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The Transformation of a Frontier, Kankakee County, 1850-1870

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THE TRANSFORMATION OF A FRONTIER

KANKAKEE COUNTY 1850-1870

(TITLE)

BY

Donald L. Wasson

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

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PREFACE

This paper's theme is the transformation of Kankakee County's frontier into an established society. Except for the small communities of Bourbonnais, Momence, and St. Anne, Kankakee County was thinly settled by 1853. In the early 1850s the coming of the Illinois Central Railroad resulted in changes which rapidly lessened the area's frontier aspects.

The opening section will present the area now known as Kankakee County prior to its creation in 1853. At that time, the major settlement was Bourbonnais, established in the early 1830s by a Frenchman, Noel LeVasseur. Another French Canadian, Father Charles Chiniquy, arrived from Canada in 1850 to establish a Roman Catholic settlement at nearby St. Anne. Becoming disenchanted with the Church clergy he abandoned Roman Catholicism founding a Presbyterian church. This created an element of Protestantism within the French Canadian community. Other ethnic groups settled in Kankakee County as a result of the building of the Illinois Central. Irish and German immigrants helped lay the rails and many remained to establish themselves in the community. The Illinois Central realized the dream of opening the eastern Illinois prairies.

In 1853 portions of Iroquois and Will Counties were used to create Kankakee County. The remainder of the paper will not only trace the county's further development but will also

analyze this growth quantitatively. The Illinois Central is almost solely responsible for the creation and expansion of such towns as Chebanse, Manteno, and the county seat of "Kankakee City." Statistical information derived from the 1850, 1860, and 1870 manuscript census schedules provide graphic illustration of the rapid increase in population plus occupational and land changes. The election results of the period 1856 to 1872 will be used to show the immigrant voter's political views and effectiveness.

In addition to the manuscript population census, local newspapers and county histories comprise the bulk of primary research materials. Monographs and journal articles relating to regional and state history will provide further tools to illustrate the change of the Kankakee County frontier to that of an established community.

There are a host of people who have given me assistance in preparing this thesis. Most of all, I wish to thank my advisor Dr. Duane Elbert for his invaluable aid in researching and writing. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of the Kankakee County Historical Society, the Illinois State Historical Library, as well as the libraries at the University of Illinois and Eastern Illinois University. Lastly, I wish to dedicate this paper to the two people who have given great moral support, LaVonne Barkhurst and Debbie Heuser.

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CHAPTER I

THE COMING OF THE RAILROAD

Kankakee County is situated along the Indiana border in the northeastern section of Illinois. Prior to its organization in 1853, the area was sparsely settled except for the principal settlements of Bourbonnais, Momence, and St. Anne. Until the arrival of the Illinois Central Railroad in 1852, the area was still within a frontier atmosphere.

The frontier was one of the major determining factors in the building of our nation. It was considered the foremost influence on American democracy and individualism. The frontier offered the settler a chance to break away from the traditional government of the east. In the west, the new settlers formulated their own local controls. But, what is the frontier? Frederick Jackson Turner in his 1893 essay "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," believed it to be "the existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward." Concerning this "continuous recession" he stated: "stand at the Cumberland Gap and watch the procession of civilization, marching single file---the buffalo following the trail to the salt springs, the Indian, the fur trader and hunter, the cattle raiser, the pioneer farmer---and the frontier passes by."¹ To Turner the

¹George Rogers Taylor, The Turner Thesis: Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History, (Lexington, 1972), 3 and 10.

frontier was the final meeting point between savagery and civilization.

Illinois was part of this frontier procession. The Illinois country was settled in four basic stages: the French occupation, the American's arrival, the era of steam navigation on the Great Lakes, and lastly, the period initiated by the railroad."² Eastern Illinois, including Kankakee County, was the last part of the state to be settled.

In his article "The Frontier in Illinois History," Ray A. Billington discussed several propositions concerning the frontier process. The frontier was an area where man's inherited institutions were noticeably changed by his natural environment. Also, it was where men of all sections and nations met to form a new society, a composite nationality as Turner termed it. This was evident by the late migration of the Germans and Irish during the railroad era of the 1850s and 1860s. The frontier was an area of the continuous battle between man and the elements. The western frontier was "where democratic theory was enshrined and democratic practises perpetuated." Lastly, it was an area of optimism and opportunity. The West reduced all men to a level of equality.³

²William V. Pooley, The Settlement of Illinois from 1830-1850, (Madison, 1908), 307.

³Ray A. Billington, "The Frontier in Illinois History," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, XLIII (Spring, 1950), 29, 30, 35, 37, 38, 40.

The year 1848 is considered the beginning of a new epoch in Illinois history for it was the period of a new constitution and of revolutionized agriculture.⁴ In agriculture it was the gradual transformation from farming as a business to farming as a way of life.⁵ The fifties brought about the passing of the final frontier in Illinois. "Every stroke of a hammer, every rattle of a farm machine, every puff of a locomotive, was a blow at the peace and calm of the untamed prairie wilderness...."⁶ This was a time when eastern Illinois was alive with the building of towns and cities. Kankakee County was a major part of this growth.

The county lies in the heart of the Illinois "Grand Prairie." It had been the hunting ground of the redmen, the haunt of the French, British, and American fur traders, and later, the grazing ground for great herds of cattle.⁷ In his old age, Noel LeVasseur, one of the first settlers, recalled that Indians told him of the great buffalo herds that wandered throughout the area until the "Storm Spirit" drove them away.⁸

⁴Arthur Cole, The Era of the Civil War 1848-1870, (Springfield, 1919), 1.

⁵Richard Bardolph, "Illinois Agriculture in Transition 1820-1870," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, XLI (Sept., 1948), 247.

⁶Cole, Era of the Civil War, 1.

⁷Margaret B. Bogue, Patterns from the Sod: Land Use and Tenure in the Grand Prairie 1850-1900, (Springfield, 1959), 15.

⁸Stephen Moore, "Noel LeVasseur," Early Illinois, (Chicago, 1890), 51.

Eastern Illinois was characterized as the "prairie province." The prairies of Illinois were "the wonder of all who saw them." Their majesty and wild beauty impressed everyone. The early travelers considered them as one of the great wonders of America, second only to Niagara Falls.⁹ Eastern Illinois had been used for several decades previous to the 1850s by farmers to breed, graze, and feed their cattle.¹⁰ Why then was there a lack of settlement in the eastern counties?

Geographic factors have been proven to have had a profound effect upon the settlement of eastern Illinois, the character of the settlers, and the pursuits which they followed.¹¹ For one, there was a lack of adequate timber in the prairie. The pioneer's love of timber was not a sentimental attachment but one of necessity. He used it to build his home, his barn, and fences as well as for fuel. Thus, on the prairie there was no windbreak to protect him from the icy blasts of winter.¹² Also, a great deal of land was swampy and needed draining. Furthermore, the soil was too tough and hard to break with the plows available, thus not adequate for farming.¹³ Lastly,

⁹C. A. Harper, "The Railroad and the Prairie," Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society, XXVIII (Springfield, 1923), 102.

¹⁰Bogue, Patterns from the Sod, 48

¹¹Carl Wittke, We Who Built America, (New York, 1946), 3.

¹²Harper, "The Railroad and the Prairie," Transactions, XXVIII, 103.

¹³Poggi, Prairie Province of Illinois, 99.

the area was too inaccessible to markets due to the lack of rivers and roads.

One factor which was linked with the problem of improper communication was the lack of trade between the east and south with Illinois. This was primarily due to the lack of internal transportation, backwoods agricultural conditions and the relative unimportance of mining and manufacturing. There were few roads in east-central Illinois prior to 1850, with the major one being "Hubbard's Trace" or the "State Road" running from Chicago through the Kankakee area to Danville. But, gradually the area between the timber settlements became populated.¹⁴

Before the gradual pioneer influx, the Kankakee area was the home of the great landowners. They moved in soon after the surveyor. One such estate was that of G. W. Danforth who owned over 80,000 acres in Kankakee and Iroquois counties. After the draining of the swampy areas he subdivided the land into small farms and sold them to the new pioneers.¹⁵

However, the area was still unattractive to migrating pioneers. With conditions as they were in the 1840s and 1850s Illinois was desperately in the need of a system of transportation which would connect the fertile interior counties with both

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Paul W. Gates, "Frontier Landlords and Pioneer Tenants," An Illinois Reader, Clyde C. Walton, ed., (Dekalb, 1970), 171 and 189.

the Great Lakes and the Mississippi. The answer to this would be the Illinois Central Railroad.

The major aid to the settlement of eastern Illinois was the Illinois Central Railroad, which passes through Kankakee County. It has been stated that a history of the Illinois Central is also a history of Illinois. Its construction through the 1850s opened the rich interior counties and connected the area with the remainder of the country, making Illinois an essential part of the economic system of the United States.¹⁶ The idea of the Illinois Central dates back to the mid-1830s when Illinois was swept along with the rest of the country in the air of internal improvements and passed the Internal Improvements Act of 1837. The act pledged over ten million dollars to a network of railroads and canals across the state.¹⁷ Likewise, the act brought about the speculation mania and with it came the advent of the "paper towns."

The pretentious scale of these paper towns may be illustrated in the case of Kankakee City, at the junction of the Des Plaines and Kankakee. In its palmiest day this metropolis never contained more than seventy inhabitants, yet its promoters had provided ten public squares, with parks and avenues enough to have afforded a fair nucleus of another New York City. The plat with its many "additions" covered 2000 acres, and in all the prominent centres of real estate speculation

¹⁶Howard G. Brownson, History of the Illinois Central Railroad to 1870. (Urbana, 1915), 15 and 16.

¹⁷Billington, "The Frontier in Illinois History." JISHS, XLIII, (Spring, 1950), 41.

highly ornamented engravings of this city, beautiful with magnificent buildings and busy with the traffic of capacious warehouses and crowded wharves, were on display.¹⁸

These "paper towns" such as the proposed Kankakee City met the same end as did the rest of the proposals, death due to the Panic of 1837. The Act of 1837 had chartered a company to build a railroad connecting the "Yankee" counties of the north with "little Egypt." The idea like the national economy revived in the 1840s. Near the close of the decade, U. S. Senator Sidney Breese became concerned about the idea and moved that Congress grant the right to use a portion of the public lands to build a railroad. Breese, who had previously been a railroad director, could do little to win sentiment.¹⁹

Luckily for Illinois, Senator Stephen A. Douglas seized upon the idea. He believed in both the old concept of internal improvements and the new one of using a part of the public domain to improve the value of the rest.²⁰ The project received support from such notables as Richard Yates, future governor of Illinois. As an advocate of internal improvements, Yates saw hope in the Illinois Central. He had previously favored the use of public aid for the private construction of railroads. His opponents believed the railroad would tax the

¹⁸Milo M. Quaife, Chicago's Highways Old and New, (Ann Arbor, 1968), 25-26.

¹⁹Cole, The Era of the Civil War, 36.

²⁰Frederic L. Paxson, History of the American Frontier 1763-1893. (New York, 1924), 420.

settlers through raising the price of land. Without government restrictions, the eastern capitalists would gain control and manipulate the state through the Illinois Central. In recalling the Panic of 1837, Yates came to believe it was disastrous for the government to help finance internal projects. Through private construction of railroads, Illinois would not suffer in any way. After its construction Yates believed Illinois had built the "longest and most magnificent railroad in the world." Yates considered railroads to be the arteries of health and vigor in the economic world.²¹

After showing the railroad's true benefit and satisfying the states-rights Democrats, Douglas was able to push the proposal through Congress and on September 20, 1850 it became law. It has been said that the Illinois Central "constituted a large step towards the solution of the financial question which blocked the frontier railroads."²²

In 1850 Illinois received a land grant of \$2,500,000 with the selection of the railroad's route left almost entirely to the state. The Illinois Central was left with a perpetual charter giving it the remains of the old state surveys and gradings. The charter granted them the federal lands and right of way, and exemption from property taxes. On the other

²¹Jack Nortrup, "A Western Whig in Washington," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, LXIV (Winter, 1971), 435.

²²Paxson, History of the American Frontier, 421.

hand, they were obligated only to complete the main line in four years and the branches in six, and pay the state seven percent of the gross earnings.²³

There had been four major considerations in the construction of the railroad's route. First of all, it could not take land more than fifteen miles from the tracks. Likewise, it was not desirable to run the line through any thickly populated areas where the price of land would be too high. The route should be located so as to build up the largest and most profitable traffic feasible. Lastly, the cost of the construction and operation should be confined to the lowest amount consistent with safety and efficiency.²⁴

The route had been chosen entirely upon its economic and engineering merits as well as its shortness. The main branch was from Cairo to Centralia and from there branched into a Y-formation to Chicago and Galena. Kankakee County lies on the Chicago to Centralia branch. Work began late in 1851 on construction. By July 11, 1853, fifty-six miles of the line was completed from Chicago to Kankakee, thus connecting the city to the Great Lakes. By September 27, 1856 the line was completed to Centralia.²⁵

²³Brownson, History of the Illinois Central Railroad to 1870, 39.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., 61.

The railroad caused considerable migration of both immigrants and natives to this formerly untamed area. Eastern Illinois began to boom with towns and farms. In looking over the effect of the railroad on the growth of the area, Carlton Corliss gave the best description when he stated:

Around nearly every little wooden railway station, streets were being laid out, houses, stores, schools, and churches were being erected. The sound of saw and hammer and the fragrance of newly cut timber and cedar shingles were in the air. Here, there, and everywhere across the prairie, farmhouses were springing up, fences were being built; trees and hedges were being planted, cattle and sheep were grazing, fields of grain were yellowing in the sun.²⁶

The Illinois Central had changed the axis of settlement from east and west to north and south along the railroad lines.²⁷

The Illinois Central causes a large influx of immigrants into the Kankakee area. Father Charles Chiniquy of St. Anne felt that the immigrants came from all parts of Europe and Canada to secure for their families "the incalculable treasures which the good providence of God had scattered over those broad prairies."²⁸ No sooner had the Illinois Central begun to survey the area than new life sprang into existence on

²⁶Carlton Corliss, Main-line of Mid-America: The Story of the Illinois Central Railroad, (New York, 1950), 86.

²⁷Mary Jean Houde and John Klasey, Of the People: A Popular History of Kankakee County, (Chicago, 1968), 38.

²⁸Charles Chiniquy, Fifty Years in the Church of Rome, (Grand Rapids, 1965), 378.

the prairies. The area overcame its retarding factors and a new development began to take place. The market was brought much closer to the consumer. No longer did one need to worry about the source of timber or merchandise at unreasonable prices. The prairie farmer was able to feel that he was no longer closed off from society and the outside world.²⁹ The settlers of the 1850s were far more gregarious and wanted to be near friends, churches, schools, and, in the case of the immigrant, fellow countrymen.³⁰

²⁹Pooley, Settlement of Illinois, 574.

³⁰Wittke, We Who Built America, 240.

CHAPTER II

THE BIRTH OF A COUNTY

The word Kankakee is Indian in origin. The French called the area Quin-que-que which came from the Indian The-ake-e-kee meaning wolf. Gurdon S. Hubbard, an early settler and partner of Noel LeVasseur, wrote in 1881 to the Old Settler's Association:

You are citizens of the most beautiful portion of our grand state. The aborigines so considered it; they designated it the "Wonderful Land," "Wonderful River," "Wonderful Home." Indians whose villages were on the banks of your river always in naming their residence would say, "Ti-yar-ack-naunk," Wonderful Land Home. I can never forget my first impressions in 1822 (it was my first visit), as I travelled up that stream (the Kankakee). I thought I had never before enjoyed the sight of so much natural beauty as met my gaze, of river, woods, and lands so delightfully interspersed.¹

Although Hubbard may have been stretching the beauty and serenity of the area, the letter does give one an early view of Kankakee before the mass immigration.

Except for Momence and Bourbonnais the rest of the county was basically unsettled before 1850. There were two other small settlements in Carey and Rockville townships. Yellowhead (Carey) township's first settler arrived in 1833 while Rockville's was in 1831.²

¹William Kenaga and George Letourneau, History of Kankakee County, (Chicago, 1906), 623.

²Ibid., 729 & 734.

Although there is some disagreement, many consider the first white settler to have been Francois Bourbonnais, formerly of Peoria, Illinois. He was of French-Canadian ancestry but had spent most of his youthful days among the Indians. He did little to promote trade and settlement in the Kankakee area. Later, both he and his Indian wife were removed with the Pottawatomies after the Treaty of Camp Tippecanoe in 1832.³

Since Bourbonnais did little for the development of Kankakee, many have come to recognize Noel LeVasseur as the first white settler. It was he who helped establish the community known later as Bourbonnais Grove. LeVasseur was born at St. Michel de Yamaska in the Province of Quebec, Canada, in 1799. He received his name of Noel because he was born on Christmas day. In 1817 he entered the services of one Rocheblave, a Canadian fur trader. After Rocheblave sold his interests in the company, LeVasseur quit and traveled west. Afterwards he met a man who was to become his life-long companion, Gurdon S. Hubbard, with whom he later formed an independent trading company in Illinois. LeVasseur journeyed to Mackinac in 1818 where he entered the services of John C. Astor's American Fur Company. In 1820 the company sent him to Illinois. In his trading with Bourbonnais and his Indian friends, LeVasseur became impressed with the area around

³Charles B. Campbell, "Bourbonnais: or the Early French Settlement in Kankakee County," Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society, XI (Springfield, 1906), 68.

Kankakee. Before long he became friendly with the Indians, having learned their customs and language.⁴

LeVasseur settled in the Bourbonnais Grove area in March of 1832. By the treaty of Camp Tippecanoe, concluded in October of the same year, the Pottawatomies ceded to the United States government the land from the Chicago River south to Vermilion County, excluding certain reservations. By 1837 the Indians were removed from the ceded land. LeVasseur served as both interpreter and agent in charge of their removal. Since his Indian wife chose to move westward with her people, LeVasseur decided to remarry. Finally, after the removal of the Pottawatomies, the area was opened to white settlement.⁵

Bourbonnais became a miniature French settlement. LeVasseur traveled to Canada in search of a wife and while there told the people of the beauty and serenity of the Bourbonnais area. However, the major migration to Bourbonnais did not begin until 1844 when the families of Rivard, St. Pierre, and Legris traveled to the area.⁶ After 1837 and into the 1840s the Canadian migration turned in favor of the United States. A move due principally to the rebellions in 1837, 1838, and the 1840s. The provinces were hurt by the British free trade

⁴Ibid., 69 and 70.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., 71.

regulations, resulting in depression. A large percentage of this migration came from Quebec. Since upper Canada lack a middle west of her own, they migrated to the United States.⁷ In 1847 three men traveled from Canada to Bourbonnais to investigate its potential as a colony. After their return to Canada others migrated to the small Illinois community. But due to Canadian governmental restrictions, immigration practically ceased in the mid-1850s. Until this halt of migration, immigrants from Canada went to Bourbonnais where they made their first plans for life in the new country. Later, many of these immigrants moved to other areas of the county and country. In the county the new immigrants established such towns as L'Erable, St. Mary, St. George, and Papineau. They also migrated to such states as Kansas, Iowa, Minnesota, and the Dakotas. Each of these settlements were outgrowths of Bourbonnais.⁸

A Canadian historian, Joseph Tasse, who wrote Les Canadiens del Quest, traveled to Bourbonnais Grove during the early 1860s and found:

Bourbonnais...a real Canadian village, and the traveller who lights unprepared in this spot might well imagine himself in one of the good old Canadian parished on the St. Lawerence. The church, the college, and the convent grouped

⁷ Maldwyn Jones, American Immigration, (Chicago, 1960), 115.

⁸ Campbell, "Bourbonnais; or the Early French Settlement in Kankakee County," Transactions, XI, 71.

together, the houses amid their green farm lands, the frank hospitality of the people, their French gayety and accent, the old national airs that fall gratefully on his ear, the popular customs, so well, in fact, so scrupulously preserved, all remind him of Canada.⁹

Shortly before the arrival of the Illinois Central, the Kankakee area saw the coming of a new migration. These people traveled to the community of St. Anne, established by Father Charles Chiniquy, known as "Le petit pere Chiniquy." Chiniquy was well-known in his native Canada by his obsession with the problem of alcoholism in the 1830s. He began a temperance crusade which lasted through the 1840s. Throughout the movement Chiniquy was described as a fiery speaker. "When he began to preach he fast became feverish, staring eagerly at his audience, and, alternating between tones that now recalled the angels, not their opposites, he would send his words splashing out in an uncontrolled stream that drowned his listeners in fear and hope."¹⁰

During the first few years of the fifties more and more people from Canada began to migrate to the Middle West. On a visit to the United States, Chiniquy became impressed with the distinct difference between the squalor of the laborers in the east and the relative comfort of the western areas, the Kankakee region in particular. After returning to

⁹J. G. Shea, "The Canadian Element in the United States," American Catholic Quarterly Review, IV, (Oct., 1879), 597.

¹⁰Jacques Monet, The Last Cannon Shot: A Study of French-Canadian Nationalism 1837-1850. (Toronto, 1969), 282.

Canada, he appealed to the Canadian people to migrate with him to Illinois.¹¹ As he later explained in his autobiography, Fifty Years in the Church of Rome, his trip to Bourbonnais in 1851 was to establish settlements which might enable the Roman Catholics to control Illinois. His plans did not endear him to Father Courjeault, the pastor at Bourbonnais. Chiniquy stated: "had I suspected such ~~opposition~~ from the very men on whose moral help I had relied for the success of my colonizing schemes, I would have never left Canada for Illinois." But, Chiniquy had left Canada in an honest effort to colonize Illinois. Upon his leaving for the Illinois country, he stated:

Those emigrants are in need of priests. They are like those little ones whom God speaks in His Word, who wanted bread and had nobody to give them any. I have heard their cries, I have seen their wants. And in spite of the great sacrifices I am called upon to make, I must bless the Good Master who calls me to work in that vineyard planted by his own hands in those distant lands.¹²

He left Canada for Bourbonnais but due to the hostility there, he and his followers ~~traveled~~ further east until they reached the site they chose for their settlement, St. Anne.

Before long fifty families located around them. They erected homes and a church. The "stormy petrel of Illinois

¹¹Marcus L. Hansen, The Mingling of the Canadian and American Peoples, (New Haven, 1940), 129.

¹²Charles Chiniquy, Fifty Years in the Church of Rome, (Grand Rapids, 1965), 378 & 379.

Catholicism" wrote many long articles to influence people to migrate to Illinois. Chiniquy's exaggerated accounts drew so many Canadians from their homes to Illinois that the Canadian government was forced to appoint a special committee on the subject of emigration to study the exact causes. The major cause was discovered to be general discontent with conditions at home. The census of St. Anne for December, 1851 showed 200 people, 100 of which were adults. In January of 1852 they began to build a permanent church which was eventually finished in April. "Not a month later we had to speak of making an addition of forty feet more, which, when finished six months later, was found to be still insufficient for the accommodation of the constantly increasing flood of immigration, which came, not only from Canada, but from Belgium and France," In reference to this sudden expansion, Chiniquy stated:

It soon became necessary to make a new centre, and expand the limits of my first colony, which I did by planting a cross at L'Erable, about fifteen miles southwest of St. Anne, and another at a place called St. Mary, twelve miles southwest in the county of Iroquois. These settlements were soon filled, for that spring more than one thousand new families came from Canada to join us.¹³

Not long after the appearance of Father Chiniquy's articles some Canadian people began selling their farms

¹³Ibid., 378 & 382.

for half the normal value and moving to Illinois.¹⁴ Chiniquy's influence caused considerable migration from Canada. His fiery spirit and drive enabled the struggling St. Anne colony to survive and prosper.

However, it was not long before the community fell into turmoil. Chiniquy had never agreed with the Church hierarchy and while in St. Anne occasionally defied both the Church and the Pope. He first criticized the personal, sinful, and criminal lives of the Bourbonnais priests. "They were beginning to suspect that the heavy chains which were wounding their shoulders were preventing them from making progress in wealth, intelligence, and liberty, as their more fortunate fellow men, called Protestants."¹⁵ These complaints caused him to be ostracized by the Bourbonnais priests and brought him to the attention of the Church hierarchy.

Chiniquy previously suffered censure in Canada for similar activities. It seemed he was always finding fault with the clergy. He was admitted to the diocese of Chicago with hope he would reform. However, Chiniquy, being true to his nature, charged Bishop O'Regan of Chicago with trying to take the church at St. Anne away from him and his fellow

¹⁴Paul W. Gates, The Illinois Central in its Colonization Work, (Cambridge, 1934), 235.

¹⁵Chiniquy, Fifty Years in the Church of Rome. 391.

French Canadians. Becoming totally disgusted with the Church Chiniquy decided to split away and organize what he called the Christian Catholic Church, but adopting the Presbyterian creed.¹⁶ The Christian Catholic Church had missions established as far away as Chicago, Aurora, and Sterling, as well as in the nearby towns of Watseka, Momence, and Manteno. Chiniquy believed Manteno was "where the light of the Gospel had been received by large numbers of our French-Canadians."¹⁷ Chiniquy's break from tradition completely shocked the Canadian Catholic Church. The Church developed stricter control over French-Canadians who emigrated by advising them and sending clergymen with them so as not to let them be led astray.¹⁸

Along with French-Canadians more and more immigrants began to pour into Kankakee by the early 1850s. This European immigrant population first came as railroad passengers and workers. The Illinois Central placed a large degree of influence upon the immigrants to move to Illinois. To the railroad the immigrant meant several things including profitable traffic, someone to buy and settle the land, and a cheap source of labor. There was the need for "men who

¹⁶J. G. Shea, A History of the Catholic Church Within The Limits of the United States, (New York, 1892), 619.

¹⁷Chiniquy, Fifty Years in the Church of Rome, 587.

¹⁸Hansen, The Mingling of the Canadian and American Peoples, 130.

first break up the prairie soil, clear brush off the slopes, drain the marshes, build the railroads...and then turn to the building of factories and towns and cities."¹⁹ Therefore, immigrants from Germany and Ireland came in steady streams to work on the railroad.

In the nineteenth century and especially after 1830 the principal tide of immigration came from Ireland, Germany and the Scandinavian countries. Aside from the basic, desire for adventure and opportunity they emigrated for several reasons. For one, the earlier immigrants to the states had written home to tell of the new found life style. Secondly, many land speculators had kept the fever burning by advertisements and pamphlets.²⁰ In the case of the Irish, besides the potato famine, many emigrated because of the constant pressure and demand on the country's resources. Of course, many Europeans emigrated due to the Revolutions of 1848 but far more left due to the economic plight afterwards, as well as the religious question.²¹

The Middle West needed the population and did its best to draw the immigrants. The Illinois Central was a primary factor in drawing the new population. The railroad sent

¹⁹Theodore C. Blegen, "The Competition of the Northwestern States for Immigrants," Wisconsin Magazine of History, III (Sept., 1919), 3.

²⁰Carl Wittke, We Who Built America, (New York, 1946), 101 and 104.

²¹Theodore C. Pease, The Story of Illinois, (Chicago, 1949), 137.

a Norwegian clergyman to Quebec to try to influence emigration. Likewise, they hired such Germans as the future Illinois Lt. Governor Francis Hoffman as land agents. Such men received a commission for every immigrant they were able to bring into the new settlements. These "immigrant runners" were sent to New York and other harbor cities to contact disembarking immigrants. They were also sent to Europe to influence emigration.²²

With the influx of population many newly platted towns began to spring up along the Illinois Central. Among these were the towns of Kankakee City, originally platted as Bourbonnais, Manteno, Chebanse, and Peotone. Manteno was organized in 1853 immediately following the arrival of the railroad and is a typical example of the new station developments. It became an important shipping and trading center for the area. Later, grain elevators, grist mills, and lumber yards began to spring up. However, since it was solely a trading center for the agricultural community and too far from the river, it did not become populous.²³

The Illinois Central had the habit of purposely avoiding already prosperous towns. In the case of Bourbonnais, it had been deliberately by-passed by the railroad,

²²Wittke, We Who Built America, 112.

²³Gates, The Illinois Central Railroad and Its Colonization Work, 125.

eventually causing business to suffer. Later, the population began to move elsewhere.²⁴ Although the population left these by-passed towns it moved to other areas along the railroad lines.

Several of the principal investors in the Illinois Central organized a group called the Associates Land Company with the primary interest to buy land and plan future town sites. The railroad decided to build towns every ten miles along the tracks. The Associates managed to keep the locations of these new towns secret until they were able to buy land around them.²⁵ They made an effort to promote the growth of the towns by encouraging industry, milling, lumbering, and mining.²⁶ With this they were able to increase their own profit.

One must notice that the chief factor in settling this vast frontier was the Illinois Central Railroad. Between 1850 and 1860 the population of the thirty-one counties situated on the Illinois Central increased 150 percent in comparison to an increase of only 50 percent elsewhere in Illinois.²⁷ Of the townships existing in 1850, Bourbonnais

²⁴Mary Jean Houde and John Klasey, Of the People: A Popular History of Kankakee County, (Chicago, 1968), 39.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Gates, The Illinois Central Railroad and Its Colonization Work, 125.

²⁷Carlton Corliss, Main-line of Mid-America: The Story of the Illinois Central Railroad, (New York, 1950), 88.

grew from 1719 to 2205 in 1860 while Momence went from 793 to 943. Such towns as Manteno and Kankakee which did not exist in 1850 rose to 861 and 2984 respectively.²⁸

Without the railroad there would have been little chance that Kankakee would ever have existed except on an architect's table. With the railroad came people and with the people came manufacturing and commerce.

The development of Kankakee County fits into Turner's definition of the frontier. It followed the line of frontier progression. As LeVasseur indicated, the Indians had spoken of the great herds of buffalo before them. Afterwards, the area was alive with the activity of the hunters and fur trappers as evidenced by the presence of LeVasseur, Hubbard, and Astor's American Fur Company. The fur trappers preceded both the cattlemen such as Danforth and pioneer farmers. The communities of Bourbonnais, Momence, and St. Anne may have caused further emigration to the area but not to the degree that the Illinois Central did. By the mid-1850s the Canadian government stopped the rapid emigration to the United States. Without this, migration to the eastern part of Illinois would not have stopped. One must consider that the prairies of eastern Illinois would have

²⁸U. S. Census Office, Population of the United States in 1860 compiled from the Original Returns of the 8th Census under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior (Washington, 1864), 94.

always presented the same problems, mainly poor transportation, inadequate quantities of timber, and lack of proper lines of communication. But the Illinois Central solved the major problems presented by the frontier. It connected the prairies with the outside world enabling the area to be opened up for settlement.

CHAPTER III

POLITICS OF A COUNTY

In 1853 the two major political parties were the Whigs and the Democrats. However, 1854 saw the birth of the Republican Party, as a reaction to the Kansas-Nebraska Act. This new party caused a major split within one of the most influential elements in an election, the immigrant voter. Prior to the creation of the Republican Party, the majority of the immigrant voted Democratic;¹ however, there developed a rift within the various immigrant groups. The purpose of this chapter is to determine voting patterns within the immigrant vote.

An acceptable method of determining voting patterns is through the use of a mathematical formula which produces coefficients of correlations. By relating the percentage of Canadian or non-Canadian foreign born within a township to the percentage of Republican votes cast in each township, one discovers a degree of association between the two variables. This association is shown by a coefficient of correlation. The range of coefficients extends from +1.00 to -1.00. If the calculation produces a coefficient of +1.00, it means that the order of townships ranging from the most Canadian to the least is identical to the rank-

¹Carl Wittke, We Who Built America, (New York, 1946), 244.

order of Republican townships. If the coefficient is -1.00 , the rank-order is reversed and thus a possible tendency towards the Democratic party exists. A coefficient of $.00$ means no statistical relationship exists.²

During the first twenty years of the county's history, the largest immigrant group was the French-Canadian. Along with the English and Scotch-Irish, there was a national tendency for the French-Canadians to unite with the Republican Party. In many areas of the country they were numerous enough to balance their chief opponents, the Irish, but lacked both unity and sufficient naturalization to form a powerful voting block.³ In the case of Kankakee County, the French-Canadians out-numbered the Irish in both the 1860 and 1870 census. The rivalry which developed politically and socially between the French-Canadians and Irish was due to a struggle for social position, employment, and influence in the Catholic Church. Many Canadians chose to leave the Church rather than worship under Irish priests. French-Canadians denounced the Irish influence in the Church where the Irish attempted to control the Canadians by

²This study utilizes the Charles Spearman rank-difference formula. For a complete explanation of its application to voting probability theory see Frederick C. Luebke, Immigrants and Politics: The Germans of Nebraska 1880-1890, (Lincoln, 1969), 71-78.

³Rowland T. Berthoff, British Immigrants in Industrial America 1790-1950, (New York, 1953), 196.

imposing upon them both Irish priests and the English language.⁴ It is difficult to determine the amount of conflict which developed between these two groups in Kankakee County. First of all, the Canadians continually outnumbered the Irish in most areas of the county. Also, it was not until the mid-1870s that the Irish proved of any sufficient influence in the Church. But, whether this conflict was enough to effect political loyalty is not known.

Due to the early migrations, the French-Canadians were of overwhelming numbers in Kankakee County in 1860, especially in the townships of St. Anne and Bourbonnais, with 84 percent and 82 percent of the total adult male population. This percentage decreased to 72 and 73 percent by 1870 due to the rapid increase within township population of other immigrant and native groups. Of course, a large percentage of this native group was of French-Canadian ancestry.

By 1856 the Republican Party was organized enough to propose their first presidential candidate, John C. Fremont. The Kankakee Gazette, the local Republican newspaper, encouraged the local French people to attend a rally to hear Moss Gendron of New York. Although he never mentioned Gendron's qualifications, the editor considered him "an able and talented speaker" and hoped there would "be a full

⁴Carl Wittke, The Irish in America, (Baton Rouge, 1956), 187.

turn out of the people of Kankakee County."⁵ This article attempted to unite the French voter with the Republican Party by directing his attention to the major national issues of the day, namely homestead legislation and slavery. Throughout the election the Gazette did not involve itself in local issues.

In an earlier issue of the Gazette the editor made a direct appeal to the total foreign element in the county.

To our fellow citizens of foreign birth we can well say we are not fighting this battle for ourselves, nor for our brethern in Kansas--we are not fighting it for the slaves now in chains in the South--but we are fighting it for you and your countrymen and kinsmen. We are fighting it not merely for that mighty throng of the foreign-born sons of labor already on our shores, who are looking eagerly Westward, where lands are abundant and cheap...but for the countless millions yet in the Old World...still toiling in the spots where you were born.... I covet your aid by no flatteries. I speak to you as American citizens, with the same responsibilities as myself, born and descended through generations from those who were born on the soil.... I call upon you to rally around the flag of Freedom, and stand with us side by side,⁶ and shoulder to shoulder in the coming contest.

The Gazette was appealing to the foreign element on one of the major issues of the day, the Kansas question. The paper flattered the immigrant by stating that it considered him an equal to a native, descended from several generations of American citizens. The immigrant was told that the battle

⁵Kankakee Gazette, October 23, 1856.

⁶Ibid., October 2, 1856.

against the Buchanan Democrats was not only for him but the millions remaining in Europe. This was an appeal to old national loyalty. The entire editorial was an attempt to sway the foreign element to the Republicans and to defeat the Democrats, who were consequently painted as anti-immigrant and pro-Kansas.

In another issue the editor appealed to the people on the ~~slavery~~ question. This short article appeared in every issue of the paper prior to the election and appealed to the citizens to attend an upcoming Republican rally.

The election of Mr. Buchanan may and probably will originate a reaction in public opinion that will encourage the extension of the conservative institution of slavery.

The election of Mr. Buchanan would be a reactionary movement in favor of slavery and conservatism.

...The friends of Free Speech, Free Labor, Free Kansas, Free Territories, and Fremont--all truly national and law abiding men, opposed to the corruption and sectional measures of the present administration and to the extension of slavery into Free Territory, and in favor of restoring the government to the policy of its original founders are requested to meet at the courthouse in Kankakee City on Monday, 7th day of October next.⁷

These articles were apparently aimed at both the immigrant and native voter who opposed slavery's extension westward. The editor stated that if Buchanan was elected, his conservative nature along with his southern sympathy would allow slavery to be extended. The article appeals to

⁷Ibid., October 23, 1856.

"all truly national and law abiding men," who opposed Democratic corruption. Likewise, the Republicans appealed to the national pride of the voters through reference to the founding fathers.

The Gazette also attempted to discredit the independent candidate Millard Fillmore and his running mate. The first article tried to show a definite link between the Fillmore and Buchanan forces.

We have been convinced for some time that there is a perfect understanding between the supporters of Mr. Fillmore and the Buchananeers--at least, that the leading Fillmore men are insincere in their profession of reverence for the claims and of confidence for the success of the "vegetable garden" candidate, and are using what means they think are most available to further the election of Mr. Buchanan.⁸

In its condemnation of Fillmore's vice-presidential candidate Andrew J. Donelson, the paper attempted to directly tie him to the institution of slavery. The editor credited him with telling the nominating convention. "I live in the South, and am the owner of one hundred slaves, and I love the institution as earnestly as any man born south of the Mason & Dixon line."⁹ Except for the newspaper article no evidence has been found to substantiate this statement by Donelson. Donelson's name was given only slight attention

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

because he was named after Andrew Jackson; however, his public appeal was limited and secondary in nature.¹⁰ Those who supported Fillmore, the "vegetable garden candidate" were shown as backing Buchanan, who was shown to be a slavery sympathizer. Thus, Fillmore and Donelson were proven as poor alternatives to the Democrats. The Fillmore forces, if elected, would continue with the same measures as would Buchanan.

Having viewed the contemporary coverage of the election campaign and the appeal to the foreign element, one must see the statistical relationship of the immigrant and the Republican Party. A coefficient of $+0.40$ between the Canadian element and the 1856 Republican vote indicates a slight positive relationship between the two variables. The correlation of the non-Canadian foreign-born to the Republican vote offers a coefficient of -0.51 , a distinct correlation between the Irish-German element and the Democratic Party. Graph I illustrates the early Canadian tendency towards the Republican Party diminished considerably by 1872 to a weak correlation of $+0.11$.

Although Fremont lost the election nationally, he carried Kankakee County. Table I shows that Fremont polled

¹⁰W. Darrell Overdyke, The Know-Nothing Party in the South, (Baton Rouge, 1950), 151.

79 percent of the total vote with 1383 votes against 260 for Buchanan.¹¹

TABLE Ia

Kankakee County Presidential Vote, 1856-1872

	<u>Republican</u>			<u>Democrat</u>			<u>Other</u>	
	Votes	Percent		Votes	Percent		Votes	Percent
1856	1383	79		260	15		63	6
1860	1977	71		803	28		25	1
1864	2133	79		564	21		-	-
1868	2133	71		867	29		-	-
1872	2591	73		936	27		4	.5

^aInformation derived from William Kenaga, History of Kankakee County, (Chicago, 1906), 688.

Unfortunately both the original township election returns for 1860 and any newspaper report of them no longer exist. Thus, there is no definite method of determining coefficients and the effect of the immigrant on the election. By 1860 Kankakee County created four new townships Norton, Pilot, Ganier, and St. Anne. In that census year each contained a large percentage of foreign-born ranging from 40 percent to 88 percent. From 1864 to 1872 Pilot, Ganier, and Norton remained consistantly Republican while St. Anne hovered near the border line. From studying the final returns, Kankakee remained strongly Republican with 71 percent for Lincoln and 28 percent for Douglas. "In the campaign of 1860, Senator Douglas was the ideal of democracy and the battles of the 'Little Giant' and 'Rail-Splitter' were desperately fought in the valley of Kankakee."¹² But many

¹¹For complete township returns see Appendix I.

¹²Kenaga, History of Kankakee County, 655.

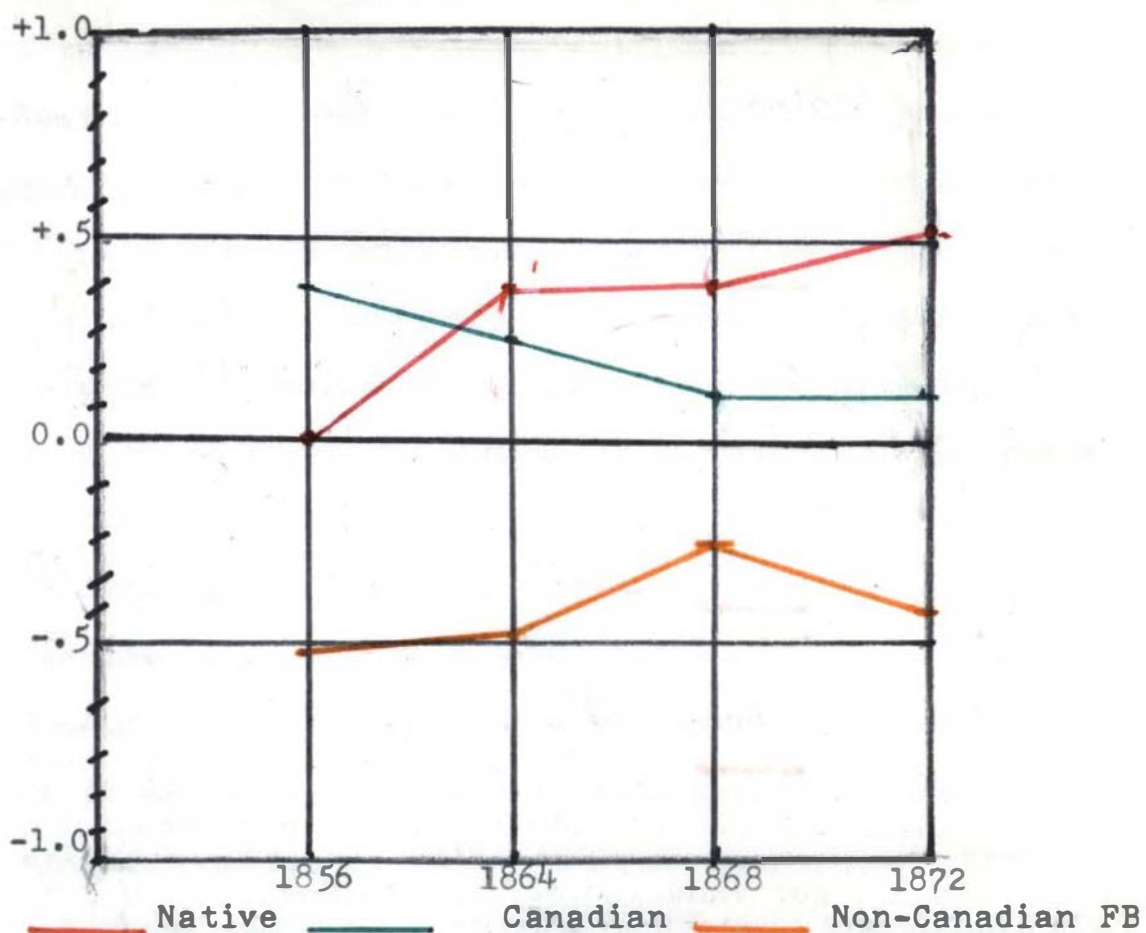
of the immigrants were still unable to align with the Democrats because of the party's aversion to slavery. The Republicans appealed to the immigrant through the homestead legislation and anti-slavery planks in their platform, a similar move as made in 1856.¹³

The election of 1864 was of little struggle for Lincoln who received 79 percent of the total vote in Kankakee. As in 1860 the newspapers of the election were lost, thus the type of appeal to the voters can not be ascertained. But, the local French-Canadian newspaper, the Courier d' Illinois, insured the French vote for Lincoln.¹⁴ Graph I shows the Canadian/Republican correlation to be +.29, while the non-Canadian foreign-born correlation was -.49. The first correlation shows a sudden decrease in the Canadian support of the Republican Party. The non-Canadian correlation remained almost constant from 1856. Table I shows that Lincoln increased his strength in the county by polling 79 percent of the total vote. A comparison between the table and Graph I show that the Republican percentage from 1856 to 1864 remained constant but the French-Canadian correlation decreased. The graph shows a sudden increase in the native correlation.

¹³Donnel V. Smith, "Influence of the Foreign-born of the Northwest in the Election of 1860," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XIX (Sept., 1932), 204.

¹⁴Arthur Cole, Era of the Civil War, (Springfield, 1919), 17.

GRAPH I

NATIVE AND FOREIGN-BORN CORRELATION WITH REPUBLICAN VOTE

Throughout the 1860s and early 1870s the elections were never very close, except in St. Anne township, where the margin remained slim. Lincoln defended Father Chiniquy in the mid-1850s for a law suit and since then Chiniquy felt close to him and the party. Appendix I shows that in each election from 1864 to 1872, the Republicans won the township by extremely slim margins. Apparently, Chiniquy was unable to persuade the entire Canadian element to vote Republican.

In 1868 the Democratic candidates were Horatio Seymour and Francis Blair while the Republicans were U. S. Grant

and Scuyler Colfax. Grant continued in the tradition of his predecessors and carried Kankakee County. At a mass Republican meeting in St. Anne, Father Chiniquy spoke in an attempt to keep the French-Canadian vote Republican. The Gazette stated that he "took the stand and made a stirring appeal for the Rebel Democrats--to keep them at peace--which was to elect Grant." It was later resolved by the citizens "that we, Republicans of Ste. Anne, will use every honest effort to bring all loyal voters to the polls on the 3rd day of November next."¹⁵

Continuing the Republican stand of the newspaper, the Gazette made an appeal to the Republican voters. "If Republicans are asked to trade a vote for one or more of the Democratic candidates don't entertain the proposition. In any respect the Republican candidates are at least the equal of their Democratic competitors, and politically they are a vast deal better. Vote a straight Republican ticket, and no scratching."¹⁶

According to the 1868 election returns, the Republicans were able to poll 71 percent of the vote, a decrease since 1864. Appendix I shows that by 1868 the Republican percentages in each township had decreased slightly. In fact, one

¹⁵Kankakee Gazette, September 10, 1868.

¹⁶Ibid., October 29, 1868.

township, Salina, turned Democratic with 52 percent of the vote going for Seymour. The coefficients show a $+ .11$ for the Canadian/Republican correlation and a $- .20$ for the non-Canadian/Republican correlation. One unexplainable result of the correlation shows a sudden decrease in the Democratic support by the non-Canadian foreign born.

In 1872 the Republicans renominated Grant for the presidency against Horace Greeley. As in previous elections the editor of the Gazette displayed the importance of the foreign vote. An article appearing in the Gazette mentioned a "French Meeting at Bourbonnais,"

Kankakee turned out a goodly number of her Republican...and St. Anne came down in full force. Other towns in the vicinity contributed liberally, while Bourbonnais will hold her old position as the banner town of the county, and nearly the entire French vote of the county will be given to Grant and Wilson.¹⁷

The article was correct in that Bourbonnais township remained strongly Republican in 1872 with 89 percent of the vote but the remainder of the Canadian vote began to slowly turn away from the Republicans. There was a Republican rally held at St. Anne where Father Chiniquy served as Chairmain. George Letourneau, a French-Canadian from Kankakee City, addressed the audience in French, although he could not speak the language fluently.¹⁸ One interesting

¹⁷Ibid., September 12, 1872.

¹⁸Ibid., October 5, 1872.

note in the Gazette stated that a renegade Republican, Achille Chiniquy, was nominated by the Democrats to a state senatorial seat. The appointment was made because no one else wanted the nomination and the Democrats obviously hoped the Chiniquy name might draw some French voters to the party. There was no mention whether or not Achille was related to the strongly Republican Father Chiniquy.¹⁹ Although the Republicans made slight gain in the county, there was almost no change in the loyalty of the foreign vote. The coefficients show a $+ .11$ for the Canadian/Republican correlation and a $- .40$ between the non-Canadian foreign-born and Republicans. The non-Canadians returned to a stronger alignment with the Democrats, while the Canadians remained constant with their normal Republican stand; however, a $+ .11$ does not prove a strong correlation.

The foreign-born element was of major importance in the national elections from 1856 to 1872. But, conflict developed between the major parties and the European immigrant groups. The cause of this conflict was over such issues as homestead legislation and slavery. Besides not understanding the value of the plantation system, the European immigrant long remembered the past restrictions on human freedom in Europe. Early historians believed that immigrants were opposed to the Democrats due to their homestead

¹⁹Ibid., September 12, 1872.

legislation. At the same time Stephen Douglas was opening the west to the southern planter and his slaves. This attitude deprived the small farmer of an equal chance of settling the west.²⁰

TABLE II^aNATIVITY OF FOREIGN-BORN BY TOWNSHIP, 1860-1870

<u>Township:</u>	U. K.		Ireland		Germany		Canada		Total ^b	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
Aroma	6	6	1	13	8	13	28	54	44	90
Bourbonnais	5	5	4	2	8	10	373	322	396	348
Essex	11	37	9	37	12	29	0	3	37	111
Ganier	18	13	26	34	7	26	66	104	118	188
Kankakee	45	54	39	42	184	270	119	300	412	704
Limestone	12	12	8	11	17	39	23	36	65	107
Manteno	17	26	12	19	3	19	61	145	97	222
Momence	7	6	5	13	10	23	42	52	64	116
Norton	11	29	3	29	3	39	3	6	23	108
Otto	11	24	4	37	15	57	13	57	44	195
Pilot	2	23	2	20	24	49	25	46	59	165
Rockville	19	20	4	23	10	4	16	49	51	99
Salina	6	3	16	16	41	78	7	9	76	124
St. Anne	0	6	1	7	3	3	238	207	251	249
Sumner	9	9	9	37	9	44	18	58	54	153
Yellowhead	4	8	2	10	26	112	16	12	51	160

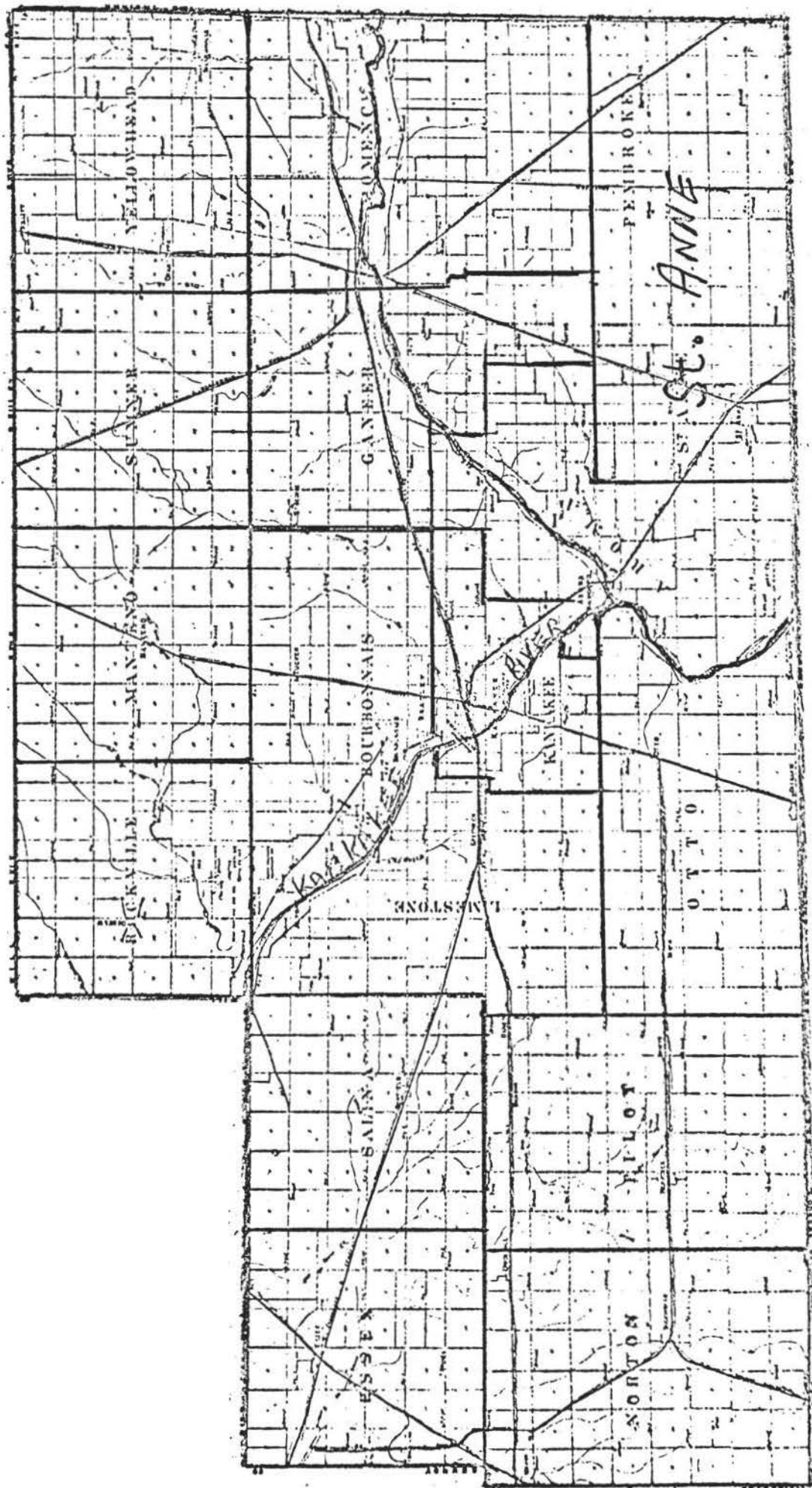
^aInformation derived from manuscript census of 1860 and 1870.

^bTotal includes other minority groups

As Table II illustrates the Germans did not comprise a large percentage of the population in Kankakee, but they were one of the major national groups. On the question of slavery, the rural Germans were willing to tolerate slavery in the states where it already was established but opposed its extention into the western states. However, the urban

²⁰Smith, "The Influence of the Foreign-born of the Northwest in the Election of 1860, MVHR, 194.

OUTLINE MAP OF
KANKAKEE CO. - 1860
ILLINOIS.



Germans seemed to side with the abolitionists and wanted slavery totally abolished.²² In the other areas of the country, the southern Germans, owning no slaves, were affected only indirectly by the slavery question. Many were satisfied with its existing value and, though they might oppose it on moral or religious grounds, refrained from publicly opposing it. Texan Germans saw little threat to free labor in the extension of slavery to the territories.. Thus, they had no objection to its introduction into the west. Lincoln found few supporters in the Texan Germans.²³ This diverse nature of one single immigrant group showed both its importance to the major parties and the difficulty in capturing its vote.

The chief exponent of national German Republicanism was Carl Schurz. Although he never personally appeared in Kankakee County, his speeches reached the Germans through the Gazette. Schurz fought hard for equal rights for the native as well as the immigrant. Along with the other German leaders, Schurz saw a chance in 1860 to receive aid from the Republicans. They suggested the "Dutch planks." The Republicans, realizing the immigrant voter's importance, incorporated the planks into their platform as the thirteenth

²²Andreas Dorpalen, "The German Element and the Issues of the Civil War," MVHR, XXIX (June, 1942), 63.

²³Ibid., 54-60.

and fourteenth steps.²⁴ The thirteenth plank was to protest against the sale of public lands already held by the squatters and to demand the passage of a satisfactory homestead measure. The fourteenth was against any change in the naturalization laws which abridged the rights of an immigrant and giving them full rights as naturalized citizens.²⁵ These planks were a direct appeal to the immigrant and native voters who opposed the movement of slave owners into the west. The Republican party was protecting the rights of immigrants and natives who wanted to move west but feared control by plantation owners. Douglas' Democratic platform resolved "it is the duty of the United States to afford ample and complete protection to all its citizens whether at home or abroad, and whether native or foreign born." The platform stated that since there was a difference of opinion in the party over the question of slavery the party would abide by the decision of the Supreme Court.²⁶

The foreign-born voter was a fundamental factor in the elections of the 1860s and 1870s, more specifically with Lincoln in 1860 and 1864. The European immigrant arrived in America with preconceived concepts of personal liberty

²⁴Ibid., 70.

²⁵Kirk H. Porter, National Party Platforms, (New York, 1924), 58.

²⁶Ibid., 53-55.

and universal suffrage. The Revolutions of 1848 had failed to widen the immigrant's freedom in the mother country. But the social solidarity of the immigrant which centered on retaining their own speech, churches, schools, and customs was transmitted to their political solidarity.²⁷ In the elections of 1860 and 1864 where the question of slavery was most important each party vied for the support of the immigrant.

Another important immigrant group was the Irish, who tended to vote Democratic. This attraction to the Democrats was due primarily to both the name of the party itself as well as its chief exponent and "patron saint" Thomas Jefferson. The Democrats were aware of the immigrant voter's importance. With the large influx of immigrants during the 1830s and 1840s from Europe, the Democrats appealed immediately to the Irish by flattering them with attention and minor jobs. They posed as the friend of the poor. The Irish continued to vote Democratic even after the creation of the Republican party in 1854. The Democrats always insisted on equal rights for the Irish, and with the advent of the Civil War the Irish remained steadfast with the Democrats. One other reason was because the Irish were dubious of Lincoln's qualifications.²⁸ However, the Irish

²⁷Dorpalen, "The German Element and the Issues of the Civil War, MVHR, 59-60.

²⁸Wittke, The Irish in America, 125.

proved to be of little influence in Kankakee County in 1856, 1860, and 1864, since their number was slight except in Ganier and Kankakee townships. But by the elections of 1868 and 1872 their number increased significantly, especially in Otto, Essex, and Sumner townships. Table III shows that by 1870 the total percentages of non-Canadian foreign-born, including the Irish, increased sizeably by 1870.

TABLE III

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ADULT MALE FOREIGN-BORN IN
KANKAKEE COUNTY BY TOWNSHIP

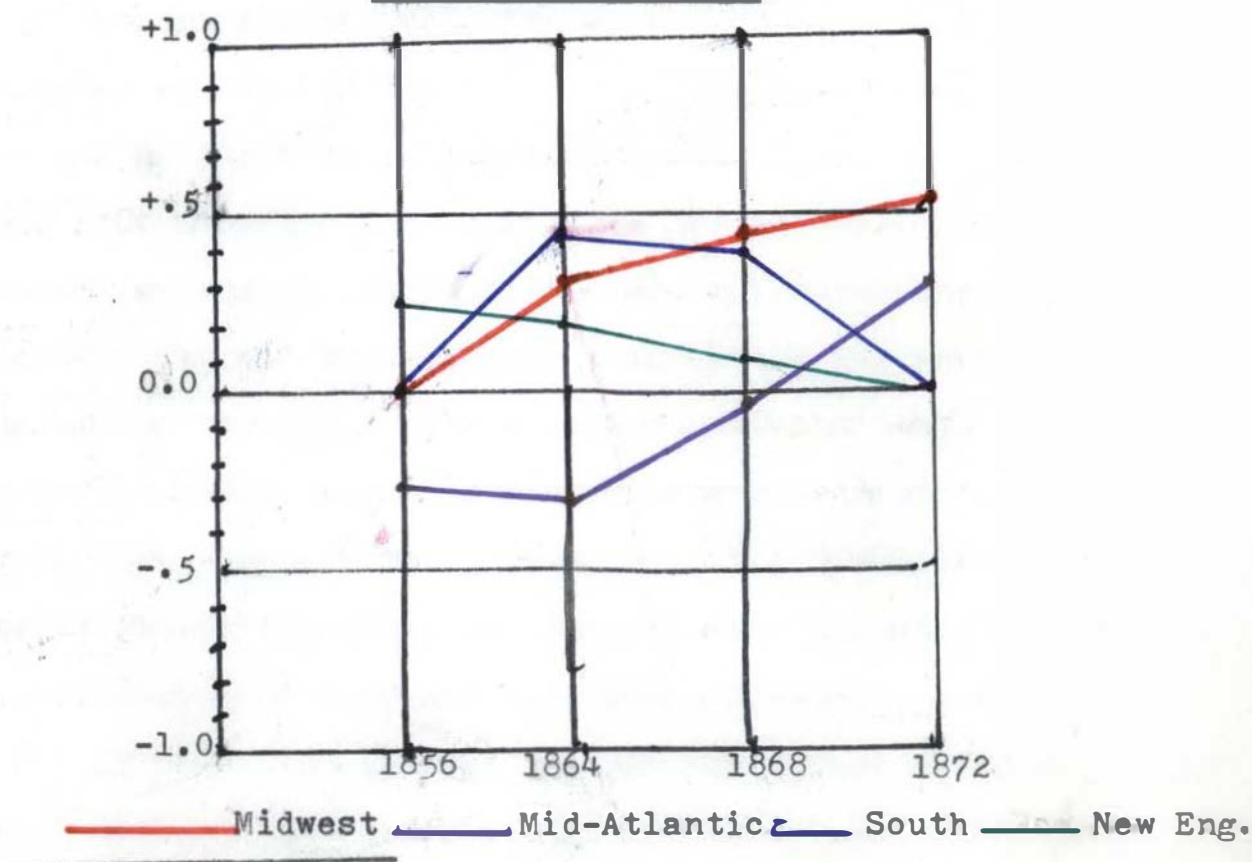
<u>Township:</u>	1860			1870			CHANGE
	C	NC	TOTAL	C	NC	TOTAL	
Aroma	15	8	23	17	11	28	+5
Bourbonnais	82	5	87	73	6	79	-8
Essex	0	31	31	1	50	51	+20
Ganier	24	20	44	27	22	49	+5
Kankakee	17	40	57	24	34	58	+1
Limestone	14	25	39	17	37	54	+15
Manteno	31	18	49	37	20	57	+8
Momence	17	10	27	16	21	37	+10
Norton	5	35	40	2	35	37	-3
Otto	9	23	32	17	42	59	+17
Pilot	22	29	51	17	44	61	+10
Rockville	7	15	22	18	17	35	+13
Salina	5	50	55	5	57	62	+7
St. Anne	84	4	88	72	14	86	-2
Sumner	13	26	39	23	37	60	+21
Yellowhead	7	15	22	3	39	42	+20

There was some Irish sympathy for Grant in 1872. This was due to the Democratic candidate, Horace Greeley, being a teetotaler, something against the constitution of the Irish and Germans. Likewise, since Greeley had opposed slavery's extension westward, he offended the Irish who had

stood strongly against the abolitionists.²⁹ Table II shows that by 1870 the Irish strength increased. But, evidence of the Irish tendency towards the Republicans cannot be found in Kankakee County. Appendix I shows a comparison of the 1868 and 1872 election returns where a strengthening of the Democratic party is evident in several townships. When a correlation was made between the Democratic and Irish percentage, it produced a $+0.36$ coefficient for 1872. Thus, the Irish in Kankakee County remained loyal to the Democrats.

GRAPH II

CORRELATION OF NATIVE BORN
AND REPUBLICAN VOTE



²⁹Ibid., 173.

The true Republican strength in the county proved not to be entirely within the foreign vote but also in the native vote. As Table III indicates the foreign-born made sizeable increases throughout the county, but the native percentage still remained quite strong. Graph II illustrates the Republican nature of the various native groups. Appendix II shows both the number and percentage of the total adult male native born by township for 1860 and 1870. In 1860 the largest percentage of the native born population came from two areas, New England and the Middle Atlantic states. But, by 1870 there was a large increase in the number arriving from the Middle West, specifically Ohio and Indiana.

Except for the articles appealing to both the foreign element and the native born, the Gazette made little appeal to the native vote in the 1860s. Of course, in the 1856 and 1860 campaign both political parties appealed to all voters on the questions of slavery and homestead legislation. In 1856 the New England emigrants showed the strongest Republican tendency with a $+0.28$ correlation while those from the Middle Atlantic states were Democratic with a -0.27 Republican correlation. Those from the Middle West and South showed almost no correlation with the Republicans with coefficients of $+0.07$ and $+0.06$ respectively.

In the 1864 election the New Englanders remained aligned with the Republican party with a weaker $+0.22$, a slight decline from 1856. The Middle Atlantic emigrants continued

to ally with the Democrats with a Republican coefficient of $-.33$. Those residents from the South and Middle West rose strongly to the Republican cause with coefficients of $+.48$ and $+.31$ respectively. In 1868 the county saw a dramatic change in political loyalty. There was a decline in New England Republicanism with a correlation of $+.16$. The residents from the Middle Atlantic states completely deserted the Democrats but still showed no correlation with the Republicans. The Middle West emigrants grew stronger with a $+.46$ Republican correlation. The Southerners continued to be Republican with a coefficient of $+.40$. But, 1872 brought another drastic change. The residents from New England and the South left the Republican party, showing no correlation. The Middle Atlantic citizens rose to the Republicans with a coefficient of $+.33$. The Middle West emigrants had the strongest correlation with a solid $+.54$ coefficient.

During the first twenty years of the county's existence the most evident change in the native voter's political loyalty was the desertion of the Republican party by the ex-New Englanders and the growth of Republicanism among the residents from the Middle Atlantic states. Likewise, there was also growth in the Republican strength in the Middle West emigrants. Although the South rose to the Republicans in 1864 and 1868, they returned to a neutral stand in 1872.

In conclusion, the foreign vote was one of the major factors in the elections from 1856 through 1872 in Kankakee County. As is indicated by Table III they comprised the major percentage of the voting population. But, the correlations show that their voting patterns were diverse. The French-Canadians were loyal to the Republicans in 1856 as indicated by a $+ .40$ coefficient, but by 1872 the coefficient was lowered to a $+ .11$. Likewise, the non-Canadian foreign born, namely the German and Irish, were loyal to the Democrats throughout the period. The Republican strength in the latter part of the 1860s and early 1870s was in the native vote, particularly those from the Middle West and Middle Atlantic states. However, the weak correlations show immigrants frequently did not vote as an ethnic block, and thus more possibly cast a ballot on an occupational basis or on the personal appeal of the party. For example, the $+ .11$ coefficient for the Canadians in 1872 show no correlation between the Canadians and Republicans. It also means they had no correlation with the Democratic party. Thus, as the coefficients grew closer to $.00$ it illustrates immigrants voted not so much because of ethnic appeal but for other reasons.

CHAPTER IV

THE FINAL TRANSFORMATION

The railroad was instrumental in bringing civilization to the Kankakee area. Between 1850 and 1870 Kankakee County was transformed from a raw, sparsely settled prairie into a fresh, productive community.

Prior to the organization of Kankakee County in 1853, that section north of the Kankakee river was part of Will County while the southern half belonged to Iroquois. According to the 1850 census reports, the population of the northern four townships ran as follows: Bourbonnais, 1719; Carey, 214; Momence, 791; and Rockville, 514.¹ Because Iroquois County was not divided into townships, no statistics can be determined for the southern half. However, other sources indicate there was little population in the area.

Shortly before the arrival of the Illinois Central Railroad, the settlers in the Bourbonnais Grove area petitioned the state legislature for the formation of a new county; however, due to the lack of support, it was denied. By 1853 they felt strong enough and circulated another petition. In answer to their demands an election was held in April in Iroquois and Will Counties to determine whether or not to make the area around the river into a new county.

¹U. S. Census Office, A Statistical View of Each of the States and Territories, Arranged by Counties, Towns, etc.... (Washington, 1854), 342, 345, 369, 379.

One principal reason for this request was the extreme distance of Bourbonnais Grove and the other towns from the county seats of both Will and Iroquois. It was at least a day's ride to both Watseka (Iroquois) and Joliet (Will).² Finally, the new county was formed. There followed a dispute within the county between the old community of Momence and the new creation of the Illinois Central, Kankakee City, for the location of the new county seat. Momence was one of the oldest communities in the county. By 1853 it contained over 150 houses, ten or twelve stores, one large flouring mill, a carding machine, saw mill, and a carriage-manufacturing and machine shop. The population was about 750, with three religious societies, Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian.³ But, with a little help from the financial backing of the Associates, Kankakee City was chosen. The reason given in favor of Kankakee was because it was closer to the middle of the county and on the railroad.⁴ However, another reason proved to be the offer by the Associates for \$5,000 towards the erection of a new court house, something the opposition in the other towns could not match.⁵

²Mary Jean Houde and John Klasey, Of the People: A Popular History of Kankakee County, (Chicago, 1968), 49.

³Kankakee Sunday Journal, June 25, 1972.

⁴William Kenaga and George Letourneau, History of Kankakee County, (Chicago, 1906), 635, 641.

⁵Paul W. Gates, The Illinois Central in Its Colonization Work, (Cambridge, 1934), 126.

With the creation of a new county and the choice of the county seat, the people of Kankakee County were ready to begin a new life on the prairie. The railroad brought immigrants into the area as well as providing a main line of communication to Lake Michigan and the Mississippi. Thus, by 1854 the area, although sparsely settled, was beginning its transformation. Gradually as the railroad was finished, Kankakee began a long progression towards prosperity. Farming increased and with it so did exports and imports. By the middle of 1853, the area finally had its first newspaper, the Kankakee Gazette. Kankakee became a growing pioneer community.

Kankakee's sudden growth is evident in the first issue of the Gazette, August 29, 1853.

The county seat of Kankakee County is rapidly progressing in her buildings; already 15 or 16 dwelling houses, are in the process of erection. Several stores are near completion, one of which is already occupied by Mr. Clark with a stock of goods, groceries, hardware, medicines, etc. The buildings for the railroad depot are nearly ready for occupancy, the freight-house having already received a considerable amount of freight.⁶

Despite numerous construction projects the area was still under the prairie influence. The Gazette mentioned that numerous Chicago residents took the railroad to Kankakee to enjoy "a trip over this magnificent prairie for recreation, giving them such easy access to the hunting grounds where

⁶Kankakee Sunday Journal, June 25, 1972.

the prairie fowls are found in abundance...." But, in Kankakee the prairie was vanishing and the area was fastly becoming settled. "The whole of this section of Kankakee County is well settled with industrious farmers, and yielding this year most luxuriant harvests. The whole county is one of the healthiest and most thriving in the state, in proportion to the age of its settlement."⁷

In a December article entitled "Still Progressing," the Gazette made a progress report. Although the population of Kankakee was still quite small, it was beginning to show further development.

As we have bidden farewell to the autumnal [sic] months, we must say that we could hardly have had a more favorable season for business, and our citizens have well improved it. The number of buildings that have sprung up within the three weeks past is not small. Our friend, Mr. Durham, who is one of the oldest and most faithful residents of our progress and has counted more than seventy buildings erected and in progress, besides the shanties along the sides of the railroad. Should the weather continue favorable, there will be much more done this season yet, before our citizens will consent to retire to winter quarters.⁸

In one short year, the area began to show further prosperity. Evidence of this growth is seen in the report by J. P. Ostrander who travelled from Monee to Chebanse by way of the Illinois Central in 1854, passing through the small community of Manteno.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Kankakee Gazette, December 3, 1853.

Leaving Monee we stretch over a country, where, we can truly see, as one gentlemen remarked, 'we were for a long time out of sight of land....' This stretch of prairie continues for about 12 miles to Manteno, it is a small station which has been in existence for a few months and now bids fair to become a place of importance for most of the land thereabouts is taken up. It contains one small store and one or two dwellings.... Already considerable grain is brought there and sold,⁹ but the place needs more enterprising men,

Ostrander made little observation of Kankakee City, or as it was originally platted, Bourbonnais, not to be confused with LeVasseur's Bourbonnais Grove. At this time the city had a population of 1026, with several law offices, eight or ten stores, several blacksmiths, and two day schools. During this period, the name of Kankakee City changes. The original Bourbonnais became first Kankakee City and by the latter part of the decade, simply Kankakee. Bourbonnais Grove dropped the last part of its name and adopted the township name.

In 1855 Kankakee County celebrated its second birthday. At this time William Ferguson left Chicago and travelled by rail to Cairo. He made the following observation as he passed through the county.

Until this railway was made, this part of the state was quite inaccessible, and still tracks, miles in extent, are without a house. Stations are put down every tens miles or so, and the lands are being rapidly settled. The early settlements are all on the banks of streams. Reaching the Iroquois River we find on its banks

⁹Kankakee Republican News, December 12, 1931.

a mile and three-quarters from the station, the old French settlement of Bourbonnais. It contained by the census of 1850, 1719 people; and its presents features of improvement.... At the station, a new town, called Kankakee, is springing up. Eighteen months ago, there was at this place one log-hut on an eminence, and one shanty or small house of boards at the station; now, there is a flourishing little town of 1500 to 2000 people. The situation is very favorable for a town, there being a flat meadow bottom along the Iroquois River, and a rising ground that the town (which is to be the county town of Kankakee County) is springing up, and a court-house is in the course of erection now.¹⁰

Although Ferguson identified the Kankakee River as the Iroquois his observation shows the sudden growth of the city. By 1855, in only two years, Kankakee City had already surpassed Bourbonnais in township population.

In five years the county made tremendous progress. This can clearly be seen through the eyes of observer Sir James Caird, who traveled through Kankakee City and Bourbonnais by road in 1858.

Before reaching Kankakee we pass through a settlement of 800 French Canadians, which has been growing for the last fifteen years. Each settler has about forty acres, and their farms are laid out along parallel roads at right angles to the railway. They exhibit signs of careful civilization, and the village and church of the colony are prettily situated near the woods on the river, fifty-six miles south of Chicago. Though there was not a house here five years ago, the population already numbers 3,500 with very good streets and shops, the centre of a rich agricultural district affording sufficient

¹⁰Paul M. Angle, Prairie State: Impressions of Illinois 1673-1967, By Travellers and other Observers, (Chicago, 1968), 301.

traffic for a special daily train in and out of Chicago. The land behind it is a fertile, black, sandy loam, lying on limestone, excellent for oats and potatoes, and productive of rich grass.¹¹

During the first years the population of Kankakee City greatly increased. In fact, it almost doubled in only three years. A major contribution to this sudden jump in population was the completion of the Illinois Central to Cairo. As Caird's observation implies, the area surrounding Kankakee City was becoming an agricultural center, with a steady export of products to Chicago via the Illinois Central. Most important is his observation of the sudden growth and change in the community.

By the mid-1850s, after the mass migration into the county of Germans and Irish who worked on the railroad, Kankakee began a steady increase in size. With this increase, the city became more closely tied with the rest of the state. Evidence of this is that by March 27, 1856, the Illinois Central announced the completion of its line from Urbana to Cairo, a total of 437 miles. The route had been running from Chicago to Urbana for several months previous. The completion of the route brought the total run to 560 miles. Kankakee also saw the completion of a telegraph line from Urbana to Kankakee on April 9, 1856, and the line was soon extended to Chicago.¹²

¹¹Ibid., 315.

¹²Kankakee County Historical file, XII, typed manuscript n. d. n. p., 9.

During the fifties and sixties, Kankakee's social life centered around the home and church. With the growth of the county, the religious element began to prosper. The Catholic Church had always been of great influence in the community, politically and socially, as well as spiritually. Its importance continued throughout the sixties and seventies. Within the thirteen Catholic parishes of Kankakee County there was a high percentage of French-Canadians. But, one of the largest French-Canadian colonies, St. Anne, chose to stray from the Catholic Church. Even though Chiniquy split with the Catholic Church in 1856 and formed the Christian Catholic Church, many St. Anne residents remained loyal to the mother Church and traveled to Kankakee to worship. They finally became numerous enough to build their own church in 1871.¹³ After seeing the need for religious education, the French-Canadians of Bourbonnais became strong enough by 1865 to erect a college, St. Viateurs. Reverend Gati, pastor of Bourbonnais Grove, made application to St. Viateurs in Canada for instructors for the children of the small community. That summer three teachers arrived from Canada and arranged for the building of a parochial school. Father Beaudoin was appointed pastor of the church, while the school was placed under the direction of Father Thomas

¹³Kenaga, History of Kankakee County, 658.

Roy. By 1869 the college cornerstone was laid.¹⁴ The school remained in operation until the middle of the twentieth century.

Protestants also proved important in the county's development. Among the earliest, the Methodists constructed two small churches in the Kankakee area, one in 1838 and another in 1844. By 1855 they built a church in Manteno and in 1862, erected one in Deselm, west of Manteno. The Presbyterians built a church at Manteno in 1853 and another at Kankakee in 1854.

Of major importance in the Kankakee region was the growth of the foreign-born population and its effect on religion, both Protestant and Catholic. One of the major immigrant elements was the Germans. The German Baptists became numerous enough by 1858 to build a church in Kankakee. Although they held several meetings in Pilot from 1852 to 1864, the German Lutherans did not have a church until St. Pauls was erected in Kankakee in 1864. The German Evangelicals built a church in 1854 at Kankakee and held morning and evening sessions in German. St. John's United Evangelical of Kankakee, built in 1870, also held their services in German. The French-Canadians, Irish, and Polish residents of Momence combined in 1859 to build St. Patrick's Catholic Church.¹⁵

¹⁴John W. Cook, Educational History of Illinois, (Chicago, 1912), 339-340.

¹⁵Kenaga, History of Kankakee County, 664-673.

Although religion played an important role in the home, one of the principal elements in any household was the need to be in touch with the outside world as well as one's own community. This sign of civilization is seen in the growth of the newspaper. As mentioned before, the first newspaper in the county was the Gazette, began in 1853. Until Kankakee could obtain its own printing press, the first few issues of the paper was printed in Chicago. With the coming of the election of 1856 the paper became Republican and continued to support the party throughout the sixties. The Gazette remained prominent in local issues. In 1856 the Kankakee County Democrat joined the Gazette. The Democrat changed hands four times before suspending publication in 1862. Due to the political nature of the county, it never reached the popularity of the Gazette. At the same time a second Democratic paper, the County Union, was established by the same publisher who previously published the Democrat, and like its predecessor, the Union ceased soon afterwards. In 1865 the Kankakee Review opened its doors. Although starting as an independent paper, it turned Republican, but later supported the Greenbackers. Lastly, a French newspaper, the Courier d' Illinois was established in Kankakee in 1868 but later moved its operations to Chicago. The Courier was circulated in Wisconsin and Kansas where there were large concentrations of French-

speaking people as well as Illinois. Although nationally Republican, it did not meddle in local politics.¹⁶

TABLE I^a

Comparative Table of Total Population
of Kankakee County

<u>Township:</u>	<u>1860</u>	<u>1870</u>
Aroma	788	1100
Bourbonnais	2205	2068
Essex	501	990
Ganier	1110	1582
Kankakee	2984	5189
Limestone	616	840
Manteno	861	1681
Momence	943	1291
Norton	251	1180
Otto	500	1356
Pilot	454	1140
Rockville	944	1112
Salina	599	865
St. Anne	1316	1385
Sumner	444	1081
Yellowhead	896	1492

^aInformation derived from the 8th and 9th census reports issued by the Secretary of the Interior, 1860 and 1870.

Although newspaper articles and observations show the growth and development of Kankakee County, only through studying the manuscript census reports can one best see evidence of the county's growth from 1850 to 1870. In 1850, the northern four township's total population was 3238. By 1860, after the arrival of the Illinois Central, the county had grown to 15,412. By 1870 the county increased by 8,940 to a total of 24,352. Table I compares

¹⁶Ibid.

township populations for 1860 and 1870. The table shows major increases in each township except Bourbonnais, which declined by almost 150 from 2205 to 2068. The largest single increase was in Kankakee township which rose by 2200. Elsewhere there were increases of 800 in Manteno, 900 in Norton, 850 in Otto, 700 in Pilot, and 600 in Sumner and Yellow-head townships.

One of the principal signs of a growing community is the abundance of youth. Table II shows the age-distribution percentage among the male population over 20 years old, the principal working and voting force of the county.¹⁷ In 1860 the over-20 male population totaled 3870 while in 1870 it was 5834, an increase of almost 2000. The largest change in this total was among the foreign-born which rose from 1975 in 1860 to 3162 in 1870, an increase of 1200 in ten years.¹⁸ This compares to a change of only 800 among the native-born. One major factor evident among the age-distribution was the emphasis on youth. In 1860 thirty-nine percent of the populace was below 29. Of this, twenty percent was native and eighteen percent was foreign-born. However, by 1870 this percentage decreased to fourteen percent for native and fifteen for foreign-born, a total of twenty-nine percent. Despite the war and its toll on the

¹⁷ Information in this and all other tables was obtained from the manuscript census reports of 1850, 1860, and 1870.

¹⁸ For complete township age distribution for 1850-1870, see Appendix III.

youth of the county, forty-two percent of the county male populace remained below 34, still quite youthful. The age percentages of the over-54 age group remained relatively constant from 1860 to 1870.

TABLE II

1860-1870 Comparative Age-Distribution Percentages In
Kankakee County

	20-24		25-29		30-34		35-39		40-44	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
1860	11	7	9	11	7	8	6	7	4	5
1870	7	8	7	7	6	7	7	5	4	6

	45-49		50-54		55-59		60-64		64+	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
1860	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	2	2	2
1870	4	5	3	4	2	2	3	2	2	3

Graph I illustrates the above percentages. By 1870 the age level of the county had begun to level off with more of the adult male population remaining under 40.

GRAPH I



As the graph indicates, there were sharp declines in the 20 to 39 age group, but an increase in the 40 to 54 age group. One possible explanation for this is the effect if the war on the community.

Another area of major concern in a new community is the distribution of wealth. Table III show the wealth-distribution in the county. The term wealth includes both personal property and real estate. The approximate wealth of each individual was determined by the resident. By 1850 relatively few adult males were valued at more than \$2000. The majority were below \$500 and only two, both native, were worth more than \$10,000.

TABLE III

1860-1870 Wealth Distribution

	0-2000		2001-10000		10000+	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
1860	1256	1571	502	228	112	17
1870	1492	2193	836	950	262	115

By 1860 with the arrival of the railroad and an increase of merchants and tradesmen, wealth rose considerably. Although the majority of the residents remained below \$2000, more and more were worth \$10,000 and upwards. This was a considerable change from the 1850 census. In 1870 the total wealth of the county had changed greatly, with sizeable increases in both native and foreign-born. From 1860 to 1870 the foreign element showed the largest increase in each category. A closer look needs to be taken at the foreign-

born wealth. Table IV compares the percentage of foreign-born in a township with the percentage of wealth in 1860 and 1870. In those townships with large percentages of foreign-born, i.e. Bourbonnais, St. Anne, and Kankakee. In Bourbonnais where there was a decline in the foreign-born, there was a decrease in the below \$2000 group, but an increase in the \$2000-\$10,000 area.

TABLE IV

Comparative Table Of Foreign-born Percentage
And Foreign-born Wealth 1860-1870

<u>Township:</u>	<u>Foreign-born %</u>		<u>Wealth</u>					
	1860	1870	<u>\$0-2000</u>		<u>\$2001-10000</u>		<u>\$10000+</u>	
	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870	1860	1870
Aroma	23	29	17	26	3	5	0.0	1.0
Bourbonnais	87	79	69	49	17	25	4.0	5.0
Essex	31	51	17	29	5	24	0.0	1.0
Ganier	44	49	37	30	6	15	0.4	2.0
Kankakee	57	58	52	51	3	8	1.0	2.0
Limestone	39	54	33	38	4	13	0.0	3.0
Manteno	49	57	42	41	8	13	0.0	4.0
Momence	27	37	22	28	4	7	0.4	1.0
Norton	40	37	35	17	5	22	0.0	0.3
Otto	32	59	30	41	3	18	0.0	1.0
Pilot	51	61	47	32	4	27	0.0	1.0
Rockville	22	35	17	22	4	11	0.4	2.0
Salina	55	62	52	29	10	30	0.0	2.0
St. Anne	88	86	84	60	4	24	0.0	2.0
Sumner	39	60	27	34	7	21	0.0	3.0
Yellowhead	22	42	13	26	4	15	0.4	1.0

Throughout the county there were large increases in the \$2001-\$10,000 category. In townships such as Otto, where there was a rapid rise in the percentage of wealth, there was also an increase in the percentage of wealth.¹⁹ As a whole, the foreign-born made the largest increase from 1860

¹⁹For complete township distribution of wealth, see Appendix IV.

to 1870 but the true wealth of the county remained in the hands of the less numerous natives. Possibly this is due to the high percentage of foreign-born with no personal property or real estate.

The final area of concern is occupational distribution. In 1850, since the county was mainly an agricultural area, and not yet influenced by the railroad, the majority of the people were either farmers or laborers. But, still there were others serving as day laborers and a small number of blacksmiths, and carpenters. However, these were occupations necessary for a farm to be operative.

TABLE V

1860-1870 Occupational Distribution

	<u>Agriculture</u>		<u>Business</u>		<u>Skilled</u>	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
1860	1197	873	90	56	189	274
1870	1696	1864	153	103	276	426

	<u>Professional</u>		<u>Labor</u>		<u>Others</u>	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
1860	74	25	122	333	35	79
1870	113	51	136	397	24	25

As did everything else, occupations in Kankakee County increased considerably by 1860. As Table V illustrates there was a large number remaining in the agricultural area; however, each township showed a sizeable rise in the non-agricultural areas. The smallest element in the 1860 census was within the professional services. The largest increase in this group was in Kankakee township, where there was also the greatest change in population. The majority of the

township's increase was in the labor group, mostly newly arrived Germans, Irish, and Canadian immigrants. But, 1860 also showed an increase in railroad workers, with four natives, one German, two English, and sixteen Irish. There were also an addition of brewers, a cotton manufacturer, and a daguerreotypist. However, the census still showed at least three trapper-hunters and one shepherd, constant reminders of the prairie.²⁰

By 1870 the county showed tremendous increases in agriculture, professional services, and manufacturing. There was a sizeable rise in the number of laborers, with the majority being German. In the business category there was an increase in bankers and insurance and real estate agents. In manufacturing 1870 saw the influx of such new occupations as an oculist, a bee culturalist, a gold miner, a windmill salesman, and a prison guard. In all the areas except agriculture, the most sizeable rise was in the skilled category. Although the foreign-born went in for other occupations, such as carpentry or railroad workers, the

²⁰In the table and throughout the discussion, the term agriculture includes farmers, farm laborers, gardeners, etc. Professional includes dentists, doctors, clergymen, lawyers, officials of the government, and teachers. The business category contains merchants, clerks, salesmen, and bankers. The term skilled includes those in manufacturing and mining, containing miners, masons, blacksmiths, carpenters, workers, express workers, tailors, teamsters, and telegraph workers. Labor identifies the unskilled day laborers. In the other category there are bartenders, hotel keepers, domestic servants, barbers, hostlers, and launderers.

majority tended to migrate to the farms where they increased by almost 1000. Although they may have had the training and ability, fewer foreign-born went into the professional areas because of either money or language problems. Fewer natives went into the agricultural field where an increase of only 500 was noticed.²¹

Kankakee County had grown considerably during the first twenty years of its existence. Although the war had great effect, there were increases throughout the county. The county responded strongly to Lincoln's call in 1860 for volunteers. After the war, however, the county had changed in many respects. The most noticeable was in farming where mechanization accelerated greatly due to the lack of manpower.²²

Throughout the fifties and sixties Kankakee County continued to grow and prosper. There were increases in wealth as well as an abundance of new occupations. As the observations and newspaper accounts illustrate, Kankakee City was the center of the county. Although it did not exist in 1850, by 1870 it had grown to be over five thousand strong. As with the rest of the county there was a large influx of foreign-born. With this growth, the

²¹For complete occupational distribution for each township for 1850-1870 see Appendix V.

²²Klasey, A Popular History of Kankakee County, 126.

French-Canadians became less of a stronghold in the county. Likewise, with the rise in the percentage of native-born, a result of migration and children of foreign-born, the county was becoming more diverse. A further study through the seventies would show the increased effect of mechanization upon agriculture. Also, the city was becoming further populated with migrants, which eventually caused greater increase in industry.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Before the 1850s little progress was made within the area that became Kankakee County. When Noel LeVasseur arrived in the Kankakee river valley during the 1830s, he discovered an area with strong frontier aspects. Kankakee County followed Turner's line of frontier progression. LeVasseur had heard the Indians speak of large buffalo herds that once roamed the Illinois prairies. Later, the Kankakee area was alive with the activity of such hunters and fur trappers as Astor's Fur Company. In fact, the 1870 census still showed the existence of two fur trappers. These trappers arrived before the cattlemen, who preceded the pioneer farmers and manufacturers of the sixties. After the Treaty of Camp Tippecanoe in 1832 and the exit of Francois Bourbonnais with the Pottawatomies, LeVasseur and the French-Canadians began to gradually settle the new area calling it Bourbonnais Grove. Throughout the 1830s and 1840s the country along the Kankakee river began to grow slowly.

Besides the older settlements of Bourbonnais and Momence, the other major settlement in Kankakee was Father Chiniquy's St. Anne, established in the early 1850s. Like Bourbonnais Grove, the majority of the new settlers were French-Canadian. From 1830 to the mid-1850s, St. Anne, Momence, and Bourbonnais struggled along with few inhabitants, depending entirely upon the land for their livelihood.

Except for the river and Hubbard's Trace, the area had little connection with the rest of the state. Kankakee suffered from the major problem of the Illinois prairies, poor lines of communication.

The answer to this problem was the Illinois Central Railroad. Without the assistance of the Illinois Central, it is doubtful that the Kankakee area would have ever become a county. With the arrival of the railroad in 1852, Kankakee's population began to increase steadily for the next two decades. The railroad caused a large influx of immigrants from England, Germany, Ireland, as well as large numbers of natives from the east and south. Many of the new arrivals first came as railroad workers and passengers. The area offered the immigrant an opportunity for success. With new communication between Chicago and Cairo, the farmer felt that he was no longer closed off from society and the outside world.

After the county's organization in 1853, the people of Kankakee were ready to begin a new life on the prairie. According to the newspaper articles, observations, and census manuscripts, the county continued to make tremendous population increases throughout the fifties and sixties. As Table I in Chapter IV indicates, by 1870 nearly every township showed increases of 300 or more, the principal exception being Bourbonnais. From 1860 to 1870 the entire county increased almost 9000 from 15,412 to 24,352.

The graphs and tables in Chapters III and IV show evident changes in age, wealth, and occupation as well as political view of the community during the first two decades of its existence. As for the political views, the county was strongly Republican prior to and during the war. This loyalty was due to both the issues of slavery and homestead legislation and the large French-Canadian faction which maintained a strong percentage in several townships. But, when the population became more diverse the Republican percentage gradually declined. Evidence of this is seen in the coefficients of correlation which showed a decline of the foreign-born alignment with the Republican party. The coefficients of the 1872 election show little correlation of foreign-born and either party. Although the foreign-born alignment declined, there was an increase in the native born correlation to the party. Even though the county remained Republican, many adult males were voting not due to ethnic reasons but possibly because of occupational or personal appeal.

During this time the county began to slowly turn away from agriculture as an occupation. This transition came when the railroad brought more industry into the county. Finally, by 1870 many of the wealthiest in the county were merchants or bankers. Although industry prospered throughout the sixties and seventies, agriculture remained the largest occupation throughout the county.

One observer during the mid-1860s stated that many Chicago residents travelled to Kankakee because the open prairies and frontier aspects offered an escape from the city. But with the advent of the railroad Kankakee began to prosper and the frontier disappeared. New towns such as Manteno, Kankakee City, and Chebanse sprang from nothing. As indicated previously, the population of the thirty-one counties situated on the Illinois Central line increased 150 percent in comparison to only 50 percent elsewhere in the state. In 1850 Kankakee County did not exist and had only a meager population. But, by 1870 when the county was only seventeen years old there were over 24,000 people living there. Although the county was still a frontier in many ways, industry was slowly changing that.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX I

Election Returns

<u>Township:</u>	1856						1864			
	R	%	D	%	O	%	R	%	D	%
Aroma	106	72	41	28	0	0	151	91	15	9
Bourbonnais	256	93	18	7	0	0	191	87	28	13
Essex	57	79	11	15	4	6	63	70	27	30
Ganier	-	-	-	-	-	-	185	90	21	10
Kankakee	147	56	75	28	42	16	382	69	175	31
Limestone	93	89	9	7	3	3	117	94	7	6
Manteno	77	91	8	9	0	0	173	75	51	25
Momence	271	94	19	6	0	0	184	88	25	12
Norton	-	-	-	-	-	-	46	60	11	40
Otto	37	77	11	23	0	0	74	77	22	23
Pilot	-	-	-	-	-	-	58	81	24	19
Rockville	123	82	27	18	0	0	144	81	34	19
Salina	61	63	25	26	11	11	63	57	48	43
St. Anne	-	-	-	-	-	-	97	67	47	33
Sumner	48	100	0	0	0	0	75	87	11	13
Yellowhead	107	86	16	14	0	0	160	87	25	13

<u>Township:</u>	1868				1872			
	R	%	D	%	R	%	D	%
Aroma	180	95	19	5	174	87	27	13
Bourbonnais	253	92	21	8	200	88	26	12
Essex	101	61	65	39	110	76	35	24
Ganier	199	83	38	17	179	76	55	14
Kankakee	509	65	276	35	443	59	313	41
Limestone	86	80	22	20	80	74	28	26
Manteno	214	78	61	22	151	70	65	30
Momence	221	88	20	12	192	84	37	16
Norton	150	78	43	22	144	80	35	20
Otto	121	75	40	25	161	72	64	28
Pilot	118	80	29	20	107	68	51	32
Rockville	188	82	40	18	143	79	37	21
Salina	72	48	78	52	63	56	49	44
St. Anne	95	56	75	44	139	75	56	25
Sumner	124	84	24	16	96	70	42	30
Yellowhead	177	92	16	8	209	93	16	7

APPENDIX II

1860-Nativity of Native Voters

<u>Township:</u>	New Eng.	Middle Atlantic	Middle West	South	Total
Aroma	36	40	57	16	149
Bourbonnais	6	25	24	3	58
Essex	18	48	15	3	84
Ganier	26	87	32	8	153
Kankakee	64	153	76	14	307
Limestone	21	46	30	6	103
Manteno	37	39	21	2	99
Momence	32	55	68	23	178
Norton	11	17	5	2	35
Otto	19	47	25	3	94
Pilot	8	43	6	0	57
Rockville	40	87	42	12	181
Salina	7	45	9	0	61
St. Anne	3	10	12	8	33
Sumner	26	39	19	1	85
Yellowhead	23	73	82	8	186

1870-Nativity of Native Voters

<u>Township:</u>	New Eng.	Middle Atlantic	Middle West	South	Total
Aroma	22	63	108	14	227
Bourbonnais	12	28	50	1	91
Essex	17	65	25	0	107
Ganier	29	81	84	6	200
Kankakee	89	197	161	35	482
Limestone	14	51	32	2	99
Manteno	46	78	34	7	165
Momence	29	68	96	8	201
Norton	24	113	47	2	186
Otto	20	45	66	5	136
Pilot	14	58	31	3	106
Rockville	21	64	81	14	180
Salina	8	42	21	3	74
St. Anne	1	10	24	4	39
Sumner	21	53	35	2	101
Yellowhead	27	79	100	13	219

APPENDIX III

Age Distribution-1850

<u>Township:</u>	20-24		25-29		30-34		35-39		40-44	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
Bourbonnais	14	58	19	37	5	35	14	39	5	26
Carey	7	6	1	4	4	7	5	5	3	1
Momence	16	8	30	9	18	10	13	6	10	1
Rockville	<u>18</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>
Total	55	78	68	55	24	53	34	54	25	32

<u>Township:</u>	45-49		50-54		55-59		60-64		65+	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
Bourbonnais	0	28	3	31	1	8	1	12	4	14
Carey	0	2	2	3	0	0	1	0	3	1
Momence	4	1	8	1	3	1	5	0	2	1
Rockville	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	11	33	15	39	6	10	12	12	9	18

APPENDIX III

Age Distribution-1860

<u>Township:</u>	20-24		25-29		30-34		35-39		40-44	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
Aroma	34	8	25	10	27	9	14	7	17	2
Bourbonnais	14	90	10	57	10	54	6	41	4	44
Essex	15	1	12	8	13	8	9	4	7	6
Ganier	25	28	28	25	25	20	23	14	15	4
Kankakee	46	54	51	87	51	88	62	66	37	43
Limestone	21	11	12	10	13	8	17	17	11	12
Manteno	23	10	16	25	12	15	12	14	9	11
Momence	41	10	27	13	28	15	19	9	19	1
Norton	5	4	3	4	9	1	6	4	4	3
Otto	20	13	17	5	10	4	17	7	9	2
Pilot	15	11	15	15	5	11	5	8	4	4
Rockville	38	9	31	9	23	7	21	6	19	4
Salina	13	11	11	13	17	12	5	19	2	9
St. Anne	10	33	6	37	6	36	3	40	1	20
Sumner	26	12	17	11	8	3	14	8	1	20
Yellowhead	63	22	41	11	18	2	12	4	13	2
TOTAL.	409	327	332	440	275	293	251	263	172	186

<u>Township:</u>	45-49		50-54		55-59		60-64		64+	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
Aroma	12	3	14	4	4	0	2	0	11	3
Bourbonnais	4	22	7	35	2	20	0	20	1	20
Essex	7	5	8	1	4	2	2	1	4	1
Ganier	10	4	13	7	4	2	6	6	6	6
Kankakee	20	20	15	17	15	10	9	12	7	11
Limestone	4	4	6	5	6	3	6	2	7	4
Manteno	8	10	6	4	7	6	2	4	4	3
Momence	13	7	11	5	3	1	8	1	10	0
Norton	2	3	2	1	1	2	3	0	0	1
Otto	6	1	6	5	7	0	2	4	0	3
Pilot	3	8	3	2	4	0	0	0	3	0
Rockville	13	4	10	7	12	2	3	2	10	0
Salina	3	5	4	9	2	2	1	2	3	3
St. Anne	1	19	3	21	1	14	1	12	1	12
Sumner	5	2	4	3	3	0	0	0	2	2
Yellowhead	18	2	5	2	10	2	2	1	9	2
TOTAL	129	119	117	128	85	76	47	67	78	71

APPENDIX III

Age Distribution-1870

<u>Township:</u>	20-24		25-29		30-34		35-39		40-44	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
Aroma	50	16	32	17	21	16	32	11	17	9
Bourbonnais	39	62	12	54	9	42	11	40	5	33
Essex	15	10	9	8	16	13	15	18	17	20
Ganier	46	34	38	30	27	35	18	20	15	18
Kankakee	79	74	68	85	53	102	63	120	54	95
Limestone	13	15	14	12	15	12	16	15	7	11
Manteno	32	43	18	36	22	26	26	26	17	23
Momence	40	19	35	12	30	23	27	18	22	15
Norton	33	16	28	11	22	15	23	23	17	14
Otto	37	24	20	31	20	33	15	33	9	19
Pilot	24	32	23	31	13	21	12	23	11	19
Rockville	38	25	28	17	19	11	19	10	14	10
Salina	16	8	16	16	14	18	6	13	4	20
St. Anne	12	49	5	26	3	17	2	31	4	26
Sumner	34	32	16	19	17	22	16	15	7	14
Yellowhead	50	36	36	25	26	26	28	16	14	21
TOTAL	558	496	398	419	327	434	329	432	234	367

<u>Township:</u>	45-49		50-54		55-59		60-64		65+	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
Aroma	13	6	13	8	12	3	10	1	8	5
Bourbonnais	5	22	1	30	4	19	5	22	1	37
Essex	10	9	7	14	7	9	8	5	4	13
Ganier	19	16	11	11	7	11	7	8	12	6
Kankakee	57	91	35	40	22	20	16	24	29	40
Limestone	9	18	7	10	4	6	4	3	10	5
Manteno	11	21	9	20	11	6	7	4	11	17
Momence	12	14	12	6	6	5	6	4	10	1
Norton	19	12	11	14	7	1	3	5	3	4
Otto	7	24	13	16	5	6	6	5	4	7
Pilot	6	17	5	9	6	9	5	9	2	6
Rockville	14	6	19	9	7	5	9	2	12	4
Salina	9	12	2	12	3	7	3	7	6	10
St. Anne	5	21	4	29	1	16	1	14	1	18
Sumner	9	19	5	18	4	4	3	4	1	5
Yellowhead	15	15	17	8	11	8	6	2	16	4
TOTAL	220	323	171	254	107	135	198	119	130	183

APPENDIX IV

Wealth Distribution-1850

<u>Township:</u>	0-2000		2001-10000		10000 +	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
Bourbonnais	60	285	3	1	2	0
Carey	26	29	0	0	0	0
Momence	100	35	9	0	0	0
Rockville	<u>75</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	261	377	13	1	2	0

Wealth Distribution-1860

<u>Township:</u>	0-2000		2001-10000		10000 +	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
Aroma	118	36	33	7	12	0
Bourbonnais	35	301	9	74	10	2
Essex	70	31	15	6	0	0
Ganier	103	95	43	15	0	1
Kankakee	204	373	65	25	42	10
Limestone	68	58	34	8	4	0
Manteno	55	84	38	17	6	0
Momence	30	54	41	9	9	2
Norton	25	20	10	3	0	0
Otto	67	44	27	5	3	0
Pilot	42	53	11	5	2	0
Rockville	113	40	61	10	4	1
Salina	44	71	15	14	0	0
St. Anne	29	233	4	12	0	0
Sumner	51	33	30	9	1	0
Yellowhead	<u>103</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>1</u>
TOTAL	1256	1571	502	228	112	17

APPENDIX IV

Wealth Distribution-1870

<u>Township:</u>	0-2000		2001-10000		10000 +	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
Aroma	135	72	50	15	19	2
Fourbonnais	65	218	12	112	14	22
Essex	41	63	53	54	3	2
Ganier	120	120	71	60	14	7
Kankakee	265	648	133	98	78	26
Limestone	53	82	31	29	15	6
Manteno	91	149	54	52	21	14
Momence	136	87	51	23	14	2
Norton	71	50	93	62	3	1
Otto	87	132	44	52	5	4
Pilot	62	93	41	81	8	3
Rockville	87	61	62	31	29	6
Salina	57	57	21	60	2	3
St. Anne	26	172	11	71	0	6
Sumner	57	89	38	54	16	7
Yellowhead	127	99	71	57	21	3
TOTAL	1492	2193	836	950	262	115

APPENDIX V

Occupational Distribution-1870

<u>Township:</u>	Agriculture		Business		Skilled	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
Bourbonnais	45	166	3	4	5	42
Carey	20	23	0	0	2	2
Momence	50	14	7	1	30	14
Rockville	<u>69</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
TOTAL	184	224	10	5	39	59

<u>Township:</u>	Professional		Common		Others	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
Bourbonnais	5	5	6	62	0	0
Carey	0	0	1	1	0	0
Momence	5	0	13	4	1	0
Rockville	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	13	5	21	72	1	0

APPENDIX V

Occupational Distribution-1860

<u>Township:</u>	Agriculture		Business		Skilled	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
Aroma	105	32	4	0	15	3
Bourbonnais	36	207	2	5	7	44
Essex	62	32	0	0	3	0
Ganier	110	57	0	0	18	24
Kankakee	76	34	59	36	84	133
Limestone	68	49	0	0	1	1
Manteno	54	54	8	3	10	18
Momence	106	28	13	1	26	11
Norton	32	21	0	0	0	0
Otto	88	35	0	0	4	2
Pilot	49	41	0	0	1	2
Rockville	140	36	1	4	11	2
Salina	43	65	0	0	5	1
St. Anne	21	138	0	7	0	40
Sumner	66	20	1	0	0	0
Yellowhead	141	24	2	0	4	3
TOTAL	1197	873	90	56	189	274

<u>Township:</u>	Professional		Common		Others	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
Aroma	3	0	12	1	0	3
Bourbonnais	1	3	4	67	3	20
Essex	1	0	1	0	0	0
Ganier	3	1	7	27	4	8
Kankakee	44	13	16	122	16	29
Limestone	6	0	1	2	2	1
Manteno	5	0	6	13	0	1
Momence	4	2	16	15	5	6
Norton	0	0	0	0	0	0
Otto	0	0	0	1	0	6
Pilot	1	0	2	6	2	5
Rockville	1	1	3	7	1	0
Salina	1	0	3	9	0	0
St. Anne	2	3	4	33	0	4
Sumner	2	2	14	21	0	0
Yellowhead	0	0	34	19	2	0
TOTAL	74	25	122	333	35	79

APPENDIX V

Occupational Distribution-1860

<u>Township:</u>	Agriculture		Business		Skilled	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
Aroma	158	67	3	4	18	9
Bourbonnais	63	256	2	3	5	29
Essex	93	95	0	1	7	16
Ganier	121	105	4	2	27	22
Kankakee	89	61	100	75	132	249
Limestone	87	89	0	0	1	1
Manteno	101	136	12	6	20	31
Momence	104	49	13	0	27	28
Norton	160	108	2	0	4	1
Otto	109	166	7	0	8	11
Pilot	97	161	0	1	2	5
Rockville	160	93	0	0	8	1
Salina	68	110	0	1	0	1
St. Anne	32	167	5	6	0	11
Sumner	89	132	0	0	6	3
Yellowhead	165	119	5	4	11	8
TOTAL	1696	1864	153	103	276	426

<u>Township:</u>	Professional		Common		Others	
	N	FB	N	FB	N	FB
Aroma	7	0	9	0	1	4
Bourbonnais	2	10	1	11	0	4
Essex	3	0	2	1	0	0
Ganier	6	6	20	37	5	0
Kankakee	64	17	28	222	14	9
Limestone	0	0	0	4	0	0
Manteno	7	2	6	23	2	3
Momence	9	1	32	30	0	3
Norton	2	0	0	1	1	0
Otto	3	1	0	3	0	2
Pilot	2	1	0	1	0	0
Rockville	1	2	1	2	0	0
Salina	0	1	2	4	0	0
St. Anne	0	9	0	18	1	0
Sumner	0	0	9	6	0	0
Yellowhead	7	1	26	34	0	0
TOTAL	113	51	136	397	24	25

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