>2,083,189</td>
<td>4,725,386</td>
<td>1,558,665</td>
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<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>2,506,199</td>
<td>5,106,678</td>
<td>1,794,311</td>
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<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>2,526,163</td>
<td>5,444,555</td>
<td>2,045,795</td>
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<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>2,036,527</td>
<td>6,262,963</td>
<td>2,367,120</td>
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### Report of the Chicago Board of Trade, 1871, p. 23.

### EXPORTS OF FLOUR, WHEAT, AND CORN TO EUROPE, 1860-70

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Flour, Barrels to British Isles</th>
<th>Wheat, Bushels to British Isles</th>
<th>Corn, Bushels to All of Europe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>574,787</td>
<td>461,276</td>
<td>4,752,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>1,559,564</td>
<td>1,496,355</td>
<td>2,205,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>1,427,442</td>
<td>2,728,443</td>
<td>1,467,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>1,600,449</td>
<td>4,823,519</td>
<td>1,426,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>1,866,920</td>
<td>6,038,008</td>
<td>6,049,371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>175,809</td>
<td>7,765</td>
<td>6,967,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>1,641,265</td>
<td>7,955,406</td>
<td>7,012,244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>649,600</td>
<td>7,479,401</td>
<td>5,289,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>1,295,430</td>
<td>5,556,543</td>
<td>5,354,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>106,457</td>
<td>439,010</td>
<td>367,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>717,186</td>
<td>4,728,714</td>
<td>2,841,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>1,653,861</td>
<td>25,543,290</td>
<td>11,806,179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>2,672,515</td>
<td>25,754,709</td>
<td>14,403,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>1,479,412</td>
<td>23,167,190</td>
<td>10,403,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>1,241,804</td>
<td>16,492,583</td>
<td>830,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>170,109</td>
<td>2,999,740</td>
<td>1,304,889</td>
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<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>147,568</td>
<td>1,831,210</td>
<td>13,950,161</td>
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<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>179,990</td>
<td>6,014,271</td>
<td>10,420,563</td>
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<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>529,404</td>
<td>12,992,609</td>
<td>9,193,553</td>
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<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>407,082</td>
<td>12,356,550</td>
<td>4,431,962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1,188,951</td>
<td>27,787,609</td>
<td>83,707</td>
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</table>

Ibid., p. 34. Years ending September 1 to 1669. That and later years ending June 30.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Wheat No. 2 Winter</th>
<th>Corn No. 2</th>
<th>Reeves, Live Weight</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Jan. 1850</td>
<td>.70 &lt; .35</td>
<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.50 &lt; 33.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 1850</td>
<td>.70 &lt; .35</td>
<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.25 &lt; 34.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1850</td>
<td>1.00 &lt; 1.20</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
<td>3.25 &lt; 34.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 1850</td>
<td>.65 &lt; .75</td>
<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.10 &lt; 33.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1851</td>
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<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.75 &lt; 34.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 1851</td>
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<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.75 &lt; 34.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1851</td>
<td>.66 &lt; .76</td>
<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 1851</td>
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<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>2.75 &lt; 33.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>2.75 &lt; 33.68</td>
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<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1852</td>
<td>.68 &lt; .75</td>
<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 1852</td>
<td>.60 &lt; .75</td>
<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1853</td>
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<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
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<td>Oct. 1853</td>
<td>1.00 &lt; 1.13</td>
<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.06 &lt; 1.15</td>
<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.12 &lt; 1.20</td>
<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1854</td>
<td>1.15 &lt; 1.20</td>
<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 1854</td>
<td>1.20 &lt; 1.20</td>
<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1855</td>
<td>1.20 &lt; 1.20</td>
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<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 1855</td>
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<td>Oct. 1855</td>
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<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
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<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
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<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Apr. 1859</td>
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<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1859</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 1859</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1860</td>
<td>1.09</td>
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<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 1860</td>
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<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1860</td>
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<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
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<td>Oct. 1860</td>
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<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
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<td>Jan. 1861</td>
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<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
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<td>Apr. 1861</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 1861</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.25 &lt; .28</td>
<td>3.00 &lt; 33.50</td>
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a No. 1  
b Mixed

Continued

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<th>Wheat No. 2 Winter</th>
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<td>b .82</td>
<td>5.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 1864</td>
<td>1.35</td>
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<td>6.75</td>
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<td>a .66</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*a No. 1
b Mixed

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Dunlap Papers. This collection, which is in the possession of Henry H. Dunlap, Savoy, Illinois, includes the letter press copy books of Mathias L. Dunlap from 1851 to 1858; a manuscript spelling school gazette, 1860; a manuscript literary paper, 1872-4; and three scrap books containing clippings of Mr. Dunlap's contributions to the press from 1853 to 1858.

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Russell Howard Anderson was born in Jasper County, Illinois, March 19, 1896. He received his high school and junior college training at the Eastern Illinois State Teachers College where he was graduated in 1916. He entered the University of Illinois as a junior and received the degree of Bachelor of Science in Education in February, 1923, and that of Master of Arts in History in August, 1925. He taught five years in the public schools of Illinois, Minnesota, and Hawaii. He joined the faculty of the University of Illinois in February, 1925, as an assistant in History, a position which he has since held except during the year 1927-8 when he served as the head of the history department at the State Teachers College, Peru, Nebraska.