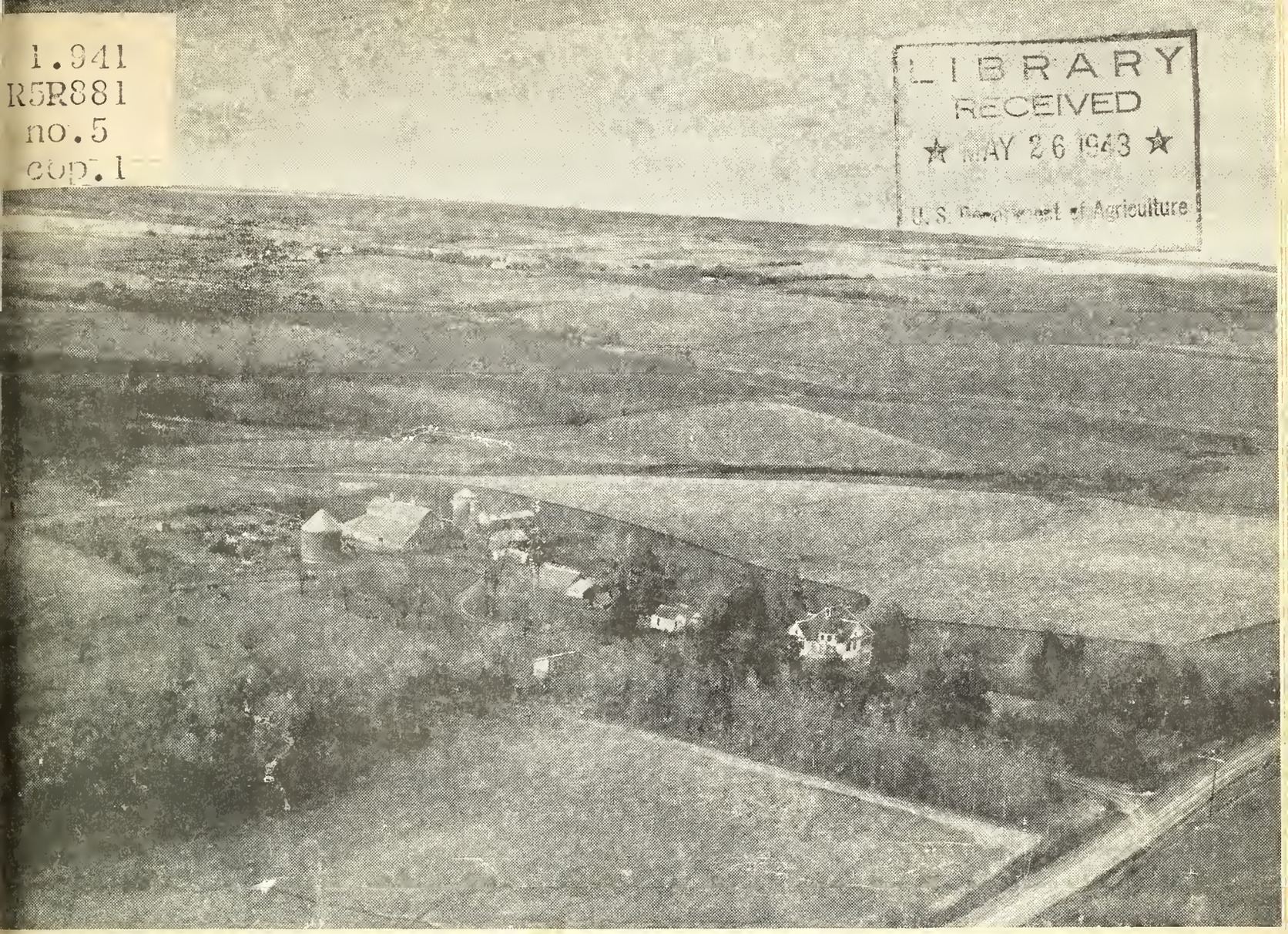

CULTURE OF A CONTEMPORARY RURAL COMMUNITY

Irwin, Iowa

by Edward O. Moe and Carl C. Taylor

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FOREWORD

This is a report on one of six communities which were studied contemporaneously by six different participant observers or field workers during 1940. Each study was sufficiently independent of the other five to make separate treatment and publication desirable, but the reader will gain full understanding of the findings only when he has read the reports of the six studies as a group.

The communities selected for study—El Cerrito, N. Mex.; Sublette, Kans.; Irwin, Iowa; The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County, Penn.; Landaff, N. H.; and Harmony, Ga.—were not selected in an attempt to obtain a geographic sampling of contemporary rural communities in the United States, but as samples of, or points on, a continuum from high community stability to great instability. At one end of the continuum, an Amish community in Lancaster County, Penn., was selected. At the other end, a "Dust Bowl" community in Kansas was chosen. The other four communities range themselves between these extremes.

The analysis of Irwin community, in Shelby County, Iowa, justifies the placing of a Corn Belt community midway between the extremes of stability and instability. The membership and social life of the community have experienced change from earliest settlement and are still in the process of change, but the type of farming stabilized itself so early in settlement and has remained so constant that there is a high degree of stability in the enterprise of agriculture. Farming and thinking about farming so dominate all members of the community, both farm and nonfarm, that there is a high degree of stability in the midst of constant change.

One of the authors of this report was born and reared on a farm in Shelby County; his father settled there in 1874, when the present system of agriculture was being established, and lived there until 1931. The folklore of pioneer days, the knowledge of ways of doing and thinking of the people in Irwin community are a natural part of the common-sense knowledge of the son concerning the segment of rural life here under study. The other author lived as a participant observer in Irwin for 4 months and has made two short trips to the community since 1940.

This is the fifth report in the series dealing with community stability and instability. A sixth report will appear on Harmony community in Putnam County, Georgia, and a seventh will present the complete methodology used in the 6 studies and a body of generalizations which grows out of the combined observations of all who participated in the studies.

Carl C. Taylor

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IRWIN, IOWA

by

EDWARD O. MOE
and
CARL C. TAYLOR

THE SETTLEMENT OF IRWIN COMMUNITY, IN SHELBY COUNTY, IOWA

Traveling by train or auto from Chicago to Omaha, or from Minneapolis to Kansas City one sees many towns and villages. Some of them are larger than Irwin, Iowa and some are smaller, but they are so much alike that he may think they are characterized by an awful sameness. If on the Great Western railroad and observing closely, he sees the sign Irwin. At that point his schedule tells him he is 450 miles from Chicago and 60 miles from Omaha. The elevation is 1210 feet. The population of the village, 345. He learns too that he is 12 miles from Harlan, the county seat of Shelby County.

As the train rolls into the Irwin station, the familiar water tower and spacious consolidated school loom large in the cluster of frame houses and business buildings. The traveler is impressed by the neatly kept houses in contrast to the unpaved streets and poorly painted stores. People are conversing leisurely while they wait for mail brought in by the train to be sorted. Boys, who minutes before were playing in the streets, are giving the train the onceover. The traveler, hurried as travelers usually are, probably wishes there were no Irwins. But down the line is another such place and beyond that are others, as there are on every railroad and highway that runs through the Corn Belt.

These towns and villages are more important than they may seem. The Irwin village has a population of 345, but it serves a thousand members of farm families who live around it. They buy in Irwin. They sell in Irwin. They attend school, and church, and lodge there, and dances, movies, and other community activities. They visit in Irwin and loaf there when they have time.

The importance of such towns and villages is indicated by their number and by the tendency to persist despite intense competition. Their frequent occurrence along railroads and highways seems to betray some plan, but they grew up unplanned and undirected. One wonders how it happened, how a prairie wilderness in 1860 could be rapidly transformed into settled and stable communities. By looking into the past one can account for the rise of these communities. The story of Irwin, which is typical, is the problem of this study. The story is inevitably tied to that of Iowa and of Shelby County.

In the Virgin state Iowa was prairie, and Shelby County high rolling prairie. Early topographical plats and maps describe the county as composed of great ridges and rounded hills, with the ridges in general running from the northeast to the southwest and forming the watersheds of the streams that drain this country. Swamps and marshes, some fed by springs, were frequent along the courses of the streams, and flanking each watercourse was a stretch of bottomland which supported a heavy vegetative cover.

Beneath the high waving prairie grass were soils of great productivity. They were very dark brown friable silt loams, generally 18 to 24 inches in depth. Yellowish-brown subsoils were rarely exposed except in stream cuts. Recent soil studies characterize Shelby County as part of Iowa's Missouri loessial soil area with approximately 82 percent of its soils classified as grades *1* and *2*.[1]

Timber was in groves which for the most part were merely enlargements of the wooded fringe along the streams. Rainfall is plentiful, averaging 30 inches; of this, 80 percent falls during the 7 months from April to October, and more than 52 percent falls during the critical crop months from May to August. Temperatures range from 40° below zero to 115° above, with an average mean of 48°. There is an annual average of 155 days between killing frosts.

To this fabulous combination of agricultural resources came in successive settlement stages, the fur trader and trapper, the pioneer adventurer and gardener, the cattleman, the grain and the corn-livestock farmer. Some such sequence of enterprise always characterized the American frontier. Early adventurers and adventures gave way to a new order until the weeding of the soil and the stable agriculturist was accomplished. Some who came as early pioneers lived to see the culture change from that of the frontier to a settled economy.

Traders and trappers were lured into this area, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, by prospects of big profits in furs. But they established no permanent settlements and left no social heritage which can be identified in the present culture.

In the decade 1830-40, as a part of the westward movement of settlement, a great tide of immigration swept into Iowa. By 1836 the white population of the State was 10,531; by 1840 it was 43,000. Across the Mississippi River settlers came from Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, New England. The southeastern and central parts of the State were largely populated in this and the following two decades but few had ventured at this time as far west as what is now Shelby County.

In 1848, Abel Galland, a refugee Latter Day Saint from Nauvoo, Ill., founded a distinct religious community at Galland's Grove - the first permanent settlement in the county. Four years later a group of families from Fountain County, Ind., located on the Nishnabotna River in the south central part of the county and founded a settlement known as Hacktown, named for the Hack family. In rapid order Cuppy's Grove was settled by Pennsylvanians, including some Pennsylvania Dutch, Waterbury's Grove by New Yorkers,

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[1]Only about 16 percent of all land in the United States is in grades 1 and 2. This classification, which takes into consideration the principal physical conditions influencing productivity, such as soil type, topography, rainfall, and temperature describes grade 1 as "Excellent land for the staple crops climatically adapted to the region in which it lies"; and grade 2 as "good land."

Bowman's Grove by Pennsylvanians and Kentuckians, Leland s Grove by Latter Day Saints from Ohio and England, Howlett's Grove by English people, Merrill's Grove and other groves by persons of various origins.

In the northeastern part of the county, the part in which Irwin is located, Kibby's Grove attracted its first settler, Nelson Ward, in 1853 or 1854. A year later, 1855, there were only 250 white settlers in the 576 square miles which had been designated by the Iowa legislature in 1851 as Shelby County.

In the groves the early settlers found their garden spots, water, protection. and timber. Late comers found all such desirable sites occupied and were forced out onto the prairie. Prairie settlement was undertaken with dire foreboding. A family was completely at the mercy of the wind and fire and blinding blizzards that swept down from the north. The soil was thought to be poor - so poor that it wouldn't support trees, and other reasons there were. One conservative Indiana pioneer is quoted as saying, "I been accustomed to living in a timber country, and by the grace of God I intend to die in the midst of timber."

Among the men who found their way to Shelby County in the early phases of its settlement, were men of courage, vision, and audacity; men whose strength and vision were deeply moved by what they found. One Johnathan Wyland, came in 1855. He had lived in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, and had traveled through Illinois on his way to the West. As he gazed over the vast expanse of virgin rolling prairie, he thought he had never seen anything so beautiful and promising as this new place called Iowa In his imagination he could see all this wild rolling country settled up with good houses and barns, planted trees and roads, everywhere. This, remember, was in 1855. To Wyland, opportunity was rigidly limited by grove settlement. He boldly left the protection of Bowman's Grove and located on the open prairie.

His experiment was outstandingly successful. Others followed him Successful prairie settlement quickly forced redefinition of what constituted a desirable settlement site. Validation of Wyland's vision came quickly. By 1900, more than 17,000 people were supported by land that had been only recently a prairie wilderness. By 1940, the authors found that 2,000 miles of roads make a checker-board of the well tilled countryside, hundreds of bridges span the streams, 2,200 farmsteads surrounded by trees are spotted over the landscape, churches and schools have been founded, business and commercial institutions have grown up, communities have developed - all built out of the good rich earth of Iowa, and the blood and tears of the men and women who built upon it. But this is hindsight - we must go back to the story, first of Shelby County and then of Irwin. (Fig. 1)

As the westward movement gathered momentum, immigration brought a different type of people into the county. The adventurers who remained did not adapt themselves to routine farming and eventually lost their positions of prominence. Among the early arrivals were many real farmers, especially among the Latter Day Saints, but they had located on the steep slopes and poor soils of Galland's Grove and were soon outdistanced by the prairie settlers.

In the new immigration were Danish agriculturists. By 1857 a few Danes had settled in the southeastern part of the county. A danish Adventist located in Clay township in 1868. He became particularly active in persuading other Danes to locate in this part of the State. Motivated by land hunger, the Danes came, willing to make any

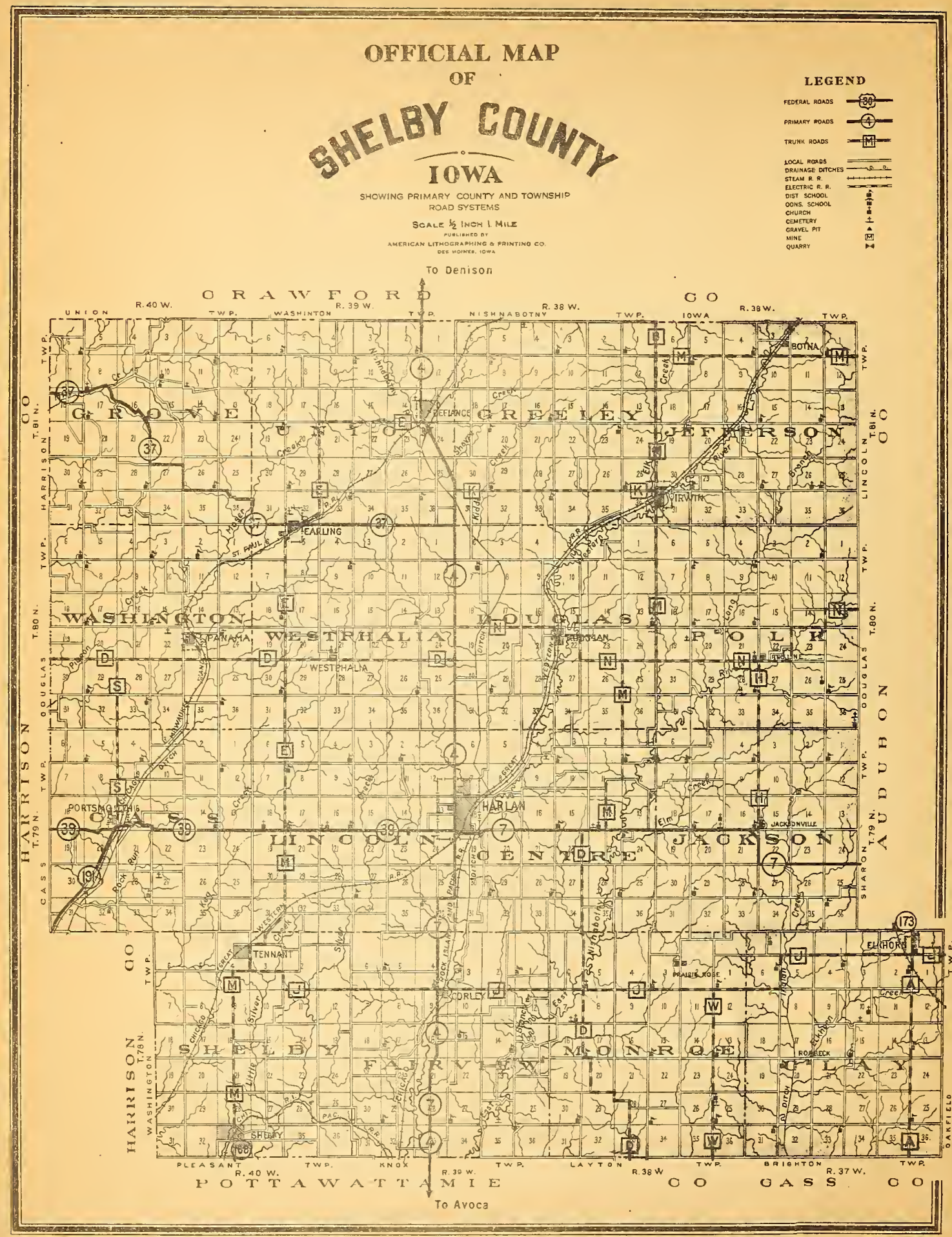
OFFICIAL MAP
OF
SHELBY COUNTY
IOWA
SHOWING PRIMARY COUNTY AND TOWNSHIP
ROAD SYSTEMS
SCALE ½ INCH 1 MILE
PUBLISHED BY
AMERICAN LITHOGRAPHING & PRINTING CO.
DES MOINES, IOWA
LEGEND
FEDERAL ROADS
PRIMARY ROADS
TRUNK ROADS
LOCAL ROADS
DRAINAGE DITCHES
STEAM R. R.
ELECTRIC R. R.
DIST. SCHOOL
CONS. SCHOOL
CHURCH
CEMETERY
GRAVEL PIT
MINE
QUARRY
To Denison
CRAWFORD CO
R. 40 W.
R. 39 W.
R. 38 W.
R. 38 W.
UNION TWP.
WASHINTON TWP.
NISHNABOTNY TWP.
IOWA TWP.
T. 81 N.
HARRISON CO
LINCOLN CO
GROVE
UNION
GREELEY
JEFFERSON
BOYER
BOTNA
IRWIN
EARLING
DEFIANCE
WASHINGTON
DOUGLAS
POLK
PANAMA
WESTPHALIA
T. 80 N.
DOUGLAS TWP.
AUDUBON CO
HARLAN
PORTSMOUTH
CASS
LINCOLN
CENTRE
JACKSON
JACKSONVILLE
SHARON TWP.
T. 79 N.
TENNANT
ELKHORN
PRAIRIE ROSE
ORLEY
SHELBY
FAIRVIEW
MONROE
CLAY
ROSSLECK
SHELBY
T. 78 N.
HARRISON CO
WASHINGTON TWP.
OAKFIELD
PLEASANT TWP.
KNOX TWP.
LAYTON TWP.
BRIGHTON TWP.
R. 40 W.
R. 39 W.
R. 38 W.
R. 37 W.
POTTAWATTAMIE CO
CASS CO
To Avoca

Figure 1

sacrifice to gain possession of the land. Newcomers induced their friends and relatives in this country and in Denmark to come to Shelby County - a paradise, they said, where land was abundant, rich, and cheap.

The second important group in the new immigration was formed by the German Catholics. Through a newspaper advertisement, Emil Flusche came from Grand Rapids, Mich., in September 1872, and undertook to sell railroad land in the northwestern part of the county. The railroad company contracted to pay $1 per acre for all land sold to German Catholics who became actual settlers, provided there were 40 settlers within 18 months from the date of the contract. The commission was to be shared equally by the promoters and the church. A new religious community grew up which was eventually to replace the failing settlement of Latter Day Saints.

Kinship was an important factor in the founding of the German Catholic colony. Joseph Flusche came from Minnesota in October 1872; Charles Flusche came a month later from Grand Rapids. Early in 1873 August Flusche, Emil Zimmerman, and John Rueschenberg came from the province of Westphalia in Germany. A township was organized and was given the name of Westphalia for the home province. It is now one of the well-known German Catholic communities in the United States.

A Norwegian settlement was made in Polk township in the early 1880's. These people came from the Norwegian colony in the vicinity of Fox River, in Illinois.

Another group in the "new immigration" was composed of settlers from other States and from other counties of Iowa. From counties in eastern Iowa came people in sufficient number to warrant the appellation - "the Jones County settlers," the "Mahaskans," "the Clinton County folk." Johnson County furnished a colony which settled in the southwestern part of the county. Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana, New York, and Wisconsin, furnished the majority of the settlers that originated in other States.

These new immigrants were home seekers, not fortune hunters; they were farmers, not adventurers. They came with the definite purpose of establishing homes. Their steeds were oxen, mild eyed and slow, and with them were their women and their children. With them, too, were their flocks and their herds, their droves and their pets.[2] When they arrived in the seventies, they found cowmen running cattle over the prairie. Settlement to the east and to the southwest was pushing cattle into Shelby and neighboring counties. Even the earliest settlers had a few head of cows and a yoke of oxen. The cows, of a low-grade general-purpose type, were to supply meat and milk for the settler's family. They were allowed to graze on the prairie unwatched or under the eye of the settler's children.

Agriculture on the frontier, before the coming of the railroad, was languishing for the want of a market. Grains, such as corn and wheat, were impossible as market crops because of their bulk. Cattle of high specific value were salable, and they provided their own transportation. Labor costs in caring for herds were small as was the capital investment under grazing conditions. These advantages of the cattle enterprise made Shelby County part of the cow country during the seventies, despite the railroads

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[2]Richman, Irving B. *Ioway to Iowa*. State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa. 1931. pp. 168-169.

reaching Avoca in Pottawattamie County in 1869. The Shelby County papers took note of herds of more than 800 head that were grazing in the county. Restraining laws, the spread of the practice of fencing, settlers using their enclosed land as wild-hay pasture, led to hostile encounters between farmers and graziers. Herders were warned about the trespassing of their herds. They were forced to seek open land farther West. There were few grazing areas in Shelby County after 1885.

Rapid increase in population through the new immigration meant the establishment of new villages. Among them were Irwin, Kirkman, Earling, Defiance, Westphalia, Panama, Portsmouth, Shelby, and Mallory. Population in the county jumped from 2,540 to 12,696 between 1870 and 1880. The greatest increase came in the decade 1875-85 when some 11,000 people took up residence. In 1900, the population reached 17,932.

Changes in density and composition accompanied the new movement. The Danish settlement in southeastern Shelby County became the center of "the largest rural Danish Colony in America." From this settlement, centering at Elkhorn, the Danes spread over the eastern half of the county. The German Catholics became dominant in the West with the exception of the extreme Southwest. Nothing remained of the settlement of Latter Day Saints at Galland's Grove. Shelbyville and Menteno, Galland's Grove villages, disappeared. Shelbyville was the first county seat; Harlan, the present seat of county government, succeeded it in 1859, after a fight with another now vanished village, Simoda. Itan, another early village, and Mallory, have ceased to exist. The majority of the population came to be of German or Danish extraction and the center of population density moved from the northwest corner to the center of the county.

With the rapid influx of people of various origins and from various areas, forces tending toward unification and segregation came to be of major importance. Groups grew up on the basis of national origin, denominational affiliation, and political-party preference. National origin tended to bring all Danes together, but they were divided religiously and politically; there were Lutherans, Baptists, and Adventists. The Lutherans were usually of one political party, the Baptists and Adventists of the other. Only when in opposition to the German Catholics in the western part of the county were these political and religious differences minimized. The Germans were mostly Catholics and of one party but in the southwest corner of the county there was a colony of Germans who were Lutherans and of the other political party.

Among the settlers from other States and other counties, differentiation was similar. Settlers came to be designated by their place of origin. Religious and political differences were important. Those coming from the southern or border States were sympathetic to the South and its problems during the Civil War and the reconstruction period. They were designated by the odious term "Copperhead." Northerners, who did the designating, were ardent in the other direction. In church affiliation, those from other States and from other Iowa counties were principally Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Christians, and Episcopalians. The Latter Day Saints naturally constituted a distinct group. Denominationalism was rife. Social relations crossed over denominational lines only with complications. The Protestants could unite, however, against the Catholics. Union Churches were founded but were short-lived in that there was no vital connection to a living organization and body of belief and doctrine.

Despite these differences social unity was encouraged by cooperation for protection and progress. Men would travel to the mills and markets together. Neighbors

helped build cabins and barns and raised frames for houses. Butchering, threshing, and road work was done cooperatively. Days on which these were engaged in were the real holidays of pioneer Shelby County. They were always capped with a bounteous dinner. Wrestling, racing, and other contests in which physical strength was at a premium were part of the festivities. Cooperation of this type necessarily tended to offset segregating influences.

In this period in the development of the county, Irwin came into existence. For purposes of this study, it was thought desirable to avoid both the German and Danish "cultural islands." Irwin was selected, among other reasons, because of its varied population origins. Here, old Americans, English, Irish, Danish, Germans, Norwegians, and even a few settlers of other national origins, formed themselves into an American rural community.

Into the northeastern townships of Shelby County, which lie largely within the bounds of Irwin community, a few settlers had ventured in the late 1860's. Four posts of one of these early homesteader's shacks, with the inscription, "This claim is vacated. Anybody can have it that wants it," were there in the 1870's when real settlement began. The McKeever family had built a log cabin in the sixties but was wiped out by smallpox. Bill Procter, in 1865, made a dwelling by covering a hole in the ground with a box-car top.

Among the early pioneers who remained as permanent settlers were the Irwins and the Constables from Cambria County, Penn. Irwin had come to Iowa in 1865, first locating in Washington County. In 1870 he induced Constable, his brother-in-law, a native of Sussex County, England, to move with him to Shelby County. Twenty-three persons made up the migrating party which came by rail to Avoca, 27 miles southwest of the present site of Irwin. (See Fig. 1). Teams were hired to transport them to the plot of unbroken prairie they had bought, but which they had never seen. An early newspaper describes such movers' wagons as carrying "women, guns, rifles, babies, and other nick-nacks . . . with numerous pots and kettles dangling beneath."[3] Fields were planted as soon as possible. "The breaking plow - a monster of ten or even sixteen foot beam and twenty-four inch share, heaved forward by six or seven yoke of oxen" - tore a way through the tough prairie sod.[4] The highly productive soils yielded abundantly. Wheat necessarily was the staple but it had to be marketed at Avoca, 27 miles southwest, or at Vail, 20 miles north.

From 1872 until 1875 several families settled on what they thought were homestead lands, but they later discovered they were on railroad grants. They had to buy the land at prices enhanced by the improvements they themselves had made. Most of those who bought land got it for $6 to $8 an acre. Those who fought the railroad company had to pay $10. The original ownership of the land in the Irwin community was accomplished by the pioneer farmers without incurring a great deal of mortgage debt, and owner-operatorship of farmers was almost universal in early days.

To tap this rich agricultural area, the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad Company in 1879 projected a line down the Nishnabotna River from Canal to Harlan. Pioneer merchants selected desirable sites along the survey and laid the foundation of several

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[3]Richman, I. B., *op cit.*, p. 169.

[4]*Ibid.*, p. 181.

villages, among them Irwin. The first survey located the route on the east and south side of the river where a post office (Tibbottsville) a mill, and a store were established. The next year a new survey located the route on the other side of the river. The embryo village moved a quarter of a mile northeast and took the name Irwin, for E. W. Irwin, the firstpermanent settler. The Western Town Lot Company plotted the town on Irwin's land, and named the streets after Irwin's daughters. Irwin's son became the first postmaster.

During the eighties there were from one to five saloons in Irwin and business for all. Gangs often took possession of the town and its bars, and ran things to suit themselves. Disputes and legal squabbles were frequent. An early chronicler says: "Of course, the man that was in the right won, but the man that had a little ready money had the costs to pay. It was a lonesome day that someone didn't have a law suit."[5]

Churches came into the community in 1881 with the organization of the Methodist and Norwegian Lutheran congregations. The Presbyterians organized in 1885 and the Church of Christ in 1886. The Presbyterians soon ceased holding services.

Early village-country relations were somewhat strained. Farmers disliked the merchants, and the merchants disliked the farmers. The farmers had hoped that the railroad would bring good prices. The railroad didn't. The farmers believed their soil was the richest on earth, but that the combination of eastern bankers and railroad companies kept their corn from bringing what it was intrinsically worth; furthermore, that what little they did get was taken away by high prices for the things they had to buy.

Agriculture was being diversified by corn-livestock farming, but prices went still lower and farmers complained that producers weren't given the consideration they deserved. Corn became more and more important in relation to other grains and with this importance came still more cattle, hogs, and horses, for livestock was now in a mutually dependent relationship with the crops. Forage crops, timothy, blue grass, clover, and later alfalfa were introduced and became an accepted part of the crop pattern.

The northeastern townships filled up rapidly. Germans, Irish, Danes, and Norwegians came in increasing numbers. Some English came. Before long, farmers of foreign extraction were succeeding old Americans. Many of the old Americans had never been farmers anyway; they looked to "better times in town." By 1900, Irwin had 295 people, and the village served approximately 1,500 country dwellers. In the village at that time one would find general merchandise dealers, hardware and implement dealers, drug stores, the post-office, a furniture store and undertaking parlor, banks, grain and coal dealers, a lumber company, blacksmith shops, a barber shop, a hotel, confectionaries, real estate agencies, a livery stable, a cream station, a contractor and builder, physicians, a veterinarian, attorneys, saloons, a newspaper, and the railroad company represented by its depot agents. Additional railroad service came to the town when the Chicago and Great Western Railroad main line from Minneapolis to Omaha was charted down the Nishnabotna Valley. Steel for this new road was laid in 1903.

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[5] White, Edward S. *Past and Present in Shelby County, Iowa*, B. F. Brown & Co., Indianapolis, Inc., 1915, (quoting Carl E. Dudley), p. 266.

In the middle and late seventies Iowa farmers had joined the Grange in great numbers, feeling that by organized efforts they could defeat "the monopolies," "middlemen," and the "railroads." In the eighties they flocked into the Farmers' Alliance with the same purposes in mind. Railroad transportation had not brought them the prosperity they expected, credit was not easy to obtain and interest rates were high. Middlemen, bankers, the railroads and "Wall Street" were blamed. The farmers of Irwin community joined these class organizations in an attempt to protect their interests. They organized a cooperative store and it failed. The Alliance was still strong when the depression of the early nineties engulfed the country

The depression of 1893 and the drought of 1894 caused widespread failure throughout the Irwin community. Crops were short and prices were low. Farming had become commercialized and could not escape the full impact of the depression and to the depression was added the drought.

Crops were good in 1895, but 1896 was a "soft corn" year. Hundreds of thousands of bushels could not be cribbed because the corn did not fully mature Cattle feeding increased. Cattle off the western range streamed in. Corn was poured into them and in a few months they left for the market. Carload after carload of fat cattle was shipped out of the community to Chicago and to Omaha. Prices were rising, and it is claimed that "Shelby County cattle generally drew top prices on the market." Farmers were making money again, and fine homes and barns were rising throughout the community "We built up this country," the farmers of the community say, "from 1900 to 1914 The days of our real prosperity were from 1896 until 1914. We fed more cattle We had the protection of the tariff. It takes tariff presidents to make for good times in this country, and we had them."

With the early 1900's also came the purebred-cattle boom. Good farmers refused to keep "grade" cattle and nearly all of them bought purebreds. They were larger, matured faster, and brought better prices. Some claim that "a bull that didn't cost a thousand dollars wasn't worth having." One farmer in the community, it is said, sold more than 40 animals for more than $1,000 a piece. He had to take most of the sales money in notes but wasn't worried because he believed the cattle would make money for those who bought them and thereby guarantee payment of the notes

Beef cattle prices between 1897 and 1920 skyrocketed from 6 cents, to 10, 12, 15, 18, 20 cents and even more, per pound. Hog prices rose from 4 cents to 7 10 13, 15, 17, 18 cents. Prices for corn rose from 25 cents a bushel to 45 75, 90, $1, and finally $2 a bushel. The price of land followed the commodity market up from $20 an acre to $35, $50, $100, $200, $300, $400, $500.

Farmers believed that Iowa land was selling for its real worth for the first time in history. The shibboleth, "Buy more land, raise more corn, fatten more cattle, buy more land," was converted into practice. Men were not afraid to go into debt, to buy land for sons who were not yet grown. They mortgaged their home farms and used the money to buy others The banks and insurance companies were willing and anxious to lend them the money, often encouraging them to borrow more than they requested; $250 an acre land was thought to be cheap by both the farmers and the lending agencies.

Census figures of average farm value, including land and buildings show clearly what had taken place. In 1860 the average value per farm was $1,418 This had

increased to $2,447 by 1870, and to $2,460 by 1880. In 1890 the figure stood at $4 125 By 1900, it had reached $6.800 Average value per farm in 1910 skyrocketed to $21,362, and this was only the beginning. The figure reached $54,125 in 1920. Farmers having lived through this experience could not believe that things there could be otherwise They argued that certain years might bring lower prices but the passing of decades always found prices of good lands going higher

The crash came with alarming suddenness The prices of cattle, hogs, corn, and land all tumbled together in the 1920's. In the clutches of insolvency or near insolvency were caught the land speculator, the man who wanted land for his sons, beginning farmers who had taken over the "home place" and mortgaged it to pay off the other heirs the banks, and even some insurance companies. Regardless of his motives, the purchaser of land was caught. His level of living and his ambitions for his family gave way Agricultural-produce prices were low and industrial prices and wages were relatively high. Farmers tightened their belts as they had done in the seventies and during earlier pioneer days.

Every effort was made to keep the farms. Every acre had to be cropped intensively. Advice was sought from the agricultural colleges as to how the per acre income might be increased. More and more was taken out of the soil less and less put back Many farmers believed they were ruining their farms but thought only about making them produce in order to save them. They argued that it was better to have a rundown farm than none at all, and once they had paid for it they could build back the soil fertility; that the soil was rich and deep and could stand a lot of washing. Some argued that the land had always washed and had never been ruined But the farmers knew that erosion was hurting their land, but they didn't know how they could avoid it.

The industrial crash of 1929 made conditions in the Irwin community even more severe. Mortgage foreclosures increased, land transfers rose sharply, prices nosedived, and elsewhere in the county the Farm Holiday Association, one of the most radical farm organizations of all American History, recruited large numbers of dissident farmers. The farmers of Irwin community did not participate to any great extent in its activities, but they were living in the shadow and atmosphere of its influence. It is asserted that elsewhere members of this association manhandled the county attorney and took over the courthouse. Roads to the Omaha market were blockaded, railroad bridges were set on fire, and trains were boarded It is claimed that the Governor of Iowa informed the sheriff that if Shelby County association members didn t stay out of the other counties, they d be "brought home in boxes." Members in western Iowa believed they could "strike" and by show of force keep other farmers from marketing their products. Very few Irwin community farmers joined the Farmers' Holiday Association, but the sympathies of many of them were with the farmers who were being dispossessed and the sale of whose farms this association was trying to prevent

By 1930, about 60 years after the era of expansion exploitation, and specula tion started, it came at least temporarily to an end in the Irwin community Farmers who had flocked into the Farmers' Alliance in the 1880 s and early '90's had supported Federal farm-relief legislation in the 1920 s and who even saw some reasons for Farmers' Holiday activities in the early '30 s, are participating in the present farm programs.

The droughts of 1934 and 1936 left farmers with practically nothing to sell, just when demand was increasing. Some farmers who had their farms sold for debt

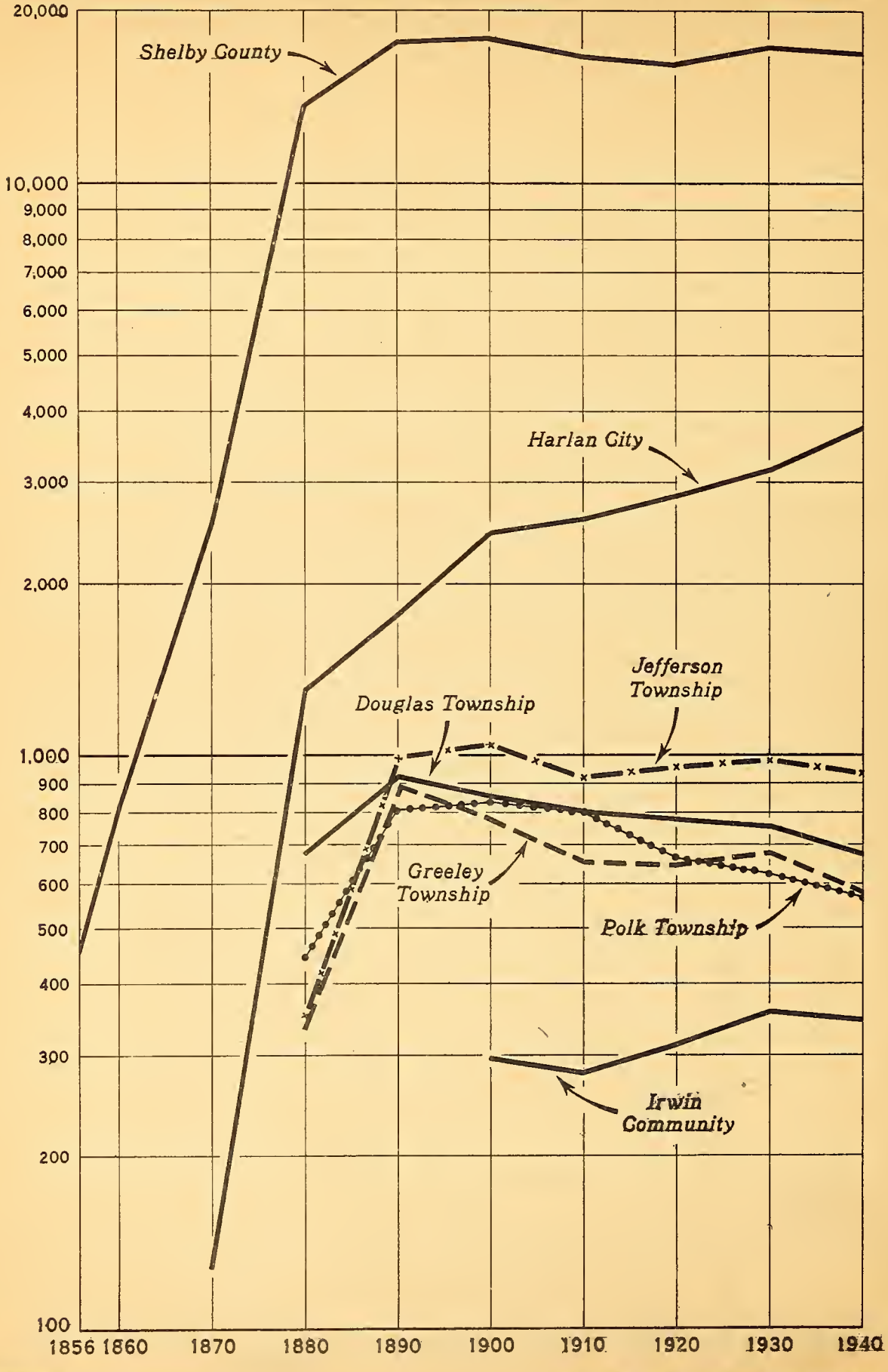
retirement were left with nothing. Gardens failed and some faced actual hunger." Two droughts in a 3-year period were a previously unheard-of and unbelievable thing in these parts and although some were disheartened, most of them believed in their land and thought it would yet produce more than it ever had before.

Conditions improved through 1937, 1938, 1939 and 1940. The advent of hybrid corn made possible the highest yields in the community's history. Farmers now believe they can work their way out by hard work, thrift, and joint effort. They say, "Sure we can solve our problems if we can get cooperation." The people of Irwin community believe that the open country is a good place to live and that they live better than city people. Many young people say they want to settle in the village or county community of Irwin. A typical expression is, "I was born here, and it's all right if I die here. I don't know a place I'd rather live. Irwin has some of the best people you can find any place; it's surrounded by some of the best farm land and there just isn't any better corn than we can raise."

In 1939, Shelby County farmers believed their chief problems were farm tenancy, farm finance, unstable markets, drought, soil erosion, water conservation, and taxation. They believed their problems arose from a lack of confidence, information, and cooperation. They claim that their experiences are leading them to view agriculture differently than did the farmers of the last generation. One young farmer described the change in these terms: "My grandfather came to this country 70 years ago to make a home. He cleared land. He built a cabin with his own hands. When he was able, he built a large house, one large enough to hold the whole family. Land was acquired which was to belong to my father and his brothers. Grandfather thought wealth was land clear, and houses and barns and full granaries and full stockyards. He didn't make much, in Dad's way of thinking, but he spent less, so that he had money in the bank. With Dad this changed. He made more, but he spent more. He had a higher level of living, but he was less secure. He played the market hoping for higher prices, but they didn't come. Unlike Grandfather, Dad wasn't afraid of debt. Wealth to him was money – cash or credit. He owed money to the bank. I believe if I go back to Grandfather's way, if I put my faith in land cleared of debt, in houses, barns, full granaries, full stockyards – things that I can call my own – that I, too, can have money in the bank. Of course, I want many things that Grandfather didn't have, but I want to think of things somewhat as he did. I want to build up my world on the farm. I want security. What will happen in the next few years, no one knows. This I know, I'll be all right if I keep my roots in my own land."

This change in the thinking of farm people in the Irwin community may be a reflection of their most recent experiences, but it is evident and real. Young people reared in decades characterized by insecure land tenure are thinking about and striving for security. "Farming to make a living in this community is coming back." Perhaps this changed thinking will be an insufficient brake in the next spiral of agricultural inflation. Perhaps it's only an expression of a flight from insecurity and its train of consequences, and not a positive conviction of the value of farming to make a living. These farmers will undoubtedly, from time to time, blame others for their plight, but they will also blame themselves if they violate their present good resolutions. The young farmers of the community think they know why farmers of the last generation failed. Some of their fathers are discouraging their sons' desires to take up farming but most of these sons want to farm because "farming is the best occupation," and want to farm in the Irwin community. They no longer want to go West and most of them don't want to go to cities.

POPULATION OF SHELBY COUNTY, HARLAN CITY, FOUR TOWNSHIPS, AND IRWIN COMMUNITY, IOWA, 1856, AND BY DECADES, 1860-1940



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NEG. 42062 BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

Figure 2

Irwin community isn't an old community, but it is settled and stable and has been for four decades. There has been little change in the total population (Fig 2). The occupancy of its farms has changed often, but is not changing rapidly now, except in the cases where the upturn in farm prosperity is making it possible for tenants to buy farms. Its agriculture is relatively commercialized and therefore necessarily somewhat speculative, but its cropping and livestock system is well determined and will probably continue as it is. Its soils are good and soil conservation practices are being adopted rapidly.

Iowa was selected as an area for analysis because the agriculture of the central Corn Belt is probably as deeply rooted in basic ecological foundations as can be found anywhere in the country, and because it is in the heart of the Corn Belt. Shelby County was selected because it is in the heart of the Iowa corn-livestock culture; was settled fairly late in the great tide of westward migration, only about a generation ago, and because one of the authors was born and reared on a farm in that county and so knew it rather thoroughly. Irwin community was selected because it probably comes nearer to having all elements of the county's mixed population in its boundaries than any other community in the county. Among the six American rural communities selected for study, it was assumed that a Corn Belt community would stand midway between extreme stability and extreme instability in community and personal life. The findings of the six studies justify this assumption.

Irwin community, like most communities of the central Corn Belt, was not a planted or planned colony; its early settlers - the parents and grandparents of the present settlers - came from various parts of this country and several foreign countries, pretty much as isolated families. It passed through the stages of normal cultural evolution in a kaleidoscopic fashion, suffered its periods of depression, rejoiced in its periods of prosperity, discovered its ecological adaptations within a generation, and is now a settled economy. It skyrocketed into complete settlement during the lifetime of its earliest permanent settlers, grew prosperous through exploitations of abundant natural resources, won and lost in a spree of boom and speculation, and now seems to demonstrate considerable desire to practice conservation and attain security and stability.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF SETTLEMENT

THE PEOPLE WHO SETTLED IRWIN COMMUNITY

The people who first settled Irwin community were a part of the westward migration that was flowing at high tide into Iowa between 1850 and 1880. The greatest numbers came from States immediately east which had been pioneered during the previous generation. Some had been born farther east or southeast, but had settled for a half-generation or less in the three States of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. Others were the sons and daughters of the early pioneers into these other States who, like their parents before them, were moving one step farther west. Others came to Iowa directly from more distant States - from which Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio had received settlers during the preceding three decades. Still others came directly from foreign countries or arrived in Iowa on their second or third move westward.

Irwin community was not the earliest part of Shelby County to be settled; the county was not settled for some 20 or 30 years later than the eastern part of Iowa. The people who came to Irwin were, however, a part of the general body of population that settled these other parts and the eastern part of Iowa.

The people living in this county in 1856 had moved there from 19 States and 5 foreign countries. The 7 leading contributing States were, in order, Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, New York, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania.[6]

Table 1. -*Place of Nativity, Inhabitants of Shelby County, 1856*

Place of Origin	Residence by Country		Total
	Gallands Grove	Round	
Total			456
Iowa	64	36	100
Indiana	38	58	96
Ohio	30	39	69
Illinois	33	6	39
New York	29	9	38
Kentucky	9	11	20
Pennsylvania	8	12	20
Missouri	15	1	16
North Carolina	5	4	9
Virginia	2	4	6
Connecticut	2	2	4
New Hampshire	3	0	3
Tennessee	3	0	3
Vermont	1	1	2
Michigan	1	1	2
Massachusetts	1	0	1
New Jersey	0	1	1
South Carolina	1	0	1
Louisiana	1	0	1
England			11
Canada			6
Denmark			5
Ireland			1
Scotland			1
Unknown	1		1

Source: *Iowa Census Report 1856* p. 355.

[6]Iowa Census Report, 1856 p. 355.

As late as 1870, 56.5 percent of all white population living in Iowa had been born in other States, the five leading States of origin being at that time: Ohio Pennsylvania; Indiana; New York, and Illinois.[7]

More significant but less trustworthy data are available for some of the people who came to the county during the 15-year period 1856-70. If it can be assumed that the sample is typical of the total population of the county during this period, then it is possible to visualize the diverse character of the people who were flowing into the county during the period of its most rapid settlement. They not only came from a great many States and foreign countries, but a majority of them (99 of 164) had lived in one or more States, other than the ones in which they were born, before they came to Iowa and Shelby County.

Table 2.--*Place of Origin: Shelby County, Iowa, Immigrants 1848-70*

Place of Origin	Total	A	B	C	
		Born in one State, moved directly to Shelby County	Born in one State, residents of a second State, moved to Shelby County	Born in one State, residents of two or more States, moved to Shelby County	Born in Iowa, (Not in Shelby County)
Total	171	65	60	39	7
Ohio	27	11	11	5	
Pennsylvania	24	12	7	5	
Indiana	24	18	6	0	
New York	17	4	7	6	
Virginia	10	1	5	4	
Kentucky	8	1	4	3	
Illinois	6	4	1	1	
North Carolina	4	0	2	2	
Tennessee	3	1	0	2	
Connecticut	2	1	1	0	
New Hampshire	2	1	1	0	
Michigan	2	2	0	0	
Wisconsin	2	2	0	0	
Louisiana	1	1	0	0	
Maryland	1	0	0	1	
Missouri	1	1	0	0	
Texas	1	1	0	0	
Delaware	1	0	1	0	
Vermont	1	0	1	0	
England	10	2	5	3	
Denmark	6	1	5	0	
Canada	3	0	1	2	
Germany	2	1	1	1	
Wales	2	0	1	1	
Sweden	2	0	0	2	
France	1	0	0	1	

Source: *Biographical History, Shelby and Audubon Counties, Iowa*, Dembar and Co. Chicago, Ill. 1889. Children of immigrants not included unless mentioned in a separate Biography or jointly with their parents, making the State of birth ascertainable.

[7]Galpin, C. J., and Manny, T. B., *Interstate Migrations Among the Native White Population as Indicated by Differences Between State of Birth and State of Residence* U. S. Dept. of Agr., Oct. 1934, pp. 7 and 39. (Processed).

The majority of those who settled elsewhere between the time they left their native States and located in Shelby County lived for a while in the States just east of Iowa. If they were natives of New York, they usually lived in Pennsylvania and Ohio on their way west; if natives of Pennsylvania, they had lived in Indiana and Illinois; if natives of Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, or Kentucky, they most frequently had lived in Indiana. In a number of cases their path of migration was not so direct. They sometimes moved from one southern State to Indiana, back to a different southern State and then to Iowa. Easterners sometimes moved to some other midwestern State - Michigan, Wisconsin, or Missouri - and then to Iowa. Among 39 migrants into this county between 1848 and 1870 for whom there is specific information, 14 had lived in 3 States other than their native States or Iowa before coming to Shelby County, 6 had lived in four, and 1 had lived in six States.

Even the most mobile of these early settlers were not vagabonds - they were only persons who exhibited in an extreme form the spirit of restlessness or adventure which was characteristic of the type of person or family that was willing to pull up, root and branch, from the place where they were born and seek opportunity in a distant and totally new location. Such a person has been characterized as an unusual combination of dreamer and doer, and Henry Adams said of these people, "Never did any mass of men support their convictions with a steadier faith, or pay more devotedly with their persons for the mistakes of their judgment."[8]

The Iowa census report of 1856 lists the occupations of the 126 inhabitants of Shelby County. As would be expected, the majority, 88 were farmers; 17 were laborers, and 4 were blacksmiths. The remaining 11 were distributed, one each, in the following occupations: carpenter, stone mason, tailor, shoemaker, physician, clergyman, teacher, surveyor, wheelwright, wool carder, and lumberman.

By 1870, settlement was flowing into the county rapidly, no small portion of it coming from the earlier settled parts of the State. The vanguard of the general tide of migration had flowed farther west, jumped the Great Plains, and begun settling the Pacific Coast. On its way west it had struck the semiarid region that begins at about the 100th meridian and discovered that the country a little distance west of the Missouri River was different from that which it had traversed between the Allegheny Mountains and the western boundary of the Mississippi and Missouri River Valleys. Iowa, therefore, became something approaching the end of the road for the tide of migrants which came west but did not jump the Great Plains and move on to the Pacific Coast. Individuals and families in the older settled parts of Iowa in 1870 who migrated more often than not moved to Western Iowa rather than farther west. People left the State in as great numbers going east as going west.

Settlers who came to Iowa after 1870 were for the most part considerably different from the earliest pioneers. They were not religious refugees, were not trappers nor adventurers, and they were not primarily range men seeking vast expanses of rich and free grazing for great herds of cattle. They were cultivators and husbandmen, home-seekers with their families, who came to Iowa with the intention of making it their living place. In 1880, approximately 55 percent of Iowa white residents were native born and less than 23 percent of all native-born Iowans were living in other

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[8]Adams, Henry, *History of the United States of America*, Vol. I, p. 174. New York, C. Scribner's Sons, 1909-11.

States. Even so, migration continued to flow into Shelby County, mostly from the same sources as earlier, with every State ultimately contributing to Iowa's population growth and many of them to the population of Shelby County.

There were a few Danish people in the county as early as 1856, but the Danish settlement established in the southeastern part of the county after 1870 came as a result of the new tide of migrants. They at first did not come directly from Denmark but from about the same older settled areas east of Iowa from which others were coming at the same time. Shortly after the colony was established at Elkhorn, in the southeastern part of Shelby County, a greatmany people came directly from Europe and settled there. This Danish community, which quickly grew into the outstanding Danish colony in the United States, did not introduce into western culture any extraneous elements. It established its own churches, even founded a college, continued to celebrate the Danish harvest festival and practice some Danish folk games for a full generation.

But the Danish people came from a country in which the agriculture was not completely dissimilar from that which had been practiced by the other pioneers and therefore quickly became a part of the cultural adaptations and creations that were taking place in the county. In Denmark they had been cereal, hay, and livestock producers. Some of them had recently gone through the transition in Danish agricultural practices from cereal to livestock farming. They had never grown corn, but they knew cereal, livestock and poultry farming. They therefore created no problem of assimilation. They were leaders in some of the early cooperative movements in the county.

Some of the Danish immigrants had had to borrow the money with which to pay their passage to America so they could not immediately buy farms. Most of them worked for a while as wage hands and so were thought of not only as foreigners but as "hired men." They were diligent, thrifty, and enterprising. Those who did not move fairly quickly into farm ownership entered other business and professions. By 1900 nearly half the stores in Harlan were operated by Danes

The Danish settlers were not unlike the American pioneers in another way. They were Protestant and Puritan. They were family people and they continued to make their own shoes, clothing, and furniture, for a considerable time after the American pioneers had ceased to do these things.

A second foreign element in the population of the county after 1870 was found in the Germans, mostly from Westphalia, who established the outstanding colony in the northwestern part of the county. They were used to an agricultural economy built around cereal crops, hay, and livestock. Land holdings had been small and agriculture meant hand labor. They were careful cultivators, industrious, and ambitious. Among them were numerous craftsmen. Like the Danes, they quickly adjusted successfully to the type of agriculture that was evolving in Shelby County

Most German settlers were devout Catholics, which tended for some time to separate them from the remainder of the population. Furthermore, they established in Westphalia township a community which was so nearly self-sufficient socially that it became almost a cultural island. Their church and parochial school were their major social institutions and as the majority of the population of the county were ardently Protestant, there tended to develop a cleavage between the Westphalia German Catholic community and other sections of the population.

To the south of Westphalia, however, a great many German Lutherans settled, sent their children to the public schools, worked as hired men for English-speaking families, in due time bought a great many of the farms upon which they had worked as hired men, established themselves as second-generation pioneers, and became an integral part of the communities in which they settled.

A third nationality group, the Norwegians, came to the county in the late 70's and early 80's. Many had not been farmers before coming to America, but even they fitted into the farming economy and were soon well assimilated in the general culture.

Two other ethnic groups, the English and the Irish, came into the county in considerable numbers. The settlement of Irish Ridge was established in Polk township, and the settlement at Leland Grove was largely composed of English immigrants. Neither persisted as cultural islands and, unlike the Danish settlement at Elkhorn and the German settlement at Westphalia, cannot today be characterized as ethnic groups.

As was true of all midwestern pioneer settlements, there were a few people of practically all the nationalities which were flowing into America at that time - a number of Scotch people, a few French, some Swiss, and a relatively few Swedes.

Irwin community has practically all these ethnic elements in its population. The Scandinavian people who established themselves south and east and the German Catholics who established themselves west of the Irwin community have been filtering into a locality which in its early days was largely populated by English-speaking people. This infiltration is not in any way considered as an encroachment by the people of the community but is accepted as a normal phase of the cultural evolution. It was partly because the people of Irwin community are so much an amalgamation of all of the population elements of the county that it was selected for study.

DEVELOPMENT OF HOMES AND FARMS IN SHELBY COUNTY

Neither log nor sod houses were ever typical in Shelby County. Some of the earliest arrivals, all of whom settled in the groves, did build log houses. But the sawmills, one of the earliest industries in the county, quickly and liberally converted logs into rough boards. Then, too, the railroad was only a comparatively short distance away and this fact, plus an almost immediately available cash income from commercial production, made it possible for the early pioneers to build frame houses.

Most houses were built of 1 by 12-inch rough boards placed vertically in packing-box fashion. The roofs were constructed of split clapboards, rived from straight-grained logs. Space for storage and shelter from cyclones were provided by a basement (called a cellar) or by a cave near the house.

The typical pioneer house had two large rooms, one used as a kitchen, dining, and sitting room, the other as a bedroom. If a second story was provided it was a "loft," usually nothing more than the space enclosed by the two end gables and the roof. If used for sleeping or storage quarters it was entered by a ladder, which was as often outside as inside the dwelling. Frequently no chimneys were built, the stove pipe extending a few feet above the roof in order to insure free-burning fires in the stoves. Fireplaces were very infrequent. Bricks were not easily obtainable and when chimneys or fireplaces were used they were constructed of wooden blocks daubed with mud.

Seldom was there a porch and seldom closets or a pantry, and never a bathroom. Houses of this type were often built without the assistance of a skilled carpenter. Neighbors from 6 to 8 miles distant gathered to assist, and the raising and completion of the structure was quickly done.

Household conveniences and comforts were few. The rough floors might or might not be partially or wholly covered with rag carpets. Plain, straight-backed chairs, sometimes boxes or benches, kerosene lamps, a large chest, and perhaps a center table in addition to the kitchen-dining table, and the beds constituted the typical household furnishings. Water was often carried from springs, and for those who lived away from the groves, cow chips and corn cobs constituted the chief fuel supply.

Stables and sheds were more crude than the houses. They were usually built on the simple pattern of a tent - four corner posts and two high center posts, each with forks at its tops into which the ridge poles were placed. The sides were built of rough boards and the roof of slough-grass hay. This hay was often allowed to cover the structure completely, thus adding to the warmth of the shelter. Early German and Danish settlers often wove the slough grass into a thatch, which made a better and neater roof.

Granaries and corn cribs were of the same materials as the sheds and barns, but were often not built until one or more grain crops had been piled on the ground from where they were fed as needed, or marketed when time was convenient.

In few parts of the country did the crude pioneer structures and modes of living pass more quickly than in Iowa. The land was rapidly converted from prairie sod into wheat and corn fields, seeded meadows and pastures. Wells dug to the depth of 20 to 40 feet generally furnished an ample and pure water supply and they were easy to dig in the deep, stoneless soil of Shelby County. Rapidly progressing farmers added rooms to their early farm houses, good-sized barns, ample corn cribs, granaries, and livestock sheds. The youngest children of many pioneer families never saw the early structures and the crude equipment which provided the total accommodations for their parents and older brothers and sisters in the pioneering days.

EARLY FARMING ON THE PRAIRIE LANDS

The first tasks of the Shelby County pioneer, who lived outside the relatively few groves, was the breaking of the tough prairie sod. This was first done by the individual farm operator with a small plow and two yoke of oxen, but most often by a large heavy breaking plow, fitted with a 24-inch share, a 16 to 18-foot beam two wheels of different sizes attached to the front which allowed the operator by use of levers to keep the plow in the ground, carry it through briars and roots, and regulate the depth of the furrow. This larger equipment required for its operation three or four men and eight or ten yoke of oxen, and so became quickly professionalized. After 1870 new settlers were arriving in the county in such great numbers, each anxious to have his sod "broke" quickly and during the proper season - from the first of May until the last of August - that "custom" breaking outfits did most of the work. Early broken ground planted to "sod corn" provided roasting ears for family use and fodder for the livestock. The first year's crop often paid for the breaking and farmers could therefore ill afford to follow the slow progress dictated by small self-operated equipment.[9]

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[9]Parker, George F., *Iowa Pioneer Foundations*, The State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City, 1940 pp. 205-206; and White, Edward S., *op cit.* p. 318.

Corn, wheat, oats, barley, rye, potatoes, sorghum, and common vegetables were the chief crops of the pioneer. Most of the pioneers were familiar with the growing of these crops which did well in these soils; corn grew especially abundantly. It was early demonstrated that other grasses produced superior and more abundant hay and pasture than the native grasses. Hungarian grass, timothy and blue grass, later clover and alfalfa were planted following other crops and they quickly replaced the native grasses as livestock feed.

At times crops other than those which now prevail were planted - tobacco, buckwheat, rye, winter wheat, and barley - but from the beginning corn, wheat, oats, and potatoes were the most important reported in the census. Garden crops were not reported, although they were produced universally and yielded abundantly.

Grains were used as cash crops for only a relatively short period in Shelby County. Cattle grazing on the abundant native grasses had preceded tillage and there were cattle to consume all the corn that the early farmers produced. Hog production quickly became a complement to the grain feeding of cattle, and the corn-livestock culture which is now the genius of Corn Belt farming quickly established itself in this county.

Cattle yielded the pioneer farmers more income than hogs. These farmers preferred to work with cattle, but there was something inevitable about hogs in this economy. Hogs were cheaper, they would increase faster; they could put on good flesh if fed only waste materials, they were good food, and when sold they would bring farmers good returns.

Sheep raising received some impetus during the Civil War, but the sharp decline in prices following the war caused sheep production to decline.

There is practically no relationship between the domesticated animals which came to predominate in the area and those which were wild and indigenous, except that both were herbivorous. Elk, deer, and probably some buffalo inhabited the area before white settlement came, but they soon all moved farther west or were killed. The same was true of game birds and predatory animals. Settlement was so rapid and cultivation so complete that even snakes, which were originally abundant on the prairie, were almost exterminated.

Settlement to the east and south of Shelby County proceeded at a more rapid pace than within the county, leaving a relatively larger amount of open prairie here than elsewhere. Graziers sent their herds in great numbers to pasture on this prairie. Even before 1870 a few small herds were being grazed in the county and the practice increased through the 70's and into the 80's. By the middle of the latter decade farmers definitely held the upper hand over the graziers and were able, with the help of more stringent restraining laws, to drive the graziers from the county.

In the pioneer period, there was little need for tame grasses because of the abundance of the prairie. Grass of good value was freely appropriated. A farmer would cut a swath around the piece of prairie grass from which he intended to get his supply of hay, and that was a sign that it was taken. Harvesting of the hay from tracts so marked was regarded as theft. In 1869 6 050 tons of prairie hay (principally blue stem) was harvested

The indigenous grasses, which were varied and abundant, gave way rapidly as the sod was plowed and within a generation contributed neither grazing nor hay. Among the new grasses which took their place were many weeds which have cost farmers of the county many thousands of dollars because of their competition with other vegetation in fields and pastures.[10] When the process of settlement was completed, domesticated hay came to be an important crop.

Implements used in farming before the advent of the railroad were crude. At first there were only cast-iron moldboard, singleshovel plows; wooden-tooth harrows; and rough and simple garden tools. Unfamiliar with the loose fertile soil, the pioneer plowed too deep. Loose soil made for low yields and facilitated erosion. Wheat, oats, and some corn were planted broadcast. But row culture was the usual method of planting corn from the beginning. Some corn was picked; an almost equal quantity was harvested in fodder. Wheat was reaped with a cradle or a simple hand-rake reaper drawn by horses. Bound and stacked by hand, it was finally threshed by the flail and by tramping or by a crude threshing machine. Garden vegetables were planted in rows and tended by women and children, who also stacked wheat and husked corn. The family labor system was the only one known by the pioneer and he used it fully.

Superstition played an important part in the pioneer's farm practices. The moon in all its phases was noted. Root crops were generally planted in "the dark of the moon"-never when the moon was full. Crops, the valuable part of which was above the ground, were planted in "the light of the moon." Farmers would seriously inconvenience themselves to comply with these ideas. Corn was to be planted when "the leaves on the trees were as big as squirrels ears," or "when the rippling in the wind of the small grain was easily observable."

Farms in Shelby County were acquired by preemption, homesteading, purchase of swamp land, or purchase of railroad land. The pattern of farm size and lay-out was almost as quickly determined as was the occupation of the land. The quarter section (160 acres) was the homestead size during the period when Iowa was being most rapidly settled. During the earlier preemption of settlement, both small and large farms were prevalent, but the modal size, 100 to 500 acres, had come to prevail as early as 1870 and has never changed.

Farmsteads were built near the section lines on which roads were being laid out. Groves were planted for windbreaks for the family and livestock, as a fuel supply, and because most of the settlers had come from timbered areas. The improvement in farm buildings was rapid and the capital value of improved farms increased steadily.

Before 1900, many Shelby County pioneers were retiring; tenants, often sons or sons-in-law, were taking over the operation of their farms. This trend increased rapidly after 1900 and by 1910 a good percentage of the pioneers no longer occupied the farms which they had broken out of the prairie. Many were still living as retired farmers in the towns of the county, but an almost completely new generation had taken over the farms.

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[10] White, E. S., *op cit*, p. 88.

COMMUNITY AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The few trappers, hunters and other adventurers who came to the county before 1845 and 1850, and the next settlers who came in groups and settled small ethnic or religious communities in the relatively few groves, were followed by the new and diverse populations that flowed into the county, settled on the open prairies, or absorbed the group communities.

First, cross-land freighters and then the railroads brought trade and commerce to the county and a number of trade centers - small towns - sprang up. Saw mills and grist mills were the first industries to be added to the enterprises of agriculture and trade. Gradually trade and professional people were added to the population and self-sufficing agriculture gave way to a division of labor between persons of various occupations and professions. Communities, however, still remained primarily rural, even agricultural, in interest and modes of living.

The country neighborhood was the pattern of early association which meant more to early settlers than all others combined. These neighborhoods often contained two or more families related by blood or a nucleus of families who came together to the county from some common source of origin. Even when early settlers had not previously known each other, they formed neighborhoods by family visiting, exchange of work, assistance in time of sickness, and fairly early for the purpose of establishing schools, building and care of roads, and sometimes for protection against prairie fires.

Larger community associations grew up for the support of churches, building of bridges, construction of roads, and the maintenance of township government. In due time the local school district, the civil township, and the county all came to play considerable roles in the lives of the settlers. Then, of course, citizens were furnished the governmental machinery by which they could participate in State and National elections.

Government as such played no great part in the life of the busy and relatively isolated pioneer. All of Iowa was divided into two Congressional districts in 1847, the year following the admission of the State to the Union, and this organization continued until 1863. During that period Shelby County was one of 22 in the first district. From 1872 to 1886 it, together with 10 other counties, composed the eighth district. Somewhat the same broad geographic grouping of counties was followed in the judicial districts, Shelby County at first being in a group of 31 counties, then 21, and in 1868, was grouped with 10 others. Citizenship in such large and socially unrelated clusters of people could not and did not have much significance to settlers in comparison with the immediacy and meaningfulness of the neighborhood associations.

The county was established as a political and governmental unit, given the name Shelby, and its boundaries set by the State Legislature, in 1851. Its "seat of government" was named Shelbyville by the legislature even before it was established or its location determined. Three men, each from a different county, were commissioned to locate "the seat of justice" of the county, "as near the geographic center as possible, having due regard to the present as well as the future population of said county."[11]

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[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 181 184.

The county was organized in 1854 by the sheriff of Pottawattamie County, who was assigned the task of supervising the county's first election. It is thus clear that Shelby County was in no sense a community or even a society at the time of its establishment, nor for that matter for some time following its origin.

For several years the county judge came near being the sum total of county government. He "looked after the care and custody of all county property, audited all claims against the county, drew warrants on the county treasurer, audited and settled the accounts of the treasurer, instituted and prosecuted suits for the benefit of the county, superintended the fiscal concerns of the county, rented or provided all buildings and rooms for county offices, and for the holding of the county and district courts, also the jail and poor house, conveyed lands in the name of the county; tried nearly all suits arising in the county, without jury; divided the county into townships; determined the places for holding elections; appointed the judges of election; altered the boundaries of townships at will; had jurisdiction over insane persons; had powers in the matter of laying out towns and villages, and the incorporation of towns, the levy of taxes; the granting of licenses or franchises for the construction of railroads, canals and telegraphs." The affairs of the county were thus little more a part of the day-by-day concern of the settlers than were the State and Federal Governments. This remained true until 1861 when county judges were stripped of most of their powers by act of the State Legislature.

The civil township had more meaning to the settlers. It was true that the early county judges could and sometimes did act in an arbitrary manner in establishing these townships, but they were more often established upon petitions of the settlers. In 1854, Galland's Grove, now Grove Township, was the first to be established. Abel Galland, leader of a small group of Latter Day Saint refugees from Nauvoo, Ill., in 1848, was the first settler in the county. He and his neighbors wanted a unit of civil government by means of which they could promote and administer the construction of roads, handle school lands, assess taxes, maintain law and order, and operate schools. Other local groups wanted the same, and township after township was established to implement their desires. Townships thus became something approaching legal communities which could effectively provide service to the people. They chose their own officers – generally three trustees, a clerk, a justice of the peace, a constable, an assessor; they established road districts, school districts, and in some instances drainage districts; levied taxes for schools, roads, bridges and culverts, and not only conducted their own elections, but acted as precincts for county, state, and national elections.[12]

The local road districts and especially the local school districts were not only legal, but for the most part were actual neighborhood associations. Members of these districts conducted their own elections, erected and operated schools, "worked the roads" in neighborhood groups, made their schools something that approached neighborhood centers, and took great interest and had great pride in their neighborhood achievements. It is a fact of more than passing significance that while road administration has in due course passed from local district to township, to county and to State jurisdiction to a very considerable extent, the local school district still prevails in Iowa and practically the only original prairie vegetation that can be found in Shelby County is on the school grounds which have never been plowed up and on which still stand many one-room, local district schools.

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[12] *Ibid.*, Chapters 9 and 10.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE EARLY SHELBY COUNTY FARMERS

George C. Dixon, speaking before the Iowa State Agricultural Society in 1854, probably expressed the Shelby County pioneer's own conviction concerning himself and his occupation when he said, "The culture of the soil . . lies at the very bottom of the fabric of the useful arts and social advancement. Out of this, springs the massive column that sustains this fabric and gives it vitality, compactness and solidarity." "Nature . . . works continuously side by side with him. . . . She gives him the earth and the air - the sky and the rain from out of her abundant stores to advance his labors, enrich his fields and ripen his harvest. . . . She invites him to a participation of her wealth and gifts."[13] In few of the agricultural areas have so great a number of independent farm operators participated in the abundance of so nearly perfect a combination of ecological, commercial, and technological factors as have those of the Corn Belt.

The Early settlers in Shelby County selected and made provisions to preempt as much land as they could afford to buy, often not more than 40 acres, seldom as much as 160 acres. In 1860, the value per acre was $6 91. Thus the typical farm, if debt free, was worth considerably less than $500, a smaller amount than the value of the first or second crop of many pioneer farmers. The per acre corn yield for that year was 34 bushels and the price was 50 cents. Such abundant yields under frontier conditions, produced at little cash cost and by family labor, predicated a quick rise in land values and a rapid change in the economic status of those who owned farms. This is what followed.

The farmers of the county prospered easily and quickly. Success was so much taken for granted that anything approaching failure was looked upon almost as moral turpitude. Individualism, or independence, was a character trait to be extolled and practiced. Society was not completely classless, but no one, except the man who failed, was looked down upon. These people had come west seeking opportunities. They found them in abundance. They came to gain farm ownership and build homes, and they found these objectives easy to attain. Land, productive land, and land ownership was the passion of all. Wealth was accumulated easily and wealth motives very early divided the field with home-seeking motives.[14] Both were inextricably tied up with the land. The land was home and the basis of wealth, first through the production of crops and livestock and later by the sale of the land itself. One elderly lady who had been a pioneer remarked to the investigators "In those days you could make money by just sitting on the land, for every year the price was higher." In the 1920's land speculation was at higher tide in the Corn Belt and thus in Iowa, Shelby County, and Irwin community, than in any other agricultural section of the country

CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE PAST TO IRWIN COMMUNITY

The early culture of Irwin community was of course borrowed because the people who settled it came from other areas the east and southeast. They brought with them

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[13]Dixon George C. Address. *Report of the Iowa State Agricultural Society for the year 1874 Appendix, 1854*, R. P. Clarkson State Printer, Des Moines, Iowa, 1875, pp. 558-559.

[14]Louis, J. H. *Shelby County* Reprinted from Iowa Journal of History and Politics, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City Ia p. 11

the knowledge of the type of agriculture which was destined by ecological forces to prevail in this locality. They brought county government from the southeast and township government from the east. Churches were the first institutions founded and schools were free public schools from the first. The explanation of the culture which came to prevail is largely to be found in the adaptation of these old practices to the new, but not radically different, environment in which they were planted. These adaptations to new neighbors, expanding settlement, increasing population, growing towns and communities, larger farms, more profitable farming, exploitation of great natural soil resources, have resulted in two dominant faiths: agrarianism and the normalcy of change, or what the people would call progress.

The first great change came in the migration from elsewhere into Iowa; the second came with the new ethnic makeup of the population after 1870. At the beginning of the period of development most of the people of the county were of American origin. By 1900 the population was composed of 14,535 native-born persons and 3,397 foreign-born. Of the native-born, 6,627 were of foreign-born parents, making the total number of foreign blood 10,024. The 1930 census registered only 1,755 foreign-born. Native whites of foreign-born or mixed parentage totaled 5,714. The number of foreign blood according to census definition was 7,469. However, it is probable that at least 13,000 of the total population of 17,131 is descended from the sturdy immigrant stock that came in from 1870 to 1900. Danes, Germans, and Norwegians in that order are the three dominant groups, followed by the English, Canadians, Irish, and a few of several other national groups.

The population of Irwin has followed the county in the matter of ethnic composition, with the exception of the fact that it has only recently included in its membership all the ethnic groups that compose the population of the county. It started as an English-speaking community. The Danes and Germans who are now coming into it from the east and west are of the second and third generations - English-speaking and thoroughly Americanized. Irwin community is therefore rather typical of central Corn Belt culture in soil, climate, type of farming, population composition, community behavior, and philosophy of life.

§

MAKING A LIVING IN IRWIN COMMUNITY

THE LAND BASE

Farm land is the primary base of economic life in Iowa and it is even more important in Shelby County and in Irwin community than in the State as a whole. In 1940, 98.8 percent of all land in the county was used for agricultural purposes, and for more intensive purposes than is true for the State as a whole. The percentage of land in crops is greater in Shelby County than in the State, and the percentage in pasture and woodland is smaller. More than two-thirds of all land in the county was in field crops in 1940, 24.3 percent in pasture, and 1.9 percent in woodland. The care of a farm, the crops it produces, and the animals it supports provide a year-round occupation for all members of the family and make a good-sized business enterprise.

The quarter-section (160-acre) farm was the original homestead unit, and this size very early proved to be a family-type farm in the corn-livestock economy. Non-homestead land was therefore, for the most part, bought in units of this size. As mechanized farming has developed, the average farm family has found it possible to operate a larger farm and there has been some tendency toward an increase in size. There are also some farms in the county and community which are much smaller than the homestead type. Some were established in preemption days, some by subdivision of estates, and some 40, 80, and 120-acre farms were established by families who could not afford to buy larger units. Most of the smallest farms are near towns and are either truck or part-time farms. These variants do little to distort the physical farm pattern of the community and do even less to distort the tradition that a man is usually talking about a quarter-section when he speaks of a farm. (Fig. 3.)

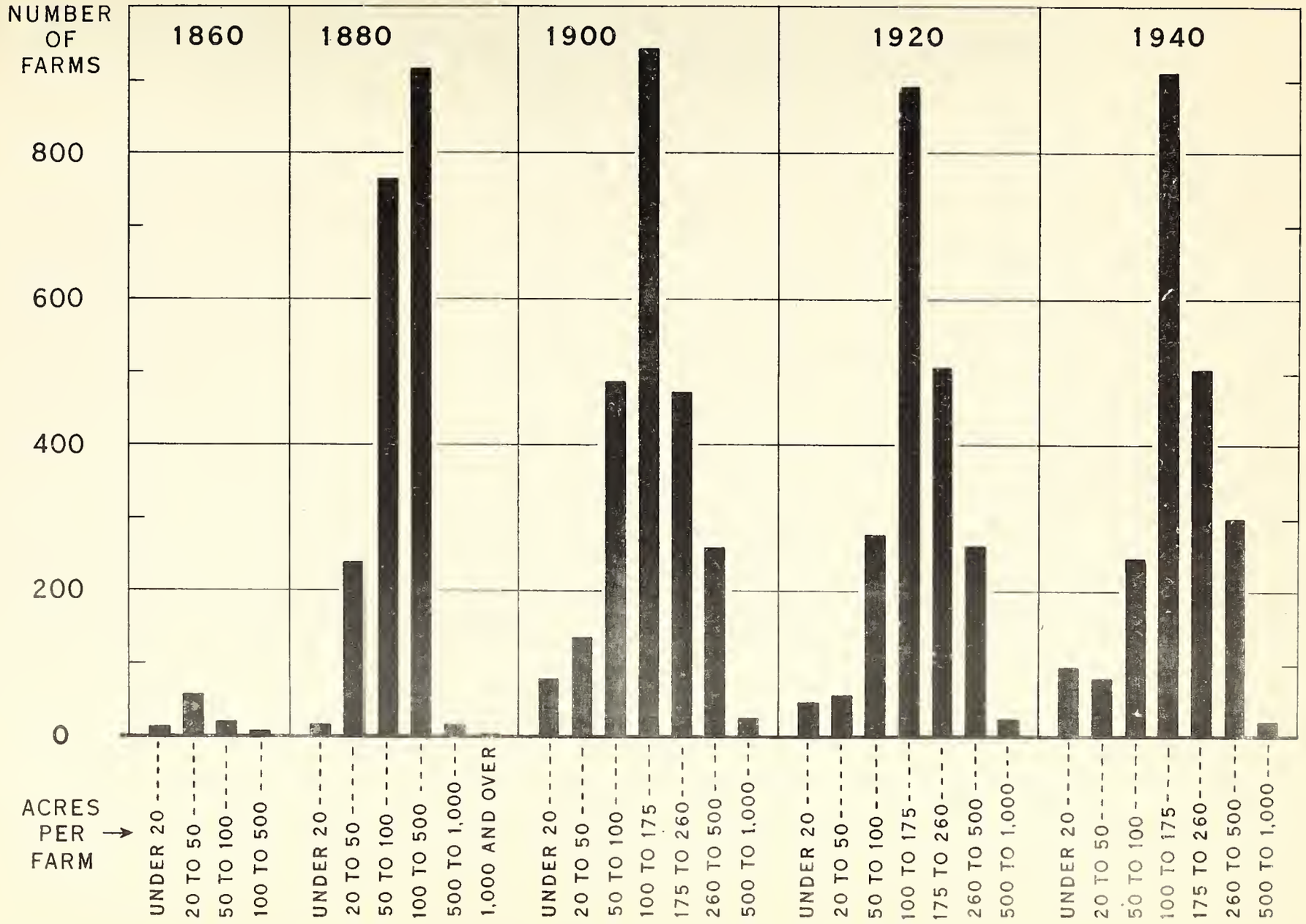
If one were to travel through the Irwin community today, he would still see quarter-section, homestead-sized farms. They would be as neatly bounded by fences as a city block is by streets. The relatively few larger and smaller farms would not alter his impression of symmetry, for the larger farms include another quarter section or one-half or one-fourth of it. The boundary fences are still there, and most of the original section-line country roads remain. Furthermore, when a young farmer talks about starting to farm, or a parent talks about leaving a farm to each of his children, he is thinking about 160 acres in each case.

The quadrangle survey clearly marked the section lines, roads marked them more clearly, and the homestead pattern divided each section into four equal parts. Thus an Iowa homestead farm was one-half mile square. Flying over Irwin community, the observer would be impressed with the almost perfect checker-board appearance of the landscape.

OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF LAND

Ownership of land is one of the traditional ideals of the farmers of Irwin community. The original, land-hungry settlers, foreign-born and American-born alike,

NUMBER AND SIZE OF FARM, SHELBY COUNTY, IOWA, 1860, 1880, 1900, 1920, AND 1940



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Figure 3

placed great emphasis upon owning land. It was taken for granted that tenants were serving a probation period leading to farm ownership and that all of them wanted and expected to move into farm ownership in due time. Tenancy has increased steadily, however, and since 1920 "tenants have seemed to get along better than owners," as one farmer noted. "They have not had interest or taxes to pay, and they've not been worried to death about losing their land." Other farmers point out that "tenants have been able to spend their money on themselves, while owners have been forced to put their cash into the land in an attempt to save their equity. In spite of scrimping some have lost out, and years of hard work have gone for nothing."

The whole series of untoward events, beginning with the crisis and depression of 1920, have seriously affected the farmers' viewpoint in relation to land ownership. Two questions are posed by young farmers in particular: "Will it be possible for me to get ownership of a farm?" and "If I can own a farm, will I be any better off than I would be as a tenant?" Nevertheless, the farmers still believe in land ownership. "Land ownership ought to be the only system allowed"; "Every farmer ought to own his own farm"; "Farmers should own the land they farm," are typical comments by tenants, none of whom is contemplating ownership.

In discussing the possibilities of land ownership, farmers point out the relatively high cost of land in terms of the probable return. With prices as they were in 1940, it was believed "that they could get by." But they asked, "What assurance is there that things will stay as they are? They may get better They may get worse." With their available resources the only type of land purchase open to them is purchase by contract with approximately a 10-percent down payment. A few farmers are buying land on this basis. The majority feel, however, "that this is another kind of arrangement that will work to the farmers' disadvantage." Purchase of land on contract is said "to tie the farmer down, to make him take all the risks," and if he fails to pay out on the contract, he loses the amount he has paid on the land On the other hand, "if he share-rented, he'd get his half of the crop no matter what comes, and the land owner would take his share of the risks." Contract purchases have become more popular during 1939 and 1940, but the farmer's feeling of insecurity prevents any widespread use of this method of becoming an owner. As he has no accumulated surplus, and does not expect to have one for some time because of the burden of old debt," there is little chance of his becoming a farm owner.

Many farmers who have lost money in the last two decades feel that they would not have lost if they had not tried to become owners, and that they could well have spent that money for things they wanted but went without One farmer said, "With the $10,000 I lost, we could have bought better cars; we could have dressed better, we could have had more for the house, and could have had more machinery to work with. We would have had something out of life As it is, we lost; we've got nothing now and we don't expect to have anything. We're about where we were when we started out 35 years ago." Another said, "It takes the savings of a lifetime to buy a farm, and it's a real sacrifice. If expenditures aren't cut there's no savings to pay for the land, and farmers don't want to cut down their standard of living. I don't think they will. If they could have a decent standard and still pay for the land, every farmer would want to own land. If they can't, they'll trade ownership for security and the enjoyments they can get by using their small savings to buy the things they want."

It is still true that farmers who own their farms and have sufficient capital for independent operation are called the "best off class." But, contrary to what one

would expect, as ownership has become less possible and less attractive, there has been no appreciation of the prestige of ownership. It isn't clear that change from the status of a tenant to that of owner would have much effect in any given farmer's social status. It is commonly said that his amount of capital would still be about the same, his friends the same, his recreation the same, and that the only change would be that he would spend more time at home.

Drought conditions in the middle 1930's, an uncommon phenomenon in this area, have caused crop yields to deviate violently from the normal, and this in turn has placed emphasis on share renting in which the landlord shares the risk. Cash renting still prevails, but under such arrangements the tenant assumes all the financial risks. Grain crops are divided two-fifths or one half to the owner and three-fifths or one half to the tenant. In most cases the cropland is rented for shares and the pasture and hay lands for cash. Sharing seldom prevails in livestock arrangements.

To illustrate, one farmer in the community rents 240 acres - 140 acres in one tract and 100 acres in another. His contract for the 140 acre tract is that he will pay the landlord one-half the corn, two-fifths of the small grain, and $100 cash for the rest of the land. He rents the 100-acre tract for $4 per acre or $400 for the year.

Despite the acceptance of tenancy as a prevailing and seemingly inevitable scheme of operation, the farmers of the community would not like to see it become an institutionalized system. Sixty percent of the farm owners of this county have lived on the same farm for 15 years or more, whereas only 47.5 percent of the tenants have lived on the same farm for as long as 5 years (Table 3). A similar situation is found in Irwin community, as is illustrated by 22 farmers, 10 owners and 12 tenants. All of the owners, except 2 who had bought their farms during the last 4 years, have lived on the same farms for 15 years or more. Five of the tenants had moved in the last 5 years, and the other five had occupied their same farms for 6 years or more.

Table 3.- *Full Owners and Tenants on Farms Specified Number of Years, Shelby County, Iowa, 1935*

YEARS ON FARM	FULL OWNERS		TENANTS	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	850	100.0	1,096	100.0
Under 1 year	29	3.4	149	13.6
1 year	20	2.4	137	12.5
2 years	23	2.7	126	11.5
3 years	27	3.2	96	8.8
4 years	24	2.8	67	6.1
5 years and over[1]			521	47.5
5 - 9 years[2]	103	12.1		
10 - 14 years[2]	111	13.1		
15 years and over	513	60.3		

[1]5 years and over, tenant classification on the census.

[2]Data in these classifications for full owners.

Many farms are owned by insurance companies that wish to sell them as soon as they can do so to advantage. Tenants are becoming increasingly fearful of losing the corporate holdings they ve been operating for there is a slight increase in the popu larity of contract sales. In 1940, three farmers in the community were "sold off" the farms they had been operating.

The desire to pass on land as an inheritance is another strong tradition of the past that is less effective today. Part of this, of course, results from the decline in ownership itself. Twenty-five years ago, farmers involved themselves in difficulty in attempting to acquire land which they could give to their sons. The ideal farm-family situation was thought to be one in which the parents and their married children had spread themselves over several contiguous farms, all of which were owner-operated. This is still held as an ideal, but is said to be unattainable.

In the settling of estates, the son or sons who want to carry on as farmers are given the farm. If there is no other property to make an approximately equal distri-bution among the other heirs, the son or sons who take the land pay the claims of their brothers and sisters in order to clear titles to their farms. In the decades from 1900 to 1920, when many of the pioneer landholders died or retired, this way of settling estates worked a hardship on the heirs who took over ownership. For example, one elderly farmer in the community had 320 acres. At his death, two sons were each given a quarter-section. To satisfy other heirs, they mortgaged the land at approximately $100 an acre. After 1920, when land values declined, the sons who inherited land had extreme difficulty in maintaining their inherited equity. They succeeded, but others in similar circumstances have failed.

At present, there are several estate farms in the community. Some are continued as estates because the heirs, who are operating the farms, are unable to buy the land or satisfy the claims of other heirs. Others are holding inherited farms as investments and renting them to tenant operators. In a few cases, farm land has been set up as an estate from which a widow receives income. Upon the death of the widow, the land is to be distributed among the heirs.

Considered in terms of the traditional concepts of the people of the community, there is no development more tragic than the tremendous increase in farm tenancy. In 1880, 78.2 percent of all farms in this county were owner operated; by 1940, 52.3 per-cent were tenant-operated. At first, tenancy resulted from the retirement of older farmers who preferred to retain ownership of their farms and rent them to their sons or other tenants. Some tenancy was due to the fact that some prosperous farmers bought additional farms and rented those they could not or did not care to operate Some town businessmen did the same thing Following the crash in farm commodity prices in the 1920's, banks and insurance companies came into possession of a number of farms through foreclosure of mortgages. Because these corporations could not operate the farms and could not dispose of them advantageously, they offered them for rent. Tenancy increased rapidly, and a new type of landlord appeared on the scene.

This process of transfer from individually-owned to corporation-owned farms continued into the 1930's. Corporate ownership in the county increased from 4.7 per-cent in 1935 to 9.4 percent in 1937 to 11 9 percent in 1939. The corporations had to take over farms to save their invested equities but it was a bitter pill to swallow for the middle-aged farmers who had put more than half a lifetime into the status of

owner-operators. They saw the viewpoint of the mortgage-holders, but believed that the corporations used just as bad judgment in lending too much as the farmers had used in borrowing too much on the land.

The trends of the last few decades have not only served seriously to modify the so-called agricultural ladder a beginning farmer was normally supposed to climb from hired man to tenant to owner and made it difficult for farmers to accumulate the ownership of additional farms to bequeath to their sons, but have also altered the quarter-section farm as a pattern of operation. As tenancy has increased, it has become customary for a tenant-operator to rent all of one farm and a portion of another. Another tenant rents the remainder of the other farm. In some cases, a tenant-operator may rent portions of several farms. Owners with an ample family labor supply or owners who now use large-scale machinery also rent additional land. The old 160-acre farm is still the mode, but variations from the mode have become prevalent.

A typical section of the community was carefully studied to ascertain details on this tendency to alter old farm patterns. It was discovered that the chief factors in the trend are tenant-operation and corporation-consolidated ownership. It was found that 15 owners, some of them corporations, owned holdings ranging from 302 acres to 989 acres. Ten of the owners were not themselves operating their land holdings, and 4 others were operating farms of 300 acres or larger in size.

One-third of the land in farms in Shelby County was planted to corn in 1935. Oats were grown on 16.4 percent of the land, and hay, the third leading crop, on 8.7 percent. These 3 crops occupied 58.4 percent of the farm land in the county. If to these is added the land in pasture, 86.7 percent of the land is accounted for. Wheat, barley, potatoes, soy beans, sorghums, and other miscellaneous crops grown were relatively unimportant.

Oats is the chief small grain crop in the county and the community. Its balanced nutritive value for breeding stock and young animals is greater than that of any other cereal. It fits particularly well into the rotation system in that "it supplements corn in the utilization of plant-food elements and in the use of labor and equipment."[15] It is also used as a nurse crop in new seedings of grasses and legumes.

Alfalfa is the most important hay crop, although clover, mixed clover and timothy, and other mixtures of timothy are also used. The emphasis on alfalfa is due to its high yields of physical feed units.

For the most part, the pastures in the community are temporary rotation pastures. Farmers believe that permanent pastures, which were at one time the custom, are becoming less necessary, but they think the acreage in permanent pasture should be increased. Sweet clover, the principal pasture crop, is thought to have several disadvantages; it is not considered a "good stock feed," and is said to "facilitate erosion in that the root system is not sufficiently branched." However, sweetclover is used "because of the high cost of other legumes and the difficulty in the dry years of getting a stand." Red clover is acclaimed the best and "at one time was the primary pasture crop," but at present, its use is limited.

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[15]Holmes, C. L. and Crickman, C. W., *Types of farming in Iowa II*, Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station, Bul. 374, Ames, Iowa. Undated.

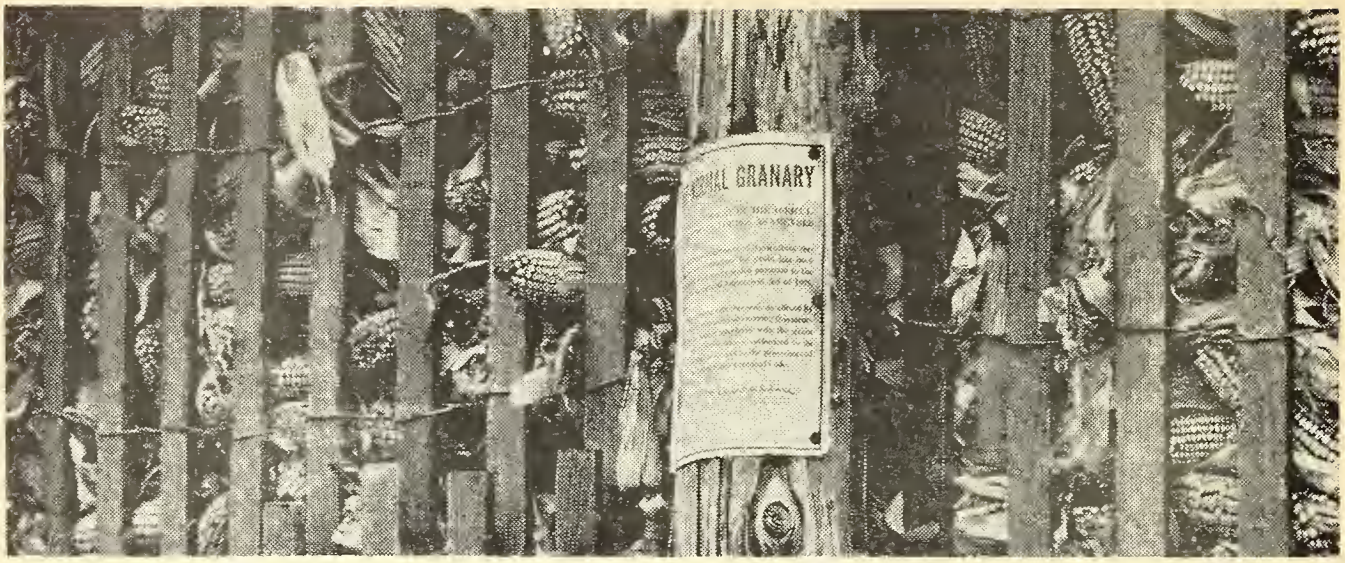
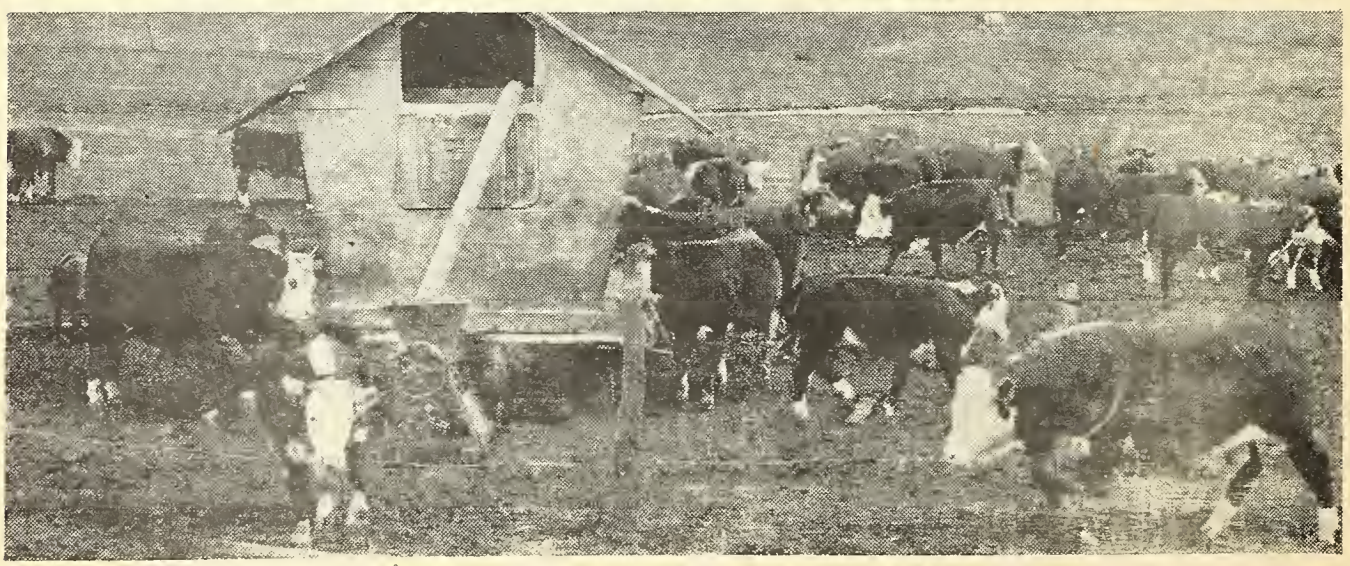


Figure 4.— *Out of the soil comes corn; pigs and cattle eat the corn.*



Barley and wheat do not loom particularly large in the cropping system. The acreage in barley has increased during the last few years, however, as a result of the development of high-yielding barbless varieties. Wheat is grown as a rotation grain crop, but the superiority of oats as a feed tends to minimize the value of both barley and wheat. The increasing importance of soybeans is shown by the fact that only 92 acres were grown in 1932 and 1,947 acres were grown in 1939.[16] Soy-beans are said to be "a good crop, but they are hard on the soil and encourage erosion."

The importance of the crop system is measured by its support of the livestock enterprise. "It's common knowledge among farm people in the community," a farmer commented, "that you can make more money by marketing crops as livestock than in any other way. For that reason a crop is measured in terms of its value as feed." In Iowa, hogs rank first as an income-producer, followed by beef cattle, dairy products, poultry and poultry products, and sheep. Farmers in Irwin community maintain that beef cattle yield them a higher income than hogs. Otherwise, the ranking of the livestock enterprise is thought to be the same as for the State as a whole.

The number of livestock in the county as of census years from 1860 to 1935 is shown in table 4. Hogs appeared on farms in greatest number in 1900 and 1910, with other high points in 1890 and 1925. Sheep were reported in greatest number in 1930. In 1935, there were about 75,000 hogs, a decrease from 1930 of about 7,000. Cattle, during the same period, increased about 12,000 - from approximately 48,000 to 60,000. Sheep decreased from about 11,000 to nearly 7,000. There was a general decrease in the number of livestock after 1935, due to the accumulated effects of depression and drought. The drought of 1936 was especially severe. One farmer noted that "in the last 2 or 3 years farmers have begun to level their livestock back to what it was before the depression and drought."

Usually, farmers have from 10 to 20 cattle, of which approximately one-third are beef cows. The range in number of cattle, however, is from none to 144. Purchases of feeder cattle ranged from none to 125. The farms on which there were no cattle at the time the study was made were cash-grain farms. Naturally the proportion of beef cows in the herds of large feeders was not so great as in the smaller herds. Livestock farmers in the community are more or less dependent on the purchase of feeder cattle because of the depletion of stock in the recent past. Farmers are of the opinion that "this is one reason for the decline in acreage of pasture."

Dairy cows of a general-purpose type on the farms ranged from 1 to 10. With shifts in the relative price of beef and dairy products, there is a slight shift in the emphasis placed on the sale of dairy products. The income yield of these sales, however, is extremely small in comparison with beef and hogs, and is usually ear-marked for household expenditures. The same is true of chickens. Flocks range from 25 to more than 200. "Chickens are kept," one farmer said, "because they eat feed that would otherwise be wasted. Few farmers would keep them if it weren't for this." Several farmers boasted of the managerial ability of their wives in that they were able to "run the house on the money they make from the cows and chickens."

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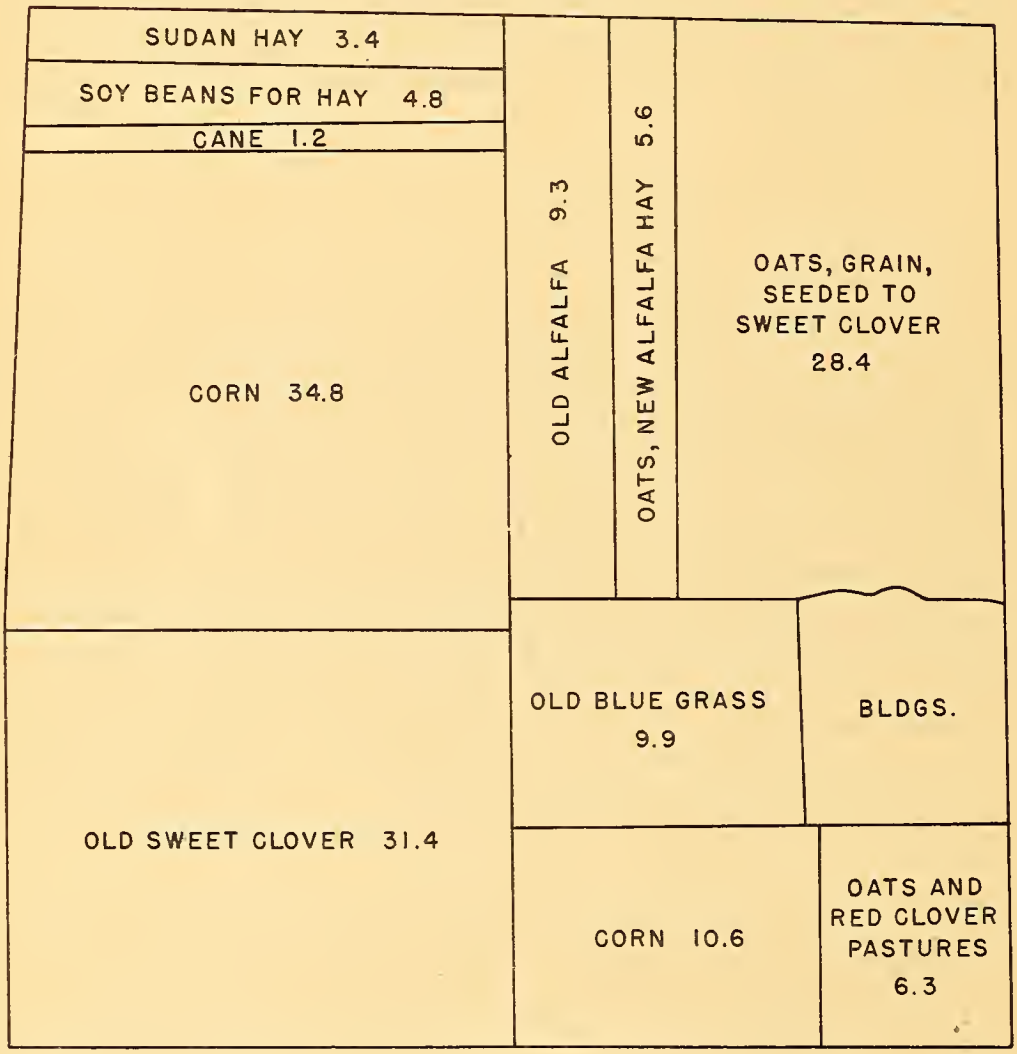
[16]Because of the increased need for oil crops in connection with the war effort, Shelby County expects to increase its plantings of soy-beans to 5,000 acres or more in 1942.

TYPICAL FIELD LAYOUT

IRWIN COMMUNITY

SHELBY COUNTY, IOWA



Figures represent acres

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Figure 5

Table 4.- *Number of Hogs, Cattle and Sheep, Shelby County, Iowa. 1860-1935*

YEAR	HOGS			CATTLE			SHEEP		
	Farms Reporting	Number	Percentage Change	Farms Reporting	Number	Percentage Change	Farms Reporting	Number	Percentage Change
1860	(1)	2,322	--	(1)	775	--	(1)	228	--
1870	(1)	2,060	-11.3	(1)	2,667	244.1	(1)	2,806	1,130.7
1880	(1)	71,459	3,368.9	(1)	23,134	767.4	(1)	[2]1,010	-64.0
1890	(1)	119,762	67.6	(1)	47,613	105.8	(1)	2,486	146.1
1900	(1)	142,643	19.1	(1)	68,065	43.0	(1)	5,685	128.7
1910	(1)	124,350	-12.8	(1)	59,685	-12.3	(1)	5,714	0.5
1920	(1)	112,566	-9.5	(1)	53,592	-10.2	(1)	7,091	24.1
1925	1,936	115,034	2.2	(1)	55,015	2.7	127	5,672	-20.0
1930	2,034	[3]82,088	-28.6	2,177	[3]47,761	-13.2	225	11,236	98.0
1935	2,026	75,448	-8.1	2,119	59,988	25.6	223	6,660	-40.7

[1]Not available.

[2]Excludes spring lambs.

[3]Animals on farms April 1, 1930 exclude animals under 3 months of age.

Memorandum To Accompany Table 4.

Since the Censuses of Agriculture were taken at different times of the year, the figures available are not strictly comparable. As a matter of fact, some of them are decidedly not comparable. For example, the number of sheep given for 1880 are not comparable with the figures for 1870 or 1890, and the figures for 1930 are a gross exaggeration when compared with those for 1925 and 1935 since the former include all sheep born between January 1 and April 1, while the latter do not. Since this is the breeding season, the actual figures are by far too large for purposes of comparison with January 1 figures of other Census years.

The 1930 figures for swine and cattle have been decreased to the number of animals on farms on April 1, that were born prior to January 1 of that year, to make them comparable with the 1925 and 1935 data. It was impossible to reduce the figures for sheep since the figures for animals under 3 months of age are not available for this item. The 1930 corrected figure for swine is an underestimation since it does not include animals that died or were sold in the period between January 1 and April 1, 1930.

Dates of Agricultural Censuses

January 1, 1935
April 1, 1930
January 1, 1925
January 1, 1920
April 15, 1910
June 1, 1900
June 1, 1890
June 1, 1880
June 1, 1870
June 1, 1860

Farmers in the lower-income groups depend relatively more upon hogs in their livestock operations than high-income farmers, but their preference is in favor of cattle The investment in hogs is relatively small and the rate of reproduction is rapid. Low-income farmers can expand their production of hogs on limited capital and they are unable to feed cattle to any extent because of limited resources. They use the hog "to accumulate the capital necessary to get into cattle." Although this is more or less general, some farmers contend "the hog, year in and year out, is the best money-maker on the farm. You may lose 1 year, you may lose 2 years, and some years hogs may only hold your money together, but over a period of 10 years, they'll pay you a good profit. The cattle business is too risky." Despite impossible hog prices in 1940, the majority of farmers expect "hogs to hold money together," but they say "we'll make a profit on cattle."

Twenty years ago a high percentage of the cattle and hogs in the community were purebred, at present few are. A former cattle breeder complained about "the poor quality of cattle and hogs now on farms." "The trouble with most of the cattle," he said, "is that they are crossed dairy and beef breeds. As a result, the animals are neither good dairy stock nor beef stock." Crossing of hogs has also tended to reduce the quality.

The reasons generally given for the decline in the number of purebred stock are "the low prices that have prevailed since 1920," and "the failure of a number of livestock breeders who have not been able to get back into the livestock business." The owners of two nationally famous cattle herds in the community, and one just outside did much to improve the quality of livestock. During the last 2 years, interest in purebred stock has decidedly increased. Practically all livestock farmers recognize the need of improvement, and they expect to improve greatly the quality of their stock within the next few years.

Farmers of the community are convinced that the combination crop-and-livestock pattern makes for a highly superior type of farm organization from the standpoint of the utilization of money, equipment, and labor, and financial return. Six principal reasons are given for the production of livestock: (1) Livestock is a readily marketable product. (2) roughage produced on the farm which otherwise might be wasted, is consumed, (3) transportation costs are reduced in that bulky grain is converted into a product of high specific value, (4) labor can be utilized in a period when crops are not being produced, (5) manure as a byproduct is usable and valuable in maintenance of soil fertility, and (6) the opportunities for high profit are relatively greater.[17]

For the county in 1930 60 5 percent of the farms were animal specialty farms, 19.7 percent were cash grain farms, and 12.6 percent were general farms. Crop sales per farm amounted to an average of $814 livestock sales totaled $3,414, and livestock-product sales, $533; boarders contributed $78. The total average income on animal specialty farms in 1929 reached the amazing total of $4,839. A limited survey in the community shows the range of gross income to be from $1,250 to $6.000. The percentage of income on the different types of farms coming from crops, livestock sales, livestock product sales, and receipts from boarders and lodgers is shown in table 5.

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[17] Hopkins John A *Economic History of the Production of Beef Cattle in Iowa.* State Historical Society of Iowa Iowa City 1928. Chapters VI and VII.

Table 5.- *Size and Organization of Farms Classified By Type*
Shelby County, Iowa, 1929[1]

ITEMS	TYPE OF FARM				
	Animal Specialty	Cash Grain	General	Dairy	Poultry
NUMBER OF FARMS IN TYPE GROUP	1,324	432	276	36	22
PERCENTAGE OF FARMS IN TYPE GROUP	60.5	19.7	12.6	1.6	1.0
AVERAGE SIZE OF FARMS, ACRES	184	189	133	57	41
DISTRIBUTION BY SIZE:					
Under 50 acres	2.2	2.8	10.5	72.2	72.7
50 - 99 acres	10.5	8.1	23.9	--	9.1
100 - 174 acres	46.5	42.8	44.6	16.7	13.6
175 - 259 acres	25.0	31.0	15.2	11.1	4.6
260 - 499 acres	14.7	13.9	5.8	--	--
500 acres and over	1.1	1.4	--	--	--
PERCENTAGE OF FARMS OPERATED BY:					
Full owners	44.2	22.9	44.6	52.8	63.6
Part owners	10.0	10.9	8.3	11.1	4.6
Managers	0.5	0.5	0.4	--	--
Tenants	45.3	65.7	46.7	36.1	31.8
Cash tenants	26.8	28.9	26.4	27.8	27.3
PERCENTAGE OF CROPLAND HARVESTED	69.2	77.4	71.3	64.6	53.0
PERCENTAGE OF LAND IN PASTURE	23.0	15.4	19.5	26.3	27.7
PERCENTAGE OF PASTURE NON-PLOWABLE	12.1	12.8	10.8	12.4	22.7
PERCENTAGE OF FARMS REPORTING:					
Horses and mules, excluding colts	97.7	96.5	92.4	61.1	45.5
Dairy cows	92.0	85.6	94.9	91.7	72.7
Beef cows	48.0	28.7	22.8	2.8	9.1
Other cattle	98.2	87.0	92.8	80.6	59.1
Sows and gilts	90.0	83.6	83.0	36.1	22.7
Other hogs, excluding pigs under 3 mo. old	80.4	58.6	69.2	44.4	31.8
Crop sales	63.0	100.0	89.1	36.1	22.7
Livestock sales	100.0	84.5	95.7	66.7	54.5
Livestock product sales	97.1	85.0	98.6	100.0	100.0
Receipts from boarders, lodgers, etc.	2.1	1.9	3.3	2.8	--
Feed purchases	89.8	64.6	81.2	77.8	68.2
Fertilizer purchases	3.1	1.9	1.4	--	--
Hired labor	74.8	67.6	58.3	27.8	13.6
AVERAGE NUMBER OR VALUE PER FARM REPORTING.					
Horses and mules, excluding colts (number)	6.5	6.4	5.5	3.8	3.5
Dairy cows-(number)	5.6	4.7	5.8	7.2	2.7
Beef cows -(number)	11.4	7.6	6.2	10.0	5.5
Other cattle-(number)	21.5	11.5	11.1	9.2	6.2
Sows and gilts-(number)	16.2	11.1	10.4	6.1	1.0
Other hogs, excluding pigs under 3 mo. old (number)	40.9	23.4	25.3	11.5	17.3
Crop sales-(dollars)	814	2,078	860	253	70
Livestock sales-(dollars)	3,414	1,008	896	585	361
Livestock product sales-(dollars)	533	385	602	1,253	733
Receipts from boarders, lodgers, etc. (dollars)	78	82	87	30	--
Feed purchases-(dollars)	510	170	163	214	302
Fertilizer purchases-(dollars)	48	56	40	--	--
Hired labor-(dollars)	426	378	245	240	260

[1]Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930. Vol. III, Part 1.

From the beginning of settlement in Irwin and Shelby County, farming practices have been increasingly mechanized. An elderly farmer explained that "every year some farmer thought the use of machinery had gone about as far as it could on our hilly farms. But year after year new machines have come, and we've come to think we couldn't get along without them. The number of hours we spent in preparing small grain and corn seedbeds has been very considerably reduced, as have planting, cultivating, haying, and the harvesting of small grain. Corn picking is perhaps the least changed of any of our main farming activities. We still pick corn by hand."

The total and per farm value of agricultural implements and machinery for the county from 1860 to 1940 are given in table 6. These figures show tremendous increase in the amount of money "tied up in machinery" in the 80-year period. In 1860 the average value of implements and machinery per farm was only $73. In 1920 per farm investment reached a peak of $1,942; in 1940, it was $1,242. Farmers believe they have more invested in machinery and implements now than they have ever had before "due to the extended use of the tractor."

Table 6.- *Total and per Farm Value, Farm Implements and Machinery, Shelby County, Iowa, 1860-1940.*

YEAR	NUMBER OF FARMS	TOTAL VALUE (Dollars)	VALUE PER FARM (Dollars)	PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN VALUE PER FARM
1860	90	6,541	72 67	--
1870	326	58,738	180 18	147 9
1880	1,946	333,477	171 36	-4 9
1890	2,424	458,210	189.03	10.3
1900	2,387	661,610	277.17	46 7
1910	2,213	1,255,165	567.18	104.6
1920	2,049	3,978,153	1,941 51	242.3
1925	2,078	2,788,222	1,341 78	30 9
1930	2,188	3,610,911	1,650 32	23 0
1940	2,148	2,527,951	1,176.88	

Within the last 10 years the most important development has been the tremendous increase in the number and use of tractors and tractor equipment. Of the 2,188 farms in the county in 1930, 763 reported tractors; in 1940, 1300 out of 2,148 farms reported tractors. Not more than 10 farms in the community are operated solely with horsepower. On a rather large number of farms horses have completely disappeared. The reasons given for adopting tractor farming are that "it saves time," "it eliminates some of the harder work," and "it makes possible a better job of farming." A frequently mentioned advantage is the belt power supplied for grinding, pumping, and corn shelling. It is believed to be cheaper but there is uncertainty on this point. The few farmers who have kept accounts do not have sufficient information to learn accurately the relative costs of tractor as against horse farming. Nevertheless they say, "If tractor farming were no cheaper than horse farming, and even a little more expensive, farmers would still use tractors because they've made it possible for the farmer to do a good job in less time and with less effort, so that he can have the time and the energy to enjoy other things."

At the time tractors were rapidly gaining in popularity in the early and middle 1930's there was an epidemic of sleeping sickness among horses. The rapid increase in the number of tractors is the result of the positive attractions of power farming and the loss or the fear of losing horses by disease

The extent and use of farm machinery and equipment can best be described in terms of the common practices in plowing, planting, cultivating, and harvesting Plowing is done principally with one- or two-bottom moldboard tractor-drawn plows at a depth of 4 or 5 inches.

About 35 percent of the farm homes in the community are supplied with electricity. The Rural Electrification Administration has been the principal factor in extending service, although private power companies are supplying more homes now than a decade ago. "Every farmer would like to have electricity on his farm, especially for lighting," is a typical comment. Cost is the forbidding factor. Some homes are lighted with gasoline lamps, but most of those who do not have electricity use improved kerosene lamps.

Less than half of the farmsteads have running water in the house, although most of the farms having electricity also have running water, because they can have electric pumps. In some cases gasoline pumps are used where electricity is not available Many radios are still battery sets. The desire for electrical appliances--irons, vacuum cleaners, toasters, --has been increasing the demand for general electrification.

Small grain fields are not plowed. Plowing of land for other crops is done in the spring Fall plowing, once common, according to elderly farmers, has been "going out because it makes the soil wash too easily." Spike harrows and disk harrows are found on all farms. Most of the corn is still planted with two-row horse-drawn check planters. The row horse-drawn cultivators are common. Each year, however, the quantity of corn planted and cultivated with tractor equipment is increasing. The tractor-drawn planters seed two or four rows and the cultivator attachments are chiefly for four rows

Hay-harvesting equipment includes "a power mower," a side-delivery rake, and a hay loader. Tractors supply the power. Small grain is harvested with tractor or horse drawn binders and wagons and power threshing machines. Trucks are frequently used in both haying and grain harvesting. Only a few farmers have bought combine-harvesters because they are said not to operate too efficiently on hills" and "they waste straw which is needed in caring for livestock." Corn pickers are not used because they "waste corn and waste feed by cutting the stalks off too low." Elevators for filling corn cribs are fairly common.

Milking is "one job the farmers would like to have done by a machine," but milkers are not used "because there's little milking to do, and they cost too much." Every farm has a separator as it is indispensable if cream is sold. It is believed that "separators pay for themselves many times over."

"Farmers will get any machine that they think will save a lot of time, effort money, and work," a farmer opined. "If they could have all the machinery they wanted without going into debt, I don't think they'd get many more kinds of machinery than they have now, but they'd get new machines more often."

It is strange news to farmers of Irwin Community that any farmers don't practice rotation of crops. It has been a custom and a tradition in Shelby County from the day prairie soil was converted into corn and wheat fields. "It makes the soil on all parts of the farm uniformly fertile," and "it lends itself to the production of roughage for livestock which the farmers must have." In 1940, the majority of the farms in the community were being organized on a four-field system with two fields in corn, one in oats and one in clover or sweetclover. There are some variations from this pattern but no basic violation of it.

On the steeper lands the plowing under of legumes and crop residues is stressed. This practice increases the water-holding capacity of the soil, and is protection against both dry weather and soil erosion.

Of one thing the farmers in the community are sure, "the soil must be conserved." Methods other than rotation that have been used are dams of various kinds to stop the formation of gullies, cover crops and occasional experiments with grassed waterways, strip cropping, and contour farming. Contour farming, grassed waterways, strip cropping, and terracing are urged by conservationists, but these practices force modification of the customary straight-row farming which has grown up as a product of large-field, mechanical operations. Contouring is generally thought to be "crooked farming," and "crazy farming."

"It is certain," farmers say, "that a checked field is prettier than a nonchecked field." "Farmers like straight rows. Sometime back, and to some extent even now, there is competition to see who will have the straightest rows." "It's more or less a foregone conclusion that if the rows in a farmer's fields aren't straight, that he's a sloppy farmer and doesn't know how to lay out a field." "A good plowman has always been the man who can plow the straightest furrow." Years of conditioning to traditional straight-row farming cannot be overcome easily.

Soil-building payments are made to farmers who use recommended practices. Among the practices are, the application of limestone, seeding of alfalfa, seeding of biennial and perennial legumes and perennial grasses other than timothy or red-top, seeding of annual lespedeza, annual rye grass, annual sweetclover or mixture of these plants, seeding of timothy or red-top or a mixture of the two, reseeding depleted pastures, contour farming of intertilled crops, planting of forest trees in protective plantings or as a windbreak, and "maintaining a good stand of at least 300 trees per acre" as a wildlife cover. Relatively few trees are being planted in the community, and contouring is not popular. The majority of the farmers are earning soil-building payments by new seedings of crops which experiment has shown to be adapted to the community.

Experimentation with new crops is not common, but most of these farmers are eager and ready to improve the type of crops they are now growing. "There are five crops of primary importance in this locality," maintained a farmer, whose attitude is typical, "and they are corn, oats, barley, alfalfa, and sweetclover. These are the crops we have to raise. They've proved themselves the best for our purposes. If a person tries to find new ways of producing these crops better, or uses improved varieties, that's all right. Nearly every farmer around has started to use hybrid corn because it yields more. A great many are interested in the new high-yielding type of barley. Attempts to find different crops have not succeeded. Experiments of that kind, and the development and testing of both crops and practices, are what the

State colleges and experiment stations and farms should do. The average farmer can't really test the value of a crop or practice anyway."

"I have experimented with other crops and have not found them satisfactory," is a frequent confession. An elderly farmer noted that "after experimenting with new crops we always return to the old standards." One farmer was particularly singled out as an experimenter. He was said "to get very little return for his trouble. The community doesn't regard him as a progressive farmer, and more or less smiles at his attempts at new crops." "Such experiments," it is said, "should be carried on by experiment stations. If superior practices are developed, they should be demonstrated in the community to all the farmers. The ordinary farmer cannot do a good job of farming and be experimenting all the time." "Experimenting is one job and farming is another. The two don't combine easily." Said another: "Industrial producers don't experiment in their shops, but in their experiment division. The experiment station is the farmer's experiment division."

Reasons given for not adopting such practices as contour and strip farming are that "they are not proved," "they mean total changes in our farm layout," "the farmers don't know enough about them, and seemingly don't want to know about them," and "the farmers don't like to change."

Farm work in the community is naturally seasonal. From the beginning of January until the farmers go to the field in April is the slack season. The days are short, however, and the care of livestock during fairly severe winter weather demands considerable time. Winter months are also used to repair farm machinery and buildings. During this period the farmer's day begins about 5:30 or 6:00 in the morning. The chores--milking, feeding chickens, and feeding workstock--are done before breakfast, which is usually about 7:00 or 7:30. After breakfast the other livestock are taken care of, barns are cleaned, feed is ground, bedding hauled, racks and fences are repaired. Dinner occupies the noon hour. In the afternoon, jobs started in the morning may be finished; the farmer may go to town, or he may stay in the house for a few hours, or call on a neighbor, or attend a farm sale. The evening chores are done from about 4:30 until 7:00 when supper is served. The evening may be spent at home reading the paper, listening to the radio, or visiting with a neighbor who drops in. Occasionally the farmer will visit a neighbor or some friends in town, attend a meeting of a fraternal order, or a farmer's meeting, a community meeting, a party, or the movies. He usually goes to bed sometime from 9 to 11 o'clock.

As soon as the farmer can get in the field, his routine becomes much more rigorous. "He rises earlier in the morning and retires earlier at night," an elderly farmer explained. However, he noted that "a great many farmers get up at the same time the year round because they get used to it and they just can't lay in bed." In the crop season, "the farmer not only works longer hours, but until the end of June at least, he also works faster." "When weather and soil conditions are just right we want to drive ahead and get things done"; "we get keyed up to going to the field just like athletes do before a big game. The winter lay-off certainly does make farm work more attractive." Spring is one of the rush seasons on the farm. Seed beds are prepared and crops planted--first, small grains and then corn. Gardens are planted.

During June and July corn is "plowed"--cultivated--and "the first crops of hay are put up." The ripening of the small grain in July is the signal for another period

of increased farm work. The threshing season generally lasts for about a month and because farmers are off their farms approximately 15 days, their work at home has to be done before 7 o clock in the morning and after 7 at night.

After the threshing season work is less urgent until "corn picking" begins in October. "If a farmer picks his own corn and has around 50 acres, it takes him a month or 6 weeks. If he hires pickers, of course, it takes him less time." "A good man will pick an average of around 90 bushels a day during the season," a farmer remarked. "On any one day he could do much better. We take it comparatively slow and work long hours."

As soon as the corn is picked and cribbed, the farmers return to the slack-season routine. Thus, in the yearly cycle there are three periods of intense activity - the preparation of seed beds and planting in the spring; the small grain harvest, and the corn harvest. Cultivation and haying between these periods, chores, and caring for livestock throughout the year "make it necessary for the farmer to be on the job all the time." "The kind of farming we do here," said a young farmer, "is a long hard job. We're never through. Tied to home as we are, we can get away for a short time but unless someone else does our chores for us, we've got to be home at chore time. It'd be nice to take a vacation in the summer, and five or ten farmers do, but most of us have to stay at home and dig. In the winter, when we could perhaps get away, the only place to take a vacation would be in California, and of late years that's been too expensive. After all, we're probably better off by staying home."

With the mechanization of farm work there is less seasonal change in extra work than formerly. Nevertheless, as one farmer remarked, "the amount of social activity is cut down during the planting season, but we still do a lot of things not tied up with farming. We may visit and go to town fewer times, but we still go."

Going to town on Wednesday and Saturday evening becomes something of a family ritual. Recreational activity is said to be "greater than in any other period except the winter." During this season, tired as farmers are, they keep up their social contacts. "They may get into town a little later," a villager noted, "but they come."

THE BUSINESS OF FARMING

The farmers of Irwin community are dependent on the cash sale of livestock, livestock products, and grain (principally corn) for their income. Only 9.7 percent of the total value of farm products produced in the county is consumed by farm families. But this approximate 10 percent is important. It often represents the margin between profitable and unprofitable farming and stands as a tie between the less self-sufficient agriculture of today and the more self-sufficient agriculture of yesterday.

Practically every farm has a garden in which the common vegetables are grown. Less frequently small fruits such as strawberries, raspberries and blackberries are raised, and practically every farm has a few fruit trees. "There were a number of orchards years ago," a farmer said, "but they've either died out or been pulled out. We have to buy most of our fruit."

Canning and preserving meats and vegetables are important activities in the farm home during the summer and fall. Home-grown corn, beans, peas, and tomatoes are canned

and peaches, pears, and apples are bought fresh and canned. Home preserving of meats has been rapidly becoming a lost art, and the tendency has been accelerated by the advent of the refrigerator locker. War may change things.

Farmers argue that farm and home enterprises of a self-sufficient nature have become less important than they should be. One man in his seventies remarked, "Farmers have got to have gardens. It has always been that way. When a farmer starts to buy things which could be produced in the time that he doesn't otherwise use profitably, he's bound to come out on the short end. And this is all the more true when we try to buy, with our low-priced products, garden stuff and fruits that have to bear transportation costs and middlemen's profits." A younger man, reared in Missouri, asserted that it is folly for farmers to buy what they can produce so easily at home with a little effort. He compared the gardens of the community unfavorably with those of southern Missouri. Local farmers, he declared, were enticed too much by "store stuff."

Cooperative practices have been adopted in a limited way to free the farmer from high expenditures in the market. Meat routes, discussed in a later chapter, provide the farmer with fresh meat at all times without resort to the market.

Washing, ironing, mending, and about half of the baking done by farm families is done in the farm homes. Clothes for adults are mostly bought readymade. Women's house dresses, aprons, "dress dresses," and children's clothing are frequently made at home.

Every farmer is more or less a semiskilled mechanic and a semiskilled carpenter. He can point out new developments in farm machinery and give good reasons for the mechanical superiority of certain types. He may not know technical terms, but he knows how machines operate and how to repair them. Exchange of labor between farmers of varied skills frees them from dependence on hired labor. A farmer-carpenter will repair the window frames in a neighbor's house in return for the neighbor farmer-mechanic's overhauling of a tractor. This kind of cooperation has great possibilities when farmers hourly wages are reported in cents and those of tradesmen in dollars.

During the early 1930's because of low cash incomes, increased emphasis was placed on gardens, home-produced goods, and handicrafts. The program of the Farm Security Administration and advocacy by the Farm Bureau encouraged such activity.

Gardens today, as in the past, are cared for by the farmer's wife and children. "In a few cases," a farmer remarked "large vegetables, sweet corn and potatoes, are taken care of by men, but as a general rule all of the gardening except the plowing is done by women and children. Under the program, farmers have more time, and more of them seem to be playing around the garden now than formerly. It's perhaps a good thing."

High farm prices, accompanied by increased land values, during the first World War, accelerated the long-time trend of commercialization and mechanization in the community Cash was available to buy many things that had previously been foregone and to buy things which had earlier been home-produced and fabricated. Prices and values fell during the 1920's and early 1930's, and habits of production and consumption tended to follow the price cycle but the habits established in more prosperous times have been inclined to persist. Families had become accustomed to easier living, many conveniences bought with ready cash in the early twenties required upkeep during the depression when

money was scarce, and interest came due on mortgage debts that had been accumulated during the period of excessively high land values. During the depression the acceptance of notes or open accounts for current purchases was discontinued and many farmers faced the necessity of restricting purchases to the minimum. Since 1937 there has been a return to what might be called normal practices in the community and both commercialization and mechanization of farming are again increasing. But farmers are convinced that the orgy of spending which prevailed before the depression will never occur among them again. They believe the community is through with speculative farming.

The mortgage is still the chief means of long-term financing. Contract sales, which operate in effect somewhat like a mortgage so far as the farmer is concerned, are used by farmers who can make only a small down payment. Farmers are fearful of both types of long-term financing. They've been burned and they are afraid of the fire. The chattel mortgage has almost completely replaced old personal notes. Farmers believe that the chattels given for security must "be so many times more valuable than the amount of money borrowed that even though you know you can make the interest rate and a profit for yourself, you hesitate to borrow."

An important new element in the financing of farm operations came in with the AAA program. Many farmers were relieved by a new source of income in the form of parity payments, conservation payments and crop loans.

There has been some change in the agencies extending credit during the last three decades. Formerly long-term credit was extended by local banks, private land bank and loan associations in the region, and insurance companies. All of these agencies have declined in importance and the Federal Land Bank has superseded them. In granting short term credit, local banks are still active but Production Credit Associations, organizations of the Federal Land Bank, are rapidly becoming more prevalent.

Farmers in the community do not practice bookkeeping to the extent that might be expected of persons engaged in a highly commercial enterprise. A typical statement heard in the community is, "Farmers don't need to keep books to know what they've got and where they are. We live with our stuff every day of the year. The things we do, the money we take in and pay out, get to be pretty much of a routine thing with us. When we know how much it takes to get along, we don't see why we should burden ourselves with keeping books."

The advent of the AAA has been among the influences making for more accurate record-keeping on the farm. The necessity of having exact data on yields, the newer emphasis on costs and profits, and parity and number language generally are initiating the farmer into a new era of farm record-keeping. Underlying the whole tendency is a series of new contractual arrangements which may tend to destroy the primary contractual basis of the farming of the past. The Farm Security Administration account books, which are known in the community, are thought to be a good thing for the farmers who have to use them. Few will admit, however, that they should keep such detailed records although there is rather general agreement that the need for accurate farm records is greater now than at any time in the past.

Weather, crop, and market reports, agricultural journals, and bulletins of the State Agricultural College and the Federal Department of Agriculture are more and more

used by these farmers when planning their operations. The county agent has made himself and his office available to the farmers in such a way that they are accepting his offers of help, particularly in relation to "new" agricultural practices. Farmers feel less sure of themselves in relation to present complicated production and market problems and are trying to get help from those agencies they think reliable.

The extent of the use of "hired labor" is not great for a locality which is commercialized to the extent of Irwin community. Only during the harvest rush is there much employment for "outsiders." An elderly farmer characterized the changes that have taken place in terms of his own experience. "Years ago I hired a lot of labor - had one farm hand steady all the year - and it was when I could do a much better day's work than I can do now. I was farmin' a hundred and sixty, my boys weren't old enough to be much account, and the machinery we used then was horse-drawn walkin' machinery that took manpower and plenty of it. That was back in the 'teens. There was no getting round it; I hired labor and so did everybody else. Of late years the boys, and the tractor and what goes with it, have cut down my labor hire to practically nothing. In fact, my gas bill now runs almost as much as my labor bill used to. Things have changed."

At present, the majority of farm laborers, whether field workers or domestics, are recruited from the upper age-groups in high school and from those not more than 3 or 4 years out of high school. After a person has been out of school that long he is either starting some farm operation of his own, or he's seeking his fortune elsewhere. This is true of both boys and girls. There is no distinct group or class of farm laborers in the community. Indeed, there are very few people in the community who have not "worked out" at one time or another, for other people.

Present labor preferences definitely favor "a local man or boy" over an outsider. "The way I look at it," said one farmer, "is that we know these local fellows, we know their families, and we know whether or not they can work. Some of our experience with outsiders hasn't been so good. You're always hirin' unsight unseen, almost." Another expressed his view in this way: "Sure, I'd hire a local man sooner than I would someone from outside. The outsiders may be just as good or maybe better workers, but you're takin' a chance. I guess anybody favors somebody they know over somebody they don't know." That this preference has always existed was declared emphatically by another elderly farmer. "We'd always rather had a local man if we could of got him. Trouble was, we couldn't. There just wasn't enough help to go around. We were always a little afraid of the kind of fellow we was gittin', when we didn't know him. People feel the same way now about strangers, and I guess they always will. That's only natural. Only now we can usually get plenty of help right around here."

The following statement is representative of relationship between employer and employee on the farms in the community: "We became attached to hired men who stayed with us the year 'round, and others, too, who came back year after year," commented another elderly farmer. "They were more or less part of the family. Sometimes they married in the community and settled down. We liked to see them come and hated to see them go. They ate with the family, slept in the house, sometimes sharing a room with the older boys. But there's not any more year-round hired men from outside the community, as far as I know. Several harvest hands do come back year after year, though, and they're treated about the same as ever."

Generally the worker has his meals with the family. He may or may not go home at night. If the worker does his work well he's respected. If not, it becomes widely

known. The farmer still treats his hired hand as his equal, and his relations with him are on a man to-man basis. The same is true of the farmer's wife and the girl she may employ.

Only one farmer interviewed in the course of the study maintained a separate house for a year-round hired man. This farmer's home was large and relatively costly. The house for the hired man and his family was small, but its appointments were not in contrast to the general housing level prevailing in the community. The farm owner was respected because of his years of hard work, wise management, and financial success. The worker was respected because he was a good worker. They were members of the same church But, on the other hand, they were looked upon as representatives of two eras in agriculture. The owner was a representative of a period that is past, a period of great risks and high profits and insecurity; he came as an immigrant from Norway, started with nothing and made a place for himself. The worker is the son of a Norwegian immigrant. "He won't make as much money," it is said, "but he'll have a place on the land. There won't be as much chance for him to be a farm owner and yet he may come to own a farm. There is always hope."

The new farm programs were received enthusiastically in 1933. Farmers had been asking for help for 10 years and it was apparent that finally something was going to be done. Then came corn-hog associations, processing taxes, and various kinds of other adjustment methods. The farmers were critical but hopeful, and they accepted these new procedures They could not see clearly the relations between some of the programs and what they knew to be their problem. They did understand the soil conservation program and have continued to approve of it. They think that the Agricultural Conservation Program which followed the Supreme Court decision of 1936 is a much better program and much more wisely conceived than the first AAA.

Participation in the program during 1939 was 93 percent in this community. In 1940 it dropped to 85.2 percent. Some farmers thought there was a chance of "making it" without the program and apparently prepared to operate without its assistance. In the community, participation in 1940 varied from one township to another as follows, Polk 92.9 percent; Greeley 90.6 percent; Jefferson 86.5 percent; and Douglas 83.1. Fewer farmers participated in Douglas township than in other parts of the community because of the higher incidence of insurance-company farms.

Extension meetings, county planning activities, and the educational phases of the agricultural conservation program itself have been particularly important in developing the farmer's understanding of the program, but his widespread acceptance seems to be due chiefly to the ease with which it fits into his normal program.

To give some examples of how the program affects farm operators, table 7 is presented. The most important consideration is the payment for participation in the program, which in 1939 varied from $1.96 per acre on the smallest farm to $2.12 on the largest These payments have kept the farmers "out of the red" during recent years and their attitudes toward the program are conditioned by this fact. When their insecurity was greatest the farmers were more willing to compromise their traditional attitudes about independent action. (See Chapter V.)

Table 7.- *Soil Depleting, Corn and Wheat Allotments; Parity and A.C.P. Payments for five farms in Irwin community, Iowa, 1939.*

Operator	Acres in farm	Crop acres	Soil depleting allotment (acres)	Corn allotment (acres)	Wheat allotment (acres)	Parity payments; corn and wheat (dollars)	A.C.P. payments (dollars)
A	123	106.7	57.6	34.7		68.36	172.49
B	160	145.7	75.2	45.7		87.29	220.54
C	180	159.7	88.7	54.4	19.7	33.88 *wheat*	276.56
						111.52	
D	240	213.4	116.5	71.0		[1]135.60	[2]190.98
							178.18
E	320	297.4	156.6	91.8		[1]189.10	[1]488.06

[1]Total of two equal payments, one to tenant and one to the landlord.

[2]Top figure tenant's share; bottom figure insurance company landlord's share.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND VALUES

SPATIAL PATTERN RELATIONSHIPS

Shelby County and the community of Irwin are located in the hinterland of Council Bluffs and Omaha, the metropolitan center of the western part of the Corn Belt. Irwin as a village is a retailing, local produce, service, and residence center. The goods and services available in the village are generally those for which there is frequent call and which are of relatively low cost. Shopping excursions are often made by Irwin people to Harlan, the county seat, a town of 3,500, and to Manila, Dennison, and Manning, where a greater variety of goods and services are available. Less frequent trips are made to Omaha and Council Bluffs. Sales of farm produce, particularly livestock, are made in the metropolitan center, as are purchases of livestock for feeding, men's and women's clothing, furniture, household utensils, and other goods and services of a somewhat special character. Council Bluffs, Omaha, newspapers, and radio stations supply the town with news and entertainment and exert great influence through the control devices of propaganda and advertising. Styles, fashions, and fads flow out into the locality from these cities.

The relations of Irwin to the other small communities of Shelby and surrounding counties is more important socially than economically. Inter-school contests of various kinds widen the range of acquaintanceship of the young people particularly. Traditional intercommunity rivalries affect these associations. Irwin people attribute to Harlan and other larger communities feelings of superiority in their relations. There is a very real attachment of the people to the community. Older people will not leave. Young people want to remain, but they face an increasingly difficult situation. Growing pressure on the farm land makes it difficult to obtain a farm, and the very real limitation of opportunity in the village makes it almost impossible to find other employment that will support them at anywhere near the level of living they want. But in spite of the increasing influence of Omaha, Council Bluffs, and Harlan, Irwin is holding together as a community, believes in itself, and aspires to a greater future.

The population of the community, village and hinterland, is approximately 1,500 dispersed over parts of four townships. (Fig. 6.) The pattern of dispersed settlement has prevailed ever since settlement on the prairie broke up the early communities which started as compact groups in the groves. The modal sized farm is the 160-acre unit, and the average mile square section in the community is today occupied by four families and approximately 22 people. Some sections have as few as two families; others have as many as seven or eight, but the great majority have three, four or five. Isolation has been largely eliminated by telephones, improved roads, and automobiles.

With the advent of automobiles and good roads, village-hinterland contacts have greatly increased. At the same time contacts with Harlan and other small towns and

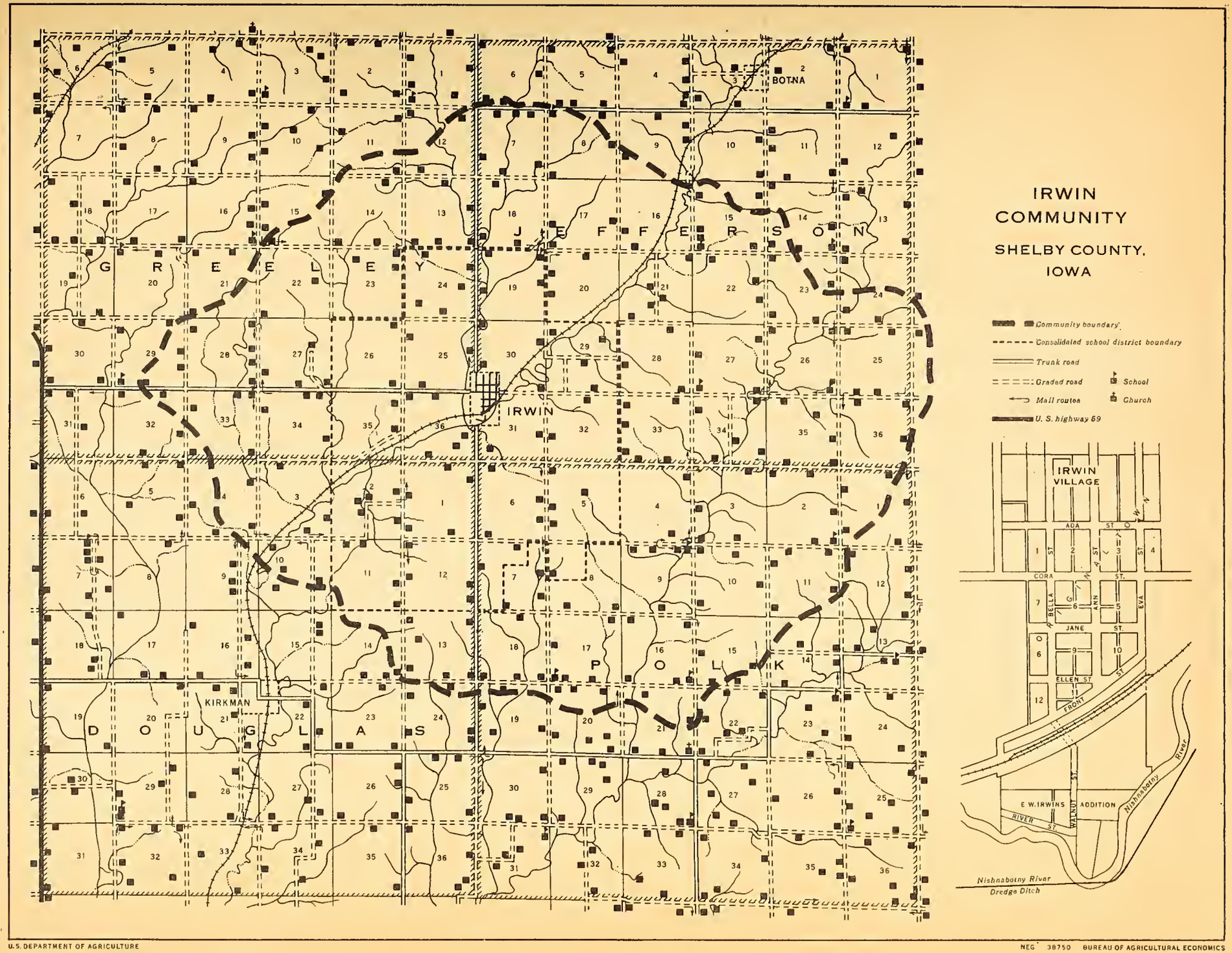

IRWIN
COMMUNITY
SHELBY COUNTY,
IOWA
Community boundary
Consolidated school district boundary
Trunk road
Graded road
School
Mail routes
Church
U. S. highway 69
IRWIN
VILLAGE
JEFFERSON
GREELEY
POLK
DOUGLAS
BOTNA
IRWIN
KIRKMAN
E W. IRWINS ADDITION
Nishnabotny River
Dredge Ditch
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NEG. 38750 BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

Figure 6

Council Bluffs and Omaha have increased. A generation ago farmers came to Irwin only when they needed to buy or sell something and on Sundays to attend church. On Saturday afternoons practically the only shopping excursions of the average farmer were made. Now a considerable number of people in the community are "in town" every day, and the majority come in at least twice a week. Wednesday's and Saturdays have become the farmers' days. In winter they come during the afternoon, and in summer in the evening. On these summer evenings the streets are lined with cars of people who have come for shopping, visiting, or entertainment, and parking on the main street becomes a problem. Wednesday evening is "show night" and on Saturday evenings dances of one sort or another are held. Various church and school activities throughout the year also bring the people together in the village. Such community activities have destroyed many of the old jealousies and suspicions that once characterized village and community relations. The associations of the people in the churches and the young people in school do not show any tendency for village dwellers to associate exclusively with village dwellers or farm children with farm children.

Despite an increasing number of interests common to both farmers and nonfarmers, economic interests are not identical. Some village folk feel that the farmers have been served by the Government and that there has been no similar program to assist them. Farmers on the other hand believe that villagers are dependent on farmers, and what helps them helps the villagers. Agriculture, they say, is the basic industry of the Nation and the Government's first obligation is to see that producers of goods as indispensable to the collective welfare as agricultural goods should be protected from speculation and should receive a reasonable price for their products. The villagers say little to the farmers about it but they feel that the farmers have become more and more the wards of the Government, and that the Government has had to underwrite agriculture because of the unbusinesslike methods pursued by the farmers.

A majority of the farmers in the community who are more than 50 years old align themselves against village interests on the question of the tremendous increase in the time spent by younger farmers and farm laborers in the village. They are convinced that a person cannot do a good job of farming and be off the farm so much. They never could, they say, and neither can people now. One old resident said, "In my day people came to town once a month. Now young farmers and farm hands aren't satisfied unless they can have supper at 6 o'clock and be in town by 7:30." The real difficulty, according to this person's way of thinking, was that once in town a person was tempted to spend money he could ill afford to spend, and to smoke, drink, and tell filthy stories which were morally deteriorating in their effect. If a young person ever wants to own a farm, he's got to save, and you can't save if you spend all your time in town, which means you're going to spend money." He believes that farmers who want to be farm owners have to control their expenditures rigidly or they can never make a go of it. "That's one trouble with farmers today; they just don't tend to business

Others point out that increasing village and larger town contacts create a desire to be always on the go." Instances, which were frequent, of young people going 50 or 100 miles for an evening's entertainment are mentioned. This, they say, is worse than going to the village, but "going to the village leads to the desire to go far and wide." They believe that the effect of both is to lessen eventually the influence of the family and other local institutions in that these institutions have a smaller and smaller part of the individual's time.

PATTERNS OF INFORMAL ASSOCIATION

One of the outstanding changes in the position of the isolated farmstead in the community during the last half century has been in the breakdown of its relative self-sufficiency. The old order was based upon the versatility and all-round abilities of the farmer enterpreneur. The hiring of labor was infrequent because there was a very real hired-labor shortage and, more important, because there was little money with which to hire hands. Payment for work with work was the most efficient system of getting done the things that had to be done with the available labor supply which consisted almost entirely of land-owning farmers and their sons. Farmers cooperated in house-raising, barn-raising, land-breaking, plowing, planting, threshing, harvesting, butchering, and road-working. Tools and implements were lent. Women often cooperated in doing various household tasks. Mutual aid was in evidence especially in the event of sickness, death, or accident. Participation in the system depended upon a person's willingness to cooperate, and his asking for help in return. There was little thought of balancing help given as against help received. Occasionally imbalance was eliminated by payments in kind or gifts. There was little dependence on the village in this system, but the farm neighborhood was pretty much an informal cooperative unit.

Some farmers believe cooperation has increased during the last decade. The reasons they give are that farmers have been depressed economically and that cooperation was somewhat recreational and offered relief from individual concern, and that mechanization has so speeded up farm work that they had time to cooperate with less chance of individual loss. Activities in which there is cooperation today are chiefly haying, threshing, and corn picking. Sickness, death, and other troubles are still signals for wholehearted cooperation. When extraordinary difficulty is experienced by a family, neighbors and friends for miles around come with offers of assistance and help, regardless of their usual relations. Such behavior is expected. Mutual aid and visiting become conjoint activities. It is not unusual for 5 or 10 farmers with tractors to gather on the farm of a farmer who is ill to prepare the ground and plant his entire crop. Occasionally 15 or 20 farmers with as many tractors turn out to help, and village dwellers also do what they can, such as driving tractors or operating planters, to relieve the burden on the owners of the machinery. Persons in difficulty are expected to accept help graciously and to pay their obligations by similar conduct toward others in difficulty.

There had been two outstanding examples of community cooperation in corn picking shortly before this study was made. During the 1938 harvest two farmers, father and son-in-law, were killed by lightning. Two or three men who are active in the community suggested that farmers and villagers join to pick the corn. More than 100 men and some 60 wagons came together and the corn was harvested in a surprising short time. In the next harvest season, 60 men and 17 wagons harvested 2,000 bushels of corn for another family hard-pressed by the death of the family head.

Farmers of the community express regret that cooperation is practiced very little except in response to a specific problematical situation caused by personal troubles. Several farmers remarked with emphasis that the decline of neighborly relations among farm people living on contiguous farms was the reason for the lack of cooperation. Loaning of tools and implements is more common than the exchange of work and neighborly relations need not be so close for this kind of cooperation.

Evidences point toward an increase in mutual aid during the last decade. Whether this is just a temporary trend or a return to old ways made effectual again under a system of mechanized farming is as yet undeterminable. This much is definite: the majority of farmers in the community are convinced that farmers must learn and apply the ways of cooperation more intensively than they have ever done before. They say that cooperation is one way in which they can join their interests in the struggle for a more certain future.

The older people in the community are of the opinion that visiting with immediate neighbors has declined since automobiles and good roads have become common. A few deprecate the change, but the majority feel they are now able to choose their friends on the basis of similarity of interests rather than by necessity of propinquity. They believe that associations with people on adjoining farms in itself was never a virtue. They say that they often were forced to associate too closely with people with whom they had little in common. Improved means of transportation has obviated this necessity. On the other hand, they believe that now when people are able to visit whomever they choose, they do not visit, and so the home is declining as a center of family interests. They say, "We farmers are trying to get together and yet we are not visiting in each other's homes which would do more than anything else to bring us together."

Young and old alike believe that the increased pace of modern life has had much to do with the decline of visiting. "We just don't have time to go to people's homes as much as we used to," is a frequent expression. There is a widespread feeling that despite the decline in formal visiting, there has been an increase in the number of contacts through meeting on the village streets, in the stores, in church congregations and other organizations, and in school activities. Telephone conversations, which are long and varied and run the gamut of farmers' interests, are another form of contact which early settlers did not enjoy.

Most of the families in the community do visit with some other family at least once a week. Kinship is the most important factor in determining visiting patterns. Similarity of interests as evidenced by membership in the same organizations is becoming increasingly influential.

The prevailing practice in the community is for the entertaining family to offer food or refreshments to their visitors, which is an evidence of the real friendliness of the people. One need not be an old acquaintance or on a formal visit to receive this offer of hospitality. It is usually extended whenever anyone comes into the home for reasons in any way allied to visiting.

Notwithstanding the changes that have taken place in visiting relations in the community, the conclusion is inescapable that visiting is still a vital part of the associative pattern. More visiting is done outside the home than formerly, but the visiting that takes place in the home has not greatly changed in form.

Recreation plays a greater part in the lives of these people than it did in past generations. In pioneer years house-raising, barn-raising, road-working, harvesting, and bees of all kinds combined work and play. Days in which these activities were engaged in were the real "frontier holidays." Wrestling and other feats of strength and endurance, and feasting, were part of the festivities. Activity of this type receded with the frontier and was followed by a generation of recreational activities

such as informal picnics, ball games, church socials, church-sponsored plays, special day celebrations, hunting, fishing, card playing, swimming, husking and quilting bees, and occasionally a dance. Today bees are rarely held, church socials have become less frequent, dancing has become more popular, and the movie and the radio have been introduced and have become as important as any other forms of recreation. Furthermore, recreation is not now confined to the community. Young people drive 50 or 75 miles to a dance, spend $4 or $5 or more and are home at hours that can be compared with those kept by young people of the last generation who seldom left the community.

Both young and old agree that their recreation costs too much and that it tends to lessen the influence of the family, the church, and the local community. They say they want a thorough-going leisure-time program carried on within the community by the cooperation of families with the school and the churches. The school is providing a varied program of athletic contests, playground activities, party games, ring games, and hobbies. The school gymnasium is used for school parties and basketball but dancing isn't allowed there. Recently the school patrons had been perhaps more satisfied with what was being done than ever before, but the school's activities do not meet all their recreational desires.

A small private hall - "the old opera house" - is used for dancing. During 1939-40 this hall, which has a stage, was used by a show-and-dance troupe which played its circuit from Irwin. On Saturday evenings they played in Irwin giving a 5-hour entertainment in all, for 25 cents. In two of the village restaurants beer is sold and there is provision for dancing. In these places and in the pool hall pitch, rummy, and poker are played for small stakes.

A circuit operating from a neighboring town puts on a movie once a week. Admission prices are 25 cents for adults, and 10 cents for children. Pictures shown are mostly old and second-rate. The nearest good moving-picture house is 14 miles away in Harlan.

While movies are rather universally approved, it is generally believed that they are the most important single factor in influencing young people to leave the farm. The majority of young people attend the movies once a week; adults, less frequently. Preference as to kind of picture is varied. Historical, educational, and musical pictures and comedies are most often mentioned as favorites. Theater-goers who discuss movies in the community say that pictures like "Dodge City," "Virginia City," "Union Pacific," and "Abe Lincoln in Illinois," western historicals with action relating to significant characters or events in western history, are the most preferred. So far as was ascertained, none in the community who saw these movies disliked them. Gangster and prison pictures are opposed. It is generally believed that movies exert their greatest influence on young people who are from 8 to 14 years old and that after this period is passed they no longer have any critical influence. Many share the attitude of a young farmer who had spent a year in college when he said, "There's a lot of education in movies, but there's a lot that isn't good. The whole issue rests on selection."

Most of the people enjoy listening to the radio and every family in the community has one. General news, market news, popular and semiclassical music, and comedy, are the most popular programs. Radio plays and broadcasts of religious services are increasing in favor. There is little doubt in the minds of most people that popular

music over the radio has stimulated dancing and made young people want to go to dances. Many want to attend dances at which nationally famous orchestras play. It is also pointed out that if dancing increases and is not kept within the homes, the radio will have contributed little to the strengthening of the position of the home as a place for recreation. Most of the people feel that the radio ranks next to the movie as an influence in encouraging emigration of youth, but a few believe that it tends to keep them at home for a greater share of their recreation.

People who attend roadhouses and taverns regularly are not wholeheartedly accepted in the community and are looked upon as having flaunted community standards. Smoking and drinking are not considered in good taste, especially for women. When a young fellow first begins to smoke the fact becomes a subject of conversation in the community. After the novelty wears off it is not mentioned again. The sale of beer in the village is objected to, but is tolerated. Two individuals are always singled out as typifying the results of drink. The general comment is that they were men of ability and promise who drowned themselves in liquor. With drinking, as in smoking, concern is at a peak when an individual begins its use; he later slips back into somewhat the same place he occupied previously, if his drinking is only occasional. Should it become habitual, he is more or less ostracized.

Card playing became very popular in the winter of 1937-38. That winter, according to one of the most intelligent and best-informed women in the village, "the whole community went in for bridge." The next year when a revivalist came to town, everybody went to the revival meetings. In the winter of 1939-40 the show-and-dance people were giving entertainments in the village and so provided much of the entertainment. Only a few disapprove of cards altogether, but gambling is strongly disapproved by the great majority. Groups come together in the evening, play for entertainment, and enjoy refreshments. Bridge, pitch, five hundred, and rummy are the favorite games.

There has been a very evident increase in the popularity of dancing during recent years. The church leaders and many of the older people disapprove, but that has not hindered the growing popularity. Dance music on radio programs has contributed to this change. When young people are questioned as to why they dance, in view of their church's opposition, they reply that if they didn't dance, or at least go to the dance and watch, they would deprive themselves of the company of other young people. Many of them, both dancers and those who attend but don't take part, say they are not fond of dancing, but that there is little other recreation available in the community. Those who criticize dancing say that once people get started, they want to do nothing but dance; that smoking and drinking follow, and then even more serious moral breakdown.

Dancing in the homes, most people believe to be all right; it is the "open dance" that is opposed. But when the open dances were sponsored by the visiting entertainment company in the winter of 1939-40 the community came together pretty well; they visited with each other and enjoyed the show and dance. Whole families came - old people, young people, children, and babies. For a while, about as many nondancers as dancers came, but with increasing publicity "an undesirable class from surrounding communities began to attend." Some say that drinking increased, drunkenness became noticeable, fights occurred, and "eventually it got so the people who stood by their moral standards would not attend." Stricter effort was made to police the dances, and conditions improved, but they had by that time "lost caste." This experience is referred to as typical regarding the natural history of dancing. Nevertheless, dancing

is becoming more common in the community and young people believe it has a place, and that when a more complete recreational program is provided it will include dancing.

Church-sponsored recreation is highly favored, as are picnics, social parties, hunting and fishing, swimming, baseball and other athletic contests, and plays. Pool and bowling are not quite so well received. There is much spontaneity in the organization and planning of recreation. Young people, meeting in town on Saturday nights, will decide to go to someone's home to play games, to sing, and to enjoy the evening together. Older persons and groups of families participate in many informal picnics, steak fries, and similar informal gatherings, and even more formal picnics similar to those of a generation ago are still common.

PATTERNS OF FORMAL ASSOCIATION

Families during the period of settlement were mostly independent economic and social units. They owned and operated their own farmsteads. Out of the land came their security and to their own land they felt a very real attachment. Years of experience strengthened and made more enduring their feeling for their land. It was a common desire to obtain enough acres so they could give the sons tracts on which to start farming. Daughters were trained in all the domestic tasks; they were to become good wives and mothers. The family was secure in its relationships to the community, and faced the future with confidence.

Drastic changes have taken place within recent years. The family is still the living and the working unit, but it is often living on someone else's land. Feelings and attachments relating to land are less intense. In some form the question is frequently asked, "Can a family be as much attached to a farmstead it doesn't own, may never own, and from which it may be forced to move at any time, as it can to its own permanent home and holdings?" The land still produces abundantly but there is little security. "Sons are supported longer than formerly and have less chance of becoming independent owners and operators." "Inheritance of debt has become as common as the inheritance of land." Nonownership of the farmstead makes the family's relationship to the community more-or-less tenuous, and there is fear in the hearts of the adults regarding the future. It is interesting that young people in the community do not always share the fears of their parents. To restore the conditions which were associated with the security of yesterday and the values had today is their avowed purpose. Central in their whole scheme is the wish to get land of their own and to hold it for themselves and for their families.

One of the outstanding instances of effective family operation is the protection and sheltering of individual members of the family by the family as a whole during the periods following the severe economic crises. "Were it not for the comfort our family was to us, we wouldn't have been able to take what we did. Our children buckled in and helped. We all had to work together to keep going at all. We sympathized with each other, stayed at home more because we couldn't afford to go very much, and got through it somehow. Some of our neighbors lost their farms. It was hard on their families but it would have been harder for them if it hadn't been for their families."

Parental help during the depression, and in some cases before, has taken the form of the parents sharing their home with the young married couple and providing

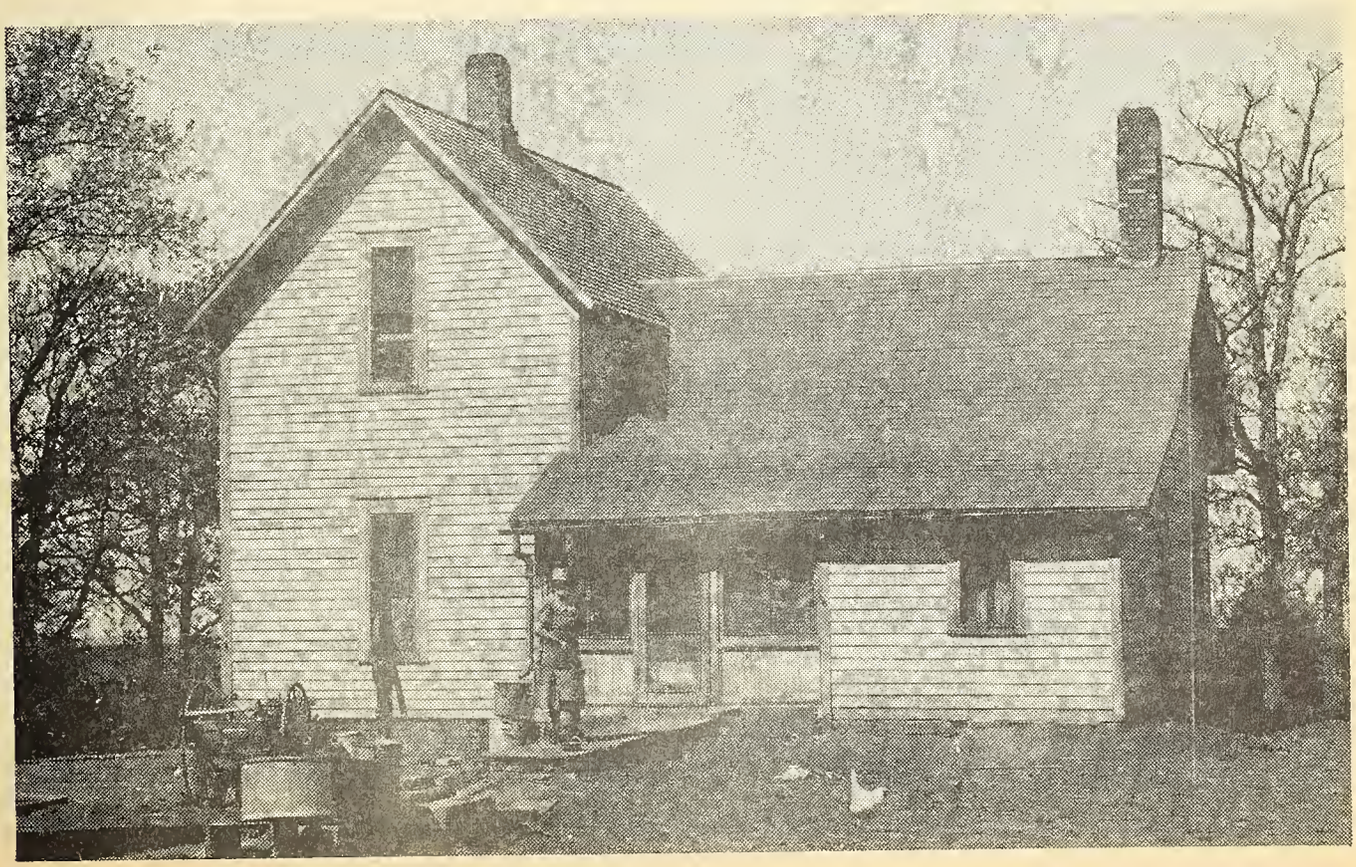
for them. In no other way could some marriages have taken place. Nevertheless there has been a decline in the number of marriages in the community, and only recently has an increase been noted. These parents do not attempt to control the marriages of their children. One man expressed his feeling, which is typical: "There is no definite attempt to control marriage, other than control through giving of opinion. I want my sons and daughters to know what my ideas are, then they may do as they wish." Young people expect more of their mates than that they be "a good provider" and "a good cook." "Living standards, education, and dress are receiving more attention. On the other hand it seems that character and moral discipline do not seem as important as they once were. For example, because it is more common for young people to drink . . . that fault has become more excusable in the eyes of young women." These remarks by people not at all prudish in their attitude but conservative on moral issues typify the thinking about the changing basis in marital selection. People in the community are interested in the fact that a marriage is about to take place or has taken place. The "pros and cons of the match and its chances for success" are widely discussed but only a few people, relatives and close friends, attend the ceremony. A greater number will participate at one time or another in the "shivaree." But aside from this, community interest in a marriage is more or less passive or casual.

Family labor is divided, the man operating the farm and the wife operating the household and the garden. Children, as soon as they are old enough, are given responsibilities and become working members of the family. Gradually their duties are increased until by the time they are 17 or 18 years old they can carry on with little supervision. This is true of both boys and girls. Various ways of compensating young people for their work are used. Generally they have some share in the income from whatever source is their particular responsibility, and boys frequently have a steer or a litter of pigs which brings them additional income. Family solidarity is evidenced by the acceptance by parents and children of their mutual responsibilities. A well-informed resident had this to say about joint obligations in the family, "I don't recall any instances of late years where children have failed to do their duty by their parents, or parents by their children. In fact, things of that sort seem to be on the decrease rather than on the increase." The idea prevails that the farm is operated as a partnership by the members of the family.

Punishment, principally whipping and the denial of privileges, is the means of inducing children to conform to parental standards. Typical of the prevailing attitude is this statement: "Of course, up to the time children are old enough to decide what is right and what is wrong, punishment of some kind is necessary. Usually a spanking is enough. But when they get older, punishment is of little use. I've had to raise my children by reasoning with them about things that are right, but they have to decide for themselves. If they don't do what I think they should, I deny them certain privileges such as the use of the car. That brings results, for young people can do little without a car in this community."

It is common for persons here to express a keen interest in the achievements of their fathers - their feats of courage and daring experiences in pioneering, their religious and political convictions, are often recounted. Family albums and portraits are everywhere in evidence. Family homesteads are regarded sentimentally. People enjoy talking about the family and its standing, past and present. One old gentleman, in talking about the status of families noted the fact "The X's think and have thought for 50 years that they were better than the Y's. The Y's, one of the best-liked

Figure 7.— *Some houses are large, some small.*



families in the community, hang together, but they don't think they're better than anybody else. Families do think a lot of their pasts, and though most things are forgotten, a few stories and incidents survive and are passed on from generation to generation. There seems to some to be a sort o' magic in names or maybe it's only that blood is thicker than water. Anyway, members of families today stand by their families and are tied to them." This solidarity is more a way of thinking than a way of behavior, for visiting between related families and family reunions have declined, and the current opinion is that "obligations are not very much stronger between relatives outside the immediate family than between neighbors."

Family customs and events such as taking meals together, holding family prayers, reunions, weddings, funerals, picnics, festivals, letter writing, and inheritance are important parts of the associative patterns within Irwin families. Family mealtimes are definitely set, and all the members are expected to be ready when the meal is placed on the table. Regular field work, livestock feeding, and 'chores' are so arranged that this is possible. The practice of asking a blessing is rare. Conversations at mealtime are extremely varied. Perhaps the most discussed topics are the progress of work on the farm and in the home. National and international events would probably come next. Radio news broadcasts come at mealtime and form the undertone of whatever else is going on. Events of special interest generally draw some comment. In some families delinquent conduct is brought to light at these times and the disciplinary measures are discussed. A real attempt is made on the part of most of the women to make conditions at mealtime pleasant. They point out the difficulties they have and say they'll keep on trying. Holding family prayers is not widespread, but the women who attend church regularly teach their children to pray.

Family picnics, festivals, and reunions in the summer are frequent. Members of the immediate and related families join in play, discussions of a great variety of subjects, and in eating a prodigious dinner, the two chief features of which are likely to be chicken and apple pie. It is not uncommon for families or members of families to travel 50 or 75 miles to attend family reunions or picnics. It is pointed out that automobiles have enabled members of families to travel greater distances to keep up customary family contacts, and that these contacts have strengthened the family units.

Weddings in the community are usually simple; church weddings are infrequent. The time-honored charivari, ("shivaree" as it is called here) is still a form of merry-making associated with marriages. The older people say that young people do not receive the "royal send off" in marriage today the couple used to have. During the course of this survey two weddings occurred, and in each case children, young people, middle-aged, and aged turned out for the "shivaree." To each was passed candy, tobacco, or ice cream. The popularity of the persons married is measured somewhat by the number of participants.

Letter writing is one of the activities for which farmers in Irwin have little time and little inclination. The most frequent comment when the question is asked as to why he doesn't write is that "letter writing is a poor substitute for seeing people, and if everything isn't all right we hear anyway." "People to whom I would write know how I feel about them and I know how they feel about me. There's no use going over that all the time." "The wife's got more time and she can write if she wants to." But correspondence with members of the immediate family who have recently left home is usually regular and fairly frequent.

In spite of the importance of farm families as living and working units, the number and variety of their functions have decreased. This process has been going on in Irwin since the community was settled. The making of clothes and furniture are among the joint functions the family has given over to outside agencies. As churches and schools were established, they acquired certain other functions previously provided by the family. Old residents say they "thought these agencies could do a better job," but they "doubt that they have, seeing what's happened." The majority of Irwin families still do their own baking, laundering, mending, and most of the repairing of household and farm equipment, but the purchase of clothes, bread, and pastry made outside the home, has increased considerably. The usual reasons given are "it saves labor," "it's more convenient," and "it gives us more free time." Replies as to the relative cost of the two ways of doing were characterized by indecision. The situation was well summarized by a farm wife: "We do at home as much as we can while at the same time trying to keep up with the other demands on our time. It may be cheaper to do a lot of things at home, but we can't do them and the other things we want and have to do."

Attitudes regarding the shifting of maternity care from the homes to hospitals and of giving the schools the responsibility for moral education were largely negative. The custom at present is for children to be born at home. Said one man: "All the members of our family, nine of them, were born at home. I believe that care perhaps can be better in a hospital, but where such specialized attention is not necessary, the average woman feels better at home." Several women concurred in the opinion expressed by a middle-aged mother of six children: "There is a great deal lost in the psychological effect of the mother being in a hospital rather than at home." To this woman, being at home and having the support of and giving her support to her family meant a great deal. This feeling is general.

The people are emphatic in their attitude that moral education should remain a function of the homes. "I'd hate to trust the moral training of my children to any teacher." "Teachers can only teach what's right and wrong according to the way they think; they may not see eye to eye with the parents, and certainly it's a parent's right to teach his child right and wrong in the way he wants to." These comments characterize the prevailing attitude although teachers and the work of the school are respected. "Schoolteachers should in no way attempt to change the ideas taught by the parents. They are hired to teach certain things, and that's what they should teach. They may supplement but they may not change."

Young people should marry, some thought, "as soon as it is practicable after getting out of school." A few favored postponement until the young people are fully mature--until the middle twenties are reached. All are agreed that family size, whether existing or what they consider ideal, has decreased. "Families of 10 or 15 are no longer common. A family of 6 or 7 is even considered large." The number of children in the families here ranges from two to eight. Locally, it was said, large families are an advantage; economically they were questionable. Some thought "there should be no children unless and until parents are absolutely sure that they can give them the proper upbringing, the proper education, and a good start in life." Others believed "children should come as soon as possible, for with children comes responsibility, and people work better when they have responsibility." Then, too, "there will be more companionship between parents and children, and the children can help the parents make what will one day become the property of the children."

From the first, children should be taught the virtues of "honesty, frugality, friendliness, and hard work," they say. They should be sent to church, and should be taught to believe in God and to be good Christians." "They should receive as much formal education as they want and can use." "They should learn to play and should participate in a variety of sports and games." "Talent in music, art, or speaking, or any other activity should be developed." There should be participation in things outside the home, "but the home should be the center of life for the family." To make it central and effective and its activities rich and varied, parents and children should work together in everything. Nevertheless, when children reach their middle teens they should know how to conduct themselves and parents should not interfere unduly in their relations with other young people. "They should grow into responsibility and not have it thrust on them suddenly. Parental counsel in matters relating to marriage should be reserved. Young people should be so equipped by training in their homes that the establishment of their own homes can be accomplished with little difficulty. Children should discharge their obligations to their parents by conforming to standards of good behavior and by being morally stable." Finally, on death of both parents the children should share equally in the estate, and there should be no jangling over property, they say.

The educational facilities of the community consist of a consolidated elementary and high school and 11 country schools. During the school year 1939-40 only 9 of the rural schools were operating because a State law requires schools with an average daily attendance of less than five pupils to be closed. Children in districts where the local schools are closed attend either an adjacent local school or the consolidated school. A careful check of school enrollment for the years 1936 to 1939 showed practically no children not in school unless they had completed high school. Very few children are kept out of school to help with farm work. A typical expression of opinion was, "Until children are ready to leave school and work on the farm, it is the duty of parents to see that they get an education. They have plenty of time to do the work on the farm and learn farm work after their schooling is finished." Some of the farmers believe that it is the cities and not rural areas that need compulsory education to keep children in school.

There is practically universal belief that high-school education is the minimum that all young people should have. As to college some say, "Young people should have a high-school education and if possible a college education." Others remark, "There are a lot of people in colleges today that have no business there." Other similar contrasting statements are, "For most young people as much education as can be afforded is desirable," and, "If they are going to learn things that make them dislike hard work, they they ought not to go to college." The opinion is very prevalent that once a person has chosen an occupation or profession he "should have all the training necessary to do his future work well"; that "in vocations that do not require higher education, it isn't necessary but usually isn't harmful." Some parents who did not have much schooling are even stronger than more fortunate neighbors in their desires for higher education for their children.

Idealizing of the old-fashioned one-room school is not prevalent, although there are still several such schools in the community. Some are of the opinion that children who would not want to miss a day at country school are not too eager to attend the consolidated school every day. Most informants believe that the consolidated school has served to break down barriers between the village and farm people. One of them said:

"When I was a boy the farm child was almost afraid to go to town because of the discourtesies shown him by town boys and girls. . . . All that has changed now, and the farm boys and girls are regarded on the same level and often on a higher level, if anything, than the children who come from the families living in the village."

Localism does not seem to hamper the selection of teachers. "People here in general seem to prefer teachers from outside the community rather than those who have been raised in the community." The value of the teachers as leaders is recognized and there seems to be little criticism of the schools or their management. In fact, many of the people feel that "the schoolteachers play a very important part in the life of the community, through their influence on the children." The influence of the schools is further evidenced by the unity and strong support achieved by the Parent Teachers Association. One informant went so far as to say that it "probably does more good than any other single organization."

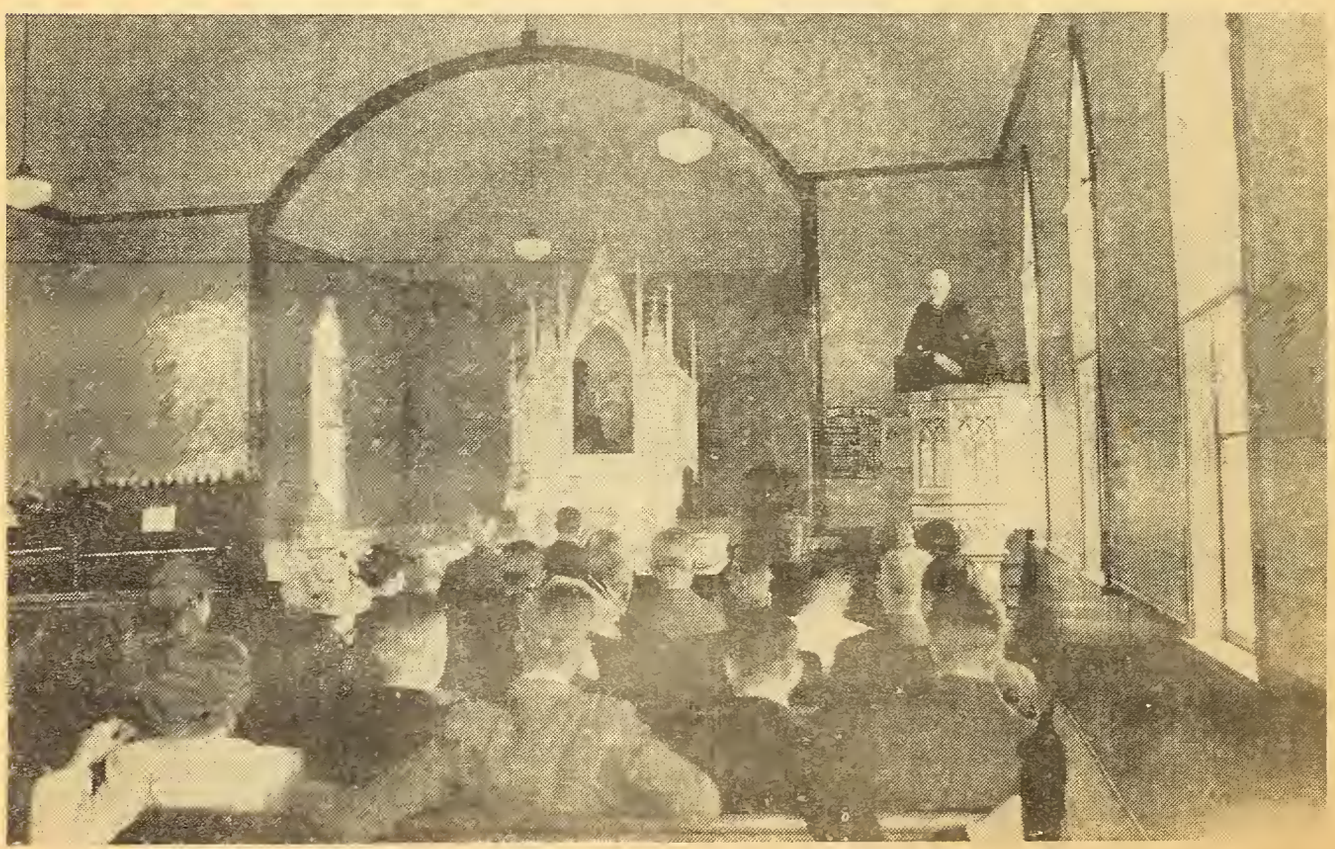
Most of the parents believe that the schools could be improved, but their struggles during the depression have made them wary of additional school taxes. School costs are carefully guarded. It is realized that the educational efficiency of the schools could be greatly improved if more money were spent, but there is little disposition at present to increase these expenditures.

The early settlers here lost little time in establishing churches. Norwegian Lutherans and Methodists organized congregations in 1881, the Presbyterians organized one in 1885, and the Church of Christ in 1886. "We were convinced then," said an old resident of the community, "that the churches are the most important institution in the community, and that if the community was to be a fit place to live in, it had to have churches. There was naturally disagreement on matters of church doctrine and practice, and these disagreements sometimes led to difficulties between members of the different churches The Presbyterians didn't have a very strong group and they soon lost out. The other churches are still in existence. They've had their ups and downs, but they've managed to keep going."

A man who hasn't been to church for "over 5 years" expressed the prevailing attitude toward the churches when he declared with emphasis that "the churches are the most important institutions in Irwin today and have the greatest effect on the locality. Were it not for them, the community would not be a desirable place to live." Although the majority of the people in the community attend only rarely or never attend, they believe the church should be supported and maintained. Stated in the words of one informant, "Loss of the churches would be an irreparable blow to the community." Another said, "Religious principles are important in governing the welfare of our community. With few exceptions, the people are fair in their dealings with each other." Said another, "Christian ethics are important to the community and to the farmers, but they are not as closely followed as they should be; however, this is not particularly worse now than before."

Most of the people who attend church were thought to be "more honest and fair than the people who don't go to church. This is not always the case, for some people who go frequently only wear their religion as a Sunday cloak." Church attendance is thought to be desirable, nevertheless, "for while it is possible for an individual to be religious without being a regular attendant at church, it is much more likely that a non-attender is non-religious."

Figure 8.— *Life revolves around the family, the school, and the churches.*



An influential group of people in the community, mostly church-attenders, maintain that "religion has about the same meaning it has always had." A larger group of churchgoers and non-churchgoers definitely believe that "church and religion do not mean as much as they once did." The following is a non-churchgoer's explanation of the situation: "The churches in Irwin aren't as influential because of decreased attendance. As one reason for this decrease, take the radio. It is possible for us to stay home on Sunday morning and listen to religious services which are more interesting with better ministers and better music than we could hear in our own churches. This has a second effect of getting young people in the community still further away from the churches for while they probably would attend church with their parents, if their parents stay home and listen to radio services, the young people prefer to do something else. When these young people get into homes of their own, they not only won't go to church, but they will not listen to religious services on the radio."

To counteract this tendency, some argue for "a consolidation and centralization of churches." After all," a non-churchgoer explained, "it is the amount of money you have that governs the things you can enjoy. A church with a big purse is able to afford interesting speakers, enjoyable music, and all of those things which increase attendance. Through centralization and consolidation it would be possible to have the money to bring these things about." This proposal was related to an active church member. His immediate response was "That sounds like a non-churchgoer. He would have no convictions about the divine work of the church. Consolidating the churches couldn't be accomplished, and it wouldn't be right if it could."

It is generally believed that the ministers in the town have not been important as leaders. Reasons advanced are their "lack of personal qualities of leadership," poor speaking ability," "short tenure," "lack of interest in the community," and "the fact that they are not well liked." One exception was noted - the Norwegian Lutheran minister who had served his congregation for 25 years.

As yet there is little competition between churches in the village and the churches outside the village. The Norwegian Lutheran is the only church in the community not located in the village. Southeast of the community there is a particularly strong Danish Baptist church and neither this nor the Lutheran church has suffered from the competition of the village churches. Denominationalism is relatively strong, and on the whole there has been little change in church affiliation. A proposal to move the Lutheran church to the village is gaining in favor. "It would be a good idea," according to one supporter of the move, "because more and more of our activities are centering in the village, and location of the church there would make it more convenient for the whole congregation."

Farming in Irwin community is so commercialized that prosperity is contingent not only on the size and quality of the crops, but on developments in regional, national, and international markets. Cash income is universally supplemented by liberal amounts of home produced food. Fruits and vegetables are canned and some home-grown products are exchanged for groceries and clothing at the local store.

Money is more readily available in certain seasons of the year than in others - in the fall when Government checks arrive and in April and August when livestock is generally sold, but there are no marked high and low tides of spending such as are found in the wheat and cotton belts. Only recently have the farmers begun to recover

from the effects of the depression and droughts. Very few farmers have money to set aside in savings accounts. "Cash on hand" is placed in checking accounts from which it is drawn to pay for farm-production expenditures, repairs, and necessary family purchases.

Bartering of products, once very common, has greatly diminished. Eggs, and occasionally vegetables, are taken to the local stores and whatever amount they bring is credited to the charge accounts of the farmers. These accounts are settled "whenever it is convenient, usually four or five times a year; sometimes no oftener than once or twice a year. When crop prices are low, or crops are poor, residents of the community are carried on charge accounts by the local stores for the things that are necessary to continue farming." Income derived from the sales of milk and cream is considered as a part of general farm income while income from minor enterprises is usually earmarked for current household expenditures.

Business relations between the farmers and the local stores is very informal. "The farmers bring in produce and take out supplies." "We settle up three or four times a year, or maybe only once a year. We know we must settle up. The merchant knows we will. There's no understanding as to when or how the settlement shall be made." Statements and receipts are relatively uncommon. Some creditors carry their accounts receivable "in their heads." Occasionally debtors offer to pay obligations, the amounts of which they have forgotten, and they find that the creditor has also forgotten the amount and has no record of the transaction.

Professional and business services available in Irwin village have changed decade by decade. There is no longer an attorney in the community, and the number of doctors, grain dealers, blacksmiths, and general merchandise dealers has declined. A millinery shop, a livery stable, a furniture store, and a hotel that previously operated are no longer there. Only one bank remains of the three banks that operated between 1910 and 1930. The number of automobile sales agencies had not changed between 1914 and 1940, but the number of garages had increased and five service stations were operating. The movies, a pool hall, and "beer joints," confectioneries, and a hamburger shop were fairly recent enterprises.

In general, the goods and services available in the community, at present, are those which are unspecialized, of low cost, and frequently demanded. Overalls and house dresses are bought in the local general store, but ready-made clothing such as men's suits and women's dresses are bought in Harlan, Manning, Council Bluffs, or Omaha. Mail-order catalogs are found in most houses, but mail-order buying has evidently declined. For simple ailments the local general medical practitioner is called in. The services of outside doctors are procured for operations and more serious illnesses. Dentists in Harlan are patronized. Morticians are called from Harlan and Manning.

Two county-wide mutual organizations, an insurance and a telephone company, and a local meat route, are represented in the community. There are no consumer or producer cooperatives. The telephone company was organized about 40 years ago at the suggestion of a leading farmer who had visited his native Norway and "found telephones in general use there by people who were poorer than the people of Shelby County." On his return, meetings were held first at his house and later in a neighborhood school. Finally the Farmers' Mutual Telephone Company of Shelby County was organized. Another telephone company operates in the county but does not serve this community. This is

not a satisfactory arrangement for families with telephones in one company may be unable to call those in the other. Irwin people favor their present system but think its service should be improved and they would like to see it become the only telephone company serving the locality.

Fewer people are concerned with the insurance company as stockholders and policy holders. It is infrequently mentioned and as a cooperative organization it is unimportant in the community.

The idea is fairly common that "cooperation is a good idea on paper but it doesn't work out in practice. Where cooperation has succeeded an individual or a few individuals have been responsible. It wasn't the larger membership." Cooperatives in some of the neighboring towns have been outstanding successes -because their leadership, it was said which included management, was good and because of the kind of product handled "Producers' cooperative creameries could be successful if they were wisely conducted in that they handle specialized products such as cream, butter, and milk. Corn and livestock are our big products. We don't hear of successful cooperatives dealing in products of this kind. Milk and cream are relatively unimportant in Irwin. If it were possible for producers of hogs, beef, and corn to cooperate and get higher prices, it would be a fine thing."

Occasionally one hears statements such as "Times in this country haven't been hard enough yet to make us cooperate"; "We've got to learn how to cooperate." Despite the tremendous influence on farmers' attitudes of some unsuccessful cooperative experiences of the past, it would appear that the interest in cooperation is increasing.

Formal farmers' organizations in this county do not operate on a community basis and Irwin, therefore, has no such organizations. The Farm Bureau is the only organization with any great number of members in the community and its smallest local unit is the township. Irwin community includes parts of, but not all of, any one of four townships. Its Farm Bureau members thus attend local bureau meetings at four different points, no one of which is the community center. Agricultural extension programs, including 4-H club work, are parts of the Farm Bureau program and these programs are planned and carried out by township organizations. The township units are all a part of the Shelby County Farm Bureau which in turn is a unit of the State Farm Bureau. As the State Farm Bureau is a member of the American Farm Bureau Federation any local farm family by joining the county Farm Bureau becomes a part of a State and national farmers' organization. Irwin community as such is not an organic part of this hierarchy of organizations.

Apparently the earliest farmers' organization in the county was the Shelby County Agricultural Society, organized in 1870 and composed of a few leading farmers who met to discuss general agricultural improvements -what today would be termed scientific agriculture. After other farmers' organizations, such as the Grange and the Alliance, came in, the Agricultural Society specialized in conducting a county agricultural fair at Harlan the county seat; it has never had either local township or community units and thus has not been a part of Irwin community.

The Grange became very strong in Iowa in the 1870's; in fact Iowa was at one time the strongest Grange State. Shelby County was then sparsely settled and its inhabitants not well acquainted with each other so the Grange was never strong there.

There was a subordinate Grange in Douglas township, but the village of Irwin had not been established so the Grange could have no influence in creating Irwin's community cohesion.

Several antihorse-thief organizations were formed in the county in the 1870's and early 1880's. Parts of the area in which Irwin community is now located are said to have furnished more than their share of the thieves and Polk township organized an antihorse-thief association in 1883.

In the later eighties the Farmers' Alliance entered the area and swept into its membership a larger percentage of farmers than has any other farmers' organization before or since that time. It was a strictly class organization whose principles called for fair treatment of farmers and whose chief fight, like that of the Grange before it, was against monopolies and railroad freight-rate discrimination. It practiced direct political action, organized cooperative stores, passed resolutions and pronounced opinions on all public issues. The four townships, a part of each of which forms Irwin community, had local Alliances but none was centered at Irwin.

A county-wide farmers' institute was organized in 1889 to work for general agricultural improvement. Discussions were held and papers presented by members who were recruited "from among the better farmers" over the county. Meetings were county wide and not on a community basis.

The Shelby County Agriculture Exchange was organized in 1902, "To cultivate social relations among those engaged in agriculture." Two or three banquets were held during the winter. It was found, a county historian relates, that farmers could make good after-dinner speeches. Only farmers in the upper economic brackets participated in this county organization.

The Shelby County Fine Stock Exchange was also organized in 1902 by the stock breeders of the county. It was said to have been the largest county stock breeders' association in Iowa. As several national and two internationally famous herds were owned and developed by breeders in the county, this organization attracted considerable attention. A sales pavilion was built at Harlan and breeders' directories were published, some of which showed that 350 purebred livestock breeders were operating in the county. Membership was not recruited from the general farm population and the Exchange was not a community organization.

Membership in the Farm Bureau has always been on a township rather than a community basis. By 1925 the memberships in the townships of the area were: Jefferson, 29; Greeley, 36; Douglas, 59; and Polk, 79. County membership totaled 880. There were more Farm Bureau members in these townships in proportion to their population than in the county as a whole. Membership in 1940 was Jefferson, 18; Greeley, 9; Douglas, 20; and Polk, 17.

Home project work of the Extension Service and Farm Bureau has been going on in the county since 1918 although a demonstration agent was not hired until 1930. In the Irwin community a relatively large number of women is participating in demonstration work each in her own township organization.

Club work was started in the townships in 1924 and 1925, with the exception of Greeley where it did not get under way until 1930. Clubs for girls have been more

successful, on the whole, than those for boys. Some years the clubs have been disbanded. Girls' organizations exist at present in Douglas and Greeley townships. Only one boys' club, "The Irwin Lucky Go-Getters," is now organized; this club includes members from all four townships and is essentially a community club.

Surveys of the Farm Bureau membership "show that it is composed of the more progressive and economically successful farmers." The relatively disadvantaged groups are not represented. Of this fact the county agent is well aware. He attempts to give as much time to nonmembers as to members, but the members feel that, as their organization furnishes the major part of the finances, they are entitled to more of his time, and they make more requests for his help and direction. The majority of farmers not associated with the Bureau think, nevertheless, that "the county agent is necessary," "he doesn't help us very much, but we can go to him and he will give as much consideration and help as he can." They would "like very much for the county agent to hold demonstrations on farms of more than just a few people, or else let it be generally known when they are to be held." Some have the opinion that "only a few farmers are getting the benefit of this help, and all need it."

The cohesive force of all farmers' organizations operating in the county or Irwin community cannot be discounted but the organizations have not used the community as a local unit of operation and have thus not contributed directly to its community cohesion.

LEADERSHIP AND CLASS STRUCTURE

It would be difficult to discern any clear-cut class structure in Irwin community. Neither the village nor the farm people feel superior to each other. Tenants and owners associate together in all kinds of activities. Women are almost as often leaders in community activities as men. The professional people are not especially "looked up to" and political officers are not held in high esteem. The general idea of the people is, "Any of us could do as good a job as those who are now leading," and there is a very common feeling that a leader "should not push himself by stepping on someone else." Certain types of persons are respected and certain types are held in disrespect, but it isn't believed that any of them are prevalent in the community.

Concerning leadership, such statements as, "We don't have any leaders," "We don't have leaders in the community like we used to have," are common. Three leaders of the militant "advance Alliance," active a half century ago, were referred to as "the kind of leaders we ought to have. They knew what ought to be done, they knew how they were going to do it, and they set to work to do it." They were active, it seems, not only in the Alliance but in local politics, the churches, and the schools. One of them is reputed locally to have influenced the thinking of Henry C. Wallace, former Secretary of Agriculture.

Men and women in the community who had no contact with the Alliance are of the opinion that the pattern of leadership has changed little. Some point out that "the farm program has done as much as anything else to develop leaders and in the future the situation with regard to leadership locally will improve." The leaders in the school, the churches, the fraternal orders, and village and township government "are the same group that has been active for a long time." The leaders in the new farm programs are

to a considerable extent a new group. They are not so completely identified with the institutional activities of the community as they are with the new farm programs.

This shift has been evolutionary. In the early days of AAA some of the old institutional leaders took over the responsibilities imposed by the new farm programs. Recently, men who are not so active in local organizations have been increasingly called into positions of leadership.

Because there was such universal insistence that all persons in the community are of equal status, a special attempt was made by the participant observer to test this opinion in various ways. The specific question "Who are leaders in the community?" was asked of 50 members of the community. So many different persons were named that the investigator was almost inclined to believe in the common idea that one member of the community could lead just about as well as any other. There were no leadership families and no class levels of citizens.

The observer made a different kind of attempt to discover leaders in the community by arbitrarily designating a person as "a dynamic leader" if he initiated activities or caused things to happen, and "a leader in advice relations" if he was a person to whom others go for advice in general fields such as farming activities, health, and business. He was not able by this device to discover any clearly defined leaders, but was able to uncover what type of person members of the community thought a leader should be.

The general ranking of the traits possessed by leaders in advice relations which would induce individuals to go to them was, technical knowledge, integrity, resourcefulness, vision, and tact. Technical knowledge was first "because one from whom you get advice ought to have knowledge on the subject." The usual reason for placing integrity second was that in addition to a person's having knowledge, one "had to have confidence that he would tell them right." Integrity was the only trait rated ahead of technical knowledge in more than one or two instances.

In the field of dynamic relations there was less pattern in the ranking of traits. Initiative, resourcefulness, and power of expression were grouped together at the top. Perseverance and energy appeared as a second group, and tact and the delegation of responsibility came next. The usual reasons for the superior ranking of initiative, resourcefulness, and the power of expression were that a person without initiative and resourcefulness wouldn't see things that needed to be done and wouldn't know how to do them, and only through "power or expression can one convince others that his leadership is good and get them to help put the thing over."

Local officeholders generally were not thought to be the dynamic leaders in the institutionalized activities of the community. "Of course, some of the officeholders are the persons that cause things to happen, but more often they are not."

The only professional people in the community are the school teachers, the ministers, and the doctor. School people have carried the P. T. A., have assisted in the churches, and were instrumental in organizing a troop of girl scouts. The superintendent of schools is a direct or indirect participant in almost every activity in the community. One of the ministers has been president of the board of education for several terms. The doctor who had served the community intermittently for more than

pointed out "the slovenly methods followed by a great many farmers." About others they said, "Reasons for failure are not hard to find." They believed that their parents were beaten before getting started and they did not expect to face a train of circumstances such as resulted in the agricultural crash of 1920. They realized that the alternative opportunities of their parents no longer exist, and that their parents' dissatisfaction is kept alive by the thought that they would have fared better had they migrated to the city. They said that some young people who have migrated in the last 10 years have been quite successful, but others have failed dismally. It is generally believed that "the honest farm boy" is much in demand in the city and can outdo in any competition an urban boy of comparable circumstances. Nevertheless, Irwin young people wanted to stay in the community and farm and believed that by working hard on the farm they could have "greater security and more freedom" than in the city. But some were questioning whether or not they should attempt to saddle themselves with the responsibilities of farm ownership. They believed that the ownership of the land one farms is desirable, but they wondered whether it is practicable.

To find out what has actually happened to young people in the community, the ten high school graduating classes from 1930 to 1939 were studied. Information was obtained on 154 young people--87 boys and 67 girls. Of the graduates, 87 had moved out of the community--44 girls and 43 boys; 10 boys and 8 girls had moved out of the State. More girls than boys had married and more boys were serving in the Army, Navy, and CCC camps than there were girls and boys in college. This relatively large contingent in the services (before the time of the Selective Service) suggests limited opportunity, and this is more or less conclusively substantiated in that half of the high-school graduates had moved away despite the general wish to stay in the community. "Perhaps the desire to stay in the community is dictated as much by fear of what may develop if a person should emigrate as by a positive attachment to the community," commented one of the school officials. "There is little doubt that security is more desired by these young people than insecurity with a limited chance of outstanding success financially."

Inquiries were made as to the kind of help received by the present generation of young farmers from their parents. "About 40 percent of the farmers will pass their land on to their children, or will have it administered as an estate in favor of their children. The only items of wealth the majority will have to pass on are a few farm implements and household goods." This summed up a prevailing opinion. Parents wish they could establish their sons on farms, if the sons want to farm, but many farmers think there is "little future in farming." Others say, "It depends on developments." But all agree that the greatest contribution they can make to their sons and daughters is "to teach them to stand on their own feet and to be independent." "To some of my children I know I have failed to give the same sense of responsibility and thrift that my father gave me. What's true of my children is true of others. Personal responsibility and thrift are less characteristic than they were 50 years ago, but perhaps it's because the past is good and the present is folly. In my opinion, and I know it is more or less general, young people today are as good as they ever were and they are most indebted to their parents for the character training and the education they receive. By living honorably and well they discharge their obligations to their parents."

Children are expected to help their parents operate the farmstead, and for their help they receive a money allowance which varies directly with their age and the economic circumstances of their parents. They are expected to graduate from high school

and some attention is paid to college training, especially when needed for vocational preparation. Participation in some phase of church activity is generally encouraged. Young people are expected to be honest, straightforward, and frugal. They are to know how to work and how to get along with people. Smoking and drinking are not in good taste Sexual equality is demanded. Participation in athletics and other extracurricular activities sponsored by the school is recognized as a necessary part of young people's experience and parents take pride in what their children do but such activities are not allowed to interfere unduly with habits of work and thrift.

During the years he is in school and after his schooling is finished, a boy, if he is not needed at home, is expected to work out as a farm hand or at some other employment. In somewhat the same way a girl, after her schooling is done, is to do the kind of work for which she is prepared, or work with her parents, or work for others at some honorable employment." "As soon as young people are settled in their own minds, they should marry, and early in their married life they should have children."

That young people in the community adhere rather closely to the prevailing moral standards is evidenced by the general attitudes of their elders with regard to delinquency, vice, and crime. Some of the teachers say they believe that moral conditions in the community are on the whole better than in other Iowa communities in which they have taught. The general attitude of old residents is expressed by these comments: "Young people are no worse than they ever were, and much better than the youth of 15 years ago, it seems"; "Young people are better behaved than they used to be"; "Delinquency on the part of people in the neighborhood is not any more common than it has ever been. For a while there was a little more tendency for them to overstep their bounds, because it was possible for them to get farther away from home. At the same time news of misbehavior also came to hand faster and from greater distances. The two about counterbalance one another, so that even though young people can get farther away from home, there is still no greater tendency to disobey the law or get involved in any other sort of delinquency or immorality."

The only undesirable influence in the community that was generally denounced was the beer halls. Sentiment was about equally divided on the issue of public dances. Drinking among young people had increased, it was thought, but there was no more drunkenness. "Young people are not to blame," according to one elderly farmer, "it's the system. Prohibition should never have been repealed. The idea's spread about that it's fashionable to drink, that it's an everyday occurrence, and that there's nothing morally wrong with drinking."

High standards prevail in the community and young people conform to the standards. Instances of crime and delinquency are infrequent. "There is nothing to the idea," it is contended, "that the younger generation is going to the dogs. Young people today seem to have higher goals and as much ambition as the young people of the generation now passing from the scene."

INTEGRATION AND CONFLICTS

During the years of settlement, disputes over farm property lines, crop damage inflicted by straying cattle, and personal concerns were frequent It is said that "every farmer had a lawyer, and on the least provocation would demand a showdown

in court." During the last decade disagreements have apparently been few and usually have been settled by the parties concerned. Occasionally in some difficult matter the disputing parties get the views of an eminent outsider. "As a general rule," related an informant, "we don't interfere in other people's problems unless asked, and sometimes not then. They're the ones to settle it. That doesn't mean that we don't have our ideas about it. We do, and we discuss it, but we don't interfere unless it concerns us." Very few disputes are now carried to court.

The community in many ways is much more a community now than it was 50 years ago. The village has become the center of the activities of the farmers, and the differences between the villagers and farm dwellers have declined. They meet together in the work and programs of the churches, the fraternal orders, and the school. The farmers' business relations in the village are on a much friendlier basis. There is general recognition that the farm and nonfarm groups are dependent on each other. In athletic competitions between the local high school and the neighboring high schools, particularly Harlan and Kirkman, the prestige of the community is felt to be at stake. The competition of trades and services in Harlan, which has developed in the last 40 years, is resented and the numbers of people who come into Irwin village on Wednesday and Saturday evenings are closely watched. Any increase or decrease is thought to be a measure of the success of the village in its competition for trade with other villages and towns. Irwin is praised and supported, whereas the disadvantages and failures of competing communities are emphasized.

The young, the old, and the middle-aged are agreed that Irwin is a fine place to live. Specific statements such as the following were made to the field worker: "I like to get away occasionally on a vacation, but I would never care to leave this community permanently"; "I am satisfied to remain here; I don't care to leave even for visits"; "I've lived in several communities and traveled in other parts of the country. I'd rather live here than in any place I know"; "Irwin's my home; I don't ever want to have to leave"; "This community is the center of my world. I could never be satisfied living any place else."

The community's most important attribute is "its friendly people." "not only are the people friendly, but they are honest, upright and law-abiding. They mind their own business, and as long as you mind yours, you get along well." The most common grievances are that "the weather has not been too favorable for agriculture the last few years," "the steep hills make it rather hard to farm," and "the beer halls in town are detrimental to the community's best interests"; but the "pleasant things in the community far outweigh the unpleasant things."

It is claimed that very few of the people who move into the community want to leave. "They are absorbed and before long come to praise the community as do the old residents." The high-school graduates who have migrated still maintain the ties to their old homes. Limited opportunity in the community is said to be the principal reason for their going. "With few exceptions they would have stayed had there been employment for them. They return as often as possible."

The village has the reputation in the community of being a good business center. Some Wednesday and Saturday evenings there are more people in Irwin than in Manilla, a neighboring town with a much larger population. Residents are inclined to boast about the community to visitors who come in and to people whom they meet outside.

An illustration of the kind of activity that is carried on as a result of the community's being conscious of itself is the promotion by some 65 merchants and farmers of an annual Irwin Colt Show. It has taken on many of the features of a county fair and now competes with the Shelby County Fair. A few in the community do not attend the county fair, and are convinced that their "local show is better anyway." It was estimated that 3,000 or 4,000 people thronged into the village to attend, in 1939. Leaders in this club are emphatic in crediting the success of the project to "the community consciousness of the people."

Despite friendly relations in this club, occasionally some farmers have felt that they were doing most of the work, whereas the businessmen were reaping the profits. The community benefited, it was admitted, but the farmers were doing more and getting less. Many farmers maintain, however, that "the village merchant is the farmer's best friend," and that associations of mutual advantage have lessened the social distance between the farmers and the villagers.

Villagers in the past, it is said, have been opposed to nonvillagers; the members of one of the three churches have been rather against the rest of the churches; the churched against the non-churched; the prohibitionists against the anti-prohibitionists. Antagonism and bitterness formerly characterized the relations of these groups, but have declined with the growing integration of the community. The feelings of Norwegians of having more in common with other Norwegians still persists; the same with Danes, Germans, Methodists, Lutherans, but they seem to feel that they have a great deal in common with the rest of the community. Social contacts pass over the boundaries of the groups.

The community does not monopolize nor even encompass all the face-to-face associations of its members, much less their secondary contacts. Township organizations cut through and across community boundaries and tend to pull people away from the community center in some activities. Other towns and the Council Bluffs-Omaha metropolitan center attract the people by their superior trade facilities. But Irwin community is a loose, more-or-less informal area of association because it is the area of the greatest number of close contacts and because it is the location of their homes, schools, churches, and visiting groups. It is thought of as a community--"their community."

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THE FARMER'S EXPANDING WORLD

AGRICULTURE IN THE FARMER'S LARGER WORLD

Since the founding of the village in 1880 the degree of self-sufficiency in the locality which has become the Irwin community has been gradually and consistently declining. The lack of timber or other durable building materials necessitated importations from the beginning of settlement, and the narrow crop possibilities encouraged the fairly specialized crop pattern.

With the coming of the railroad and the establishment of the village it was possible for the farmers to buy building supplies, fuel, flour, cloth, clothing, and other articles which previously had been produced at home, or which had been processed by local agencies from home-grown products. The farm products of the locality found ready markets and farm families began buying the goods and services available in the village to free themselves from what they considered unnecessary drudgery. Early settlers believed that the coming of the railroad would mean prosperity. There was no doubt in their minds about their capacity to produce more and cheaper corn, hogs, and cattle, than eastern farmers. To the end that they would be able to capitalize on their comparative advantages in production the settlers did everything they could to obtain railroad transportation. When they got it, they fought the railroad. This issue brought them into the Grange and the Alliance in great numbers in an organized attempt to protect their market position which had become a part of their general status.

During the 1870's and 1880's a large number of farmers had migrated to the newly-opened prairies. Agricultural production increased relatively faster than the demand for agricultural products. Infestations, especially of grasshoppers and army worms, in the early years, and drought in the early 1890's had made the position of local farmers difficult. Through the late 1890's and into the first decades of the new century, demand for farm products steadily increased. Conditioned by years of having had little the settler's struggle when the opportunity to have much became available, was characterized by hardness and drive that broke many men and women, physically and mentally. The race was between the weak and the strong, and only the strong could be rich.

Irwin farmers began to feel the effects of their improved market position about 1896. The drought of 1894 had driven them to revive some home industries which had been declining. "The years 1894 and 1895," one old farmer related, "were the hardest we've ever seen. Prices had been low, and we suffered from both drought and hail. We'd been accustomed to buying such things as clothes and some groceries, but had to stop because we didn't have any money. I had to work out to get money for us to live on." Farmers had geared their activities to the market, then both production and the market failed.

Beginning shortly after 1896 the relative position of cattle in the market with relation to corn and hogs improved. More efficient feeding methods and new and improved plant crops were being adopted. Cattle production became a highly profitable enterprise. A cattle boom in the community was underway and both corn and hogs advanced in price. Opportunities for high profit in agriculture were more evident than they had ever been before. Hesitation induced by drought and depression was soon forgotten. Crude pioneer houses and farm buildings were replaced by good dwellings and barns; deposits in the local bank increased. A second bank was organized in Irwin. Land prices climbed steadily; new conveniences and gadgets appeared in the houses. The farms became less and less self-sufficient. Thrift, industry, independence, initiative, and an excess of income over expenditures had always been cardinal virtues with the early settlers; now it was easy to practice these virtues.

Farms, by and large, became less and less self-sufficient between 1895 and 1920. The purchase of feed for cattle and hogs became a practice among some Irwin farmers, and the purchase of food for the farm tables became more and more common. Farmers learned to shift enterprises in keeping with market outlooks. When it appeared that it would be most profitable to feed corn to hogs and cattle, they did so, and thus marketed their corn "on foot." When corn prices were out of line with livestock prices, they sold the corn instead of feeding it to cattle. The probability of making profits became the principle by which the farmer governed his farming activities.

During the years of the first World War prices soared to record highs. A few farmers began to ask, "If it takes $1.75-corn and 17-cent hogs to pay for $350-an-acre land, what will happen if prices fall to the old levels?" The obvious conclusion was that they'd be wiped out. Some farmers, most of them with European backgrounds, decided they had expanded far enough and that they should consolidate their positions. This they did, and they are now the wealthier farmers of the community. For the most part, however, the older American, Danish, German, Norwegian, Irish, and English farmers, were all speculating in the market, and all were caught when the crash came.

In 1920 and 1921 prices started down and were soon followed by mortgage foreclosures in great numbers. Distressed farmers once more talked about self-sufficiency but could do little about it. Apparently, they did not believe that the solution of the farmers' problem was in their becoming more self-sufficient, but rather in some adjustment of market prices. All during the 1920's they sought a price-and-market answer to their problems through farm-relief legislation, debt moratoriums, and even market strikes.

During the depression and drought of the early 1930's some farmers were said to be actually in want of food as creditors and the drought took both major crops and garden produce. Greater emphasis came to be placed on producing at home the food that could be produced without interfering with farm operations. One farmer in describing the community's adjustment observed: "In good times we raise relatively less of our living at home and buy more. When we're hard up we're naturally more dependent on what we produce." These farm families did not easily give up the habits they had developed during years of prosperity. Some home-made articles had so completely disappeared that they never returned. The making of husking mittens at home had gone out about 15 years before. Home bread-making had become less common. As one woman said, "A few years ago, we never bought bread in town, and we still prefer home-baked bread. Yet I notice we have more and more a tendency to buy bread from the store."

Whether another period of high prices would again lead to another era of expansion, exploitation, and speculation in the community it is not possible to predict. In 1940 there was a decided reaction in the community against going into debt. The people say that memories of crisis and depression will be effective for a long time in keeping the use of credit within reasonable limits. At the same time they say, "We have raised our standard of living faster than we've learned how to pay for it, but the solution is not to return to a lower standard. We must learn how to pay for the one we've got, and the higher one we ought to have." Any solution that would destroy the family-sized farm or undermine the farmer's level of living is opposed, but attempting to produce goods at home to the point of interference with farm operations is "bad economy." "The Nation would not be better off if people depended less on things bought from the stores." "So far as possible, raise what you feed and feed what you raise, but buying livestock for fattening is an exception." Decreased hiring of labor and the decline of exchange labor over a long period are said by farmers to be "two indications that at least in some ways the farm is less dependent."

Great importance is attached to specialization and division of labor. "If a man's going to be a factory worker, let him be one completely, and so with the farmer. There should be no half-breed agricultural-industrial set-up." "Farmers should produce efficiently and the industrial workers should produce efficiently and products should be traded on a parity basis. In this way both farmers and industrial workers would have more." Not only should there be specialization along the broad lines of agriculture and industry, but there should also be specialization within these fields, they say. Farmers should produce those crops for which they have advantages in production, and should leave to other farmers the production of other crops. Some farmers expressed the opinion that Iowa farmers should be able to buy Idaho potatoes, California oranges, Texas grapefruit, and other such products, and should pay for them out of income from their corn-livestock production. They believe this situation can be attained through the operations of an improved financial system and the elimination of speculators and manipulators.

Farmers are about equally divided regarding the relative strength today as compared with 40 years ago of the old virtues, thrift, independence, honesty initiative, and industry. Those who have been creditors are convinced that there is a "larger group of less honest people" now than there once was. They are "less honest in that they try to avoid their obligations." The noncreditors lean slightly to the view that "these values are as evident in our relations today as ever." They are said by some to have never been sufficiently in evidence. The all-inclusive nature of commercial relations and the hard times in agriculture have produced "the larger group of less honest people," it is said.

The most evident effect that growth in agricultural commercialism has had on the value system of the people of the community is in making less evident the idea of personal blame for failure and personal inadequacy. Realization that the farmer has very little control over the market, and that a man "can go broke" with an excellent crop on his hands has lessened the stigma of failure. This idea appears to have carried over into other aspects of life. Personal responsibility has become relatively less, while the responsibility of other people and forces outside the individual, though not too closely understood, has become greater.

Although hard work has always been considered a virtue and to possess a "certain value in itself," this fact has had little effect on the progressive mechanization of

the farms and homes. The adoption of machinery and conveniences, it is universally believed, has made farm work and farm living more pleasant. It has brought the advantages of the towns and the cities to the farms. By the use of machinery, farmers have been enabled "to do a better job of farming in less time and with less effort." Against these advantages are the disadvantages of not being able to produce fuel on the farm, high costs, heavy depreciation, and the relatively rapid rate at which machinery becomes obsolete. However, services are said to far outweigh disservices

Tractors had come in rapidly during the 10 years preceding this study. Farmers with the old-type tractors used them for plowing and "belt power" in grinding, pumping, and corn-shelling. Small row-crop-type tractors, a development of recent years, are said to be "the best things that have been developed in farm machinery."

Generally speaking, if one of these farmers believes a machine to be an advantage, he will own one somehow. Conveniences for the house, however, can await the accumulation of extra funds. This differentiation in the types of expenditures has always been characteristic. Some believe it is breaking down and that farmers are as likely to go into debt for home conveniences as they are for farm machinery.

A few outstanding farmers, the harness dealer, and the veterinarian are the chief local opponents of power farming. They contend the average farmer cannot afford to use tractors because of the high cost of the tractor itself, its heavy depreciation, and the high cost of tractor fuel. They advocate as high a degree of self-containment as can be attained on individual farm units and believe that farmers should produce their own power in the form of horses and mules, and their own feed through a system of crop rotation. To their way of thinking, crops must be rotated, and in so doing the farmer can produce his feed and free himself from a relatively high expenditure. "Fuel bills" are said to be as great as "labor bills" used to be, and money is sent outside the community when they think it should be kept at home. Manufacturers of farm machinery are considered to be monopolistic and seeking to control farmers in ways not to the farmers' advantage.

To this barrage of objections, the advocates of power farming have an answer. In the first place they call attention to the heavy loss of horses in the community due to sleeping sickness. "A few years back," one farmer related, "I lost four horses in 2 years. It was a heavier loss than I could afford to take. All over the country the same thing was happening. I had to have power. Horse prices were high. The choice was between a tractor and more horses, and I chose the tractor." This incident is typical of the reaction against horses. The farmers who had horses and had not suffered loss were constantly fearful of what would happen if their horses should die. The purchase of tractors, it is argued, makes it possible to feed cattle the crops formerly consumed by horses and the return from cattle is greater than from horses

Another advantage of the tractor is that work can be done when it ought to be done, and in less time. One can do a better job of farming in that the time gained can be used to do other tasks that a farmer has never had time to do before. Fences and buildings, for instance, can be kept in better repair. The farm and home can be made more attractive Tractors supply the belt power to grind and pump. There is no longer any necessity of having several motors on the farm and - as important as any other reason, they think - farm work can be done more easily. A farmer doesn't have to go to bed so early in order to gain strength for the next day's work. He can be sufficiently alive to enjoy the newspaper, the radio, a game of cards, a movie, or a farmers' meeting

Most of the farmers are not quite sure what effect mechanization has had on their incomes. Since the widespread introduction of tractors, farmers have had a disadvantageous position in the market. Prices and earnings have been less than they were in the best years of the 1920's. Some farmers believe that costs have increased, but that their gross incomes have not increased. "If we had the market we used to have, and other conditions were as they were then, costs might even be less and income more. We wouldn't have to hire as much labor." Even so, "the enjoyments of farm living have increased regardless of income." One farmer said, "If the Government so sets the stage that the farmers can get good prices, we can have conveniences previously denied and leisure in which to enjoy them."

All farmers of the community (tractor-users and others) are highly in favor of mechanization generally. Two particular machines are not thought to be practicable - corn-pickers leave "the stalks so close to the ground that a slight snow will cover them up, and a lot of winter roughage will be lost for livestock. In addition, grain is wasted" For these reasons most farmers do not want corn-pickers, despite their attractiveness in doing away with a difficult hand job. Small combines are not used because "they leave the straw in the fields where it cannot be used" whereas livestock farmers, they emphasize, need straw. A few farmers do have combines and believe them to be "the coming things in the Middle West."

Few of these farmers have trucks but the services of truckers in the village are frequently used, to transport livestock to market and for hauling most farm-produce. They have driven out the old methods of cooperative hauling One farmer accounted for the change this way, "Years ago to haul hogs to market, I had to get the help of five of my neighbors. In 6 wagons we would carry 30 hogs. We went 5½ miles to the railroad stop in Irwin. I had to buy a meal for the men and myself. Generally it cost me about 50 cents apiece Those men ate a real meal, not a lunch. That's $3. To put the 6 teams in the livery barn cost $1.20. Because I had the men come and help me, I had to go and help them, which meant 5 days of work off the farm for myself and my team. The cash cost alone was $4.20. Today, I can hire a trucker to take 25 or 30 hogs to Harlan, more than twice as far, for only $2.50. He can get them there and be back in 2 hours. And I don't have to spend any time off the farm."

So long as a cheap, speedy trucking service is available, a large number of farmers will not buy trucks of their own. A few farmers hire their plowing done by tractor for somewhat the same reason that most farmers hire their hauling done. It was suggested by an informant that this practice is becoming more common because of the high cost of machinery and the relatively low price of agricultural produce.

All farmers recognize the tendency for power farming to do away with year-round labor on farms and to lead to the consolidation of farm units. These are points of contention between tractor and non-tractor users. The latter group points out the failure of families to obtain farms, and the passage of hired men as indicative of real and dangerous changes in agriculture. Power farmers counter with the idea that families displaced through combination of farms "are inefficient farmers." "Their loss to agriculture is not particularly important." "It is too bad that they are not efficient." They sympathize with the displaced, but say they can do nothing to change the situation. Farmers holding these ideas dislike even the possibility, however, that the family-sized farm should ever be replaced with corporate farming on a large scale. "Should this come," they say, "the more important values in agriculture would be lost - things we've lived for and hope to pass on to our children."

Because the increase in mechanization is said to have eliminated the year-round hired man, farmers said they had had difficulty in getting laborers when they needed them WPA and its high wages was blamed for the situation as it was in 1940. Were the "system such as would allow a man to take an occasional day's work without losing WPA status, the farmer would have little difficulty."

Pets are kept and treated well, but for the most part, farm animals are valued in terms of their economic worth. No longer do farm boys argue the relative merits of particular breeds of work horses; instead they talk of the various tractors and their respective advantages and disadvantages in relation to price.

The effects of mechanization on the functions of the village are said to have increased its importance as a center of farmers' activity. Automobiles have made it possible to go into the village more frequently. Blacksmiths and livery stables which formerly served the farmers have disappeared; in their place have come garages, filling stations, and bulk-oil stations. The village is said to be better looking now than it has been before.

As indication of the decline in differentiation between home and farm expenditures, several farm homes in the community are mentioned as being more mechanized than the farms on which they are located. Farmers express the opinion that if it were possible to have conveniences and machinery in their homes and on their farms without going into debt, they would have every device that would lighten the work and make living more enjoyable

Habits of thrift have been affected in that many farmers in the past overestimated their ability to pay for machinery, and some do now. Responding to the influence of fads in mechanization, they have bought machines on the installment plan and in some cases short crops or low prices have caused them to lose the machine and whatever amount they had paid This has been true in the case of automobiles, tractors, binders, and many other farm machines One old gentleman pointed out, however, that "some farmers bought top buggies when they couldn't afford them, and horses and other farm implements. The trouble isn't with the machine, but with the farmer who doesn't know how to manage his own affairs." But the constant display of a large line of attractive machines, highly advertised, which will lighten farm work, is a temptation that in time melts many farmers' resistance Payment on time is made to sound easy.

"Whether or not farmers work as hard today as they did years ago is not the question, informants point out. Businessmen, professional men, farmers, laborers, have all had their work lightened by mechanization." The farmers say their sons work as hard as they ought to, they get their work done on time Working harder would solve none of their problems Leisure and time for recreation have also come to be recognized as important. The daily routine on the farms in the community begins about 5 o'clock in the morning and ends about 7 o'clock at night. This is still "back-breaking as compared with the urban day." Thus farmers say that they work long hours but at lighter work and that this has come as a result of mechanization, not because farmers are becoming lazy

The impact of the Federal farm programs upon the independent and individualistic farmers of Irwin has been one of the most interesting developments in the community's history Traditionally, these farmers have been opposed to interference from

the outside Formal cooperative patterns, important in the pioneer period had been progressively breaking down. The independent man who worked hard on his own affairs who interfered with no one, and was not interfered with, was their ideal They believed that Government should forbid "the extortionate rate-making practices of railroads" and that what they consider the monopolistic tendencies and devious business practices of trusts corporations, holding companies, utilities, and the activities of speculators and manipulators should necessarily be curbed. But they did not believe that the Government should engage in business enterprise.

Decided change in opinions and attitudes became increasingly evident after 1920 Disadvantaged in the market and with their level of living being undermined, they demanded that something be done They appealed for farm relief. What form of relief they wanted was not too clear. Somehow the McNary-Haugen proposal didn t sound just right, selling abroad at a lower price was unfair to American consumers, they thought A slight easing of credit was appreciated. According to the best-informed farmers, the Federal Farm Board was thought by the majority in the community to be a good idea Its collapse was a real disappointment. They couldn't accept the radical Union and Holiday movements " Their sympathy was with the impassioned groups, but they refused to participate in their actions

The election of a new President of the United States, they thought, might bring a change in national policy, some farm relief might be forthcoming Selection of a fellow Iowan as Secretary of Agriculture was interpreted as a good sign He, at least knew something about the farm problem. Then a new farm program became law, which came to be accepted

They justify the idea of Government payments to farmers on the basis that Government has long given comparable help to all branches of industry Statements such as the following typify this opinion: "There is no particular reason why the Government owes the farmer any aid, except that aid has always been extended to industries when they needed it The farmer is entitled to the same treatment " "Agricultural Conservation payments," some went so far as to say, "are more sound than industrial grants," in that the farmer was conserving real resources – the land upon which so much depends

Adjustment of production caused divisions of opinion Typical of expressed attitudes is this statement of a one-time township committeeman "We don t like to cut down production Highly desirable, in their thinking, would be some system whereby both farmers and industrialists could produce at capacity and exchange on a parity basis As this committeeman put it, "We want a high standard of living Why shouldn t arrangements be made so we can go ahead and produce it."

The conservation of agricultural resources" is the most favored aspect of the agricultural program Hard pressed farmers have had to crop their land heavily in attempting to retain possession. Some conservation practices had been applied One farmer characterized the effort as an attempt to "tighten the loose soils " In an erosion survey, the soils of the community appeared in the category "severe sheet erosion with occasional gullies " Some farmers said they knew what heavy cropping was doing but they could do nothing about it. Those who did something about it and were apparently really conscious of the problem said the majority didn't care At any rate the emphasis placed on conservation is wholeheartedly approved now

Program cooperators are necessarily cutting down their acreage of soil-depleting crops, principally corn and small grains. The acreage of nondepleting crops - alfalfa, the clovers, pasture crops - are increasing. Farmers say that although the program has helped, it has not effectively eliminated erosion. Farming methods, it is said, must change, but it will take a long time to change them. Some of the farmers ask if the objective is "soil conservation" and they raise the question of why soil-building payments aren't larger in relation to the so-called adjustment payments.

Storage of surplus corn has made the problem of surpluses and their relation to price more understandable. This in turn has affected the thinking in relation to crop control. It was generally recognized that the ever-normal granary is a force in keeping corn prices at a fair level. The effect it would have in curbing price increases in years of crop failure is said to be a highly-desirable feature. Despite some foreboding, the farmers are of the opinion that the annual carry-over of corn should not be less than 20 percent or more than 30 percent. At that level, even with increased production due to hybrid corn, further acreage restrictions will not be great.

Credit assistance given to the farmers most in need is thought to be highly desirable. "In many cases," informants pointed out, in effect, "the beneficiaries of the Farm Security Administration have been good farmers whose failure was no fault of their own." As an equalizer of opportunity through credit extension, the Government is helping farmers to regain their own economic status, they say, but repayment of the loans should be demanded; money should not be given away. Acceptance of a loan from the Government, many farmers thought, gave the Government the right to investigate farming operations and practices. This was not cause for objection as long as the other fellow was to be investigated, but none confessed welcoming this kind of help. One FSA client who was denied money for obviously necessary dental work could not see the fairness in compelling him to buy a pressure cooker. He strongly approved of FSA but thought improvements could be made in the application of the act. Noteworthy was the favorable attitude of FSA clients in regard to the keeping of records. "Keeping records," it was said, "helped check unnecessary expenditures."

Very little is known in the community about crop insurance. Corn insurance generally was thought to be a good idea, especially if the premiums could be set at a reasonable level.

Few of these farmers know anything about the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation (now the Surplus Marketing Administration). Those who knew about the Food Stamp Plan of dispersing some surplus commodities were highly in favor of it. They believed that the plan, by keeping commodities in the legitimate channels of trade, reduced the cost of administration which was a decided advantage.

Farmers as a group were thought to be the underdog in economic competition, and it was believed if the economy is unbalanced by the superior economic power of industry, then parity should become the objective of all legislation, and of farm legislation in particular.

During the month of May 1940, only 32 cases received public assistance in Shelby County, as follows: direct relief, 10; WPA, 6; old age assistance, 14. In addition, 5 cases (3 of which received old-age assistance) were given food.

Previous to the depression, any relief work in Irwin community was largely informal. Foods were given to needy families by friends and neighbors. Members of the needy families were hired to do jobs that ordinarily would not have been done, or they were favored in the selection of employees for routine farm and village work. The people prided themselves on their independence and stability, but they believed it their duty to offer assistance whenever it was needed in the community. With the deepening of the depression, formal relief agencies were superimposed on the informal patterns. At first, the two were somewhat complementary in their effect, but as the formal pattern came to be accepted, the informal tended to give way. The sense of local responsibility declined and the relief problem was turned over to the Government. It was reasoned that the operation of forces over which the community had no control ushered in the problem and that the load was too heavy to be handled locally.

On the whole, these people are opposed to direct relief. Giving aid without requiring work in return is an infringement on the virtue of hard work, they think. Only the young, the old, and those unable to work should be supported outright; all others should work for their support. "If they are not made to work," an informant noted, "they get the idea that the world owes them a living."

A few support the WPA as it is, but the majority would welcome a series of changes. Often changes urged by the same person will be self-contradictory. Some contend that the WPA clients are men of good, hard-working families that have suffered reverses which they could in no way prevent, and are entitled to the help they are receiving. Very few believe WPA clients responsible for the plight in which they find themselves, but the majority express concern "at what's going on now" particularly that "they are losing their self-respect and they are too willing to remain on WPA." Fear is expressed that they are laying aside the old virtues.

One of the criticisms stated with most violence is that it had made labor practically unobtainable. Farmers can't understand why WPA workers shouldn't accept occasional employment on farms. When crops are "wasting in the field" or a farmer needs help to meet an emergency, then condemnation of WPA is bitter.

But after having severely criticized the WPA, most members of the community confess that it "probably does more good then it does harm." "Their activities should be supervised and they should be encouraged to learn something about the work they're doing." Some assistance should be given them in how to handle money and plan expenditures, it is said; they should be required to adopt better systems of household management and they should be allowed to accept the occasional jobs available on farms without losing their status. Some went so far as to declare, "If they refuse such jobs, they should be cut off WPA."

Old-age assistance is strongly approved by almost everyone. Elderly people are said to have given a half-century of work and service to society and are entitled to more dignified treatment than confinement in a home for the aged with the consequent brand of a pauper placed upon them. That some measure of security has been given is considered an important extension of Governmental activity.

Notwithstanding approval of recent relief measures, some people are worried about the effects of shifts in responsibility. It is pointed out that a needy person does not like to receive help directly from a neighbor, unless he can do something in return. At most, he will take as little help as is necessary. From the Government he demands more, and yet feels less obligated to return value for value received. A case was

mentioned in which one man who had always given freely refused to help a neighbor because relief is now a governmental function and by paying taxes he was doing his share. Farmers are of the opinion that declining personal relationships in the community, due to changes in handling of relief, will seriously affect neighborly relations.

Several students in the high school receive help from the National Youth Administration. "This kind of help," an informant remarked, "tends to equalize educational and work opportunities among young people. It is one of the best things the Government has done." This attitude is typical. The NYA program and the granting of old-age assistance are the least criticized of the newer social measures.

The activities of the Civilian Conservation Corps are quite generally commended. It is believed that they have done a good job of conservation, "and have helped boys to get on their feet." Some of the enrollees were saving their wages to go to college. "While farm and village boys have been helped," one farmer remarked, "the greatest good has come in getting boys off city streets and out into the open where they become more healthy and have learned something about the outdoors which they never knew before."

The Rural Electrification Administration program is another highly praised measure. Relatively few farms in the community had been served by a private power company. Although REA had not yet greatly increased the number of electrified farms in this particular community, the great increase in the number of farms electrified in the State had given the farmer hope that he could soon become a member of an electric service cooperative, and have all the advantages of electrification. "Farmers need electricity," it was said, "and the Government should help them get it. They won't get it any other way - it costs too much."

THE IRWIN COMMUNITY IN THE LARGER SOCIETY

"It is regrettable," according to one farmer, "that we must lose some of the things that seem to have been so enjoyable in our former society. But regrettable or not, we must move forward." Said another, "We may be going a little too fast. We may have to slow down and get things balanced, but when we do we are going on to the greatest period of prosperity and advancement - social, scientific, and financial - that the world has ever seen." Despite the pessimism of a rather large group regarding the future of agriculture, the general outlook as to the shape of things to come was tinged with optimism in 1940. Reference was often made to many of the improvements in agriculture - farm work made easier, and the conveniences of farm living increased. The farmers believed that many of the disadvantages they had experienced in the past are no longer necessary and that they now had, in addition to the real values of rural living most of the advantages of urban living. Apparently there is considerable desire not to lose all the old ways of life, but little fear that they will. "After all, have things changed so much?" asked a farmer. "Are not the virtues of today the same as those of yesterday? Do we not have the same mountains to climb and the same rivers to cross? Are not hard work and honesty as necessary now as ever?" He believed they were and that they were just as much in evidence today as in any of the 60 years through which he had lived. These things that change little" were said to be the core around which the expanded world revolves just as they were the center of the old world. "Stability, quiet, and serenity will come to us even in the fast-moving world, if we organize our living in terms of modern methods of transportation, communication and business operations, including farming."

City life was thought to have few attractions. Noise, slowness of travel in traffic, crowded living conditions, unfriendliness of the people, and less frequent contacts with nature were indicated as "chief" disadvantages. The city is not necessarily evil, "but there are more people in cities who will take unfair advantages if they get the chance." Urban young people are thought to be "less moral" than rural young people, urban families thought to be less united than rural families, and not so efficient as child-training institutions as rural families. Formal educational opportunities in cities are, however, admittedly better.

It was believed that during the last half-century there had been a great decline in village-country differences and, to a somewhat lesser degree, in rural-urban differences. However, urban people were characterized as believing themselves superior to rural people, "principally because they live in bigger places and think they get more out of life." Farm people in Irwin do not like cities; they do not like "to mingle in large crowds where they don't know anyone," and they prefer to trade in stores where they are known. They do not feel inferior to city dwellers, but some of them do feel uncomfortable in their presence." Two elderly farmers expressed the opinion that as rural people have become more like urban people, they have tended more and more to resent the remaining differences and are more concerned about what other people think.

Little emphasis is placed on dress in contrast to that of urban centers, but on particular occasions the manner, sophistication, and dress of the young people compare favorably with the habits of urban young people. The increasing contacts with the village, with Harlan, and with other towns and metropolitan centers make it necessary for farm people to dress more in conformity with the urban people and so are increasing the expenditures for clothing. On casual trips into the village farmers come in their work clothes, but they "dress up" for the Wednesday and Saturday evening excursions.

Newspapers are widely circulated in the community. The principal dailies are the *Des Moines Register*, the *Des Moines Tribune*, the *Omaha World Herald*, and the *Council Bluffs Non Pareil*. Although Irwin is a satellite of Omaha and Council Bluffs, its people generally prefer Des Moines papers in that they have a better coverage of Iowa State news. "As long as we're part of Iowa," one farmer comments, "we ought to take our Iowa paper." Two county weeklies, the *Harlan Tribune* and the *Shelby County News Advertiser*, dispense local news. In each issue a column is devoted to news of Irwin and vicinity and some community news appears in the columns of a mimeographed high-school paper. The usual practice is for a farm family to subscribe to both a county and a metropolitan newspaper. News dispensing by newspapers is thought to be of less importance now that the radio gives news reports. Nevertheless, "the newspaper is said to be an important agency in forming local opinion," and some farmers are careful readers of the editorial pages. In discussions, they spread the ideas expressed by editors and commentators. Pictures of persons and events, advertising, educational articles, stories, accounts of sporting events, and the comic strips are said to be the most attractive features of newspapers.

The county papers are characterized by vigorous and progressive editorial policies. They interpret general policies in terms of their effects in the county. They do a good job of local news coverage, and their agricultural pages are a decided help in advertising the farm programs and progressive farm practices. Farmers believe they cannot do without a newspaper. "You've got to have a paper to keep abreast of new developments, and to know what's going on in the world. Radio news is good, but it is not enough. The paper on the whole is just as important as it ever was."

The farm journals most widely circulated in Irwin are *Wallace's Farmer* and *Iowa Homestead* and *Successful Farming*. These journals are used by the farmers in keeping in touch with experimentation and new developments in agriculture. Advertisements are followed to note the changes in farm machinery. Articles with respect to probable price trends are carefully read. The farmers say that the farm journals are an important opinion-forming agency. Articles published in them are quoted and are considered authoritative. The better-informed farmers are regular readers and use the information gathered in their reading to convince others of the rightness of their views. However, farm journals are said to be deficient in somewhat the same way as farmers' bulletins in inducing farmers to adopt improved techniques and practices. "To convince a farmer that a farm practice is desirable you've got to do more than write about it," is a typical comment. "He s got to see it demonstrated and understand the basis of its superiority in relation to old and tried practices. Even then he may not change his methods." Nevertheless, over a long period of time the farm journals are said to have been the means by which several improved practices came to be used. "A farmer," it is said, "should subscribe to some farm paper dealing with the crops he raises."

The circulation of other periodicals in the community is limited. Among those most prevalent are *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *The American Magazine*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Readers' Digest*, *Life* and *Look*. Some church papers are circulated. Recently such magazines as *Life* and *Look* have become popular because of their pictorial presentation of news and features. "This saves time and adds interest." Advertisements are followed particularly by girls and women "to keep up with new developments."

The circulation of periodicals of this kind is greater in the village than among the farm people. Villagers use them in their leisure time. Some farm people say they already have more material than they can read, and that "the cost, even though it isn't very much, can just as well be saved or spent for something more useful." The cheap western, detective, and fantasy story sheets displayed at the drug store are not widely read. No one maintains that they are good reading; they are used to fill idle hours because they are available, easy to read, and the stories have a measure of excitement.

A library in the village is maintained by a women's library club. Selecting books has been a particular problem; some members objected to circulating "Gone With the Wind," "The Grapes of Wrath," and "The Children of God." One club member exclaimed that she saw "no reason for the recent deluge of sensational books; they aren't fit reading for anyone," and several believed that their circulation would endanger the existence of the library project.

State and Federal bulletins are circulated in the community in relation to specific problems. During the epidemic of sleeping sickness in horses, bulletins on how to prevent the disease and how to care for infected animals were widely read. If some other problem arises such as the control of noxious weeds, bulletins are obtained on the subject. The farmers have come to think of bulletins as one of the immediately available sources of information. They are valued and they are thought to be an important governmental service. However, some farmers prefer that the county agent explain the material that is contained in them. It is frequently suggested that demonstrations should supplement the bulletins and show exactly how the suggestions can be applied. Were this done, the farmer would be more confident in his own application of new and relatively new procedures. Farmers point out that this seems to be the tendency, and they believe the bulletins supplemented by more adequate demonstration are becoming an increasingly important service.

Because of automobiles, the area in which the farmer is acquainted and in which he does some trading and visiting is expanding. This has tied the community to Onaha, in which contacts have become relatively frequent. As far as time is concerned, Irwin is now closer to Onaha, 60 miles away, than it was formerly to Harlan at a distance of only 14 miles. "We used to take a whole day just to go to Harlan when we had to use the horses and wagon," a farmer commented, "Now we seldom start until afternoon to go to Onaha or Council Bluffs."

Not only are farmers going out of the community, but other farmers and nonfarmers are coming in, and this again stimulates understanding and cultural exchange An elderly farmer with a philosophic bent remembered that "Farmers in the community have been afraid of people and things they don't know. Now, we are coming to know more and be afraid less." Another farmer stated, however, "We have become more widely acquainted, but not better acquainted. With the automobile we travel greater distances and are acquainted with more people, but we know our neighbors less intimately." He pointed out that visiting with people outside the community has resulted in "relatively less exchange of advice and opinion on problems confronting neighboring farmers."

Automobiles were not so useful as they might be because the roads are often impassable. "You just can't drive a car through the kind of mud we have around here." "Farm-to-market-road" progress was strongly approved. Some farmers believed Federal aid should be extended in improving the more important rural roads, especially if they are in any sense arterial. They looked forward to the time when the community would have a network of hard-surfaced roads.

The demand for labor has become primarily a seasonal affair as a result of the introduction of machinery. Farm labor was completely unorganized in 1940 and depended for a fair wage on personal contact and individual bargaining with the farmers who employ laborers. There had never been a general farm meeting to discuss hiring problems. The nearest approach to it was the meeting of threshing rings each fall Usually the wage was determined within the ring by its members. The wage was, of course, somewhat influenced by what was known to have been offered in other rings, but the issue of collective bargaining had never arisen and the farmers of the community had never had any experience with labor unions. Their conception of employer employee relationships was based on their own face-to-face contacts with their employees They preferred the American Federation of Labor rather than the Congress of Industrial Organizations because "it is conservative." One elderly man commented, "We fear things that we don't know. We know little about labor. We've heard a great deal, most of which is unfavorable As we come to know more we become sympathetic. We've already become much more sympathetic."

Despite some distrust, the farmers recognize the importance of laborers as consumers, but believe industrial prices rise more sharply than farm prices when higher wages are paid laborers. The farmer, they think, gains by wage increases and then loses more than he gains, owing to increased industrial prices. The decade of the 1920's is referred to as a period of industrial prosperity and high wages, while the farmers were in continual depression. They think, "Employment of idle industrial labor would help, but would not solve the farm problem."

Opinion regarding foreign trade - often based on misconception or error - was summarized by a farmer in this way: "We ought to sell abroad any surpluses that we

can't use, and we ought to buy abroad things that we don't produce, but we ought not to let competing products destroy the American farmer's best market." Whether or not trade agreements have helped the farmer, there was considerable question. "If they have enabled foreigners to buy American goods, that is certainly a help. But it seems that we've let in beef from Canada, and beef and corn from Argentina; and this has helped to keep the prices down." Said another, "It's a crime that corned beef from Argentina is sold right in Irwin. Allowing competing products to come in is harmful." Another said, "It doesn't seem to me that we can sell much abroad anyway, the way things are." Trade with South America is welcomed "as long as we get coffee, spices, nuts, fruits and other things we don't raise, but other products should not be allowed to come in." Agreements with South American countries which would facilitate exchange of American industrial goods for their general run of agricultural goods are condemned. If trade with South American countries is contingent upon our accepting competing products, "We ought not to trade with them." (This was in 1940.)

Basically the farmers of the community had an unshakable faith in "protection." It is pointed out that "the years of the farmers' greatest prosperity were in the years of high tariff and the World War." Regaining markets is not worth while if it means sharing the American market, they think. The American farmer is said to have some advantage in producing beef and corn; other countries produce products, some of which we now import and others that we might import, in which they have an advantage. Exchange of goods on the basis of comparative advantage can be accomplished under protection. "That's the kind of trade we should have," said one farmer, "and not the kind in which we trade agricultural machinery for corn and beef and good will."

People in the community were apathetic about the war in Europe until the beginning of the Russian campaign in Finland. Interest really flamed with the news of the German invasion of Scandinavia. Residents of Danish, Norwegian, German, and English descent were particularly affected. Concern was expressed for relatives in the warring countries. In Danish and Norwegian groups women wept and men found it hard to restrain themselves. The idea of sending all aid short of war to the allies was received with great favor. There was resentment against a few individuals of German parentage. Armed participation was thought unwise in that we were unprepared. Things were happening so fast that before we could be prepared, they said, the conflict would probably be over.

The defense program was vigorously approved. Remarks such as these are typical: "The United States should become so strong that no Nation will dare attack us." "We've got to have an army and a navy big enough to defeat any possible enemy or enemies." "Certainly the defense program is a good thing. We've got to arm ourselves for our own protection. We should never have destroyed the arms we had at the end of the World War." "We've got to have a big navy to keep us out of war. If we're adequately prepared no one will bother us."

Some could not understand, however, "why we need a big army." After all, some said, it's the navy that has to fight off attackers. "They're our first line of defense." It was suggested that "getting a big army is the first step in getting into another European war."

Traditionally the community votes as does the State. In July 1940 some of the "issues" of the National campaign were being widely discussed. That some desirable reforms had been initiated was admitted. "But the reforms have cost farmers more than

they should have." "The national debt is a threat that the Government may become insolvent." "Governmental bureaucracy has tremendously increased," an old-timer said, "and none of the real problems has been solved. The agricultural program is only a stop-gap. Unemployment is widespread, the budget is unbalanced, and people have been supported in idleness." Violation of the third-term custom was thought to be dangerous. If the other party were elected, it was suggested, the things that are good would be continued. The farm program would not be changed until "a better one is found." Some wanted a "businessman who knows something about administrative efficiency."

Those of his party in the community have great faith in the President. He has done "as much as he could under the circumstances." "He has fought Wall Street successfully. Although major problems haven't been solved, his reforms have made for greater security. The farmers couldn't get along without the agricultural program. Setting of allotments would destroy the whole thing." The opposing party didn't have a program to meet any of the problems facing the country," they contended. The President should be kept in power to complete the program he has under way."

The whole community is fairly stable psychologically. The attitudes of farm people toward "radicalism" are in evidence in their discussions of the Farm Holiday movement in western Iowa during the early years of the depression. They sympathized with its objectives and believed that "something should have been done to prevent farm sales and foreclosures." But the disorder which accompanied the movement was condemned, and the movement as a whole was disapproved. They somewhat exonerated the farmers in the movement because they believed that outsiders--"communists, labor organizers, and other such radicals"--came in and stirred up the difficulty.

Generalizing from their experience, the better-informed farmers pointed out that "widespread injustices may at times be permitted and supported by law. Property rights may be unduly stressed as against human rights. People have a legitimate right to protest, and to suggest changes that may be radical, but they have no right to openly violate the law and flaunt established authority. But their protests should be so vigorous and pointed that legislative relief will be given."

Of the superiority of the democratic system farmers in the community are convinced. It is said to be "the only type of political rule that guarantees higher human and spiritual values. Fascism, communism, and socialism are opposed as foreign doctrines that have no place in America." "Open advocacy of the overthrow of the Government should be severely dealt with," a farmer declared. "It seems that some people in this country have got too much freedom." "If we adopted a foreign system," another said, fundamental human rights would be sacrificed and nothing would be gained to compensate for that loss."

The people in the community don't like to see the movements they favor become unpopular through a resort to violence. But they believe in change, have always experienced it, expect it to continue, and are more likely to call it progress than to condemn it.

INTEGRATION AND DISINTEGRATION IN COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL LIFE

Irwin community has no unique bonds - ethnic, religious, or historic - which bind its members into a clearly-recognized in-group. Members of the community do not think of themselves as different from persons in adjoining community, different from other Iowans, or even different from other persons in the Corn Belt. But they are aware of, and generally live by, the fact that they are members of Irwin community and not members of any one of the half-dozen adjacent and bounding communities. Their community is an aggregate of about 250 families whose patterns of visiting, institutional participation, and trading are both traditional and practicable.

The boundaries of the community are not marked by topographical features and a stranger could drive into the community, talk casually to farm families along the road, and pass on, without seeing the community itself or knowing of its existence. The houses and other farm buildings are like those seen along the road for many miles before one enters or after one leaves Irwin community. Farm men, women, and children are doing the same things observed all through the Corn Belt; the churches and schools are typically midwestern; and no peculiar local dialect or inflection, much less any strange language, is found among the people.

According to his mood or esthetic bent, a visitor might either be depressed with the terrible sameness of the countryside and small towns or be stimulated by the sweep of the vast lush crops, the thousands of fat, sleek farm animals, the ordered lay-out of farms, and the highly mechanized farm operations. Under the spell of either impression, he would be aware of the fact that everything he saw, along the road or in the small towns, was tuned to the dominant motif of farming, and he would thereby have discovered the most powerful integrative force operating in the individual and community life of the people who live on the farms and in the towns.

Irwin community - the village and farms - is integrated by the occupation and enterprise of, and the thinking about, farming. Prices of corn and livestock, the yields, and the weather are dominant topics of conversation because they are important to merchants, bankers, lawyers, physicians, and even teachers, ministers, barbers, beauty-parlor operators, theater operators, and every other occupation and profession in the locality. Psychologically, the community is modally-integrated. It is also socially integrated. Townspeople and farmers use, support, and are loyal to a fairly adequate gamut of social institutions and agencies - schools, churches, stores, picture shows, the Farm Bureau, celebrations, athletic teams, community fairs. No member confines his complete time or attention to things or events in the local community, but none is disloyal to them and each participates in common community prides and prejudices. The community evolved out of its own natural history and is sustained by its day-by-day mode of life.

The brief picture of Irwin community presented in Chapter I and the more detailed history of its evolution given in Chapter II describe the processes by which community integration and stability have been accomplished.

During early settlement, people came into Shelby County from various States and a number of foreign countries and tended to settle in ethnic and religious groups or in groups which had migrated in clusters of families, these latter never comprising all the new settlers of any given locality. Gradually two processes changed this structure and these original patterns of association into those which now characterize the community. One was the process of dilution of the early groups by the constant inflow of new settlers, and the other was the impact of common necessities and the growth of common practices. No group held a monopoly of the land in any locality, and newcomers moved in without restraint. In keeping with pioneer customs, they were accepted immediately as neighbors and the dilution of early religious, ethnic, and other groupings began. With slight variations everyone found it necessary to make a living in practically the same way as others. Similar, and even cooperative, practices became the common denominators of life for all settlers. They changed from a grazing culture to wheat culture and from wheat culture to corn-livestock culture in unison as a co-adaptation to a common ecological base and an evolving transportation and market situation.

With slight individual variations, all farm families of the locality passed through the economic and social cycles of expansion, exploitation of rich natural resources, speculation in land and livestock, depression and boom. They found common enemies in "high freight rates, monopolies, and Wall Street," and rallied to or were sympathetic with the Grange, Alliance, Farm Bureau, and the Farm Holiday Association as these organizations fought their common "enemies."

The townspeople made common cause with them after a brief period of farm-village belligerency. Early marked differences and early social groupings were eliminated in the melting pot of similar tasks, neighborhood cooperation in some of these tasks, common economic necessities and purposes. To these were added the cooperative efforts of establishing schools, roads, and churches, and the development of a trade center which would serve as a connecting link between them and the outside world.

The fact that early settlers brought no pronounced bodies of doctrine with them to the locality, that most of them, even the Danes and the Germans, came from similar type-farming areas, and that it was obvious to every family that its necessities and tasks were similar to those of all others in the locality helped to break down early language, nationality, and political boundaries and gradually to fuse all the people into something approaching a common culture.

Irwin community is a social entity in the midst of influences that might at first seem to be disintegrative. The population of Irwin community was smaller in 1940 than in 1900, as was the population of Shelby County and the migration out of the county, especially of older youth, continues In 1940, the community had been settled less than 80 years and in some ways had been changing all during its history The children and grandchildren of early settlers constitute a small percentage of the population, and a fairly rapid turn-over in farm occupancy is still in process. The rapidity with which this part of Iowa was occupied by white settlers and converted into substantial farming communities is not unlike the general dynamic situation which has prevailed in Irwin community all during its life. Tenancy has increased steadily and with acceleration decade after decade, and relatively few farms in the community are owned and operated by persons who acquired them by inheritance. Fluctuations in economic conditions have subjected the farming to booms and depressions which occurred

almost in rhythmic cycles, and speculation in land, cattle feeding, and fancy breeding have at times been rampant. Modes of transportation and communication have changed as rapidly as in any farming locality of the Nation except in the most highly industrialized sections near metropolitan centers. And yet Irwin has a settled and stable culture and is an integrated community.

A well-established type and system of farming evolved very quickly after settlement, and has always been so well adjusted ecologically and economically that it has remained the same under the impact of increasing tenancy, transfers in occupancy, and even severe depressions. The type of farming stabilizes the culture in spite of the changes under which it operates. Farms which have changed operators several times during a decade remain corn-livestock farms. Mechanization has done nothing to alter the type of farming, and high and low prices have caused only slight variations in established systems of crop rotation or in the percentage of grain fed to livestock or sold for cash. The seasons and the farm practices dictate the day-by-day, month-by-month, and year-by-year activities of all members of the community, nonfarmers as well as farmers. Farm work, marketing of farm products, prices, weather conditions, the normality or abnormality of the seasons and their influence on the annual yield and financial outlook, so dominate the thinking and purpose of everyone that it is impossible to push the attention of the community off center to any appreciable extent.

The remarkable uniformity of ecological factors probably has been the most stabilizing influence in a situation which has been otherwise subjected to great change. Not a farm in the community is located on poor land, and the fact that everyone is engaged in the same kind of farming makes excessive rainfall or drought, severe winters or late springs equally disadvantageous and the dominant rhythms of life are the same for all. This is automatically true of the annual and seasonal rhythms and has come to be true of the weekly and daily rhythms. Everyone starts spring field work as soon as frost is out of the ground; plants, plows, and husks corn during the same periods; makes hay, cuts oats, does fall plowing, hauls manure, at about the same time. Threshing requires group cooperation and is therefore a common task. Even milking and feeding are done at about the same hours on all farms because the times for getting up and going to bed, which follow the seasons and the work necessities, are about the same for all families.

Because of the dominance of farm work, buttressed both by systematic practice and ideological criteria, most of the cultural life of the community is conditioned by, if not tuned to, the cycles and rhythms of the type of farming that prevails. The school vacation comes during the heavy work months of late spring and summer. Community and county fairs are staged during the relatively slack work month of August, and church revival meetings are held in August or during the winter. The Chautauqua, 20 or 30 years ago, was staged in August, and the old-fashioned "Lyceum," a generation earlier, came during the winter. Spelling bees and county literary and debating societies in times past were held only during the winter. The importance of such days of celebration as "Decoration Day" and the Fourth of July has gradually declined partly because they come during the period of heavy and urgent farm work.

Standards of success and failure in farming also constitute a common denominator that makes for cultural integration. Yields, stints of work, profitable production, care and condition of livestock, upkeep, repair and neatness of farm buildings and fences, willingness to contribute a full share of work or more in threshing rings or

gangs, promptness in paying bills, and good neighborliness in trading tools and implements, are as important as helping in times of sickness and other emergencies There are no class lines in these things Tenants and owners, newcomers and old settlers, elders and youth, are all measured by these standards and are generally willing to live and be measured by them. Individual and community prides and prejudices follow the same sanctions and taboos.

Yet the community is subject to change and is responsive to extra-community influences. It is by no means local custom- or tradition-bound. Families are used to losing old neighbors and acquiring new ones Children reared together find themselves widely separated in adulthood, some of them living in distant places and practicing professions and occupations other than farming. But the community persists through all these changes and keeps its general mode of life and geographic entity.

Occupancies of farms change, but the type of farming remains the same. The craze of pedigreed, even fancy, livestock breeding has swept the community and left bankruptcies in its wake, but livestock farming remains. Tenancy has increased to a disturbing extent, but the standards of good farming are the same for tenants as for owners. Hard work, thrift, and good management are extolled, and yet the families and the community are willing that young people who don't like farming shall seek opportunity elsewhere and are proud of them when they "make good." All of these things are taken as a matter of course and do not destroy the modal way of life for those who remain.

Mechanization and commercialization of farm production have come in an evolutionary and not in a revolutionary way. The necessitous work routines of previous decades have gradually changed, and isolation has been dispelled. Thus time for trips to places outside the community and vehicles to make them are now usual, but the penetration of the outside world has not destroyed old community patterns or loyalties Township governmental functions have diminished, consolidated schools have been built, and farm families are members of the county and State Farm Bureau, but they also cherish their old localisms.

Irwin community is a living reality. Everything that comes to the community or to its families or individuals filters in through channels that are common to all the members. Thus no one is set apart from others and there is no cause for disintegration of old cohesions. New stimuli and new contacts have been added, but more time is available to respond to them, and there is nothing inherent in these activities to sunder old local relationships. The similarity of farm work, farm and family problems and processes, and the uniformity with which so-called outside influences have affected all members have served to bring the community through one evolutionary transition after another without destroying its integrity.

The multiplying of new influences has meant a greater diversity of behavior on the part of individuals living here But community consciousness and sanction of this diversity have expanded with its expanding universe, and individuals are not therefore frustrated by community taboos There is no evidence of personality instability or general conflict between the younger and older generations, between those members of families who leave the community and those who remain, or between old settlers and newcomers. There are some tendencies of extended families and other kinship groups to exchange visits more frequently among themselves than with others. and some of the

nationality groups, the Scandinavians for example, are much more likely to attend the churches that at one time were somewhat segregated because their services were conducted in a foreign language. But social contacts, even marriage, disregard all these lines.

Primary and secondary group relationships exist side by side, intermingle, and operate in a functional fashion that disturbs no one. A family that makes more than the average number of trips outside the community does not mingle less freely or loyally in local neighborhood affairs, although it may contribute slightly less to the support of local institutions and agencies than do those families who more nearly confine themselves to local contacts.

Irwin has been a community from the time of early settlement. It is still a community. Its membership and its way of working and living are constantly changing. The life of the outside world today is much more a part of its life than in the past but this does not tend, to any appreciable extent, to disintegrate the life of the community nor destroy its stability. The integrative forces which are functional in the lives of all the people give little evidence of weakening.

The people of Irwin community do not feel that they are living in a dual world - their community and the outside world - because the outside world comes to them, for the most part, through the very instruments they use to enhance life within the community. It brings them things and interests which their predecessors did not have, but it robs them of few if any of the basic local things by which and for which they work and live.

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