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Rural Life in Indiana, 1800–1950*

Barbara J. Steinson

The wind with the rain blew a great deal of my corn down which caused it with so much rain to damage very much. I am now trying to gather it as fast as I can . . . I should have been done but hands can't be hired here at no price at all hardly . . . I swopped work with one of my neighbours, helped him cut Broom Corn for him to help me gather Corn, every body seems to be behind with their work owing to their having been so much wet weather here this Summer & fall & So much sickness a part of the latter part of Aug & the first of Sep that they was not enough of well persons hardly in the neighborhood to wait on the Sick.¹

This passage from Decatur County farmer William Tyner's December, 1855, letter to his sister and brother-in-law is an appropriate prologue for an essay on the history of rural life in Indiana. With eloquent simplicity these lines disclose some pivotal characteristics of Tyner's life as an Indiana farmer: the impact of environmental factors and consequent uncertainties of the harvest, labor shortages that necessitated carefully calculated work sharing, and extended ordeals of sickness.² The experiences recounted in Tyner's letters illuminate rural life in nineteenth-century Decatur County, Indiana, but must be placed within a broader context of Indiana and midwestern rural history from the early nineteenth to the late twentieth century.

Extensive scholarship exists on midwestern land disposition policies, settlement and land ownership patterns, crop production, technology of farming, commercialization of agriculture, and government agricultural programs.³ In addition, in the past twenty years practitioners of the "new" rural history have enhanced the study of rural life by expanding their focus beyond these topics. Influenced by social history models, which examine everyday lives of ordinary people in connection with large-scale socioeconomic developments, and using social science methodology, including quantitative analysis, the new rural historians have developed ambitious agendas that call for investigating the "lifestyle and activities of farmers and villagers, their family patterns, farming

*Because of the extensive information contained in the notes for this article, they have been published as endnotes, pp. 235-50.

practices, social structures, political activities, and community institutions.”⁴

A review of historical scholarship, both the more traditional work and recent studies in the new rural history, however, reveals that Indiana is among the least studied states in the Midwest.⁵ As in other states, pioneering generations have attracted far more scholarly and popular interest than rural Hoosiers in the late nineteenth century and in the twentieth century.⁶ Several state histories include discussions of major agricultural developments within Indiana, but historians have not subjected agriculture to the rigorous attention it has received elsewhere in the region.⁷

It is curious that there has not been more historical scholarship on agriculture and rural life in Indiana because the state has been overwhelmingly rural for much of its history. As late as 1880 four-fifths of the population was rural. Even after the population balance had shifted to urban areas by 1920, Indiana had a higher proportion of its population engaged in agriculture than either Ohio or Illinois, both of which industrialized at faster rates.⁸ Although some regions of Indiana experienced rural out-migration as early as the mid-nineteenth century and only a minuscule fraction of Indiana residents are engaged in agriculture today, the ideology of agrarianism continues to be celebrated, and Indiana’s rural past retains a strong hold on the state at the conclusion of the twentieth century.⁹ Research on rural Indiana has the potential to illuminate the state’s history far beyond the agrarian sector and will also provide data for interesting comparisons within the Midwest. The Hoosier state is the most “southern” of the midwestern states in terms of the origins of its population, and it attracted proportionately fewer European immigrants in the nineteenth century. More than most midwestern states, its agricultural base has been dominated by two products—corn and hogs—since the early nineteenth century. The smallest of the midwestern states in square miles, Indiana nonetheless encompasses considerable diversity not only in topography but also in its settlement history and economic development.

Although the history of rural life in Indiana requires studies of numerous topics utilizing a variety of research methods, the new rural history offers perhaps the most interesting possibilities. New rural historians examine a “range of settlement patterns, including villages and small towns” under the rubric of “rural.”¹⁰ Robert P. Swierenga has posited that “ruralness is more than location or an occupation; it is a way of life”; but other scholars warn against emphasis on the “separateness of the countryside” from socioeconomic developments within the nation and the world.¹¹ Similarly, Hal S. Barron notes that in answering questions about patterns of social structure and mobility in the countryside, the nature of family life, the roles of class, race, gender, and ethnicity, and the influ-

ence of ideology and *mentalité*, new rural historians will be able to expand knowledge of the countryside and of American society as a whole. "From this perspective," Barron states, "the crucial experiences in the agrarian past are not just the processes of settlement and the economic and technological development of agriculture. Rather, it is equally important to look at the social and political relationships that tied the countryside to the great transformation of nineteenth-century America into an urban-industrial society."¹²

Until the 1980s rural northerners like William Tyner were part of what Barron terms "a kind of historiographical 'silent majority.'"¹³ While social historians during the 1960s and 1970s concentrated on the colonial era, urbanization and industrialization in the North, and the institution of slavery in the South, the social history of rural life in the North languished. The publication of some innovative social histories of rural life in recent years, however, marked the end of this scholarly drought, at least for some northeastern and midwestern states. Unlike agricultural historians whose works are essentially devoid of the men, women, and children who inhabited rural areas, these scholars and several others have not only given life to rural inhabitants but have also situated their experiences within the context of their families, communities, regions, and nation.¹⁴ Most of the new rural history research, however, like much of the work in social history, focuses primarily on the nineteenth century; rural life in the twentieth-century Midwest has received less attention by historians.¹⁵

John Mack Faragher's *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* offers a model of the detailed local study of rural life that needs to be written for different rural Indiana communities. Through careful examination of land office records, genealogies, and census manuscripts, Faragher traces the pivotal role of kinship groups in settling the Sugar Creek Valley area in central Illinois. Relatives joined settled families, children of these families intermarried, and these families and households formed "the essential social building blocks" of community in Sugar Creek.¹⁶ Prior to 1850 land was fairly evenly distributed among residents who evolved a pattern of community self-sufficiency based on "exchanges of labor, products, and tools," all outside the market. Commercial farming did not evolve "until the agricultural revolution of the late 1850s, the 1860s and beyond, when farms were converted, in economic terms, into units of capital."¹⁷ Traditional ways of thinking and acting persisted even as economic development progressed: the most successful continued to believe that the best investment was additional land. At the same time class distinctions became more evident as the gap widened between the large landowning families and the landless farmers who worked for them.¹⁸

Faragher's study of Sugar Creek is based on an impressive number and variety of sources, a tribute to his skills as a researcher

and a reflection of the richness of materials on that particular region of Illinois. Local studies present scholars with imposing methodological problems, the most significant of which is the availability of sources. Reminiscences and memoirs contain some interesting anecdotes but often tend to be vague and nostalgic. Letters, diaries, and account books are more useful in furnishing details of daily life although they reflect primarily the experiences of the community elite. Furthermore, the availability of manuscript sources for different counties within Indiana varies considerably. Court records, population and agricultural censuses, and the quantitative studies by the Purdue University Agricultural Experiment Station cover the entire state and furnish crucial data essential for undertaking new rural histories of Indiana.¹⁹ In Indiana, as in other states, the settlement era has generated a substantial corpus of "hardy pioneer" literature.²⁰ This genre celebrates individualism in conquering the wilderness but also addresses the creation of communities and institutions. Along with county histories and genealogies these early works furnish information on founding families and early institutions and also reveal something of the values of the community elite. Tracking the progeny of early settlers in specific rural communities through succeeding census years and land records offers one method of determining whether or not certain families succeeded in passing on their land and influence to later generations. Painstaking thoroughness is required to locate, sift through, analyze, and assemble the data for local studies. Most daunting perhaps is the necessity for historians of rural life in Indiana to link their local studies to the major issues identified by new rural historians, in particular the socioeconomic transformations that affected the entire country in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Studies of rural life in Indiana informed by the methods and goals of the new rural history will logically build on the scholarship on the settlement of the state. This work provides a crucial foundation for understanding many of the regional variations within the state, differences that often render sweeping statewide generalizations invalid. Historians have long noted the existence of distinctive regions within the state, differences based not only on soil quality and topography but also on variations in settlers' origins, settlement patterns, and the nature of market opportunities.²¹ These distinctions merit review because they were underscored by later developments and reverberate into the late twentieth century.

White settlers inhabited Indiana from the south to north in a pattern that reflected the accessibility of transportation routes and the removal of Native Americans.²² The Ohio, Wabash, and White-water rivers and their tributaries were the focal points of much of the white settlement from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century.²³ Upland southerners, trekking over the Appala-



EMIGRATION TOWARD THE WEST
(NOTE FARM IMPLEMENTS ATOP WAGON)

Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis.
Neg. no. C4387.

chian Mountains, ferried across the Ohio River from Kentucky or traveled down the river from Pittsburgh. Others from the mid-Atlantic region used the Ohio as a primary route to central and southern Indiana. The Upland South origin of Indiana residents who dominated the southern portion of Indiana and, along with mid-Atlantic migrants, settled central Indiana, is effectively demonstrated by Gregory S. Rose, whose work refines and reinforces conclusions of earlier scholars.²⁴ These settlers from eastern Kentucky and Tennessee and western North Carolina and Virginia were not slaveholders but yeoman farmers who sought better opportunities for themselves in the Northwest Territory.²⁵ Above all, they wanted more land for their crops and livestock. The topography of southern Indiana had a special appeal to these individuals because of its similarity to the hilly and heavily forested regions they had left behind. These woodland farmers, who engaged initially in subsistence agriculture, followed the branches of the Ohio, Wabash, White, and Whitewater rivers in settling the southern part of the state. Their influence has persisted in this region. "Southern Indiana was the most distinctive," James H. Madison writes: "upland South patterns of word usage and pronunciation, religion, place names, food, amusement, and methods of constructing barns, houses, and corn cribs were firmly implanted in southern Indiana by 1820 and remained into the late twentieth century."²⁶

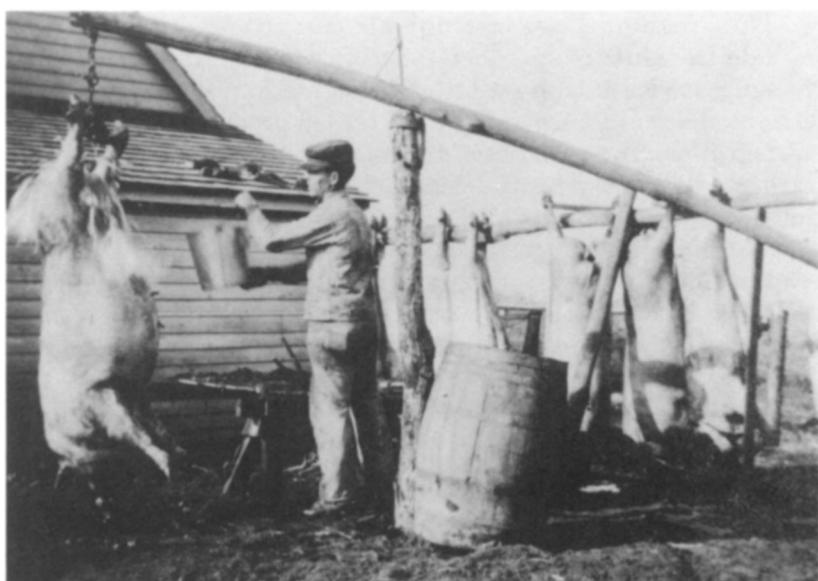
The fertile lands of central Indiana, settled after the New Purchase Treaty of 1818, drew migrants from the Upland South, Ohio,

and the mid-Atlantic states of New York and Pennsylvania.²⁷ Richard Lyle Power in *Planting Corn Belt Culture* noted the blending of the corn and hog subsistence economy of the southerners with the more efficient and commercially oriented farming of the easterners in this region.²⁸ James M. Bergquist posits that this melding of upland south and mid-Atlantic work cultures occurred in southwestern Ohio before these settlers moved on to central Indiana. Corn and hogs formed the basis of subsistence farming for upland southerners, and when they “moved into southwestern Ohio and Indiana, corn and hogs became a dependable source of ready extra cash. In time they would become the mainstay of a new market economy” According to Bergquist, this “fruitful union of Middle States commerce and upland southern agriculture would be strengthened in Indiana . . . and would set the pattern for the future evolution of the Middle West.”²⁹

Many of the early settlers in southern and central Indiana were squatters, some of whom obtained preemptive rights to the lands they had improved. When reforms in land policies decreased minimum purchases and prices and made it possible for more individuals to become landowners, squatters then either obtained clear titles or sold their improvements.³⁰ Ultimately, the grid system set out by the Ordinance of 1785 prevailed in states encompassed by the Northwest Territory and in all lands to the west and “imposed a checkerboard pattern on the land, characterized by straight roads with a north/south and east/west orientation, with bisecting cross-roads every six miles that promoted the growth of small regularly spaced farms and farming communities.”³¹ In the newly opened regions of central Indiana, “few purchases exceeded 160 acres, and many were limited to half that amount”³² The result was a pattern of open country settlement in which open country neighborhoods covered fairly large areas.³³

Not until the 1830s and 1840s did settlement begin in most of northern Indiana because Indians remained in the area, it was initially more difficult to reach, and the prairie counties of the northwest were swampy and deemed unsuitable for farming.³⁴ Among those who had settled in the northern part of the state by 1850, Rose found higher concentrations of settlers from New England and fewer southerners. According to Rose, “New Yorkers traveled on the Erie Canal . . . and New Englanders could reach the canal from land routes or by way of coastal vessels and the Hudson River.”³⁵

Northern Indiana is also the one region of the state where extensive land speculation occurred. Paul W. Gates argued that speculators who “acquired enormous tracts of land before the actual settlers appeared” drove up land prices and thus affected agricultural development and settlement in this region.³⁶ Although all public land in Indiana was gone by 1850, large speculative holdings in the northern portion of the state left “vast stretches of the state



WASHING HOG CARCASSES THAT HAVE BEEN SCALDED
AND SCRAPED AT BUTCHERING TIME

Indiana Extension Homemakers Collection, Daviess
County, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.

. . . totally unimproved."³⁷ Some speculators became cattle raisers, but when land values increased in the 1870s, many of them divided their land into smaller sections, drained it, and brought in tenants to plant corn and wheat.³⁸ This northwestern region of Indiana contained the highest proportion of tenants and the largest farms well into the twentieth century.³⁹ These regional variations provide a critical backdrop for the exploration of rural life in Indiana.

Since agricultural pursuits dominated Indiana rural communities throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, developments in agriculture remain essential components of the study of rural life in the Hoosier state. Given variations in topography and settlement patterns, it is not surprising that agricultural advancements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were not uniform throughout Indiana and in fact reinforced earlier distinctions within the state. Examinations of these differences within Indiana are essential because scholars' efforts to understand the role of agriculture in the capitalist transformation of the nineteenth century and the steadily decreasing proportion of Americans engaged in agriculture in the twentieth century require local studies in all parts of the country as well as aggregate data on national and regional economic trends. Through the accumulation of case studies, state and regional syntheses can be developed and comparative studies undertaken.

The broad outlines of economic transitions in agriculture include the shift from subsistence to commercial agriculture, changing modes of transportation, farm mechanization, the development of scientific agriculture, increased productivity, and rural outmigration. The specifics of the story are much less straightforward and have led to lively debates among scholars. Acknowledging that interpretations differ, Steven Hahn nonetheless concludes that the evidence "suggests that farm families in a variety of geographical settings well into the nineteenth century relied upon their own labor, looked to household subsistence before marketing 'surpluses,' and were reluctant to embrace improved methods of tillage and animal husbandry."⁴⁰ Historian Clarence Danhof in *Change in Agriculture: The Northern United States, 1820–1870* comments:

The test of family need in determining production did not readily give way to the view that a farm was a source of net money income, with all activities subject to scrutiny from the point of view of money income maximization. The latter kind of farming required that full utilization be made of any advantageous factors in determining production plans, and that a rationalized approach to their execution be adopted, including alertness in the appraisal and application of new methods and equipment. The appearance of opportunities did not always and immediately elicit a sensitivity to market considerations or the application of a cost-profit calculus.⁴¹

He notes that agriculture as a "market-focused, profit-making business was by no means universally accepted even in 1850."⁴² Market-oriented agriculture would never be adopted by all farmers, but during the second half of the nineteenth century it became dominant. The problem for historians, according to Hahn, is "to analyze and comprehend the dynamics of this transformation—to analyze and comprehend how farm households were invaded and conquered by the logic and relations of commodity production."⁴³ Further complicating the historical study of the capitalist transformation of agriculture is the inclusion of gender in the analysis. As Nancy Grey Osterud points out, historians must investigate the "relationship between the gender division of labor and distinctions between market-oriented and non-market-oriented production"—whether women's work was "devalued relative to men, through transition to capitalism"—and must examine the "ways in which rural women and men conducted and thought about the relations of cooperation and exchange between households."⁴⁴ Since assessments of the dynamics of the capitalist transformation of agriculture have yielded so many conflicting interpretations, studies of various localities in Indiana will clarify diversity within the state and provide Hoosier data for the debates about the complex national processes of agricultural change and capitalist transformation.

Historians often cite William C. Latta's *Outline History of Indiana Agriculture* as the source for comments on agricultural transformation within the state. Latta asserted that "by 1860, the

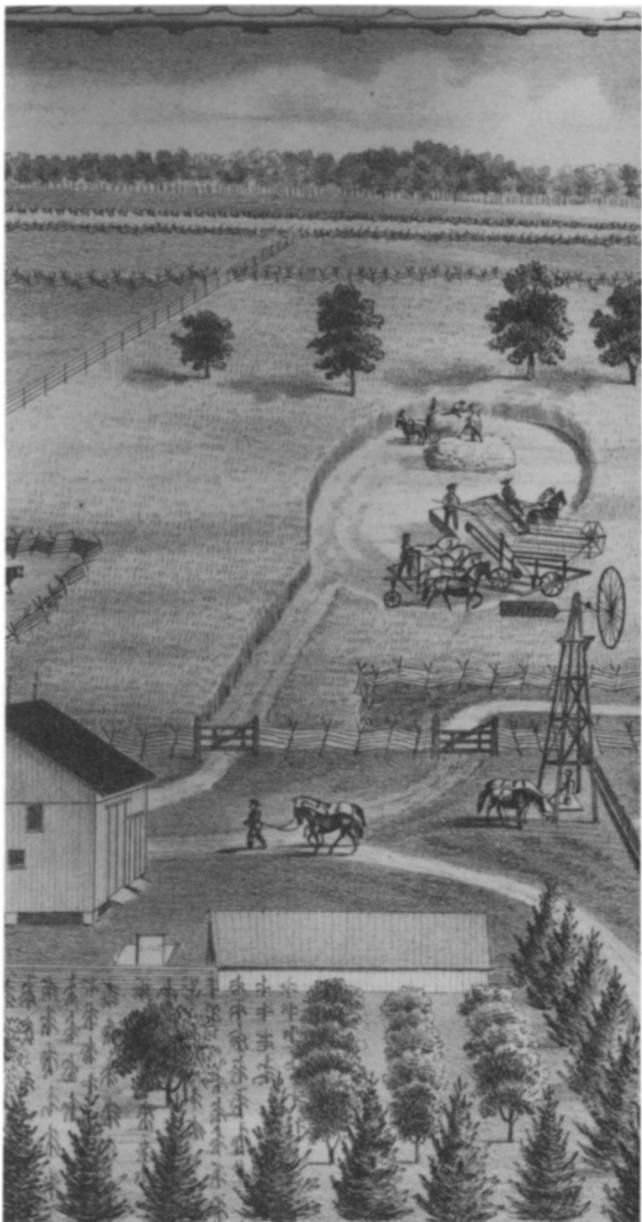
self-sufficing period of Indiana agriculture was practically closed and the commercial period fully ushered in.”⁴⁵ Latta’s conclusions leave little room for statewide variations and contradict Danhof’s and Hahn’s cautious conclusions about the speed, ease, and uniformity of the transition to market agriculture, but his interpretation conforms to that offered by Douglass C. North in his standard *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790–1860*. North notes that the “shift from pioneer self-sufficiency to a market oriented agriculture took place throughout most of the western states” in the years from 1815 to 1860.⁴⁶

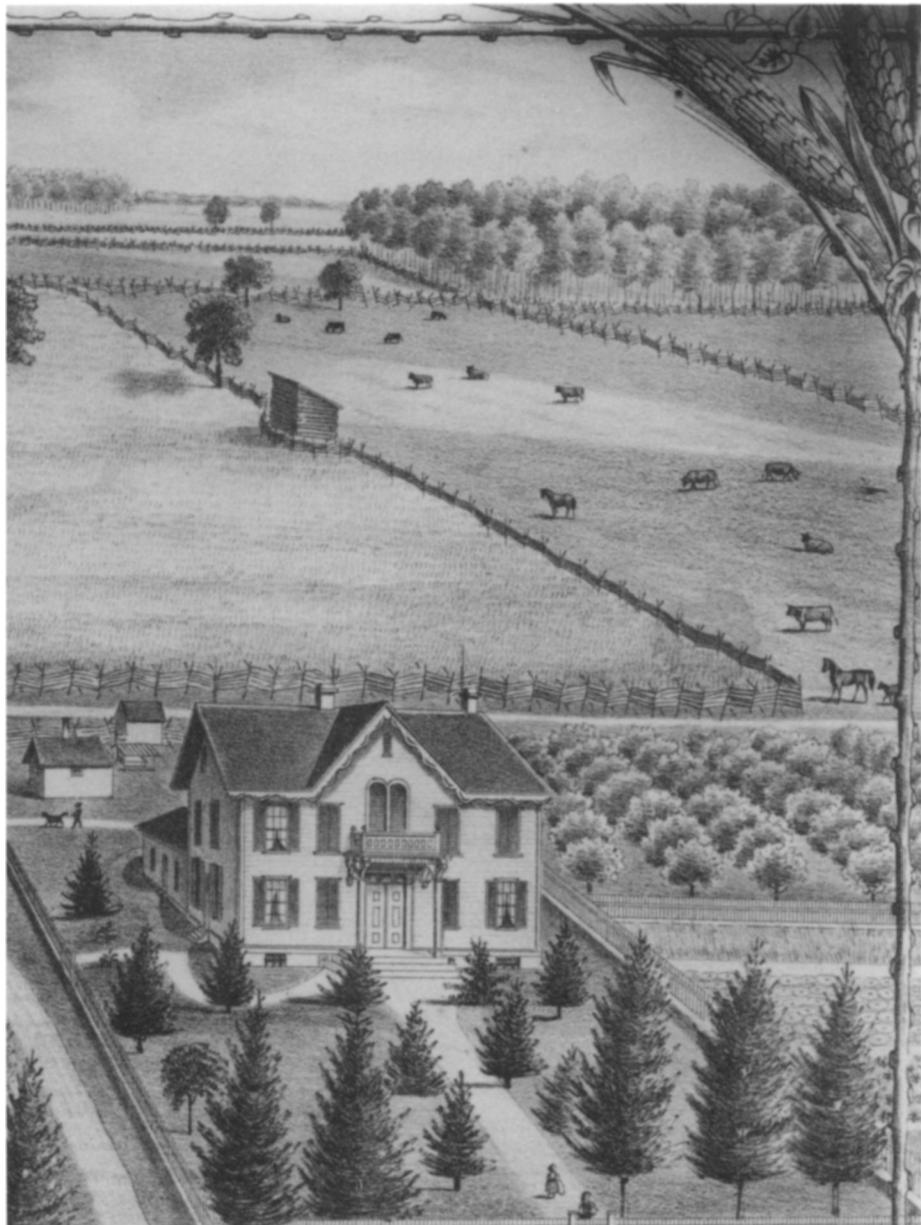
Indiana can serve as an interesting case study in this debate over the timing and nature of the transformation of agriculture. For example, although Latta’s statement implies that subsistence and market agriculture were mutually exclusive modes of production, they probably coexisted within many Hoosier communities. Individual farmers were unlikely to follow a linear path from subsistence to market agriculture given their lack of control over environmental factors and the instability of markets for their goods. Furthermore, if individual farm families were not self-sufficient, varieties of community-level self-sufficiency may have persisted, especially when wild price fluctuations made participation in commercial markets a sporadic economic affair for many nineteenth-century farmers.⁴⁷ Records of extensive trade and labor sharing within neighborhoods, often on a noncash basis, appear in nineteenth-century diaries and account books of Indiana farmers. Many survived because they “swoped” work like William Tyner and his neighbors. How did Indiana farm families determine proportions of goods for the market and for household consumption? Is there evidence of resistance to change in these Indiana communities? What forms did resistance take? What factors were most influential in pushing farmers to enter the market economy? Topographical differences in farming regions must not be the only factors considered in assessing variations between rural communities. How important were such factors as commodities grown, accessibility of markets, socioeconomic status, educational level, and ethnicity in families’ shifts to commercial agriculture? How did Indiana farmers conceptualize “the market”—in regional, national, or international terms—and how did their conceptualizations change over time?

Historians will undoubtedly find differences between farm families within rural neighborhoods as well as variations based on socioeconomic distinctions within counties, but despite this localized diversity patterns characteristic of the major regions of the state should emerge. For example, less productive farms in southern Indiana persisted in various permutations of subsistence agriculture well into the twentieth century.⁴⁸ On the other hand there is little evidence to suggest that self-sufficiency existed at all in portions of northern Indiana as a result of the later settlement dates,

**FARM RESIDENCE OF
WILLIAM PINNEY AS IT
APPEARED IN A
LA PORTE COUNTY ATLAS
OF 1874**

"In the field behind the house, four horses push a side-delivery hay rake, while an adjacent wagon pulled by two other horses receives the newly cut hay."





Indiana State Library, Indianapolis.

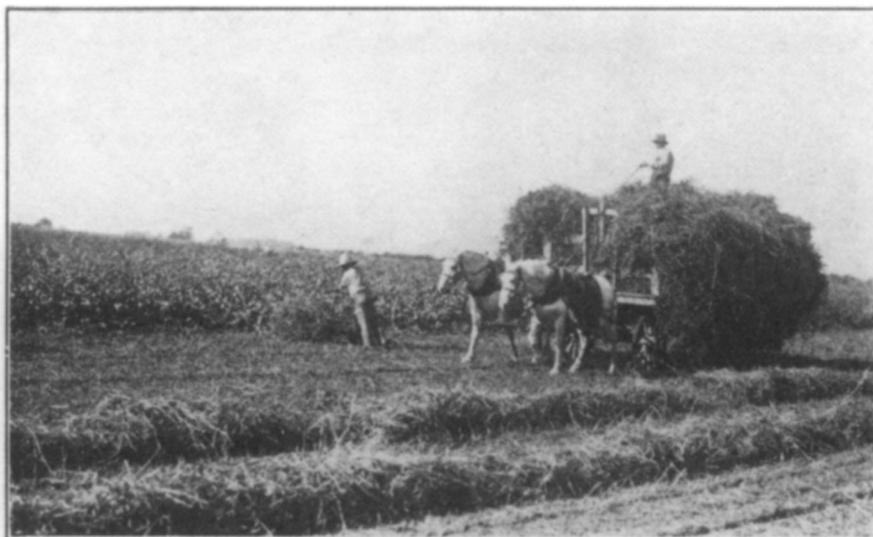
scale of farming operations, high rates of tenancy, and concentration on cash crops.⁴⁹

Changing modes of transportation affected rural development and intensified regional differences because the benefits of improved methods of transportation were not distributed equally throughout the state. Developments in transportation during the nineteenth century, in addition to less fertile soil and hilly terrain that inhibited mechanization, combined to make agriculture in southern Indiana less prosperous than in northern or central Indiana. Hoosier farmers initially relied on rivers for transporting their products south to the Ohio and then down the Mississippi to New Orleans and from there to eastern markets. The National Road crossed Indiana by the late 1830s, and by the end of the 1840s the first rail tracks had been laid in the state. In the succeeding decades a rail network within the state connected many Hoosier farmers with regional and national markets for their goods. Since the National Road ran through central Indiana and the rail network largely bypassed southern Indiana, farmers in this area continued to rely on "slower, less versatile waterways for transport."⁵⁰ Studies of rural life in Indiana might profitably compare townships with different degrees of access to transportation networks.⁵¹ To what extent did improved transportation affect the production mix on Indiana farms? Without access to markets were some families and communities forced to remain more self-sufficient as a means of economic survival? What kinds of efforts did communities undertake to secure transportation improvements in the nineteenth century? How did success or failure in these endeavors affect farm families in the open country and village residents? It is also vital that historians assess the effects of transportation developments on rural life in the twentieth century. Studies of rural life should explore the changes brought by the automobile to open country neighborhoods and rural communities. The impact of motorized vehicles on the marketing of farm products and the increased accessibility of off-farm employment are only two of many issues to consider.

Technological advances in farm and farmhouse equipment have had repercussions on Indiana agriculture and rural life that correspond in magnitude to those involving transportation. The Civil War spurred railroad building in Indiana and "accentuated the trend toward mechanization by bringing about both an increased demand for farm products and a shortage of man power." Although "pioneer methods of planting and cultivation and harvesting were still generally prevalent" throughout the Hoosier state at midcentury, the following decades witnessed an extraordinary expansion in agricultural mechanization.⁵² Historians John D. Barnhart and Donald F. Carmony noted that prior to 1860 Indiana farmers "used only a few simple, crude implements which were pulled by horses

and oxen—such as plows, carts, sleds, and harrows—and relied principally upon the labor of men and boys with axes, hoes, forks, spades, and other tools.”⁵³ By the 1860s some farmers were using iron plows, reapers, mowers, wheat drills, cultivators, corn planters, and threshers.⁵⁴ Indiana farmers’ investments in farm machinery more than quadrupled from 1850 to the turn of the century, and this mechanization made possible the cultivation of three times as much land in 1900 as in 1850.⁵⁵

Although such figures are impressive, they reveal little about differences between regions of the state or the ways in which individual farmers, families, and communities were affected by new technologies. The uneven diffusion of agricultural technology accentuated differences within the state and also created new distinctions within communities. Not surprisingly, new farm technologies had least impact in southern Indiana, where topography made the adoption of new methods more difficult. Technological advancements, regardless of attitudes or economic constraints, were simply “unsuitable for use in the hillier regions” of southern Indiana.⁵⁶ During the first half of the twentieth century when gasoline-powered tractors and combines brought further changes in Indiana agriculture, disparities in the diffusion of new agricultural technology and regional variations in agricultural productivity and pros-

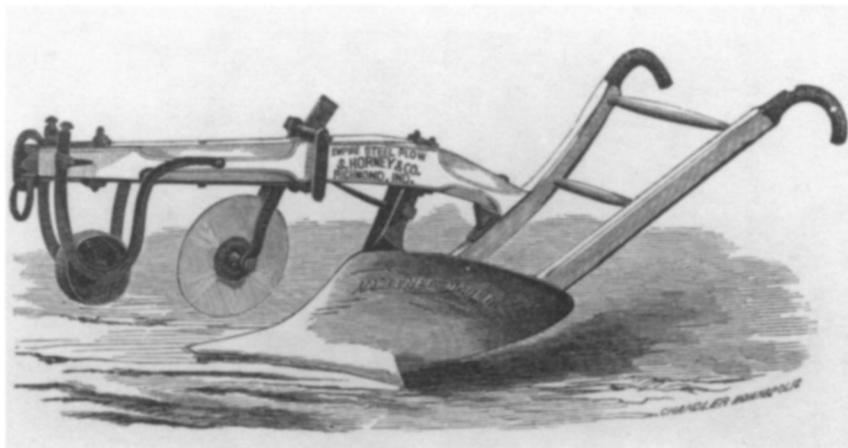


HAYING, C. 1928–1929

Reproduced from *Eighteenth Annual Report of Purdue University Department of Agricultural Extension, July 1, 1928 to June 30, 1929* (Lafayette, Ind., 1929), 3.



MC SHERRY IMPROVED GRAIN DRILL EXHIBITED AT THE
1868 INDIANA STATE FAIR SPONSORED BY THE STATE
BOARD OF AGRICULTURE



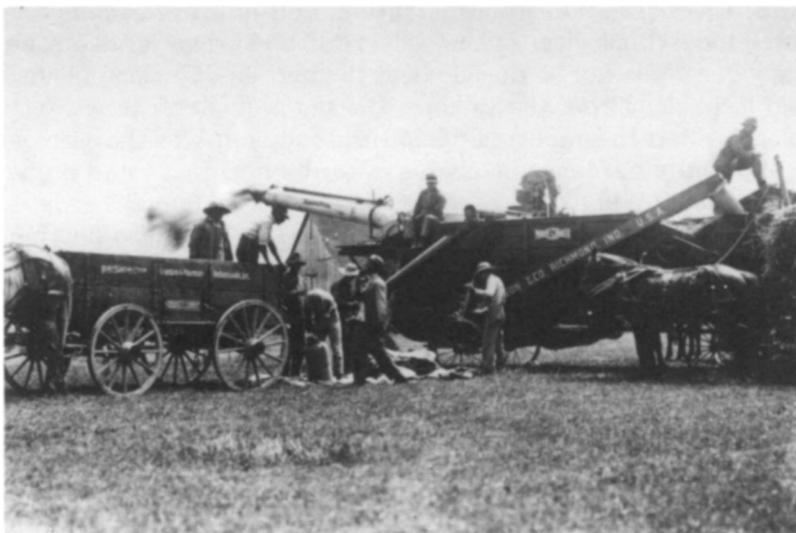
SOD PLOW EXHIBITED BY J. GEORGE STILZ, INDIANAPOLIS,
AT THE 1868 INDIANA STATE FAIR SPONSORED BY THE
STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

Reproduced from Indiana State Board of Agriculture,
Tenth Annual Report (1868) 9, 135.

perity continued to be evident. The increased costliness of agricultural machinery in the twentieth century heightened distinctions between regions, with southern Indiana continuing to lag behind the rest of the state. The cost and scale of machinery also widened the economic gap between farmers within the same communities. Small and medium-sized farms, not only in southern Indiana but throughout the state, had insufficient output to generate the capital necessary to purchase new equipment.⁵⁷

This brief overview of agricultural mechanization raises many questions about rural life in Indiana from 1850 to the mid-twentieth century. Is it possible to isolate characteristics of those farmers who were the first to experiment with new technologies? Who were the modernizers or innovators and who were the traditionalists? What kinds of risks were the innovators assuming? Were they among the wealthiest in their communities? Were landowners with several tenants more or less likely to mechanize with their available labor source? How were the work lives and routines of farmers changed by new farm technologies? What kinds of factors did families weigh in decisions to invest in farm machinery? How did differences in rates of technological diffusion contribute to economic disparities between regions and differences in rural lifestyles?

J. Sanford Rikoon demonstrates the cultural impact of new technologies in *Threshing in the Midwest*. His study of the evolution and decline of threshing rings in Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio in



THRESHING, AUGUST 6, 1912

Bass Photo Co.
Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis.
Neg. no. 29670.

the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is a model assessment of the intersection of technological change and rural work cultures. He analyzes the effects of technological transformation on both the men who threshed the wheat and the women who prepared their meals. By revealing how crucial it is to consider the impact of new machinery and processes on work cultures and gender roles, this important work suggests the limitations of studies that look only at the economic implications of technological changes in farming.⁵⁸

Any examination of rural life, particularly in the twentieth century, should explore the impact of domestic technological change on rural farm and nonfarm families.⁵⁹ During the first decades of the twentieth century rural Hoosiers, like their counterparts in other states, lagged far behind town and city residents in acquiring household improvements. Automobiles, which, as previously noted, had an enormous impact on rural life, made access to town easier and at the same time made differences in lifestyles more apparent.⁶⁰ Electricity and indoor plumbing had transformed urban middle-class homes, but even many of the more prosperous rural families remained without these amenities well into the twentieth century.⁶¹ By 1940 just over half of all farm families in Indiana had electricity compared with 98 percent of the urban homes.⁶² Rural telephone service in Indiana actually got worse during the 1930s and 1940s as lines and poles decayed and were not replaced.⁶³ Post–World War II prosperity, increased expenditures under the Rural Electrification Administration, and improved roads narrowed the technological gap between rural and urban residents; but many questions can be raised about the uneven diffusion of household technology prior to this time. Did the acquisition of new technologies affect the quality of life in rural Indiana? Was the decrease in physically burdensome chores offset by new tasks and higher expectations? What kinds of choices were made by families in determining when and which new technologies to purchase for their farms and homes?

Many changes in farming practices and rural life in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Indiana can also be linked to the explosion of agricultural information and organizations and to policies and initiatives undertaken by the federal government and Purdue University. Organizational and institutional histories, as well as evaluations of governmental policies and their repercussions in Indiana, represent additional research areas that are relevant to understanding rural life in the Hoosier state. In the last half of the nineteenth century, information on crops, livestock care and breeding, and farming methods proliferated. This data appeared in newspapers and general farm periodicals and in the publications of the State Board of Agriculture, farm organizations, and the School of Agriculture at Purdue University.⁶⁴ The State Board of Agriculture,

created by the legislature in 1851, held the first state fair in 1852. County agricultural societies, which reported to the state board and organized county fairs, were also established by the legislature. State and county fairs offered recreation and information with exhibits of livestock, agricultural products, and the latest farm machinery.⁶⁵ In addition to countless specialized agricultural groups such as the Indiana Corn Growers Association, the Indiana Live Stock Breeders' Association, and the Indiana State Dairy Association, farmers also formed fraternal organizations, the most important of which was the Grange or the Patrons of Husbandry. First organized in Indiana in 1869, the Grange had its highest membership of over sixty thousand in the mid-1870s. The organization promoted social and educational activities and cooperative buying of farm equipment.⁶⁶ The first Indiana "farm bureaus" appeared in communities in 1912; by 1919 these and a variety of "Better Farming Associations" had created the Indiana Farm Bureau to protect and promote the interests of farmers.⁶⁷ The Indiana Farm Bureau ultimately became the most important agricultural organization in Indiana and at various times has had considerable political influence.⁶⁸

The Purdue University School of Agriculture (which first enrolled students in 1879) and its Agricultural Experiment Station



WELL INTO THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY
WOMEN OFTEN HAD
TO CARRY WATER
FOR HOUSEHOLD USE
FROM OUTSIDE PUMPS.

Reproduced from H. L. Hawley, "Small Agricultural Holdings in Two Industrial Areas in Indiana" (*Purdue University Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin*, No. 460; Lafayette, Ind., May, 1941), 5.



Fig. 2. Grasp the appliance cord by the plug when connecting or disconnecting it from the outlet. This light weight automatic iron maintains the proper ironing temperature for any fabric.

Appliance Cords

1. In handling an appliance cord, *always grasp it by the plug* and not by the cord itself. Rough handling is hard on the fine wires inside the cord, and will eventually cause them to break, and allow them to cut through the protective covering in which they are wrapped to keep them from touching each other.
2. Do not allow one of the wires to break or the insulation to become damaged permitting the two wires to come together or current will no longer travel through the cord to the appliance.
3. The appliance cord *should not* be twisted or bent. Store it where it will be reasonably straight or at least where it will not be bent sharply.
4. Watch the cord for signs of wear and make repairs before the cord becomes useless.
5. If the cord is provided with a switch, make all cord connections first, then turn the current on by means of the switch.



Fig. 3. A porcelain enamel washer is easily kept clean and the large soft rubber wringer adequately removes the water from the clothes.

Reproduced from Gail M. Redfield, "Selection, Operation, and Care of Electric Household Equipment" (*Purdue University Cooperative Extension Bulletin*, No. 215; Lafayette, Ind., March, 1937), 3-4, 5.

was undoubtedly the most prolific source of information on scientific agriculture for Indiana farmers. The station performed agricultural research and disseminated the results of research on such topics as rates of seed germination, methods of preventing oat smut, and swine fertility, as well as undertaking social scientific investigations on numerous aspects of rural life.⁶⁹ Purdue and the State Board of Agriculture undertook other outreach activities, including Farmers' Institutes and agricultural trains.⁷⁰ Ultimately, Purdue's most effective method of reaching farmers was the county agent system. Four counties already had agents when in 1913 the Indiana General Assembly passed legislation that provided support for agents from state and local taxes and placed the program under the direction of Purdue.⁷¹

The following year, the Smith-Lever Act authorized federal funding for agricultural extension work in connection with the land grant schools of agriculture "in order to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics."⁷² The Smith-Lever Act and the attention directed at agriculture and rural life in the early twentieth century were in part manifestations of the Country Life Movement, a coalescence of broad-ranging interests within the mainstream of progressive reform that focused on the problems of rural life.⁷³ Much of the impetus for the movement came from urban interests worried about the number of people leaving the countryside and concerned about the maintenance of an abundant and cheap food supply. Some rural residents found much of the Country Life Movement's critique of their lives offensive and condescending.⁷⁴ Whatever the motivation and reception, Smith-Lever funds expanded extension work in Indiana and throughout the nation.⁷⁵

The county agents, mainly graduates of Purdue, had broad mandates that included cooperating with various farmers' and youth groups, conducting demonstrations, advising farmers, and promoting agriculture and home economics education. During the 1930s county agents were given additional responsibilities for explaining New Deal programs to farmers.⁷⁶ Federal monies provided by the Smith-Lever Act also made possible the employment of county home economics agents, but their numbers lagged far behind those of the county agents. In many counties, in fact, the regular agents handled the home economics work. Even without demonstration agents women in counties throughout the state formed their own "home ec" clubs as forums to receive lessons in homemaking and to promote friendship.⁷⁷ Regional variations, however, must again be considered in assessing the impact of the county agents and home demonstration agents. Proportionately fewer of the poorer counties in southern Indiana secured agents in the first years of funding.⁷⁸



ELEVEN MEMBERS AND NINETEEN CHILDREN ATTENDED
THIS HOME ECONOMICS CLUB MEETING.

Indiana Extension Homemakers Collection, Spencer
County, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.

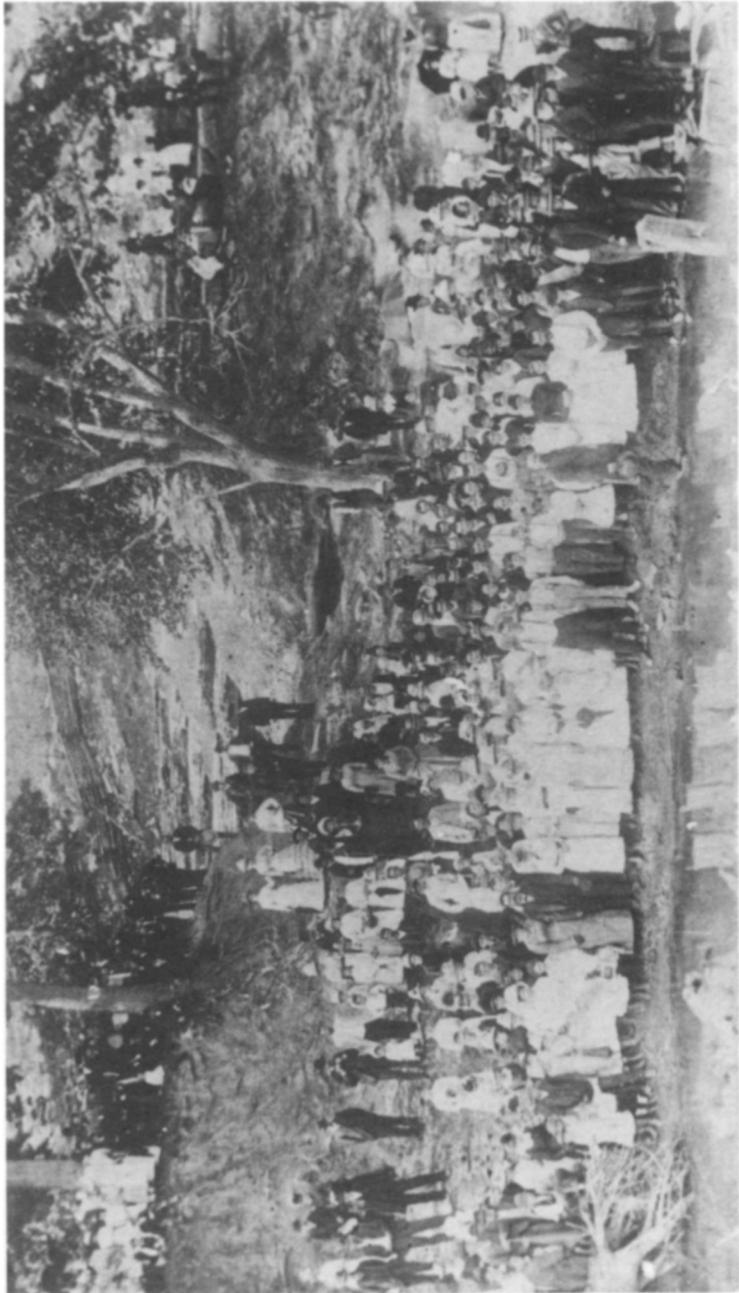
As with all "advice" literature, caution must be used in determining the actual influence of all the exhortations directed at rural residents. Whether they wrote in popular agricultural journals or in mimeographed demonstration lessons, various "experts" propounding certain agricultural methods or homemaking techniques furnish historians with information on their goals and expectations, not on actual farming and housekeeping procedures. Simply having access to the information does not mean that rural Hoosiers put it into practice. Many Hoosier farmers were not just skeptical about but hostile to "book" farming. To what extent are regional distinctions apparent in the successes and failures of the various "experts" and their programs? Which farm men and women within communities were most receptive and which were most hostile to suggestions in different publications and to the extension agents and their messages about new methods in agriculture and homemaking? Are class, ethnic, and racial differences apparent in reactions to new methods and organizations? Is there evidence of community consensus in reactions to experts?

As some of the previous questions indicate, the concept of "community" is one that must be clarified in any local study. Historians and sociologists have developed several useful models for exploring

the meaning of "community."⁷⁹ Two interesting constructs are Faragher's conclusion that dispersed open-country settlements "demonstrated communal patterns usually attributed to nucleated villages alone" and the early rural sociologist Dwight Sanderson's definition of community as the "corporate state of mind of those living in a local area, giving rise to their collective behavior. There cannot be a true community unless people think and act together."⁸⁰ Faragher's and Sanderson's models suggest a number of questions about rural Indiana communities. What were the physical boundaries of community observed in the open country? What role did networks of kin play in the creation and duration of communities? Is there evidence of exclusivity in deciding who "belonged" in the community? Determining patterns of social visiting and reciprocity in the sharing of materials and labor is another important factor in the historical reconstruction of rural communities.⁸¹

The creation and evolution of local political, religious, and educational institutions provide insight into community values in rural Indiana. Analysis of the qualifications for political participation, voting patterns, and local political leaders will also clarify both the nature of community values and the role of persistent families in rural communities. Kenneth J. Winkle's impressive study of antebellum pollbooks in Ohio revealed that a majority of voters cast their ballots only once or twice in an area before moving on but that a "core community" of between 5 to 10 percent participated in several elections. According to Winkle, these individuals "represented a persistent political and economic elite" and "used their persistence to win exaggerated influence both at the ballot box and in political office."⁸² It would be interesting to determine whether or not persistent families in Indiana communities exercised the same disproportionate degree of influence in politics and over the formation and operation of community institutions as those in Winkle's Ohio study. Questions about how rural Hoosiers perceived politics and the nature of their political participation should be incorporated into any local study.

Social historians in general have not paid enough attention to religion, a fact that is also true for the new rural history. Records of rural churches contain an abundance of information on community values and networks of relationships.⁸³ They also provide information on lay leaders and conflicts within congregations. Early twentieth century rural surveys undertaken by national churches lamented the decline in rural church membership and the intense competition that existed between different congregations within very small population areas. James H. Madison's study of rural church reform efforts from 1900 to 1950 establishes that while reformers considered over-churching because of denominational rivalries the most serious obstacle to reform, these individuals "did not show an understanding of the rural congregation itself as a



ORANGEVILLE METHODIST CHURCH BAPTISMAL SERVICE, ORANGE COUNTY, INDIANA, C. 1890S

DePauw University Archives and Special
Collections, Greencastle, Indiana.

community—a religious community of believers and a social community of friends, family, and neighbors, extending across time.”⁸⁴ In Indiana the Methodists were the most successful denomination on a statewide basis, but as Madison’s study suggests, many questions remain about the role of religious institutions within particular communities.⁸⁵ What factors within a community account for the success of a particular church? Was this success related to doctrine, the role of early circuit riders and later ministers, revivals, social and economic distinctions, or ethnicity? What roles did women play in the religious lives of their communities? Examining religious activities in rural Indiana will enhance historical understanding of changing patterns of rural behavior and values.

Explorations of the origins of rural schools in the nineteenth century and their development over time are essential in understanding rural life. When were schools initially created and how long were their sessions? What kinds of conflicts evolved over the funding and operation of rural schools in different communities? To what extent did the school term conform to the dictates of farm labor? What choices did families make in sending their children to school or keeping them home to work on the farm? Were decisions influenced by the gender of children, and did fathers and mothers differ in the values they attached to education?⁸⁶ What role did teachers play in the community, and what was their status? When did compulsory school attendance laws actually have an effect on rural communities in Indiana?⁸⁷ Any examination of rural education in Indiana will have to come to terms with the debates over control of local schools, the evolution of the township system, and the role of township trustees.⁸⁸

School consolidation is an issue of critical importance in the rural Midwest in the twentieth century because it has meant that countless rural communities have faced mergers with historic rivals and losses of local school identities. During the 1920s the John D. Rockefeller-funded General Education Board launched projects in LaGrange and Johnson counties in Indiana to demonstrate the advantages of consolidated schools financed and professionally run at the county rather than the township or district level. James H. Madison’s study of these efforts demonstrates the degree of rural opposition to loss of local control. Despite the fact that the project directors concluded that consolidation was more economical and efficient, township trustees offered strong opposition. Madison explains, “These local institutions traditionally belonged immediately and fully to the people in an organic and even personal way. The township trustee was the local government, and he was in fact the trustee of the schools, holding them in trust for the people who elected him.” Trustee opposition, Madison asserts, was not simply “narrow-minded stubbornness” and “self-interest”; it reflected the local determination that “strangers would not run their schools.”

As Madison concludes, "Only gradually and in piecemeal fashion did local communities in Indiana and the Midwest painfully and often inexpertly consolidate their schools. Not yet do Johnson, LaGrange, and most of Indiana's other ninety-two counties have county-wide school corporations, and not yet have the differences reflected in the debates of the 1920s been fully resolved."⁶⁹

Although the impact of school consolidation is undoubtedly one of the most important issues to consider in examining changes in rural life in the twentieth century, several other broad themes in twentieth-century history also had enormous repercussions on the lives of rural Hoosiers. Studies of rural life in twentieth-century Indiana must assess the impacts of World War I and World War II, the Great Depression, and various policies of the federal government directed at the agricultural sector. Statistics indicate that Hoosier farmers, like their counterparts in other midwestern states, expanded production and experienced sharply rising prices during World War I but suffered through lower prices in the 1920s. The early 1930s witnessed another sharp drop in prices for farm produce and also saw a decrease in job opportunities off the farm. One particularly interesting Depression-era phenomenon in Indiana was the "Back-to-the-Land" Movement in which rural migrants to towns and cities returned to their rural counties in an effort to



DISCUSSING THE 1930 FARM BUSINESS SUMMARY

Reproduced from *Twentieth Annual Report of Purdue University Department of Agricultural Extension, July 1, 1930 to June 30, 1931* (Lafayette, Ind., 1931), 51.

live off the land. Since many of these individuals returned to economically depressed rural areas in southern Indiana, they exacerbated the already difficult conditions in these counties.⁹⁰ The implementation of the New Deal Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA), which sought to deal with overproduction by paying farmers to cut back production of certain staple crops, did little for landless and small farmers, especially in southern Indiana. Reflecting the continued domination of corn and hogs in Indiana, a comparable proportion of subsidies in Indiana was paid to producers in these two areas, and as in other states, the largest producers were the primary beneficiaries. Consideration of local case studies will aid historians' understanding of the effects of the New Deal on rural life, not only in terms of the AAA but in connection with jobs provided for rural residents through the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration. Certainly the Rural Electrification Administration had an extraordinary impact on rural life in Indiana during the 1930s and 1940s. World War II had contradictory outcomes for rural Hoosiers. It promoted agricultural recovery through the increased demand for agricultural products and workers; but more importantly, through the creation of new jobs in war-related industries, it made more off-farm employment available for rural Hoosiers and ultimately speeded the exodus from Hoosier farms. Perhaps the most important theme of the past forty years has been the steadily decreasing proportion of the Indiana population on farms and in rural areas, a trend that began in the mid-nineteenth century.

As early as 1850 rural Indiana had become more important as a source than as a destination for migrants. This was particularly true for the oldest settled region of the state, southern Indiana. Mid-nineteenth-century outmigration involved individuals seeking what they perceived as better agricultural opportunities further west, but increasingly, rural outmigration in Indiana, and other states, reflected improved agricultural efficiency during the second half of the nineteenth century.⁹¹ In Indiana 52.2 percent of the workforce was engaged in agriculture in 1880; in 1900, 38.1 percent; and by 1920, 26.3 percent.⁹² The dominant trend, particularly in the twentieth century, has been toward fewer but larger farms.⁹³ These changes are mirrored in other population figures. In 1850 only 4.5 percent of the Indiana population was urban (defined as living in a city over 2,500); in 1880 the figure was still below 20 percent; but by 1950 almost 60 percent of the population was so designated.⁹⁴ Not only had the urban population grown from one-fifth to three-fifths in the seventy years from 1880 to 1950 but the nonfarm rural population had also grown larger than the farm population. In addition, increasing numbers of families that continued to farm, particularly those with smaller farms, supplemented their farm incomes with off-farm employment, by women as well as men. By

1950 the total nonfarm rural population was 909,874, and the total farm population was 667,154.⁹⁵ In the next forty years the farm population fell to 188,133, and the nonfarm rural population rose to 1,760,009. By 1990 only 9.66 percent of rural Hoosiers lived on farms, which represented a scant 3.39 percent of the total population.⁹⁶ The repercussions for rural communities of the population shifts away from farming and away from rural areas in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries require careful historical investigation.⁹⁷ Economists, sociologists, and anthropologists have undertaken most of the research on the continuing exodus from farming and the economic strategies employed by farm families, but historians examining social and economic processes over time have much to add to an interdisciplinary dialogue about agrarianism, farming, and rural life in the late twentieth century.⁹⁸

Finally, as several earlier questions and comments have indicated, explorations of rural life and agricultural developments in Indiana during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries should include the variables of race, ethnicity, and gender.⁹⁹ In 1850 less than 6 percent of the state's population was foreign-born, and blacks made up only 1.14 percent of the total population. By 1900 5.6 percent of the state's population was foreign-born, and blacks accounted for 2.29 percent of the population. In 1920 blacks still accounted for only 3 percent of the population, and the percentage of foreign-born had dropped to 5. Indiana was the "least ethnically diverse" state in the Old Northwest.¹⁰⁰ Within Indiana in the nineteenth century both blacks and foreign-born were more likely to be urban than rural residents, a pattern that persisted throughout the twentieth century.¹⁰¹ Immigrants and blacks, although obviously not a large proportion of the rural Indiana population, nonetheless merit attention because they lived and raised families in rural areas, worked as farmers and farm laborers, and settled in clusters in some rural communities.¹⁰²

Kathleen Neils Conzen points out that immigrant experiences have not received much attention in rural sociology and agricultural history. She reminds those writing the new rural history that "the lively debate . . . over agrarian complicity in capitalist transformation . . . cannot be fully resolved until the immigrant farmer is taken into account." Conzen asks if Old World customs survived and influenced lifestyles and farming methods and further notes that if "immigrant values could shape a distinctive rural way of life, the same freedom must have existed for their native-born counterparts."¹⁰³ Studies of rural Indiana might thus explore the connections between race and ethnicity and differences and similarities with natives in farming methods, investment strategies, and retention of land within families.¹⁰⁴ As conflicting interpretations of the Ku Klux Klan indicate, the attitudes of the white, Protestant, native-born, rural Hoosiers toward racial and ethnic minorities also

need to be better understood.¹⁰⁵ Certainly race and ethnicity must be factored into any analysis of rural women.

Historical research on rural women, although still predominantly on white European-American women, challenges the applicability of the urban-based paradigm of separate spheres for understanding the historical experiences of women who were part of family-based agricultural production units in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁰⁶ It also calls into question explanations of the development of market-oriented agriculture that are oblivious to gender differences in farm families' adaptations to commercial agriculture. Recent scholarship on rural women has revealed interesting variations in work patterns.¹⁰⁷ This research suggests that on wheat- and corn-producing farms on the prairies and Great Plains, work was clearly gender-defined, and women had at best marginal roles in connection with the commercial crops; but on dairy farms in the East and upper Midwest, scholars have found that there was more work sharing and that women had critical roles in the farming operation.¹⁰⁸ Since it seems possible that both patterns existed in Indiana, it is worth summarizing some of the most important conclusions of this research.

Faragher, who carefully delineates women's tasks on the Illinois prairies around Sugar Creek, emphasizes their extraordinarily heavy work loads and the essential nature of their role within the family. He documents some important changes in women's lives, including declines in fertility and amount of household manufacturing from the 1830s to the 1860s, but his conclusions are grim; in patriarchal Sugar Creek women were unequal and largely excluded from the community:

Farmers found themselves better able than their wives to break free from the responsibilities of farm work to participate in the larger social world—participation that could take place because their women labored at home with children, cows, and chickens. Men could pursue the work of the public world precisely because the inequitable division of labor at home made them beneficiaries of women's and children's labor. The farming household exploited women as wives, and this constituted a central dynamic of the social system.¹⁰⁹

Researchers on dairy operations in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, while acknowledging that the farm with its "patriarchal legal restrictions, offered women little ultimate control over their wealth, property, or even their labor," have reached more positive conclusions about the experiences of rural women. Joan Jensen, in *Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women, 1750–1850*, describes the personal satisfaction and societal esteem women derived from the development of the women-centered butter-making industry in the Brandywine Valley of southeastern Pennsylvania and northern Delaware. "They preserved, almost intact, a self-sufficient household economy that provided a firm foundation for the market production of the farms," she notes. "They provided

most of the uninstitutionalized welfare for the rural population and organized their own labor into efficient farm units, both as managers and as a work force." Jensen observes that "most country-women found satisfaction and comfort in their rural lives" and concluded that they had "loosened the bonds of the traditional rural family in small but significant ways; it was reduced in size, less subject to male control, and modified by female experimentation and productivity."¹¹⁰ Nancy Grey Osterud's study of nineteenth-century rural women in the Nanticoke Valley of New York is even more explicit in challenging the patriarchal oppression and inequality of farm women. Again recognizing that "inequality was still deeply embedded in women's and men's relationships to the land," Osterud nonetheless asserts that the lives of her rural women "directly contradicted the prescriptions of separate spheres" and represented a rejection of "the terms of the dominant ideology." Their involvement in dairying and the centrality of this work to the economy "ensured that at least this form of women's work was recognized and valued by men." Osterud believes that the mutual work of men and women on the farm and the importance of the kinship network "helped to mitigate the hierarchical nature of property and authority relations between men and women." Women expanded "existing areas of commonality" and constructed "new modes of sharing between women and men. In struggling to improve their own lives women enhanced the quality of life for men as well."¹¹¹

Similarly, Mary Neth in her work on rural women in early twentieth-century Wisconsin dairy farming concludes that the exchange and trade of the products of women's labor was "central to building the consistent patterns of resource and labor sharing within rural neighborhoods." Like Osterud, Neth reiterates the importance of kinship ties in rural communities. "Rather than being sharply defined by a separate sphere of gender, women's identity encompassed their roles as women, as family members, and as friends and neighbors in the rural community. While women's work was sometimes gender-defined, it was not segregated from the work of the family or the community . . . While gender did shape the lives of women, it was only one of their points of reference."¹¹² Although land ownership conformed to patriarchal dictates, several of these studies suggest significant "cracks in the mold" in other areas. Further research on rural areas throughout the country will be necessary to test these conclusions about gender roles on different farming operations and to ascertain other patterns that reflect not only geographic regions and types of farms but also class, race, and ethnicity.

Rural women in Indiana offer myriad possibilities for historical research. In addition to exploring the nature of their household labor, studies of rural women in Indiana must determine which kinds of farm labor were undertaken by women and the role of gen-

der in the assignment of farm work roles. To what extent did social class determine women's farm chores? Were some chores clearly gendered and others gender neutral? If women worked in the fields was this labor acknowledged and valued within the family and community? How was women's farm labor altered by technological changes in farming methods and equipment?

Rural women in early-twentieth-century Indiana engaged in a wide variety of income-producing activities on family farms: among other tasks they grew truck gardens, raised chickens, and made butter. How essential was this work to their families' economic survival, and was it recognized by their families? What were the varieties and specific characteristics of women's income-producing work on farms, and how did these change over time? How extensive was noncash trading within the community? What was the nature of women's trade with town merchants and traveling hucksters? Was any of it on a noncash basis? Were women engaged in direct marketing of their products to their own customers in town? What was the significance of women's participation in trading and selling in the local economy? What factors were most significant in the decline of women's farm-based income-producing activities? Indiana women's paid employment off the farm has steadily



WOMEN OFTEN HELPED WITH FIELD WORK ON THE FARM, ESPECIALLY IN PLANTING AND HARVEST TIMES.

Indiana Extension Homemakers Collection, Hendricks County, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.

increased in the twentieth century. What factors were most influential in leading women to seek wages off the farm? What impact did technological changes in farming, housework, transportation, and in off-farm job opportunities have on decisions to work for wages off the farm? To what extent is paid employment related to rural women's racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds? Explorations of rural life, particularly in the twentieth century, must also include rural women and men who were not engaged in agricultural pursuits at all.

Preliminary research on rural women in early-twentieth-century Indiana based primarily on the massive oral history project of the Indiana Extension Homemakers Association suggests some tentative conclusions regarding these questions and links Hoosier women to recent historiography on agrarian women generally. Although women's work was often distinguished from male tasks on Indiana farms, there were many exceptions when women joined men in farm labor, especially in dairy operations and on smaller holdings.¹¹³ Furthermore, women's gendered work was not cut off from the family's work or from gender-integrated communities of kin, neighbors, and friends. Women were pivotal, in fact central, players in nurturing and maintaining the personal social and economic links that bound rural Hoosiers in their interdependent communities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was, for example, the products of women's labor, not the market crops, that were exchanged within the neighborhood or rural community in the early decades of the twentieth century. Rural Hoosier women maintained the family gardens and had responsibility for the processing and distribution of the produce. They traded fresh produce and canned goods with kin and neighbors, exchanges that enhanced the diversity of their diets and strengthened ties of community mutuality. It is also evident that through their dealings with local hucksters and store owners many early-twentieth-century Hoosier women were active participants in the local economy and made significant contributions to their families' incomes.¹¹⁴ Trading with neighbors and relatives was based on trust and reciprocity, but women's dealings with hucksters and town merchants involved exact accounting on both sides.¹¹⁵

From this evidence in the oral histories it appears that Neth's conclusions for early-twentieth-century Wisconsin are echoed in several Indiana communities for the same period: the products of women's labor formed the nucleus of local trade, women were the primary nurturers of community bonds, and they were not consigned to a distinct gendered world. Yet it is also likely that historical research on some nineteenth- and twentieth-century rural communities and on the large wheat-growing farms in northern Indiana may well reveal patterns similar to those observed by Faragher in Sugar Creek, Illinois, and Deborah Fink on the

Nebraska plains. The regional variations within Indiana and the distinctive farming regions highlighted in the early twentieth century afford scholars voluminous research possibilities. The most valuable of this research will tie the experiences of rural Indiana women in their homes and communities to the large-scale economic, social, and political processes that shaped the history of the entire nation.

William Tyner, fretting about his delayed harvest and about whether or not he would be able to market his crops, was himself an actor in the capitalist transformation of the United States in the nineteenth century. New rural historians have uncovered different patterns of adaptation, resistance, and change in nineteenth-century rural communities across the country, but regardless of the form, time, or region, the countryside was affected by this transformation and was an integral part of it. Similarly, rural Hoosier homemakers who left their farmhouses to drive to paid employment were players in the vast economic, social, and technological changes in post–World War II American society. Many elderly Hoosiers interviewed for the IEHA oral history project noted this expansion of the paid female work force. “Very few women worked outside the home,” an Elkhart County woman asserted. “The kitchen was their throne room, but today they have their own life and work outside the home. I can’t say it is a bad thing, but that is a significant change.”¹¹⁶ The same challenge awaits scholars who undertake studies as different as a reconstruction of life in rural Decatur County in William Tyner’s day and an analysis of the decline of home egg production and the increase in off-farm work for women in central Indiana in the years after World War II: the necessity of linking the histories of individuals, families, and communities to the transformative economic, social, and political processes that affected the entire nation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

By making these connections, historians just might be able to explain why the old ways of rural Hoosier Alvah Watson’s youth are gone. Watson’s lament, recorded in the early 1980s for the IEHA oral history project, captures what may be the essence of the lingering appeal of traditional rural life:

I just wonder—we live life so fast now. It is just like a big game of whip cracker. You’re on the tail end and you’re traveling so fast that you can’t hardly hold on and you’re afraid to let go.

I do wish sometimes that we could just stop this fast-moving world long enough to say, “Good morning,” or “How are you?” or “Is there anything I can do to help you?”¹¹⁷

Endnotes

¹ William P. and Margaret Tyner to John and Nancy Merrick, December 3, 1855, William P. Tyner Papers (Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana).

² Weather featured prominently in letters and diaries of nineteenth-century Indiana farmers. Several diarists noted the weather before any other matters and sometimes recorded only the weather in their diaries or journals. For examples see J. Edgar Scholl Diary, 1900–1901; Henry Baker Diaries, 1875–1911; Thomas B. Faucett Diaries, 1873–1881; William R. Hackelman Diaries, 1821–1862; and Aggie F. Lafuse Diaries, 1860–1879, all at the Indiana Historical Society.

Illness is often discussed in these documents. In addition to the Tyner Collection see the Jacob Weaver Collection, 1814–1824, and John M. Killian Diaries, 1900–1904, Indiana Historical Society. Interviews from the Indiana Extension Homemakers Association (IEHA) Oral History Project contain abundant evidence of sickness, home remedies, and the lack of medical care in rural communities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Typescripts of the interviews are deposited at the Indiana Historical Society. Published excerpts from interviews on this topic are contained primarily in Eleanor Arnold, ed., *Girlhood Days (Memories of Hoosier Homemakers*, Vol. IV; [Indianapolis, 1987]).

Patterns of work sharing and wages paid to neighboring farmers and youths are evident in account books, diaries, and the IEHA oral histories. See Eleanor Arnold, ed., *Feeding Our Families (Memories of Hoosier Homemaker*, Vol. I; [Indianapolis, 1983]). Two examples from the collections of the Indiana Historical Society are the Thomas Beeson Papers, 1849–1902, and John Lloyd Diaries, 1867–1876. As a young man Beeson farmed some land with his brother but spent much of his time working for wages around the neighborhood. Lloyd often hired nearby youths to help in his farming operation, but he also worked for wages himself and traded labor with neighboring farmers.

³ Since the Middle West quickly developed into a leading agricultural region in the second half of the nineteenth century, midwestern agriculture has received considerable scholarly attention. A short list of some book-length studies for the nineteenth century includes: Jeremy Atack and Fred Bateman, *To Their Own Soil: Agriculture in the Antebellum North* (Ames, Iowa, 1987); Allan G. Bogue, *Money at Interest: The Farm Mortgage on the Middle Border* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1955); Bogue, *From Prairie to Cornbelt: Farming on the Illinois and Iowa Prairies in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, 1963); Clarence Danhof, *Change in Agriculture: The Northern States, 1820–1870* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969); Paul W. Gates, *Landlords and Tenants on the Prairie Frontier: Studies in American Land Policy* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1973); Robert P. Swierenga, *Pioneers and Profits: Land Speculation on the Iowa Frontier* (Ames, Iowa, 1976); Donald L. Winters, *Farmers without Farms: Agricultural Tenancy in Nineteenth-Century Iowa* (Westport, Conn., 1978); Lou Ferleger, ed., *Agriculture and National Development: Views on the Nineteenth Century* (Ames, Iowa, 1990); Alan I. Marcus, *Agricultural Science and the Quest for Legitimacy: Farmers, Agricultural Colleges, and the Experiment Stations, 1870–1890* (Ames, Iowa, 1985); Earl W. Hayter, *The Troubled Farmer, 1850–1900: Rural Adjustment to Industrialism* (Dekalb, Ill., 1968).

Although agricultural and economic historians have done more work on the nineteenth than on the twentieth century, there are a number of twentieth-century studies. See, for example: Gilbert Fite, *American Farmers: The New Minority* (Bloomington, Ind., 1981); Theodore Saloutos, *Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West, 1900–1939* (Madison, Wis., 1951); Saloutos, *The American Farmer and the New Deal* (Ames, Iowa, 1982); Richard S. Kirkendall, *Social Scientists and Farm Policy in the Age of Roosevelt* (Columbia, Mo., 1966); John L. Shover, *First Majority, Last Majority: The Transforming of Rural Life in America* (Dekalb, Ill., 1976); Allen J. Matusow, *Farm Policies and Politics in the Truman Years* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967); Mary W. M. Hargreaves, *Dry Farming in the Northern Great Plains, 1900–1925* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957); Hargreaves, *Dry Farming in the Northern Great Plains: Years of Readjustment, 1920–1990* (Lawrence, Kans., 1992); Christina Campbell, *The Farm Bureau and the New Deal: A Study of the Making of National Farm Policy, 1933–1940* (Urbana, Ill., 1962).

⁴ Robert P. Swierenga, "Theoretical Perspectives on the New Rural History: From Environmentalism to Modernization," *Agricultural History*, LVI (July, 1982), 496.

⁵ More recent scholarship is available on Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Minnesota, and Nebraska. The persistence of strong agricultural and rural identities in states such as Iowa and Nebraska has undoubtedly influenced research interests at universities in those states. Both the University of Iowa and Iowa State University presses, for example, publish series with an agrarian focus, and both institutions have history faculty members with primary research interests in rural life. The University of Wisconsin, along with Cornell University, pioneered in the field of rural sociology, and this undoubtedly influenced historical research at those institutions.

Perhaps it comes down to interests of faculty members at universities and their influence on the research choices of their graduate students. Although members of the School of Agriculture at Purdue University have produced numerous studies on various aspects of rural life in Indiana, published as Experiment Station bulletins, bibliographic searches have not revealed extensive historical or sociological interest in the study of rural life at either Purdue University or Indiana University. At the Krannert Library at Purdue University, which houses the collection on agricultural economics, there is a complete microfilm collection of the United States censuses for agriculture on the southern states in the nineteenth century, but not for Indiana.

⁶ The pioneer and settlement period has received extensive treatment in the historiography of Indiana. Examples of some of the earliest works are: John B. Dillon, *A History of Indiana from its Earliest Explorations by Europeans, to the Close of Territorial Government, in 1816 . . .* (Indianapolis, 1859); William M. Cockrum, *Pioneer History of Indiana Including Stories, Incidents and Customs of the Early Settlers* (Oakland City, Ind., 1907); Frances and Frank Streightoff, *Indiana: A Social and Economic Survey* (Indianapolis, 1916); Logan Esarey, *A History of Indiana from Its Exploration to 1850* (Indianapolis, 1915); Esarey, *A History of Indiana from 1850 to the Present* (Indianapolis, 1918). (In later editions these two works are labeled volumes I and II.) The best pioneer study remains R. Carlyle Buley, *The Old Northwest: Pioneer Period, 1815-1840* (2 vols., Indianapolis, 1950).

⁷ Most state histories of Indiana contain informative chapters on the history of agriculture but little on rural social history. See John D. Barnhart and Donald F. Carmony, *Indiana: From Frontier to Industrial Commonwealth* (4 vols., New York, 1954), vol. I, chap. XX, vol. II, chap. XI; Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1850-1880* (Indianapolis, 1965), chap. IX; Clifton J. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition, 1880-1920* (Indianapolis, 1968), chap. IV. The one exception, in which rural life receives more consideration, is James H. Madison, *Indiana through Tradition and Change: A History of the Hoosier State and Its People, 1920-1945* (Indianapolis, 1982).

⁸ Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 363; Phillips, *Indiana in Transition*, 135. A recent study of the Midwest had few citations to Indiana in its discussions drawing on the new rural history. See Andrew R. L. Cayton and Peter S. Onuf, *The Midwest and the Nation: Rethinking the History of an American Region* (Bloomington, Ind., 1990).

⁹ Indiana has by far the highest state membership in the Extension Homemaker Clubs, groups originally formed for rural women in the early twentieth century. Further, county fairs continue to thrive, and 4-H memberships, after declines in the 1980s, are on the rise. Jackie Bauman, homemaker extension agent, Putnam County, Indiana, conversations with author, June, 1992; Darryl Thomas, extension educator, Putnam County, remarks at Putnam County Historical Society session, "Our Putnam County 4-H Fair: History and Highlights," Greencastle, Indiana, July 15, 1993.

¹⁰ Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude, "Introduction," in *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation: Essays in the Social History of Rural America*, ed. Hahn and Prude (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1985), 8.

¹¹ Swierenga, "Theoretical Perspectives on the New Rural History," 496; Hahn and Prude, "Introduction," 9.

¹² Hal S. Barron, "Listening to the Silent Majority: Change and Continuity in the Nineteenth-Century Rural North," in Ferleger, *Agriculture and National Development*, 4. The new rural history and rural sociology ask many of the same questions, and much of the work by rural sociologists is very useful for historians. See Barron, "The New Rural History," *Rural Sociologist*, IV (No. 2, 1984), 112-16; Edward O. Moe, "Toward Greater Collaboration Between the New Rural History

and Rural Sociology," *ibid.*, 117-20; Michael J. McDonald, "Rural Social History and Rural Sociology: An Historian's Perspective," *ibid.*, 121-24.

¹³ Barron, "Listening to the Silent Majority," 3. Additional comments on the lack of attention to rural history are found in Robert P. Swierenga, "The New Rural History: Defining the Parameters," *Great Plains Quarterly*, I (Fall, 1981), 211-12.

¹⁴ These studies, particularly John Mack Faragher's *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (New Haven, Conn., 1986); Joan Jensen's *Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women, 1750-1850* (New Haven, Conn., 1986); Hal S. Barron's *Those Who Stayed Behind: Rural Society in Nineteenth-Century New England* (Cambridge, England, 1984), and Nancy Grey Osterud's *Bonds of Community: The Lives of Farm Women in Nineteenth Century New York* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1991), demonstrate the extraordinary richness and complexity of the new rural social history.

¹⁵ Rural sociologists and anthropologists have undertaken far more work on twentieth-century sources than historians.

¹⁶ Faragher, *Sugar Creek*, quotation 237. Two other relevant works by Faragher are "History from the Inside-Out: Writing the History of Women in Rural America," *American Quarterly*, XXXIII (Winter, 1981), 537-57; and *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* (New Haven, Conn., 1979).

¹⁷ John Mack Faragher, "Open-Country Community: Sugar Creek, Illinois, 1820-1850," in Hahn and Prude, *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation*, 245.

¹⁸ Faragher, *Sugar Creek*, 187, 204-209, 237.

¹⁹ Both the Indiana Historical Society and the Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, have several manuscript collections with relevant materials far too numerous to list here, but the range includes several individual and family letters and diaries, organizational records (for example, the Indiana Grange papers at the state library), and company records (such as those of the Oliver Chilled Plow Works at the IHS). Indiana State University, Terre Haute, houses the manuscripts from the Indiana Federal Writers Project. These materials, organized by county, contain some interesting local folklore, but much of the material is taken from existing county histories.

Other sources include genealogy materials; small-town newspapers; the agricultural press; Purdue University Extension Service publications; federal government publications, especially census publications and those by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA); the Indiana State Board of Agriculture's *Annual Reports*; records of rural churches; research by early rural sociologists; and investigative reports on rural churches and schools. A sampling of some of these sources includes: U.S., *Seventh Census, 1850*; U.S., *Eighth Census, 1860*: Vol. II, *Agriculture*; U.S., *United States Census of Agriculture, 1925*: Part I, *Northern States*; National Archives and Records, *The 1920 Federal Population Census: Catalogue of National Archives Microfilm* (Washington, D.C., 1991); *Hoosier Farmer*; United States Department of Agriculture Statistical Reporting Service and Purdue University Agriculture Experiment Station, *Indiana Crop and Livestock Statistics—Historic Crop Summary, 1866-1969* (West Lafayette, Ind., 1974); *State Conference on Agriculture and Country Life in Indiana* (Purdue University Agricultural Extension Bulletin, No. 26; Lafayette, Ind., June, 1913); C.A. Norman, *Tenant Houses for Farm Labor* (*ibid.*, No. 73; Lafayette, Ind., November, 1918); Lynn Robertson, et al., *Rural Youth In Indiana* (Purdue University Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin, No. 467; Lafayette, Ind., April, 1942); F. V. Smith and O. G. Lloyd, *Part-Time Farming in Indiana* (*ibid.*, No. 410; Lafayette, Ind., April, 1936); F. V. Smith, *Farm Family Incomes and Expenses of Low-Income Farm Families in Indiana* (*ibid.*, No. 485; Lafayette, Ind., July, 1943; Walter W. Wilcox and O. G. Lloyd, *The Human Factor in the Management of Indiana Farms* (*ibid.*, No. 369; Lafayette, Ind., August, 1932); "Social and Labor Needs of Farm Women" (*USDA Reports*, No. 103; Washington, D.C., 1915); Charles Josiah Galpin, *Rural Life* (New York, 1918); A. C. True, "Some Problems of the Rural Common School," *Yearbook of the USDA*, 1901 (Washington, D.C., 1902); and Department of Church and Country Life of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., *A Rural Survey in Indiana* (New York, 1911).

²⁰ The term "hardy pioneer" is not a label chosen by later historians. William C. Latta in his *Outline History of Indiana Agriculture* (Lafayette, Ind., 1938) offered the following (and fairly typical) commentary:

The Hardy Pioneer— . . . They were predominantly robust, hopeful, and brave. No others would venture, or if they did, a taste was sufficient and they turned back, a timely warning to others like themselves. Many if not most of the early settlers were young married people who came with the dual purpose of carving a home out of the wilderness and of rearing a family therein (p. 62).

Some of the best examples of "hardy pioneer" literature that nostalgically glorified settlers are found in the early issues of the *Indiana Magazine of History*. See, for example, Rolla M. Hogue, "Life in Indiana, 1800–1820," *Indiana Magazine of History*, IX (March, 1913), 83–92; James Albert Woodburn, "Local Life and Color in the New Purchase," *ibid.*, (December, 1913), 215–33; William F. Vogel, "Homelife in Early Indiana," *ibid.*, X (June, 1914), 1–29; Robert Weems, "Settlement of Worthington and Old Point Commerce," *ibid.*, XII (March, 1916), 60–83; James B. Lewis, "Pioneers of Jefferson County," *ibid.*, (September, 1916), 214–44; and Avril S. Barr, "Warrick County Prior to 1818," *ibid.*, XIV (December, 1918), 304–31.

County histories, not only those written in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but more recent ones, similarly extol the virtues of early settlers. They are nonetheless extremely valuable as sources of information on founding families.

²¹ For a succinct overview of these differences and the causes, see James H. Madison, *The Indiana Way: A State History* (Indianapolis, 1986), chaps. I and IV.

²² Although this essay will not discuss Indian-white relations, the topic needs to be examined in explorations of the early periods of white settlement in all regions of Indiana. Studies of different Indian tribes that lived in what became Indiana are: Bert Anson, *The Miami Indians* (Norman, Okla., 1970); R. David Edmunds, *The Potawatomis: Keepers of the Fire* (Norman, Okla., 1978); Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln, Neb., 1983); and Edmunds, *Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership* (Boston, 1984). An interesting examination of Indian-white interaction is John L. Larson and David G. Vanderstel, "Agent of Empire: William Conner on the Indiana Frontier, 1800–1855," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXXX (December, 1984), 301–28.

²³ Southern Indiana, the first area settled, was also the first area to experience outmigration as settlers moved on to find better lands than the unglaciated, hilly regions. Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 363.

²⁴ Gregory S. Rose, "Hoosier Origins: The Nativity of Indiana's United States-Born Population in 1850," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXXXI (September, 1985), 201–32. Rose, "Upland Southerners: The County Origins of Southern Migrants to Indiana by 1850," *ibid.*, LXXXII (September, 1986), 242–63. Rose's work is more precise than earlier work in that he has been able to track the counties of origin of many of the migrants. Southern origins of Hoosiers has been long recognized. See, for example, John D. Barnhart, "The Southern Influence in the Formation of Indiana," *ibid.*, XXXIII (September, 1937), 261–76; Barnhart, "Sources of Southern Migration into the Old Northwest," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXII (June, 1935), 49–62; and Elfrieda Lang, "Southern Migration to Northern Indiana before 1850," *Indiana Magazine of History*, L (December, 1954), 349–56.

²⁵ The Northwest Ordinance prohibited slavery in the Northwest Territory. There has been considerable discussion of this issue and several other features of the ordinances of the 1780s. Recent scholarship on the Northwest Ordinance includes: Peter Onuf, *Statehood and Union: A History of the Northwest Ordinance* (Bloomington, Ind., 1987); Paul Finkelman, "Slavery and the Northwest Ordinance: A Study in Ambiguity," *Journal of the Early Republic*, VI (Winter, 1986), 343–70; and the special issue of the *Indiana Magazine of History* on the Northwest Ordinance, LXXXIV (March, 1988).

Although some of the upland southerners who settled in Indiana, primarily Quakers from North Carolina, opposed the institution of slavery because of the evils it inflicted upon those in bondage, most migrants to Indiana who opposed slavery were motivated by their own self-interests as small farmers. For information on Quakers from North Carolina, see Rose, "Quakers, North Carolinians, and Blacks in Indiana's Settlement Pattern," *Journal of Cultural Geography*, VII (Fall/Winter, 1986), 35–46.

²⁶ Madison, *Indiana Way*, 61.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Richard Lyle Power, *Planting Corn Belt Culture: The Impress of the Upland Southerner and Yankee in the Old Northwest* (Indianapolis, 1953), *passim*. Another

interesting study of Indiana in the early nineteenth century is John Modell, "Family and Fertility on the Indiana Frontier, 1820," *American Quarterly*, XXIII (December, 1971), 615-34.

²⁹ James M. Bergquist, "Tracing the Origins of a Midwestern Culture: The Case of Central Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXXVII (March, 1981), 26, 27. Bergquist maintains that "long-term economic forces were working to develop in central Indiana an agriculture and a way of life based upon a market economy such as had been developed in the Miami country a few years before." *Ibid.*, 26.

³⁰ Paul W. Gates, "Land Policy and Tenancy in Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History*, XXXV (March, 1939), 4. There was an increase in squatting after the War of 1812 because the threat of the British and their Indian allies was removed. "While the government was committed to orderly disposal of the public domain, the rapid advance of settlement and the attendant rise in squatting over vast tracts of the public lands threatened its careful plans. District land offices in Indiana and Illinois reported intruders in increasing numbers." Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *The Land Office Business: The Settlement and Administration of American Public Lands, 1789-1837* (New York, 1968), 92.

³¹ Jane R. Nolan, "Agricultural Development in Seventeen Counties in Southwestern Indiana, 1730-1900" (Indianapolis, 1988), 4. This work was prepared under the auspices of the Department of History, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis as part of the Resource Protection Planning Process, Indiana Regional Divisions.

³² R. T. Brown, "Review of Agriculture in Indiana," Indiana State Board of Agriculture, *Thirtieth Report* (1880), 217.

³³ Such settlements should not be seen as antithetical to community. See Faragher, "Open-Country Community," 237.

³⁴ Gates, "Land Policy and Tenancy in Indiana," 6.

³⁵ Rose, "Hoosier Origins," 228. Of Indiana's American-born population born outside the state in 1850, only 2.7 percent had come from the New England states compared to 44 percent from the southern states. *Ibid.*, 212, 214. See also Thomas J. Schlereth, "The New England Presence on the Midwest Landscape," *Old Northwest*, IX (Summer, 1983), 125-42.

³⁶ Gates, "Land Policy and Tenancy in Indiana," 6. In the *Indiana Magazine of History* article, several other journal articles, and his book, *Landlords and Tenants on the Prairie Frontier*, Gates argues that speculators were responsible for high rates of tenancy in such areas since new farmers could not afford the land at the inflated prices; and farmers who had lost land, often to speculators, were forced into tenancy. Allan G. Bogue and Robert P. Swierenga, in their studies of Iowa, however, emphasize that with the huge amount of land made available by the government it was not possible for speculators to secure enough land to set prices. They argue that a competitive market, not speculators, affected land prices. See Bogue, *From Prairie to Cornbelt*, and Swierenga, *Pioneers and Profits*.

³⁷ Gates, "Land Policy and Tenancy in Indiana," 18. At midcentury the northern prairie counties of Benton, Newton, and Jasper were virtually undeveloped, and the same was true for parts of White, Tippecanoe, and Warren counties. "It was not until well into the eighteen-sixties that these counties began to develop and much of their land was not improved until after 1880." *Ibid.*

³⁸ Paul W. Gates, "Hoosier Cattle Kings," *Indiana Magazine of History*, XLIV (March, 1948), 1-24. Scholars continue to debate Gates's thesis that high rates of tenancy coincide with land speculation. More recent Iowa studies that do not indicate a correlation between farm renting and speculation are: Seddie Cogswell, *Tenure, Nativity, and Age as Factors in Iowa Agriculture, 1850-1880* (Ames, Iowa, 1975); and Winters, *Farmers without Farms*. It is worth noting that the detailed economic analyses on Iowa have not been replicated for Indiana. Such studies will be necessary to determine whether or not Gates's interpretation about land speculation in northern Indiana holds up. Winters has published a useful essay on the historiographical debates on tenancy: "Agricultural Tenancy in the Nineteenth-Century Middle West: The Historiographical Debate," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXXVIII (June, 1982), 128-53. The article does not address tenancy in Indiana *per se*; its conclusions are based on Winters's Iowa study.

³⁹ Stephen Visher, "The Geography of Indiana Agriculture," *Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of Sciences*, XXXVII (1927), 114-16. A Purdue study that designat-

ed this area as the "Western Cash Grain" region noted in 1930 that "tenant farming is more common here than elsewhere in the state, about 50 percent of the farms being rented." E. C. Young and F. F. Elliott, *Types of Farming in Indiana* (*Purdue University Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin*, No. 342, Lafayette, Ind., June, 1930), 29.

⁴⁰ Steven Hahn, "The 'Unmaking' of the Southern Yeomanry: The Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1860-1890," in Hahn and Prude, *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation*, 180.

⁴¹ Danhof, *Change in Agriculture*, 17.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴³ Hahn, "The 'Unmaking' of the Southern Yeomanry," 180.

⁴⁴ Nancy Grey Osterud, "Gender and the Transition to Capitalism in Rural America," *Agricultural History*, LXVII (Spring, 1993), 17-18.

⁴⁵ Latta, *Outline History of Indiana Agriculture*, 104. Latta came to Purdue in 1882 as the first teacher of agriculture at the institution. He was involved in the creation of the Purdue Experiment Station and ran the Farmers' Institutes until 1923. *Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁴⁶ Douglass C. North, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1961), 143.

⁴⁷ The instability of prices and the precarious nature of market participation are effectively illustrated in the early nineteenth-century experiences of Jacob Weaver, who settled near Vevay in Switzerland County. Writing to his father and brother back in New York, he explained in September, 1818, that he and his neighbors received high prices for grain because there were so many new settlers coming into the area that "have no improvements a nuff to rase a sufisency for their own use and have to buy from them." In addition, others trading in New Orleans "buy up all tay can get as long as it is cheap . . . so that the farmer can always git red of his produce with eas and at a fair wise." Only two years later, however, he reported dramatic changes: "at present our country is very extensive and perduces in abundance gits to be thick settled and abundance raised and has but one sea port no furen trade at presant so the markets are glutted and peopel can scarce sell at all but what they sell amunght a nother then cumes on the worst of all no money to be had if any good fornothing so you must sell on credit or not at all . . ." In 1823 Weaver decided to take his own crops down the Mississippi to New Orleans where he found the "trade very dull and produce very low and money very scarce so we had to trade in the best manner we could to try to sell in the best manner to not luse to much." Jacob Weaver to Jonas Weaver, September 6, 1818, July 30, 1820, July 24, 1823, Weaver Collection.

⁴⁸ F. V. Smith, "Farm and Family Incomes and Expenses of Low-Income Farm Families in Indiana." Smith defined subsistence farms or self-sufficing farms as those "where the operator spent the major part of his time on the farm and where the value of the farm products produced and used by the operator's family was 50 percent or more of the total value of all the products produced on the farm." *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁹ Not until 1850 is there detailed census data on agriculture; but the regular decennial censuses and other records, including local papers, receipts, letters, diaries or journals, wills, and account books, shed light on economic activities of Indiana farmers throughout the nineteenth century. The Fred Bateman and James D. Foust sample of rural households from the 1860 manuscript census, which includes data on townships in seventeen Indiana counties, is a valuable source for examining economic activity of rural Hoosiers in the antebellum period. The sample includes agricultural and demographic data for all households in a single rural township in each of 102 randomly selected counties in the North. Of the twenty states from which townships were drawn, Indiana had the most with seventeen. The Indiana counties in the sample are Clinton, Franklin, Fulton, Gibson, Knox, LaGrange, Morgan, Posey, Putnam, Shelby, Switzerland, Tippecanoe, Wabash, Warren, Warrick, Washington, and Wells. These counties, each represented by one township (the authors refer to counties rather than township names), are scattered throughout the state. The sample includes all data from the census of agriculture for each farm. From the population manuscripts Bateman and Foust recorded name of head of household, value of real estate, value of personal estate, plus the color, sex, age, literacy, school attendance, occupation, place of birth, and parents' nationality for each individual in the household. Their sample includes nonfarm as well as farm

residents in these rural townships. Fred Bateman and Jame D. Foust, "Agricultural and Demographic Records for Rural Households in the North, 1860" [computer file] (Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, no. 7420; Ann Arbor, Mich., 1976).

Bateman and Jeremy Atack have published several articles in addition to their book length study, *To Their Own Soil*. These include: Atack and Bateman, "Yankee Farming and Settlement in the Old Northwest: A Comparative Analysis," in *Essays on the Economy of the Old Northwest*, ed. David C. Klingaman and Richard K. Vedder (Athens, Ohio, 1987), 77-102; and Atack and Bateman, "Yeoman Farming: Antebellum America's other 'Peculiar Institution,'" in Ferleger, *Agriculture and National Development*, 25-52. Although their analysis focuses primarily on comparisons between the Northeast and the Middle West as regions, they have numerous tables for the individual states in *To Their Own Soil*. Several of their charts indicate statistics for the selected townships. The information they have coded will make it possible to compare regions within Indiana.

⁵⁰ Nolan, "Agricultural Development in Seventeen Counties in Southwestern Indiana," 34. See also Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, chap. VIII.

⁵¹ After analyzing all the factors involved in his national survey, economic historian Douglass North concluded that the decrease in "transport costs" was the single most important factor in the shift to market agriculture. North, *Economic Growth*, 143-46.

⁵² Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 362, 374.

⁵³ Barnhart and Carmony, *Indiana*, II, 207.

⁵⁴ Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 375-77. Thornbrough notes that there were few major changes in farm machinery by the 1870s but that all machinery was being improved in ways that made it easier to operate and more efficient. Precise dating of adoption of machinery is difficult because there was so much variation even within communities. It is possible to determine when various pieces of equipment became available by displays at the state fairs, which began in the 1850s, but displays do not reveal much about actual use.

A critical innovation in plows, the Oliver Chilled-Iron Plow, was developed in Indiana by James Oliver. The plow was as strong as steel but much cheaper, and Oliver's factory in South Bend had become the world's largest plow manufacturing plant by the late 1870s. *Ibid.*, 375. The papers of the Oliver Chilled-Iron Plow Company are at the Indiana Historical Society.

See also Harvey L. Carter, "Rural Indiana in Transition, 1850-1860," *Agricultural History*, XX (April, 1946), 107-21.

⁵⁵ Barnhart and Carmony, *Indiana*, II, 208.

⁵⁶ Nolan, "Agricultural Development in Seventeen Counties in Southwestern Indiana," 34.

⁵⁷ One Purdue study compared Benton County in the nearly level prairie area with Crawford County in south central Indiana to demonstrate the greatest contrast in patterns of agricultural production. See Lynn S. Robertson and Earl L. Butz, *Indiana's Agriculture: Its Output, Costs, and Trends* (Purdue University Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin, No. 523; Lafayette, Ind., August, 1947), 5. The differences between farmers with more machinery and those without labor-saving equipment are discussed in Smith, *Farm and Family Incomes and Expenses of Low Income Farm Families in Indiana*, 10-11.

⁵⁸ James Sanford Rikoon, "From Flail to Combine: Folk Culture and Technological Change in the Rural Midwest" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1986); J. Sanford Rikoon, *Threshing in the Midwest, 1820-1940: A Study of Traditional Culture and Technological Change* (Bloomington, Ind., 1988).

The impact of technology on rural women will be discussed further in relation to research possibilities on women. A model study on women and technology is Katherine Jellison, *Entitled to Power: Farm Women and Technology, 1913-1963* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1993).

⁵⁹ Jellison's *Entitled to Power* is an extremely valuable study of midwestern farm women and their attitudes toward farm and household technology. The study, although it encompasses Indiana, uses only limited sources from the state. Nonetheless, it seems likely that several of the author's conclusions for women in the region would hold for women in Indiana. In an earlier study of rural women in Kansas, Nebraska, and North and South Dakota, Jellison found that farm women strongly

desired household and communication technology and resented men for failing to recognize their wishes. One form of technology that both men and women valued was the radio. Many families acquired radios before any other household conveniences. They were less expensive, they could be run without electrical wiring, and they provided valuable information and entertainment for isolated farm families on the Great Plains. According to Jellison, radios had an enormous impact on farm women's lives. Jellison, "Women and Technology on the Great Plains, 1910–1940," *Great Plains Quarterly*, VIII (Summer, 1988), 145–57.

⁶⁰ For a discussion of the impact of the automobile on rural life in the twentieth century, see Joseph Interrante, "You Can't Go to Town in a Bathtub: Automobile Movement and the Reorganization of Rural American Space, 1900–1930," *Radical History Review*, XXI (Fall, 1979), 151–68.

⁶¹ Numerous homemakers interviewed in the *Memories of Hoosier Homemakers* series recalled their visits to town and their regrets that they still lacked indoor plumbing and electricity. Many reflected upon the transformation of their daily lives when they finally acquired the conveniences that their town and city counterparts had enjoyed for decades. The benefits of electricity were emphasized in countless lessons by the home demonstration agents, and rural Hoosiers with the means and the money enthusiastically converted. Some families acquired Delco battery packs and obtained electricity that way, but the distances in rural Indiana meant that there were long delays before entire neighborhoods were wired for electricity. See, in particular, Eleanor Arnold, ed., *Party Lines, Pumps and Privies (Memories of Hoosier Homemakers, Vol. II)*; [Indianapolis, 1984].

⁶² Madison, *Indiana through Tradition and Change*, 171. At the very end of the 1930s federal funding through the Rural Electrification Administration greatly increased the number of rural Indiana homes with electricity. In 1920 the figure was 10 percent; in 1930 it was 16.7; in 1937 it was 17.4 percent; and in 1940 it was 51.8 percent. All of the figures except 1937 are from *ibid.*

Gail Redfield, *Selection, Operation, and Care of Electric Household Equipment* (*Purdue University Cooperative Extension Bulletin*, No. 215; Lafayette, Ind., March, 1937), estimated that in 1937 more than 35,000 Indiana farms were using electricity. The total number of farms in 1935 was 200,835 so it is apparent that prior to the second half of the decade the percentage of homes with electricity had not increased much from 1930. Redfield's commentary is fairly typical in extolling the virtues of electricity for rural homes:

The use of electrical equipment for household tasks results in decided saving both in the housewife's time and energy. The total time saved by using electricity in cleaning, laundry work and cooking alone amounts to seven hours a week or a savings of one-third the time required without electricity. Similar figures might be given showing time saved through the use of electricity in sewing, refrigeration, and water systems. The saving of human energy is often more important than that of time saving and quite as striking contrasts might be given showing the saving of energy through the use of electrical household equipment. *Ibid.*, 2.

Ruth Schwartz Cowan, in *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (New York, 1983), argues that household technology did not lessen the amount of time women spent on housework. Although her argument is compelling for middle-class urban women, the IEHC oral histories offer more support for Redfield's point of view.

⁶³ Lynn Robertson and Keith Amstutz, *Telephone Problems in Rural Indiana* (*Purdue University Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin*, No. 548; Lafayette, Ind., September, 1949). See especially a chart with the following figures: in 1920, 136,140 or 66.4 percent of all Hoosier farms had telephones; in 1930, 110,333 or 60.8 percent; in 1940, 83,675 or 45.3 percent; in 1948, 118,000 or 66 percent. Robertson and Amstutz calculated that farm telephones actually decreased by 38 percent between 1920 and 1945. *Ibid.*, 3.

The telephone story involves more than numbers, however, for the quality of service for those with telephones was often abysmal. Because of obsolete or decaying equipment there was often so much static on the line that it was difficult to carry on conversations. Although rural Hoosiers may have valued neighborliness, party lines with ten and in some cases as many as seventeen or eighteen parties undoubtedly strained the bonds of community. *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶⁴ Some of these publications in Indiana and the year they first appeared are: *Indiana Farmer* (1866), *Farmers' Guide* (1888), *Farm Life* (originally *Agricultural Epitomist*, 1882), *Farm, Herd and Home* (1881), and *Up-to-Date Farming* (1898). Specialized farm journals include *Swine Breeder's Journal* (1882), *Live Stock Journal* (1889), and *Inland Poultry Journal* (1896). Information on these publications is in Phillips, *Indiana in Transition*, 141-42. A collection of writings on agriculture that gives some sense of opinions and developments earlier in the century is Herbert A. Keller, ed., *Solon Robinson, A Pioneer and Agriculturist: Selected Writings, 1825-1851* (*Indiana Historical Collections*, Vols. XXI, XXII; Indianapolis, 1936).

⁶⁵ Indiana State Board of Agriculture, *Fifth Report* (1856), xiii-xv, 31-41. The recreational aspects of the fairs were recognized early in their history. The secretary of the State Board of Agriculture noted in 1856: "The immense throng of visitors formed the most prominent feature of the late fair, and the increasing attendance illustrates the wisdom of a permanent central location for these annual gatherings. . . . Our hard working, nervous, restless population needs an annual period of relaxation, and that which comes at the close of their summer toil, uniting rest and instruction, seems best suited for this purpose." *Ibid.*, 38.

⁶⁶ Phillips, *Indiana in Transition*, 170-71.

⁶⁷ World War I definitely spurred the movement to protect the interests of farmers. In Warren County, for example, members were convinced that farmers were being drafted in disproportionate numbers. Warren County Farm Bureau Papers (Indiana Historical Society). From its beginning in Indiana the Farm Bureau made it clear that the organization was composed of respectable members of the farming community and that it was not a bunch of radicals or troublemakers. Although the local groups were often formed in order to aid the work of the county agents from Purdue, Edna Moore Colby, in *Hoosier Farmers in a New Day* (Indianapolis, 1968), hints at some tension between the Farm Bureau and Purdue on questions about the influence of the university and farmers' autonomy. Bureau members objected when "experts" at Purdue sought to direct activities of the organization. *Ibid.*, 33. See also Paul O. Turner, *They Did It in Indiana: The Story of the Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperatives* (New York, 1947).

⁶⁸ Those interested in organizational and institutional approaches to rural life in the twentieth century will find intriguing questions to explore in the relationship between the Farm Bureau and Purdue University. Although many county agents established solid relationships with Farm Bureau leaders, there is evidence to suggest that some local Farm Bureaus resented the fact that county agents tried to direct the local Farm Bureau activities and seemed to assume that the Farm Bureau was there primarily to promote the agents' programs rather than to promote the economic self-interests of the farmers. There was considerable tension between Purdue agricultural faculty and William H. Settle, Indiana Farm Bureau president from 1923 to 1934. Settle supported federal aid to agriculture and promoted the McNary-Haugen bill in the 1920s. Purdue faculty regarded him as a "misguided radical" and believed that rather than federal aid, farmers could be helped through improved farming techniques. Tracing the evolution of this institutional relationship throughout the twentieth century will make a significant contribution to the understanding of agricultural policies in Indiana. Madison, *Tradition and Change*, 173, 177.

⁶⁹ In the late nineteenth century there was no consensus about what the curriculum for the agricultural colleges should include. Throughout the country there was considerable disagreement between those who favored a practical "how to" course of study and those who supported scientific agriculture. The development of experiment stations at the agricultural schools tended to satisfy many of the objectives of both groups. See Marcus, *Agricultural Science and the Quest for Legitimacy*. In Indiana the state legislature did not provide support for the Purdue University Experiment Station until 1905, which fact made the federal funds from the 1887 Hatch Act critical in these early years. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition*, 143. See also Wayne D. Rasmussen, *Taking the University to the People: Seventy-Five Years of Cooperative Extension* (Ames, Iowa, 1989). The Experiment Station began issuing its numbered *Bulletins* in the 1880s. The Cooperative Extension *Bulletins* first appeared in 1910. Historians will probably not find the results of the scientific experiments particularly useful, but some of the social scientific studies of rural life are extremely valuable sources.

⁷⁰ Among the first outreach efforts were the Farmers' Institutes, which were held by the Board of Agriculture in conjunction with Purdue beginning in 1882. Purdue professors and various members of the state board lectured to farmers and farm women, but low attendance signaled the failure of this initial effort. When farmers themselves became more involved, the institutes had wider appeal. There were also women's auxiliaries organized in many counties in conjunction with the Farmers' Institutes. In 1908 delegates from the auxiliaries met and concluded that there should be at least one separate session for women at each institute and that all the institutes should use highly respected local speakers. William C. Latta, *Indiana Farmers' Institutes for 1908–1909* (Lafayette, Ind., 1909), 42–43. Purdue also sought other methods of reaching farmers: agriculture trains carried staff around the state to talk to farmers and demonstrate scientific methods, and short courses for farmers were held at Lafayette and other locations. Latta, *Indiana Farmers' Institutes from Their Origin, in 1882 to 1904* (Indianapolis, 1904), 5; Phillips, *Indiana in Transition*, 143–46.

⁷¹ George I. Christie, "Report of the Superintendent," *Second Annual Report of Purdue University Department of Agricultural Extension for the Year Ending June 30, 1913* (Lafayette, Ind., 1914), 3, 5. The Maish Act of 1909 appropriated \$10,000 annually to the Experiment Station for agricultural extension work. As a result of the demands created by this work, the legislature in 1911 passed the Clore Act, which appropriated additional funds for extension work. It was under this appropriation that the first county agents were appointed and the new Department of Agricultural Extension created at Purdue. See George I. Christie, "Report of the Superintendent," *First Annual Report of Purdue University Department of Agricultural Extension for the Year Ending June 30, 1912* (Lafayette, Ind., 1913), 4–7. From the year ending in June, 1913, to the year ending in June, 1914, the number of county agents increased from four to twenty-seven. *Third Annual Report of Purdue University Department of Agricultural Extension for the Year Ending June 30, 1914* (Lafayette, Ind., 1915), 4.

⁷² "Smith-Lever Act," quoted in George I. Christie, "Report of the Superintendent," *Fourth Annual Report of Purdue University Department of Agricultural Extension for the Year Ending June 30, 1915* (Lafayette, Ind., 1916), 7.

⁷³ President Theodore Roosevelt was a strong supporter of the Country Life Movement and helped to make it quite visible. In addition to spurring much of the early research and publication in the field of rural sociology, the movement led to some interesting investigations on churches and schools and more general commentaries on rural life. See Liberty Hyde Bailey, *The Country-Life Movement in the United States* (New York, 1911); Sir Horace Plunkett, *The Rural Life Problem of the United States: Notes of an Irish Observer* (New York, 1910); *Report of the United States Country Life Commission* (Washington, D.C., 1909); the American Country Life Association's journal, *Rural America*; Warren Hugh Wilson, *The Church of the Open Country* (New York, 1911); Kenyon Butterfield, *The Country Church and the Rural Problem* (Chicago, 1911); True, "Some Problems of the Rural Common School"; and Ellwood P. Cubberley, *The Improvement of Rural Schools* (Boston, 1912).

⁷⁴ David Danbom's study of the Country Life Movement, *The Resisted Revolution: Urban America and the Industrialization of Agriculture, 1900–1930* (Ames, Iowa, 1979), made extensive use of reports by county agents for the United States Department of Agriculture and found considerable opposition to the agents and the messages they carried. Danbom argues that county agents often had more receptive audiences with rural merchants, bankers, and businessmen than with farmers. *Ibid.*, 86–89.

⁷⁵ Further research on Indiana is necessary to determine the reactions to the county agents throughout the state. The National Archives has eighty reels of microfilm on Indiana, "Extension Service Annual Reports: Indiana, 1912–1944," T859. These records are arranged chronologically and are available for purchase from Scholarly Resources, Inc. I have not been able to locate this microfilm within Indiana. The records of the Cooperative Extension Office at the Purdue University School of Agriculture are located in the attic of the Agricultural Hall. Copies of the reports that county agents sent to Washington—plus other materials including photographs—and records after 1944 are literally stashed in the attic. Sometime in the past five years records for about three-fourths of the counties were discarded, begin-

ning with the first of the alphabet. All of the Putnam County records remain, but for the most part only counties from S-W were not discarded. I would like to thank Joy Pherson for guiding me through the attic.

These records are essential for anyone interested in the work of the county agents, who were required to keep incredibly detailed records of all their actions. Their reports include not only rather candid narrative comments but also detailed statistical accounts of their work. Some idea of the richness of these materials can be demonstrated with reference to the Putnam County records.

R. S. Fouts became the first agent in Putnam County when he was appointed an Emergency Demonstration Agent in May, 1918. At the end of his first six months he reported that farmers "are taking to the work and the longer I am here the [b]usier I become." He complained that he was always "rushed for time with which to push my demonstration work" and that the many requests for help with war work "kept us always behind our schedules." He "did not know how to systematize my work and especially the office work." Finally, he noted that there was "too much club work." Midway through the following year Fouts resigned, "not because of dissatisfaction with the work itself, but because I felt I could do better financially in most any other kind of work . . . I have only one criticism [sic] to make and one suggestion to offer, and that is that the County Agents are very much underpaid for the work that they are expected to do, and the qualifications that they are expected to have, and they should receive a much higher salary than they are now receiving." R. S. Fouts, "Narrative Report of Years Work. Work Done as Emergency Demonstration Agent," 1918, Putnam County Files (Purdue University School of Agriculture, Agricultural Hall attic, West Lafayette, Ind.); and Fouts, "Narrative Report of the Work Done for the year by R. S. Fouts, Putnam County Agent Resigned," 1919, *ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Fourth Annual Report of Purdue University Department of Agricultural Extension*, 14-16; Madison, Indiana through Tradition and Change, 161-62.

⁷⁷ David O. Thompson, *A History: Fifty Years of Extension Service in Indiana* (n.p., [1962]), 54-58. Four members were listed on the home economics staff of the Cooperative Extension Department for the year ending in June, 1915. For the year ending in June, 1918, six women were listed as urban home demonstration agents and twenty-six were listed as emergency home demonstration agents in rural areas. *Seventh Annual Report of Purdue University Department of Agricultural Extension for the Year Ending June 30, 1918* (Lafayette, Ind., 1919), 7. Their numbers increased the following year but then dropped off to six the next year and during most of the 1920s; only Vanderburgh County had a home demonstration agent. Women in rural communities across the state carried on the work with the Home Ec Clubs. In 1928 the Capper-Ketcham Act provided additional federal funding and made possible the appointment of seven new agents. "Division of Home Economics," *Eighteenth Annual Report of Purdue University Department of Agricultural Extension, July 1, 1928 to June 30, 1929* (Lafayette, Ind., 1930), 9, 49. By 1931 there were still only twelve home demonstration agents compared with eighty-six county agents. *Twentieth Annual Report of the Department of Agricultural Extension, July 1, 1930 to June 30, 1931* (Lafayette, Ind., 1932), 35, 58. The best source for information on what the clubs meant to women are the Indiana Extension Homemakers Association oral history interviews. The volume *Going to Club: Seventy-five Years with Extension Homemakers (Memories of Hoosier Homemakers, Vol. V)* [Indianapolis, 1988]) is very informative, but the interview transcripts also contain some information not included in the published volume on the dynamics within clubs.

⁷⁸ Only two of the fifteen counties in south central Indiana, Lawrence and Clark, had county agents in 1913. All but six of the remaining twenty-five agents were in central Indiana. *Third Annual Report of the Purdue University Department of Agricultural Extension*, 4.

⁷⁹ Historical works to consult include Don Harrison Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825-70* (Urbana, Ill., 1978); Ruth Sutter, *The Next Place You Come To: The Town in North America* (New York, 1973); Robert Dykstra, *The Cattle Towns* (New York, 1968); and Jane Marie Pederson, *Between Memory and Reality: Family and Community in Rural Wisconsin, 1870-1970* (Madison, Wis., 1992). Broader discussions on the historical study of community are provided by Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1978) and David Russo, *Families and Communities: A New View of American History* (Nashville, 1974).

⁸⁰ Faragher, "Open-Country Community," 237; E. Dwight Sanderson, *The Farmer and His Community* (New York, 1922), 9. Other early twentieth-century publications in rural sociology include Charles J. Galpin, *Rural Life* (New York, 1918); John H. Kolb, *Rural Primary Groups: A Study of Agricultural Neighborhoods* (Madison, Wis., 1921); and Sanderson, *Rural Sociology and Rural Social Organization* (New York, 1942). Two recent studies of rural communities are Sonya Salamon, *Prairie Patrimony: Family, Farming, and Community in the Midwest* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1992); and Peggy F. Bartlett, *American Dreams, Rural Realities: Family Farms in Crisis* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1993).

⁸¹ See Pederson, *Between Memory and Reality*, for an innovative exploration of the networks of community visiting in Wisconsin. Pederson used columns in local papers with accounts of visits to establish her networks of friends and kin.

⁸² Kenneth J. Winkle, *The Politics of Community: Migration and Politics in Antebellum Ohio* (Cambridge, England, 1988), 176.

⁸³ The Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, Indiana, include not only official church business, such as elections of church officers, but also minutes of many different church groups, including various women's auxiliaries. The records of the women's groups indicate that in many congregations although the men may have held the church offices women were quite involved in the business of the church. Not only did they hold the church suppers that fostered fellowship but through some of their fund raising activities they directly affected the business of the church.

⁸⁴ James H. Madison, "Reformers and the Rural Church, 1900-1950," *The Journal of American History*, LXXIII (December, 1986), 667.

⁸⁵ Several studies of different religious denominations in Indiana have been published. These include Henry K. Shaw, *Hoosier Disciples: A Comprehensive History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indiana* (St. Louis, 1966); Elizabeth K. Nottingham, *Methodism and the Frontier: Indiana Proving Ground* (New York, 1941); L. C. Rudolph, *Hoosier Zion: The Presbyterians in Early Indiana* (New Haven, Conn., 1963); L. C. Rudolph, William W. Wimberly, and Thomas W. Clayton, eds., *Indiana Letters: Abstracts of Letters from Missionaries on the Indiana Frontier to the American Home Missionary Society, 1824-1893* (3 vols., Ann Arbor, 1979); Horace N. Herrick and William W. Sweet, *A History of the North Indiana Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, from its Organization in 1844 to the Present* (Indianapolis, 1917). Frederick A. Norwood, *History of the North Indiana Conference, 1917-1956* (Muncie, Ind., 1957). (The works by Herrick and Sweet and by Norwood are generally listed as volumes I and II of a set.) The United States census is of course a valuable source for determining strengths of various religious denominations within communities. The Sunday School and its role in rural life must also be explored. See Grover L. Hartman, *A School for God's People: A History of the Sunday School Movement in Indiana* (Indianapolis, 1980).

⁸⁶ A 1940 Purdue study of rural youth in Blackford, La Porte, Hancock, and Orange and Monroe counties revealed that rural boys dropped out of school earlier than rural girls. In Blackford County 77 percent of the boys and 87 percent of the girls completed high school; in La Porte the figures were 67 percent and 75 percent; in Hancock 80 percent and 86 percent; and in Orange and Monroe together 56 percent and 78 percent. It is striking that in the southern counties of Orange and Monroe just over half of the boys but almost 80 percent of the girls were high school graduates. Robertson, *Rural Youth in Indiana*, 43.

⁸⁷ The first compulsory education law in Indiana was passed in 1897, but according to Robert S. Lynd and Helen M. Lynd, the law only required twelve weeks of consecutive attendance from ages eight to fourteen. "Until 1924 the upper age limit for required school attendance was fourteen." The Lynds also noted that high school attendance increased 56 percent from 1920 to 1924. Lynd and Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture* (New York, 1929), 183-84.

⁸⁸ Wayne E. Fuller, *The Old Country School: The Story of Rural Education in the Middle West* (Chicago, 1982), includes considerable information on rural education in Indiana, but he does not deal with differences within the state.

⁸⁹ James H. Madison, "John D. Rockefeller's General Education Board and the Rural School Problem in the Midwest, 1900-1930," *History of Education Quarterly*, XXIV (Summer, 1984), 193, 194, 195.

⁹⁰ See H. E. Moore and O. G. Lloyd, *The Back-to-the-Land Movement in Southern Indiana* (Purdue University Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin, No. 409; Lafayette, Ind., April, 1936).

⁹¹ Attack and Bateman, *To Their Own Soil*, 186-200. Donald L. Winter explains: "Increases in output per worker also enabled the agricultural sector to satisfy the growing demand for its products at home and abroad while employing a declining portion of the labor force. In 1860 farming used 60 percent of the labor force; by the end of the century it used less than 40 percent." Winter, "The Economics of Mid-western Agriculture, 1865 to 1900," in Ferleger, *Agriculture and National Development*, 87.

⁹² Phillips, *Indiana in Transition*, 135; U.S., *Twelfth Census, 1900*: Vol. II, *Population*, plate 16.

⁹³ In 1910 there were 215,485 farms; in 1920, 205,126; in 1925, 195,786; in 1930, 181,570; in 1935, 200,835. U.S., *United States Census of Agriculture, 1935*: Vol. II, part 1, *Reports for States with Statistics for Counties and a Summary for the United States* (2nd ser., Washington, D.C., 1936), 138. Even more significant was the increase in the number of farms with over 175 acres. Farms of this size accounted for almost 43 percent of all farm land by 1940. Medium-sized farms with 50 to 75 acres decreased significantly. Madison, *Indiana through Tradition and Change*, 165.

Although the trend was reversed temporarily when unemployed workers returned to rural areas during the Depression with the "back-to-the-land" movement, outmigration and farm desertion were highest in southern Indiana. For information on the "back-to-the-land" movement, see Moore and Lloyd, *The Back-To-The-Land Movement in Southern Indiana*.

Regardless of the county, however, the 1935 agricultural census indicates that longevity itself was a factor in persistence. In 1935, 48,805 Hoosier farm operators who owned their own farms had been in farming for fifteen years or more and were by far the largest group of landowners.

⁹⁴ Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 363; U.S., *Seventeenth Census, 1950*: Vol. II, *Population*, plates 14, 44.

⁹⁵ Two interesting studies of part-time farming and nonfarm rural residents are Smith and Lloyd, *Part-Time Farming in Indiana*; and H. L. Hawley, *Small Agricultural Holdings in Two Industrial Areas in Indiana* (Purdue University Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin, No. 460; Lafayette, Ind., May, 1941).

⁹⁶ U.S., *1990 Census of Population and Housing: Summary Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics, Indiana*, Summary Tape File 3A, CD-ROM.

⁹⁷ Hal Barron, in his work on Chelsea, Vermont, questions whether population decline at least in the late nineteenth century should be equated with stagnation. Barron's rural Vermont village experienced some outmigration and virtually no immigration in the late nineteenth century. Those who remained behind were not suffering economic distress but were in fact very stable farm families whose lives reflected a remarkable degree of continuity. Barron, "Staying Down on the Farm: Social Processes of Settled Rural Life in the Nineteenth-Century North," in Hahn and Prude, *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation*, 327-44.

⁹⁸ See, for example, Gary Comstock, ed., *Is There a Moral Obligation to Save the Family Farm?* (Ames, Iowa, 1987); Mark Friedberger, *Farm Families and Change in Twentieth-Century America* (Lexington, Ky., 1988); Friedberger, *Shake-Out: Iowa Farm Families in the 1980s* (Lexington, Ky., 1989); Steve Murdock and F. Larry Leistritz, eds., *The Farm Financial Crisis: Socioeconomic Dimensions and Implications for Producers and Rural Areas* (Boulder, Colo., 1988); Paul Rosenblatt, *Farming Is in Our Blood: Farm Families in Economic Crisis* (Ames, Iowa, 1990); and William B. Browne, et al., *Sacred Cows and Hot Potatoes: Agrarian Myths in Agricultural Policy* (Boulder, Colo., 1992). For a scathing critique of the role of agricultural colleges and the federal government, see Jim Hightower, *Hard Tomatoes, Hard Times: The Original Hightower Report, Unexpurgated, of the Agribusiness Accountability Project on the Failure of America's Land Grant College Complex and Selected Additional Views of the Problems and Prospects of American Agriculture in the Late Seventies* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978).

⁹⁹ Forthcoming from the Indiana Historical Society is an anthology of essays on different ethnic groups in Indiana. The essays originated as papers delivered at the November, 1992, Indiana Historical Society Annual Meeting. For blacks in Indiana in the nineteenth century see Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana before*

1900: A Study of a Minority (*Indiana Historical Collections*, Vol. XXXVII; Indianapolis, 1957). The Indiana Historical Society's *Black History News and Notes*, edited by Wilma Gibbs, is a useful guide to sources and research on blacks in Indiana history.

¹⁰⁰ Gregory S. Rose, "The Distribution of Indiana's Ethnic and Racial Minorities in 1850," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXXXVII (September, 1991), 225-26, 259-60.

¹⁰¹ Germans made up over half the foreign-born population in 1850. "As was true of the foreign-born population as a whole, counties with river, canal, lake, or road access and with urban centers tended to be the most German," although Germans composed 58.1 percent of the population in rural Dubois County. Rose, "The Distribution of Indiana's Ethnic and Racial Minorities in 1850," 231. See also Elfrieda Lang, "German Immigration to Dubois County, Indiana, During the Nineteenth Century," *Indiana Magazine of History*, XLI (June, 1945), 131-51. A more recent study is Juliet Anne Niehaus, "Ethnic Formation and Transformation: The German-Catholics of Dubois County, Indiana, 1838-1979" (Ph.D. dissertation, New School for Social Research, New York City, 1981). See also Frederick Trautman, ed. and trans., "Life in the Wild": Three German Letters from Indiana, 1852-1853," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXXX (June, 1984).

Rose reiterates conclusions of other scholars that "throughout Indiana at mid-nineteenth century blacks were proportionally more common in urban than in rural areas." Rose, "The Distribution of Indiana's Ethnic and Racial Minorities in 1850," 250. These population trends for both blacks and foreign-born continued throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, with increasing proportions residing in urban rather than rural areas of the state.

Comparisons between Indiana's foreign-born population and that of other mid-western states are especially striking for farmers. Kathleen Neils Conzen calculated that 9.8 percent of the farmers in Indiana in 1880 were foreign-born in contrast to percentages of 12.6 for Ohio, 24.3 for Illinois, 31.2 for Michigan, 60.5 for Wisconsin, 65.5 for Minnesota, and 28.7 for Iowa. Conzen, "Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Agricultural History," in Ferleger, *Agriculture and National Development*, 303-42.

¹⁰² For examples of studies of blacks in rural communities see George K. Hesslink, *Black Neighbors: Negroes in a Northern Rural Community* (Indianapolis, 1968); and Frederick A. Karst, "A Rural Black Settlement in St. Joseph County, Indiana, before 1900," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXXIV (September, 1978), 252-67.

¹⁰³ Conzen, "Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Agricultural History," 305.

¹⁰⁴ Conzen summarizes the conclusions of several recent studies of immigrants in rural areas. *Ibid.*, 317-32. Her bibliography is an especially useful guide to recent scholarship on ethnic groups in rural America. *Ibid.*, 334-42. One fine example of recent scholarship is Sonya Salamon's *Prairie Patriarchy*, which explores the differences between German farm families and Yankee farm families in land inheritance strategies in Illinois.

¹⁰⁵ The incredible popularity of the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana in the first half of the 1920s is often cited as an example of racism and nativism in the state. Two significant recent studies on the KKK in Indiana reach different conclusions about the importance of racial and religious intolerance as factors that motivated white, Protestant Hoosier men and women to join the KKK. Both, however, found strong support for the KKK in urban and rural areas, thus making it clear that the KKK in Indiana was not symptomatic of urban-rural tensions. Kathleen Blee's study of women in the Indiana Klan emphasizes the group's rabid anti-Catholicism and racism, but Leonard J. Moore in *Citizen Klansmen* argues that although the KKK's message emphasized white Protestant nationalism, he believes that Indiana's Klansmen "were concerned first and foremost with Prohibition enforcement and crime, with state and local political corruption, and with a wide range of other issues that affected individual towns and cities." Kathleen Blee, *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s* (Berkeley, 1991); Leonard J. Moore, *Citizen Klansmen: The Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, 1921-1928* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1991), 23, quotation 11.

¹⁰⁶ Examples of the research in women's history that focus on urban middle-class women and discusses the ideology of separate spheres are Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven, Conn., 1977); Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York,

1977); and Mary P. Ryan, *Womanhood in America from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York, 1975). An influential article that presents middle-class men and women as members of separate cultures created by sharp gender distinctions is Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," *Signs*, I (Winter, 1975), 1-25. Linda Kerber has offered some important criticisms of the use of the rhetoric of separate spheres. See Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History*, LXXV (June, 1988), 9-39.

¹⁰⁷ It should be noted that most older studies of the evolution of the Old Northwest, including, for example, R. Carlyle Buley's 1950 Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Old Northwest*, largely ignore women. Although Buley provides detailed descriptions of pioneer life in which he explains numerous household artifacts and processes and offers occasional comments, such as "the output of some of these home looms, considering the multifarious duties of the housewife, was truly prodigious," the women performing these tasks seem like nonentities (I, 206).

¹⁰⁸ Osterud, "Transition to Capitalism," 20.

¹⁰⁹ Faragher, *Sugar Creek*, 118. Anthropologist Deborah Fink, in *Agrarian Women: Wives and Mothers in Rural Nebraska, 1880-1940* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1992), concludes that rural women in the Great Plains area of Boone County, Nebraska, were also inadequately valued within the rural household. These Nebraska women were not "insulated from gender oppression," their physical labor (and that of their children) was exploited, and their isolation deprived them of community support which made them more vulnerable to domestic violence. Fink emphasizes the theme of isolation as women's experience on the plains of Nebraska. Landless families moved frequently and failed to develop community ties, but even women in more prosperous, settled families experienced physical and emotional isolation. By the end of the 1930s less than one-fifth of the farms in the county could be reached by graveled or hard-surfaced roads. It was usually men who went to town and women who remained at home. Boone County women wanted out; they encouraged their children's education and hoped that they would not enter farming.

¹¹⁰ Joan Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds*, quotations 207. Jensen is the most prolific scholar on rural American women. In addition to her work on mid-Atlantic farm women, Jensen has written extensively on historiographical issues and on rural women in New Mexico. Jensen's other publications on rural women include: *With These Hands: Women Working on the Land* (Old Westbury, N.Y., 1981), a collection of primary sources; Jensen and Darlis A. Miller, eds., *New Mexico Women: Intercultural Perspectives* (Albuquerque, 1986), and *Promise to the Land: Essays on Rural Women* (Albuquerque, 1991), a collection of several new and previously published essays on rural women. See also Jensen, "The Role of Farm Women in American History: Areas for Additional Research," *Agriculture and Human Values*, II (Winter, 1985), 13-17. Other articles of interest in this special issue of *Agriculture and Human Values* are Peggy J. Ross, "A Commentary on Research on American Farm-women," 19-30; Carolyn Sachs, "Women's Work in the U.S.: Variations by Regions," 31-39; and Jane Knowles, "Science and Farm Women's Work: The Agrarian Origins of Home Economics Extension," 52-55.

¹¹¹ Osterud, *Bonds of Community*, quotations 278, 279.

¹¹² Mary Neth, "Building the Base: Farm Women, the Rural Community, and Farm Organizations in the Midwest, 1900-1940," in *Women and Farming: Changing Roles, Changing Structures*, ed. Wava G. Haney and Jane B. Knowles (Boulder, Colo., 1988), quotations 340, 341. This book is a collection of papers delivered at the Second American Farm Women in Historical Perspective Conference held in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1987. Neth's work is drawn from her dissertation, "Preserving the Family Farm: Farm Families and Communities in the Middle West, 1900-1940" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1987). Sarah Elbert and Gould P. Coleman began a study of decision making in farm families in New York in 1977. Elbert also argues in support of an integration model: "The family system and the farm system are integrated, and women's productive and reproductive work cannot be neatly separated without losing the holistic reality of farm families, family farms, and their location in a world system." Sarah Elbert, "The Challenge of Research on Women," *The Rural Sociologist*, I (No. 6, 1981), 387-90, quotation 388.

¹¹³ Those interested in rural women's history in general and Indiana in particular owe an enormous debt to Eleanor Arnold and members of the Indiana Extension Homemakers Association for undertaking their oral history project with rural Indiana homemakers in the early 1980s. *Memories of Hoosier Homemakers*, a six-volume series edited by Arnold, is a rich source of data on the experiences of rural Indiana women, especially for the period between 1890 and 1940. The books offer compelling proof of the merits of oral history in furnishing details about the lives of rural women, families, and communities, details rarely covered in written accounts. The actual interview transcripts are deposited at the Indiana Historical Society and include data on the interviewees not included in the volumes: birthrates, religious affiliations, ethnic backgrounds, farm or nonfarm residences, educational levels, and employment histories. This information helps to explain some of the choices women and their families made. The oral histories, conducted by several different individuals, vary considerably in their quality. In addition to the previously cited *Girlhood Days*, *Feeding our Families*, *Party Lines, Pumps and Privies*, and *Going to Club* the published series consists of Eleanor Arnold, ed., *Buggies and Bad Times (Memories of Hoosier Homemakers, Vol. III)*; [Indianapolis, 1985]); and Arnold, ed., *Living Rich Lives (Memories of Hoosier Homemakers, Vol. VI)*; [Indianapolis, 1990]. For longer discussions of these works see Barbara J. Steinson, "Memories of Hoosier Homemakers: A Review Essay," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXXXVI (June, 1990), 196-222; and Steinson, review of *Living Rich Lives*, by Eleanor Arnold, *ibid.*, LXXXVIII (March, 1992), 56-60. Arnold has also edited a collection of oral histories from the National Extension Homemakers Council oral history project, *Voices of American Homemakers* (Indianapolis, 1985). The entire series has been republished by Indiana University Press.

¹¹⁴ Barbara J. Steinson, "Women and Rural Communities in Early Twentieth Century Indiana" (Paper delivered at the Indiana Historical Society Annual Meeting; Indianapolis, November 2, 1991).

¹¹⁵ Marilyn Kluger recalled, "Mother's objective was to buy a total amount of groceries costing less than the amount of money due her in trade for the eggs and roosters." This trading required careful calculations on her part, with the leftover cash comprising her "egg money." Kluger, *Country Kitchens Remembered: A Memoir with Favorite Family Recipes* (New York, 1986), 21-22. Others received "due bills" from town merchants for their "butter and egg money." One Decatur County woman born in 1890 remembered that her mother was "never given any money back at the store. But she gave us a due bill. Then you could apply the due bill the next time you went back to the store on whatever you had to buy then." Arnold, *Feeding our Families*, 104.

¹¹⁶ Arnold, *Living Rich Lives*, 230.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 228.