

ANALYSIS OF POPULATION FLUCTUATIONS IN WESTMORELAND,
LOUISVILLE, AND WAMEGO, KANSAS

by

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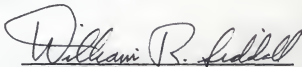
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

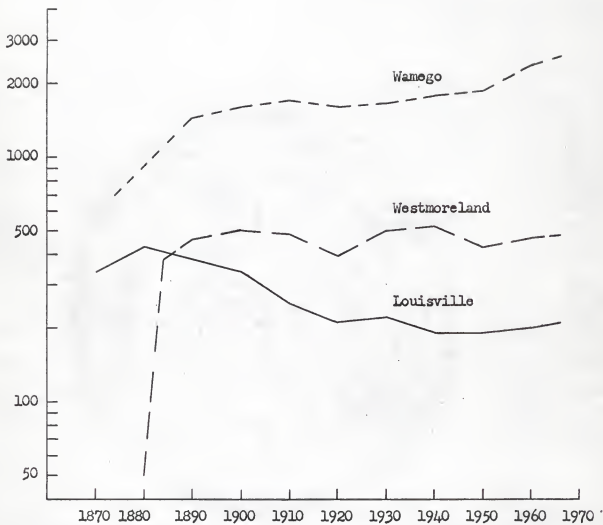
If geographers are concerned with man, his way of life, and spatial patterns, then certainly they must be interested in the small, rural communities as well as Gottmann's "Megalopolis."¹ In 1960, more than thirty percent of the population in the United States lived in rural areas or small towns of less than 2500 inhabitants.² With such a large population living in the rural areas, it is of concern to geographers to study the trends of growth and decline of this segment of the population.

This thesis is concerned with three of these small, rural communities. The cities of Westmoreland, Louisville, and Wamego, all of which are located in Pottawatomie County, in Northeastern Kansas, will serve as case studies in an effort to determine what factors have influenced the population growth or decline in these communities. This study will focus on the changes in the number of persons living in these communities and explain what has caused these changes. (See Figure 1.)

¹Gottmann, Jean, Megalopolis; the Urbanized Northeast Seaboard of the United States, Twentieth Century Fund, (New York: 1961), 810 pp.

²U. S. Bureau of the Census, Eighteenth Census of the United States: 1960. Population, Vol. 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 1-28.

FIGURE 1



POPULATION TRENDS BY DECADES

Source: Biennial Reports, Kansas Board of Agriculture.

The population growth or decline of a community is related to the economic inter-dependance of the community with other areas. The changing of these spatial linkages through-out time can help to explain the population changes within the community.

There are several spatial linkages present in these three communities that are of primary importance. The first factor that needs consideration is that of the central place market town. The importance of a town as a market place will vary through time and can greatly influence the population living in a community. Certain restrictions must be placed on the theory that if a population decline is witnessed within the trade area of a community, then this will cause economic hardships and abandonment of certain services within the community. This theory would be true for those businesses that were oriented towards serving a large number of customers. It would be less true for a business that was land oriented, e.g. the sale of fertilizer, because the area involved does not necessarily change.

The economic importance of a community is also related to the major transportation facilities servicing the town. The importance of a railroad in town is not static. The importance of the town as a shipping point changes through time because of changing transportation technology. The changing from one type of transportation facility to some other type of transportation facility may greatly influence

the central place function of a community. This influence may have a positive or negative effect on the population living in the community.

The accessibility of a community to larger cities may be another factor that could influence population growth. Frequently these small communities serve as places of residence for persons who work in nearby towns. Certainly there is no significant exodus from Manhattan, or the other larger surrounding cities, to these smaller communities, but the proximity of Manhattan may influence a person's decision to remain in one of the three towns.

A fourth factor that may influence population growth is the changing political importance of a community. Westmoreland is the county seat of Pottawatomie County and has political ties with the entire county. In regard to this problem, it will be important to determine the number employed by this function and other related activities.

The number of retired persons living in a town is the final factor that needs consideration. This group of people are frequently looked upon as non-productive elements of society, but for the purposes of this study they represent an important element in the economic base of any community. They bring money into the community from outside sources and spend it locally.

A survey of works pertaining to urban geography reveals an emphasis on four major themes. These themes are: the

morphology of cities, the city and its region, the spacing of towns, and the functional classification of towns. This thesis is partially concerned with the latter three when they relate to the explanation of why the numbers of persons living in Westmoreland, Louisville, and Wamego have changed throughout time.

CHAPTER II

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITIES

Traders

In 1848 the United States Government made a settlement with the Pottawatomie Indian Tribe in Iowa that required these Indians to relocate in a new area. Prior to this agreement, they had been settled near Souix City, Iowa, but the designated new location was in Kansas. The site of the new reservation was located east of what is now known as Louisville, and encompassed a thirty square mile tract of land. Associated with this Indian tribe were several government employees with varying administrative as well as service functions. These men were relocated in conjunction with the resettlement of the Indians.

One of these employees was Robert Wilson, a blacksmith, who established his shop adjacent to Rock Creek at the present site of Louisville. His main function was to service the blacksmith needs of the Indians but he quickly discovered that trading with these people was very profitable. During this period, the government paid the Indians an allotment which made their patronage highly desirable. Wilson, however, did not have an exclusive market for his goods. Other traders were located at the city of St. Mary's, southeast of the reservation, where the allotments were distributed to the Indians.

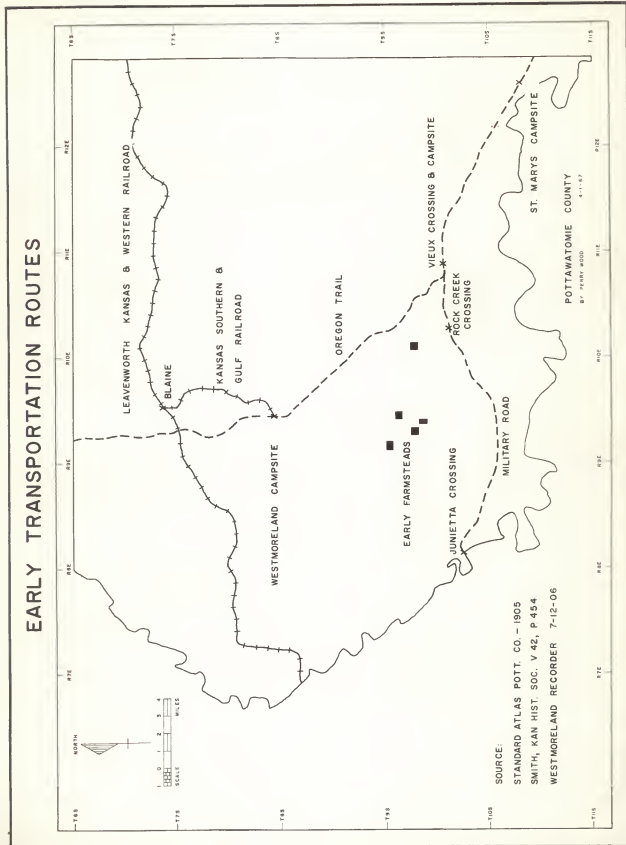
Trails

Shortly after the relocation of the Indians, there was an important event that stimulated Wilson's trade and blacksmith business. The discovery of gold in California and later in Colorado attracted adventurous men to the West. The lands of Kansas constituted a barrier of distance for these men in their attempts to reach the gold fields. The Oregon Trail, one of the important routes west, traversed Pottawatomie County and was located near Wilson's establishment. He was in a position to service the needs of these early travelers. (See Figure 2.)

There were two other important sites in Pottawatomie County that were situated on the Oregon Trail. These consisted of a fording point across the Vermillion River and a campsite at the present location of Westmoreland. The ford (later a toll bridge was constructed) was operated by a Frenchman named Louis Vieux, ascribed chief of the Pottawatomie Indians. Vieux charged the travelers one dollar per wagon for using his facilities. Certain accounts claim that he collected as much as three hundred dollars revenue per day in the early 1850's.³ This location also served as a camping ground which enabled Vieux to engage in trading with the travelers.

³Smith, William E., "The Oregon Trail Through Pottawatomie County," Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society, Vol. 42, (1926-1928) p. 454.

FIGURE 2



The significance of the other site mentioned was related to its situation with respect to the Vieux Crossing. The Westmoreland campsite was a day journey, twenty-four miles, from the Vermillion River and the springs in and about the camp grounds provided an ample water supply for the travelers. A blacksmith shop was also established at this location providing services for the travelers.

It is difficult to determine the volume and value of the transactions that transpired between the travelers and these early businessmen. The proximity of this area to the "jump off" point at Westport (Kansas City) would preclude the necessity for any large scale outfitting of supplies since, in all eventuality, the travelers would have an adequate supply of most provisions. There were, however, certain "necessities," such as whiskey and tobacco, that would be in demand all along the trail as would the services of a blacksmith.

The volume of traffic along this trail would indicate the potential demand for these services. It is estimated that several thousand persons traversed the Oregon Trail annually in the early 1850's. The ruts of the wagon wheels are plainly visible today and remain as evidence of this early route to the west. (See Figure 3.)

Shortly after the influx of traders, the government established a military post nine miles southwest of Pottawatomie County. With the completion of the newly

FIGURE 3



The Oregon Trail

established Fort Riley in 1853, it became necessary to transport equipment, supplies, and personnel from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley. To facilitate this movement, a road was established, known as the Military Road, which traversed Pottawatomie County. (See Figure 2.)

A ferry was required for the wagons and travelers using this road, in order to cross the Blue River. This crossing, the Junietta Crossing, was located in the vicinity of the mouth of Cedar Creek and was operated for the government by Samuel Dyre.⁴ In addition to the ferry, a blacksmith shop and trading post were located there. With the increased number of travelers using this road, the services of Vieux, Wilson, and Dyre were in greater demand. The latter two men expanded their operations to include lodging for the travelers.

This early period was characterized by the development of several trading posts, a flood of travelers traversing the area, and the establishment of government control. With the establishment of a military post in this area, protection was provided, order was maintained, and the effective national territory was increased. One year later the settlers came with their plows, livestock and dreams of establishing a new home. This inflow of settlers brought about the closing of the frontier in this area.

⁴Ibid., p. 463.

CHAPTER III

PRIOR TO THE COMING OF THE RAILROAD

First Settlers

Shortly after the establishment of Fort Riley, an influx of settlers arrived with the intention of cultivating land. Unlike their predecessors, they came with plows and seed, not with guns and trinkets. As these settlers became more numerous, they demanded certain services which contributed to the development of towns. Grist mills were required to grind the corn and wheat into corn meal and flour, and saw mills were necessary to make lumber used for the construction of buildings. Eventually, professional and recreational services were in demand in this area.

The first group of settlers that came to Pottawatomie County for the purpose of acquiring and cultivating land consisted of five families. These people were what Bowman would call real "pioneers."⁵ Their original home was Germany but they came to the United States in the early 1800's.⁶ It is known that this group came to Kansas from Missouri but it is possible that they lived in the eastern part of the country before they arrived in Missouri.

⁵Bowman, Isaiah, The Pioneer Fringe, American Geographical Society, (New York: 1931) 361 pp.

⁶Westmoreland Recorder, Westmoreland, Kansas, July 12, 1906.

This group settled in the Pleasant Run Valley near the present location of the Village of Flush. They arrived in the year 1854, three years before the area was surveyed. (Table 1 shows the names of the men and the description of the lands claimed and later pre-empted.) These pioneers were experienced farmers and had their choice of locations at this time. A comparison of the sites chosen by these men shows a similarity, reflecting their common background. There were three important characteristics that were prevalent in all cases. These included level land, permanent streams, and a forested area.

The level land of the small but discernible flood plain provided deep, fertile soils well adaptable to the cultivation of crops. The permanent streams provided a readily obtainable source of water for household and livestock needs. They also indicated that moisture was available for crops. The galerial forests provided a source of fuel, construction material, habitat for game, and perhaps the connotation of soil fertility. These three characteristics are closely associated with each other and offer a description of the lands claimed.

The type of economic activity in which these settlers were engaged was agriculture on a subsistence level. Very little commercial exchange of goods took place because of the remote nature of this area from the markets. They grew the crops that were necessary for existence, namely corn and

TABLE 1

Name	Parcel	Section	Township (South)	Range (East)
Franz Dekot	$E\frac{1}{2}$ $NW\frac{1}{4}$	16	9	9
Michael Floersch	$W\frac{1}{2}$ $NW\frac{1}{4}$	5	9	9
	$E\frac{1}{2}$ $NE\frac{1}{4}$	6	9	9
Jacob Haid	$SE\frac{1}{4}$	4	9	9
Andrew Noll	$SE\frac{1}{4}$	7	9	10
Michael Repp	$SE\frac{1}{4}$	8	9	9

Source: Westmoreland Recorder, Westmoreland, Kansas, July 12, 1906.

wheat, and had few livestock. What livestock they did possess were more valuable for working and breeding purposes than for slaughtering. For this reason, hunting was not a sport for these people. It provided meat to supplement their diet. The deer and the antelope were numerous in this area at that time as were the prairie chicken and wild turkey. These animals were the main source of meat for the early settlers.

Development of Services

From a mere handful of inhabitants in 1850, the population of Pottawatomie County increased to 1512 in 1860.⁷ With this population increase there evolved a demand for flour and saw mills. There were two different sources of power for these mills--water and steam--but the location of both types was closely associated with permanent streams. The explanation of this association is rather obvious for water powered mills but a more complex analysis is required for the steam powered mills.

One factor that would influence the location of steam powered mills is that they require water for the steam generating process. A permanent stream offered the cheapest source of this water. Secondly, these mills used wood as fuel and the source of wood was near the streams. And finally, the crops of corn and wheat, or trees in the case

⁷U. S. Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States: 1860. Population, Vol. 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), p. 159.

of saw mills, were situated near the streams. These three factors would have a tendency to attract the mills to this location because it would not require additional transportation costs.

Several mills were established throughout the country but the mills at Louisville and Westmoreland are of primary importance. Both of these were water powered grist mills. Robert Wilson constructed a dam across Rock Creek and used the falling water to operate the mill. Charles Zabel established a similar mill and dam at Westmoreland, but no evidence remains of them today.⁸ The dam and mill at Louisville are intact and were still in use during the 1940's. (See Figure 4.)

The services provided by these men aided in the development of the communities in which they were housed. In essence, they helped to channel the movements of commodities and persons to these communities. The mills could have been erected at any site along Rock Creek but these men took the initiative and established them at Louisville and Westmoreland.

With an increase in the number of people settling in this area, there was an increase in the number and type of services offered. The professional services of real estate

⁸Scott, Charles A., "Who were the Pioneers? What became of Them?" Westmoreland Recorder, August 30, 1956.

FIGURE 4



Dam at Louisville

agents were in demand because the settlers were somewhat confused by the legal requirements for acquiring land under the various government and railroad programs. The settlers found it wise to solicit the advice of these experts. The storekeeper and doctor also began functioning during this period.

Louisville quickly became the key community in this area during this period. It had several advantages which helped in achieving its position of dominance. The advantage of being situated on the Military Road and close to the Oregon Trail helped in channeling travelers to this town. The stage coaches which carried passengers and mail stopped at Louisville. In fact, the mail for the entire county was distributed from this point. Also, there were cultural, recreational, and professional services offered there that made the town the heart of Pottawatomie County.

John Wilson was a real estate agent at Louisville and was claimed to be one of the best in the area.⁹ There was a doctor practicing there who was one of the first in the county. General stores were also found in the community during this period. These services, coupled with other previously stated facilities, aided the growth of this community.

Certainly much of what transpired at Louisville regarding its development and pre-eminence was related to the dynamic leadership of Louis Vieux, Robert Wilson and his

⁹Hill, W. F. "Pottawatomie County History," Westmoreland Recorder, July 12, 1906.

son John. They seized every opportunity available to push the community into the public view which even included an attempt to make Louisville the site of the state capitol.¹⁰

Other towns came into existence during this period but were overshadowed by Louisville. St. George was developing but it lacked several of the advantages that Louisville possessed. It was not located on the Military Road which meant that little traffic stopped there. They did, however, manage to convince the stage coach company to make a stop for passengers and change horses in town. Also, it seemed to lack the forceful leadership that was necessary during this period.

County Seat

St. George, however, did have the privilege of being the county seat from 1854 to 1862.¹¹ It was appointed as the temporary county seat when Pottawatomie County was first organized. This function was not as significant then as it became in later years because the county officials conducted their business at their homes rather than in a centralized location.

In 1862, when Kansas was admitted into the Union, it was necessary to determine the permanent site for the county

¹⁰Maskil, Oliver, "Early History of Pottawatomie County," Westmoreland Recorder, 1954.

¹¹Historical Records Survey, Kansas Board of County Commissioners, Vol. 1-6, 1857-94.

seat. The principal contenders were Louisville and St. George. The leaders of Louisville realized that this function would become more important to a community in future years and engaged themselves in an active campaign for their town. Some of the campaign promises were in the form of bribes. Louis Vieux offered to give the county forty acres of land adjacent to Louisville and one hundred town lots if Louisville won the election.¹² Also, there were claims made that the leaders solicited the votes of the nearby Indians, who did not have the legal right to vote, in an effort to win the election. Louisville did win the election but it was questionable whether or not the election was legal. Because of the questionable legality of this election, the site of the county seat would not be determined until a future date.

During this period, from 1854 to 1866, the settlers arrived and began practicing farming. They required few services but those that were in demand were enough to contribute to the establishment and growth of several small communities. Louisville emerged as the principal community during this time primarily because of its leaders and situation on the major thoroughfares. Events forthcoming, however, would alter the course of history for these communities. The first was the development of the railroads and the second was the relocation of the county seat.

¹²Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

INFLUENCE OF THE RAILROAD

The Growth of Wamego

The pre-eminence of Louisville prior to 1866 has been attributed to its dynamic leadership and its situation with respect to the major thoroughfares. However, the importance of a community in an area is not a static phenomenon. It is related to the functions provided by the community at a particular time period of technological advancement. Any change in the level of technology within its hinterland will cause a period of readjustment, which may or may not be favorable for the community. The completion of the trans-continental railroads and the extension of the Kansas Pacific Railroad through Pottawatomie County, disturbed the existing pattern. Louisville was subjected to a period of readjustment.

It appears that the capable leadership once possessed by Louisville had either disappeared or was channeled in an illfated direction. This occurred at a critical time in the development of the community. The Kansas Pacific Railway Company offered the city an ultimatum. Either the community would provide a depot and stockyards or the railroad would circumvent the town. The citizens of Louisville believed that their town was too important for the railroad to bypass. They believed that the economic success of the

railway was dependent on their community and decided that the company should purchase the necessary land rather than receive it in the form of donations from the city. As a result the railroad decided to bypass Louisville and it ultimately passed through an area four miles south of the town in 1866.¹³

Since the community of Louisville was an important town the company established a depot south of town to service its needs. The site of this depot attracted other facilities and eventually became the City of Wamego. During this period of readjustment caused by the technological innovation of the railroad, the town was attracted to the railroad rather than the railroad being attracted to the town. This situation was not uncommon in many other areas during the period of railroad expansion.

The Decline of Louisville

The shift to railroads as a means of transportation brought an end to the importance of the Oregon Trail and the Military Road. Not only did Louisville lose the trade derived from the older form of transportation but it did not share in the increased trade brought about by the new form of transportation.

For a brief period, the existence of Wamego could be explained by its proximity to Louisville. It served as the

¹³Personal conversation with Oliver Maskil, March 1, 1967.

rail yard for Louisville. This situation soon changed and Wamego started to grow at a rapid rate. A comparison of the number of retail stores and their sales between the two communities shows that Wamego was the more important town by 1874. Louisville had six retail stores that sold \$73,795 worth of merchandise while Wamego had twenty-eight stores with a total sales of \$218,900 for that year.¹⁴ The volume of trade at Wamego was nearly three times that of the stores in Louisville. (See Table 2 and Table 3 for a listing of retail stores and sales.)

The population of Louisville in 1874 was 400,¹⁵ near the community's peak number. The number of inhabitants of Wamego at this time was 700.¹⁶ The number of retail stores and their sales can offer an index by which to compare the two towns. It would indicate that the importance of Wamego as a service center was considerably larger than Louisville at this early date. It appears that the citizens of Louisville were wrong in their belief that the railway needed their town more than they needed the railway.

Louisville lost part of its trade area during this period of readjustment but it still was the county seat. By this time, it was an important function for the community

¹⁴Third Annual Report, Kansas State Board of Agriculture, 1874, p. 190.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 189.

¹⁶Ibid.

TABLE 2
RETAIL STORES AND SALES OF WAMEGO - 1874

Name and Kind of Business	Number	Sales (\$)
Agricultural Implements & Wagons	1	12,500
Books, Periodicals, & Stationery	2	800
Boots & Shoes	1	750
Clothing & Tailoring	2	3,500
Confectionery	1	1,200
Dry Goods	5	75,000
Drugs, Oils, & Paints	-	22,000
Groceries	5	36,500
Gunsmith	1	650
Hardware	1	15,000
Jewelry, Clocks, Watches, etc.	1	3,000
Lumber	2	40,500
Millinery	3	3,500
Saddles & Harnesses	1	2,250
Bakery	1	1,000
Brick Yard	1	750
Total	28	218,900

Source: Third Annual Bulletin, Kansas State Board of Agriculture, State Printing Office, Topeka, Kansas, 1874, p. 189.

TABLE 3
RETAIL STORES AND SALES OF LOUISVILLE - 1874

Name and Kind of Business	Number	Sales (\$)
Agricultural Implements	-	85
Drugs, Oils, & Paints	1	5,100
Hardware	1	10,000
General Country Store	1	41,250
Saddles & Harnesses	1	2,360
All other mercantile pursuits not herein mentioned	2	15,000
Total	6	73,795

Source: Third Annual Bulletin, Kansas State Board of
Agriculture, State Printing Office, Topeka, Kansas,
1874, p. 189.

because many of the officials were full-time employees. Their work was done at a centralized location and county business was rapidly becoming a big business. No public building was provided to house the office of these officials but office space was rented from the local businessmen. There was, however, a county jail.

The rapidly growing community of Wamego quickly overshadowed the traditional focal point of the county, Louisville. This town not only captured part of the trade area of Louisville but its leaders soon began agitation to move the county seat to Wamego. The fifteen year old controversy over the legality of the election in 1862 was again debated. It was decided that another election would be held in 1882.

Wamego and Louisville were the principal contenders for the site but the people in the northern part of the county preferred a more centralized location. Westmoreland was their choice even though this community consisted of nothing more than a church, two stores, a blacksmith shop, and a few scattered homes. The election was held and the outcome was in favor of Westmoreland; Louisville had suffered another defeat.

Development of Westmoreland

With the movement of the county seat to Westmoreland, there was an associated boom period for the town. Prior to 1884, there were only a few people living at Westmoreland,

but by 1890 the population had increased to 459.¹⁷ An account by an eyewitness to this growth describes the situation in the local newspaper.

The coming of the county seat was a real boom to Westmoreland. It was soon a town of 100 or more inhabitants. People seemed to come from everywhere. Perhaps the greatest number came from Louisville, families of the county officials.¹⁸

Within a few years, the people of Westmoreland built a permanent court house and donated the building to the county. This was an effort to ensure the permanent location of the county seat in their town. All materials and labor were donated by a group of public minded citizens. Perhaps if the citizens of Louisville had made a similar effort, they could have kept this important function in their community.

The loss of the political function and part of its trade area caused the population growth of Louisville to level off. Attempts were made to attract people to the community in an effort to capitalize on the "mineral springs" located there. Unfortunately, many communities were involved in similar attempts and so little economic gain was realized from this effort. Louisville had reached its peak and then population decline began occurring.

¹⁷Seventh Biennial Report, Kansas State Board of Agriculture, State Printers, Topeka, Kansas, 1889-1890, p. 197.

¹⁸Scott, Charles A., "County Seat is moved over protest of Sheriff," Westmoreland Recorder, August 23, 1956.

CHAPTER V

TURN OF THE CENTURY

Market Place Function

Previously, it has been shown that the growth or decline of a community is related to its location with respect to the major thoroughfares. The decline in usage of the Oregon Trail and the Military Road caused the retrogression of Louisville. The construction of the railroad aided the development and rapid growth of Wamego. It also has been shown that the political function of the county seat contributed to the growth of Westmoreland. Another factor that requires examination is the importance of retail trade derived from those people residing in the area surrounding a community.

Within a community, there are certain services provided to meet the needs of the people in the surrounding area. The area from which a service or business attracts its customers is called its catchment area. The combination of the catchment areas for every service or business located within a community is called the trade or market area of that town. The catchment area for one service frequently varies from the catchment area of a different service and these can vary through time depending upon the attractive force of a competitor. Certain types of businesses are dependent on the amount of land within their catchment area. Other types of

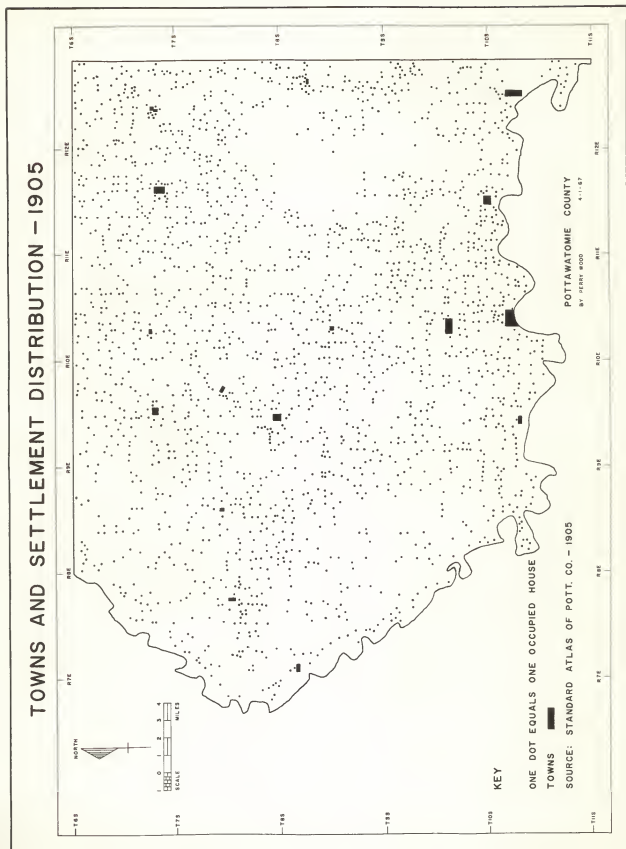
businesses, e.g. barber shops and grocery stores, are dependent on the number of people living in their catchment area. The period of peak demand for this type of service is when the population density is the greatest in the catchment area providing that the people have and are willing to spend their money for the service. It is this type of service that is of major concern.

The year 1900 marked the period of maximum population density throughout Pottawatomie County. A map has been prepared which shows the location of rural residences throughout the county. None of the homes that were within the town boundaries have been shown. (See Figure 5.) An average figure of five persons per dwelling unit was determined by dividing the number of inhabitants by the number of dwelling units. Unfortunately it was impossible to delineate the market areas for the towns under investigation because of the lack of data.

It is important to note that the trade area of Wamego extended south beyond the county boundary into the adjoining county. The Kansas River was not a barrier to the flow of people and goods because a bridge had been constructed which crossed the river as early as 1872.¹⁹ Prior to the construction of the bridge, a ferry was used to cross the river.

¹⁹"How Early Settlers crossed Kaw - A Ferry in 1866," Wamego Times, February 24, 1966.

FIGURE 5



After 1900, the population living on the farm began to decline. Consolidation of land holdings began and the process of abandonment started to take place. This meant that competition between similar services was increased. There were fewer customers to serve so the businesses with the most favorable advantage would prosper, and thus force others out of business. This process only started to take place at this time and competition was between merchants and services within the same community. People were not willing nor able to travel great distances at this time and were, in essence, confined to their own market town.

The Railroad in Westmoreland

The population living in Westmoreland increased from 377 in 1885²⁰ to 493 in 1900.²¹ This has been associated with the relocation of the county seat in this community. The number of inhabitants was also increasing in the trade area of Westmoreland. The local merchants, however, soon learned that the trade area of their town was not as large as it should have been in comparison with other towns of comparable size. The merchants could not compete favorably with the merchants at other towns located on the railroads. They decided that Westmoreland needed a railroad to connect

²⁰Fifth Biennial Report, Kansas State Board of Agriculture.

²¹Twelfth Biennial Report, Kansas State Board of Agriculture.

it with the rest of the state. The following is a quotation written at the time the railroad was completed and shows the problem as conceived by the businessmen and the optimism for the future.

People from all parts of the county come to Westmoreland every year for various purposes. Heretofore, as the town had no railroad facilities, it was impossible to compete on a few articles with merchants of more favored towns, and the fact has been that Westmoreland businessmen received but comparatively little trade from people who came to Westmoreland for other purposes than to trade. Now, there is no reason why our business men cannot compete in all lines with others in the most favored localities. The people who come to Westmoreland will do much trading here if our business men can convince them that it is to their interest to do so.²²

In 1899, the Kansas, Southern, and Gulf Railway completed a line from Westmoreland to Blaine, approximately eight miles north of Westmoreland. This eight miles of track, right-of-way, an engine, a few cars and the depot constituted the equipment of the company. At Blaine, the Leavenworth, Kansas, and Western Railway was joined which provided railway service for Westmoreland to Leavenworth. The town was finally linked to the rest of the state by a railroad. (See Figure 2.)

The economic feasibility of this railway was questionable from its very beginning. Throughout its brief history, it was in bankruptcy several times. The revenue earned from the amount of cargo shipped to Westmoreland was not sufficient

²²Hill, W. F., Railroad Edition, Westmoreland Recorder, Westmoreland, Kansas, 1899, p. 5.

to meet the operating expenses of the inefficient steam engine. The cargo brought to Westmoreland was general merchandise and the town was not large enough to require large volume of merchandise.

The amount of cargo shipped from Westmoreland was not in significant amounts either. The farmers in the area surrounding Westmoreland had begun specializing in cattle production at this early period. The ranchers, however, found it cheaper to drive their cattle the seven miles to Blaine rather than suffer the additional freight cost of the railroad. This was especially true for the ranches located north of Westmoreland. The railroad did manage to carry some cattle to Blaine, but very few.

There was a period in the history of the railway when it was a profitable venture. This was between the years 1914 and 1915 when it was under the management of Charles Morris. He decided to sell the steam engine and use automobiles, mounted with iron wheels to fit the tracks, to pull the specially built cars. The same schedule was kept, two round trips daily to Blaine and special trips when needed, which made connections with the Leavenworth, Kansas, and Western trains. Table 4 gives the time tables for these railroads.²³

²³Westmoreland Recorder, Westmoreland, Kansas, November 1, 1906.

TABLE 4

Kansas, Southern, and Gulf Railway ScheduleNorth Bound

No. 1 Leaves Westmoreland 5:00 AM
No. 3 Leaves Westmoreland 9:00 PM

South Bound

No. 2 Leaves Blaine 7:45 AM
No. 4 Leaves Blaine 11:00 PM

Leavenworth, Kansas, and Western Railway ScheduleEast Bound

No. 42 (passenger) Leaves Blaine 6:05 AM
No. 44 (accommodation) Leaves Blaine 1:05 PM

West Bound

No. 43 (accommodation) Leaves Blaine 8:50 PM
No. 41 (passenger) Leaves Blaine 10:09 PM

Source: Westmoreland Recorder, February 1, 1906.

Enthusiasm for the railroad began to spread and plans were considered to fulfill the title of the company by extending the line southward. Several alternate plans were discussed and one was actually adopted. The plan was to extend the line south to the village of Flush and then to Manhattan. The company hoped that the railroad would enable the mining of a twelve inch coal seam located near Flush.²⁴ Construction of this extension was started but the line never reached Flush. The excavation scars of this intended road bed are plainly visible to the present date (See Figure 6.)

In 1915 Charles Morris lost his life in an accident while he was examining flood damages to one of the railroad bridges.²⁵ After his death, no attempt was made to rebuild the damaged railroad or continue its operation. The rails were sold for scrap when the prices were high during the outbreak of the First World War. This ended the brief history of the company that was intended to make Westmoreland an important railroad town.

There was a trucking firm operating in Westmoreland at the time of the railroad disaster that was engaged in delivering the merchandise from the railroad depot to the stores and homes. When the railroad was destroyed, the trucking firm capitalized on the situation and expanded their

²⁴Westmoreland Recorder, December 5, 1907.

²⁵Westmoreland Recorder, June 8, 1915.

FIGURE 6



Excavation Scars of the Proposed Railroad Extension

services to include the carrying of the goods from Blaine to Westmoreland. This action would issue in a new period for this and eventually other communities; the use of the automobile and truck as a means of transportation.

CHAPTER VI

THE AUTOMOBILE AGE

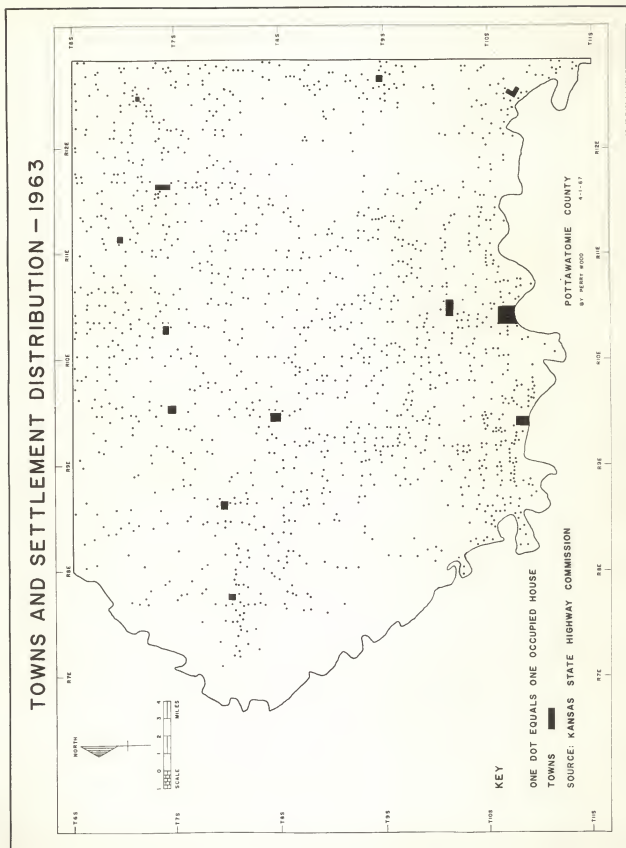
Influence of Abandonment

The advent of the automobile has had great and varying effects on the settlement pattern throughout the country as well as in Pottawatomie County. It has enabled the working force to establish homes at greater distances from their places of work. Associated with this trend has been an improvement in farm machinery. These improvements have enabled individual farmers to cultivate more land than ever before. This ultimately resulted in an excess population on the farm. This excess group began to migrate to the cities as farms were consolidated. These two factors have had different effects on the small communities of Pottawatomie County.

Associated with the mechanization of the farms was an abandonment of farmsteads. This began in Pottawatomie County around 1900 and has continued to the present time. The rate of abandonment has been accelerated since World War II. A comparison of Figure 5 and Figure 7 will show the number of homes that have been abandoned since 1905. Each dot on the maps represents one home which was occupied in each of the respective years. The homes were plotted on the map to the closest one-eighth mile to insure greater accuracy.

Many of these homes were in good condition at the time

FIGURE 7



of abandonment but their owners have either died or have moved to the cities. (See Figure 8.) The causes of this abandonment have been many and diverse, and intricately interwoven. It is difficult to determine which factors have been the most influential; therefore, they will be treated equally here.

With the increased mechanization of the farms, it was not only possible to cultivate more land but it was an economic necessity. The rising cost of living and the increased investment in farm machinery required the farmers to cultivate larger tracts of land. Consolidation of holdings and the rental of additional farm lands became common. This has meant that a large farm labor force was no longer necessary and encouraged the excess population to move into the cities.

The cities have been attractive forces in luring the rural families to them. The advantages of living in the city include opportunity for employment and recreation. Many of the older farmers have moved to the cities to retire, while many of the younger persons have sought employment opportunities in the city. Certain government programs have even paid the farmer to allow his land to stand idle or to reseed the land to native grasses. These policies have enabled the farmer to move into the cities because there was no need to remain on the farm.

The automobile has also been a leading contributor to

FIGURE 8



Abandoned Homes near Westmoreland

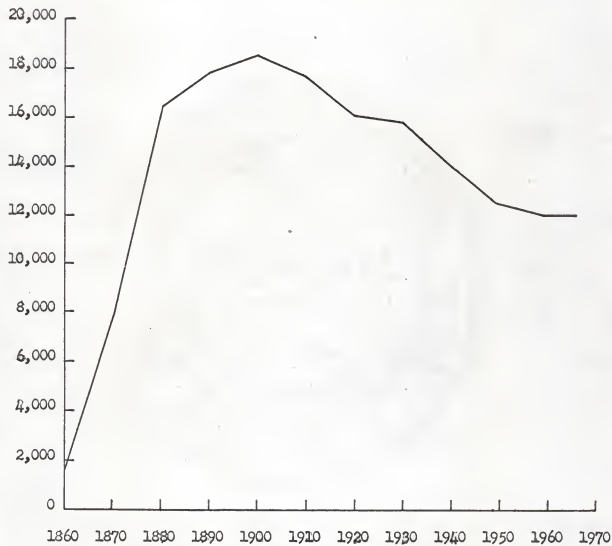
rural abandonment. It is possible for farmers to live in towns and commute by automobile or truck to their farms, as commuters drive to a factory or an office. Kollmorgen and Jenks have made a study of this group of self-styled commuters in Western Kansas and call them "sidewalk farmers."²⁶ There was, however, a relatively small percentage of this group located within the three communities under consideration in 1967. The portion of the employed population that were farmers was as follows: Westmoreland, 3.4; Louisville, 4.5; and Wamego, 1.9 percent.²⁷

The significance of this abandonment in regard to the retail establishments located within the rural communities has been discussed in Chapter V. How long this process will continue, or how far, is difficult to determine. An examination of the age structure of those people remaining on the farms would offer an insight into this problem but will not be treated here. Whether or not there will be younger farmers to take their place is also difficult to determine. The one thing that is certain is that Pottawatomie County will continue to change. (See Figure 9.)

²⁶Kollmorgen, Walter M. and Jenks, George F., "A Geographic Study of Population and Settlement Changes in Sherman County, Kansas," Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science, Vol. 54, No. 4, Dec. 1951, p. 452.

²⁷Field survey, March 1, 1967.

FIGURE 9



POTTAWATOMIE COUNTY POPULATION TRENDS BY DECADE

Source: U. S. Census of Population, Bureau of the Census, 1860-1960 and Biennial Reports, Kansas Board of Agriculture.

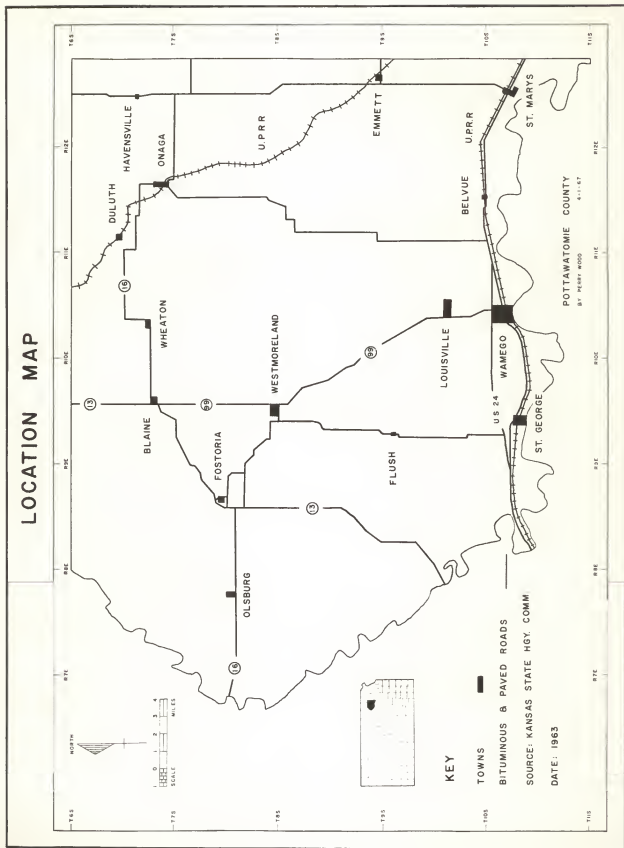
Changes Caused by Highway Bypasses

The automobile has enabled the population of the country to be far more mobile than it was in previous years. Associated with this mobility there has been an increased demand for services by these travelers. During the 1920's Louisville had several businesses that were dependent on this trade. Their position was aided by having a major highway pass through town that linked Westmoreland and Wamego. In 1929, however, the decision was made to construct a new highway which would bypass the community. After the completion of the new highway, the amount of trade of these transportation oriented businesses eventually decreased and they were forced to close down their operations. In this case, the relocation of the highway had a negative effect on the community. (See Figure 10.)

The construction of a highway bypass around Wamego, only a few hundred feet north of the city, had a different effect. This highway was completed in 1959 and the shift had little effect on the total retail sales within the community. A study conducted by Wagner²⁸ has shown that no trade was lost but many of the services that were being offered had to relocate to adjust to the new situation. Businesses located along the old route suffered losses but the newly established businesses along the new route made

²⁸Wagner, Hulse, The Economic Effects of Bypass Highways on Selected Kansas Communities, Center for Research in Business, University of Lawrence, 1960.

FIGURE 10



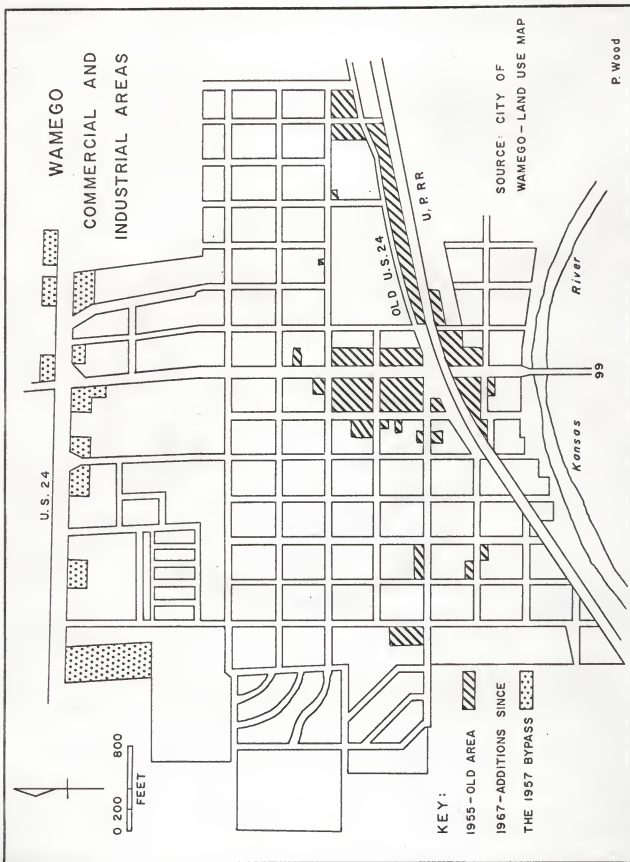
up the losses and have continued to operate. A map has been prepared which shows the location of the old business district and the newly established businesses. (See Figure 11.) This newly established highway also made it easier for the commuters to travel to other cities for work.

Commuters

When the automobile became an important means of transportation, it enabled the working force to live greater distances from their work. It was no longer necessary to live within a few blocks of the factory, store, or office. It was possible for the worker to live in a town several miles from the place where he was employed. This meant that the number of persons residing within a community was not completely dependent on the job opportunities offered by the community. Some communities located near large industrial towns serve as merely places of residence for a large population and yet employ relatively few people.

In order to determine the significance that the automobile has had on the size of the three towns under consideration, a survey was conducted in the Spring of 1967. The purpose of the survey was to determine the number of persons residing in each home and by what means they earned their living. Specifically, it was of concern to determine the number of commuters, farmers, government employees, locally employed persons, and retired persons that lived in the three towns and the size of their families. Once this

FIGURE 11



information was collected, it was possible to calculate the percentage of the total number employed that were commuting to work in another town or the percentages of any of the other five categories above mentioned.

To insure greater accuracy, a door-to-door survey was conducted to gather the required information rather than using a sampling method. The small size of these towns made this type of survey possible and the author found the people very cooperative.

It was found that 32.8 percent of the employed population in Westmoreland was commuting elsewhere for employment. Manhattan and Fort Riley served as the largest source of employment as one might expect because of their proximity and size. Of all those persons commuting, 63.7 percent were dependent on Manhattan and Fort Riley for employment. Traveling salesmen and those employed in other cities constituted an additional 24.2 percent while sidewalk farmers were only 12.1 percent of those commuting.

In comparison, the proportion of commuters in Louisville was much greater because there was little opportunity for local employment. It was found that 93.2 percent of the full-time employees were driving to other areas for work. Wamego, located only four miles south of Louisville, serves as the primary source of employment. There was 38.5 percent of the commuters working in Wamego. One third of this group was employed by the City of Wamego. Manhattan-Fort Riley

served as the second largest source of employment. There was 30.8 percent of the commuters driving there for employment. The percentage of sidewalk farmers, 4.5, was slightly higher than in the case of Westmoreland but remains a small segment of the commuter population.

In the city of Wamego, a much larger community, one would not expect to find a large percent of commuters because of the opportunities for local employment. It was surprising to find that 38.5 percent of those employed were commuters. Of this group, 50.0 percent was based on Manhattan for employment, 23.5 percent on Topeka, 7.4 percent on Fort Riley, and 19.1 percent elsewhere. This latter classification includes traveling salesmen, farmers, and those working in other cities.

The data reveal that there is a large number of persons willing to travel great distances for work. The number of persons traveling to Topeka from Wamego shows that the working force is highly mobile. This group helps to increase the size of the community in which they are located without being dependent on local job opportunities. Three maps have been prepared which show the movement of these commuters from the three towns. (See Figures 12, 13, and 14.)

Retired Persons

It has been shown that the number of persons residing within a community is partially dependent on the number of commuters living in the town. The size of a community is

FIGURE 12

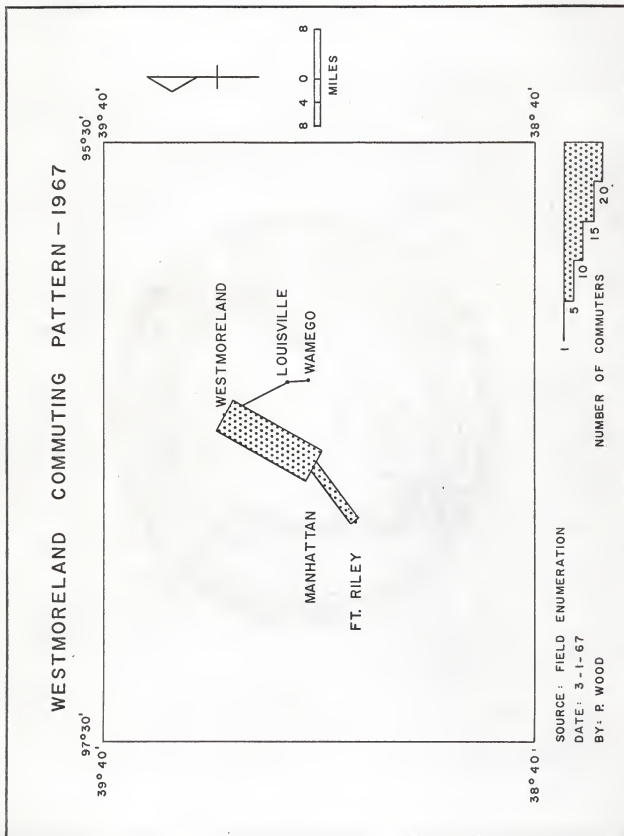


FIGURE 13

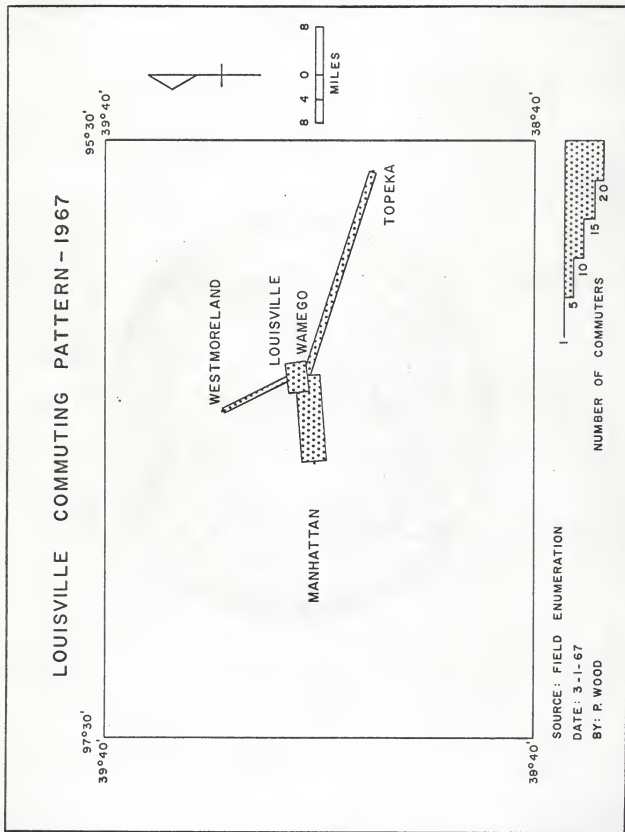
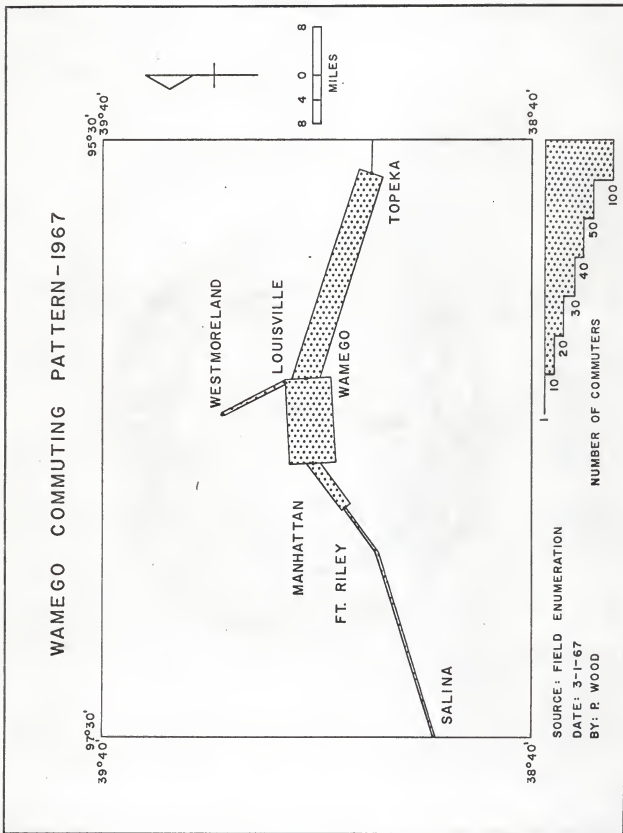


FIGURE 14



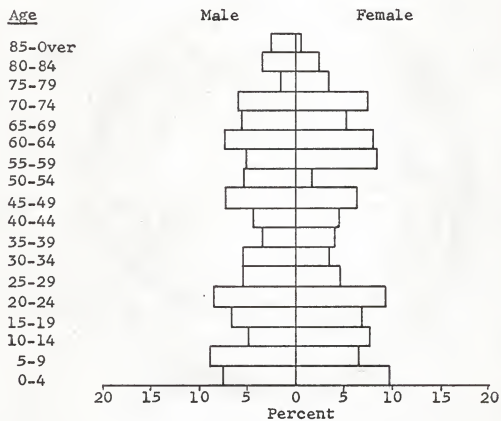
also dependent on the number of retired persons living there. This segment of the population can readily migrate because the retired persons do not need to be located close to employment opportunities. For all practical purposes, they can settle in any area of their choice without reference to the economic opportunities offered in the community.

This group brings money into the community from other sources, namely from government and private retirement programs, and spends it locally. In this way they are somewhat similar to the group of commuters. The retired group not only increases the size of the town directly but also indirectly by helping to support local businessmen and their families. Population pyramids have been constructed which give an indication to the size of this group in each of the communities. (See Figures 15, 16, and 17.) From these pyramids one can readily observe the large percent of the population that are over 65 years of age and the deficiency of those persons between the ages of 25 and 45. This age group normally is the basis upon which a community rests.

In the city of Westmoreland, it has been established that 22.1 percent of the total population was retired. The comparable figures for Louisville and Wamego were 15.7 and 20.0 percent, respectively. These percentages closely approximate the figures derived from the population pyramids. Discrepancies can be explained by the fact that not all persons sixty-five years and over were retired and the

FIGURE 15

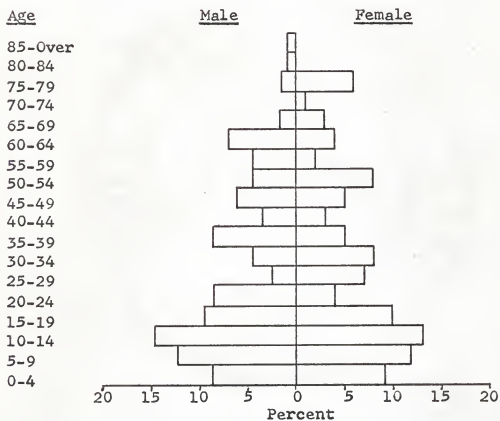
Westmoreland Population Pyramid - 1966



Source: Census Records of the Pottawatomie County Clerk.

FIGURE 16

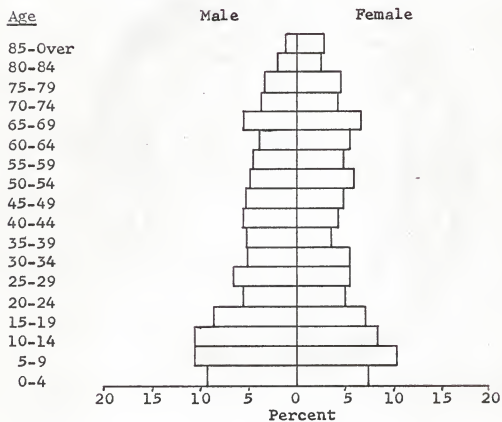
Louisville Population Pyramid-1966



Source; Census Records of the Pottawatomie County Clerk.

FIGURE 17

Wamego Population Pyramid - 1966



Source: Census Records of the Pottawatomie County Clerk.

data for the two tables were taken in different years.

Government Employees

A third factor that requires consideration was the segment of the population that was employed by the government. Of primary concern, was the significance of the county seat to the economy of Westmoreland. The indirect effects of the political function of this town are difficult to assess. The number of lawyers and real estate agents that locate in a community is related to many factors other than the location of the county seat. However, the direct effect of county employment was readily determined.

From the survey, it was determined that 20.7 percent of those employed in Westmoreland were working for the county, either in the court house or highway shops. An additional 4.3 percent obtained employment from the federal agencies located in the community. These agencies were no doubt located in Westmoreland because of the county offices.

In comparison, the city of Wamego had only 10.7 percent of its full-time employed population working for government agencies. There was the Kansas State Highway Commission offices located there which did employ a large number of workers. However, this number was not large enough to compare with this segment in Westmoreland.

The significance of the political function of Westmoreland has already been discussed. It contributed to the growth of the community in the later 1800's. The

importance of this function has remained to the present day and will continue to be important in future years.

Locally Employed

The final sector of the population that was significant were those that were locally employed. In a sense, this is the true measure of what the size of the town was without the commuters, retired persons, and the government employees.

In the community of Westmoreland, it was found that 42.2 percent of the working force were employed by local concerns. Louisville had a much smaller percentage because there were few occupational opportunities within the town. The percentage for Louisville was only 6.8. Wamego had 50.8 percent of its working force employed by local concerns.

An analysis of the data presented throughout this chapter reveals various factors that have influenced the size of the communities of Westmoreland, Louisville, and Wamego. The excess farm population, caused by the mechanization of the farms and consolidation of land holdings, has migrated to the cities for employment and residency. This ultimately has contributed to the growth of the communities under consideration.

The construction of new highway facilities has had a negative effect on the community of Louisville and a positive effect on the community of Wamego. The highway bypass around Louisville meant that the highway oriented services were forced out of business. This ultimately constituted a

negative effect on the size of the community. The highway bypass around Wamego contributed to the growth of services that shifted to the new location on the highway bypass. This increase in business aided the growth of the population size of the town.

The automobile has also enabled more persons to live in the three towns but work in different cities. This meant that the size of the communities was no longer dependent on the local job opportunities. This factor has enabled all three towns to maintain larger populations than otherwise would be possible.

With the increased life span of the population and the number of retired persons living in the communities, there has been a positive factor that has influenced the growth of these towns. Not only do the retired persons directly increase the size of the communities but indirectly, they provide employment possibilities for additional persons who service the needs of this retired group.

The increased importance of government agencies has also contributed to the growth of the communities of Westmoreland and Wamego. This has had a positive effect on the number of persons that can earn their living in these towns.

The number of persons that are locally employed gives the true measure of the size of these communities. The number of locally employed persons and their families

provides an index to the number of persons that can be supported locally. If this sector of the economy declines, the other above mentioned sectors must increase in importance if the community is to maintain its population size.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it was found that the changes in technology and means of transportation have had varying effects on the number of persons residing in the communities of Westmoreland, Louisville, and Wamego. The changes in the spatial linkages and functions of the communities have affected their size throughout their histories.

The community of Westmoreland received its initial impetus by providing certain services for the travelers using the Oregon Trail. As the surrounding area became settled by farmers, the community became a trade center for these farmers. When the community acquired the county seat in 1884, there was an associated population increase. The town reached its population peak in 1900 and has been able to maintain this level since then. The factors that may have contributed to the decline of the town have been counterbalanced by the positive factors of population growth. The number of retired persons, commuters, and government employees residing in the town have been able to counterbalance any change in the number of locally employed persons.

It is difficult to determine what the future will hold for the community of Westmoreland. It is possible, however, to make projections on the basis of the present trends. The author believes that with the increasing number of commuters

and government employed persons, there will be an associated growth in the size of the town. The number of new homes built in the last five years (fifteen), the new public buildings, and the retail services provided in the community, "makes the town a nice place to live."²⁹

The community of Louisville also received its start by being located on an important trail prior to the construction of the railroad. The town did suffer two setbacks from which it has not recovered. The decision of the railroad to bypass the town and the loss of the county seat to Westmoreland have both contributed to the decline in the number of persons residing within the community. The automobile has enabled the persons residing there to commute to other towns for employment but the future prospects do not look good for Louisville. There seem to be few advantages of living in Louisville that may attract new families to replace those that have moved to other areas.

Wamego received its initial start from its location with respect to the railroad. It grew at a rapid rate prior to 1900 and has continued to experience a population increase to the present date. The significance of the railroad as a contributor to the growth of the community has long since passed. The automobile and truck have replaced the railroad as a means of transportation for the community.

²⁹Personal conversation with Oliver Maskil, Editor-Mayor, Westmoreland, Kansas, 3-1-67.

The favorable location of Wamego on an important highway (U. S. 24) has enabled commuters to drive to Manhattan and Topeka for employment but live in Wamego. This has contributed to the growth of the community.

Two additional factors that have contributed to the growth of Wamego have been its function as a trade center and as a place of retirement. Wamego quickly became an important trade center, at the expense of the smaller communities located nearby, and has been able to maintain this function to the present date. The community also serves as a place of retirement for the surrounding area. Several nursing homes and boarding houses specialize in this service. This service ultimately increases the number of persons residing in the community and the number of persons that can be locally employed.

The future for the community appears bright. Its favorable location on a major thoroughfare will encourage more people to live in Wamego but commute elsewhere for employment. The highway oriented services should continue to prosper as will the towns function as a trade center.

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ANALYSIS OF POPULATION FLUCTUATIONS IN WESTMORELAND,
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by

PERRY S. WOOD

B. S., Carroll College, 1966

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the changes in the number of persons residing in the towns of Westmoreland, Louisville, and Wamego, Kansas, throughout their histories. Several factors were involved in the differential growth rates of these three towns. One factor was the changing urban functions of these towns. The significance of the towns as trade centers has had a marked change throughout their histories and this ultimately effected the population size of these communities. The importance of the location of the county seat as a means of local employment was also an important factor. In addition, the changing situation of these towns with respect to transportation facilities was a critical factor. The importance of these facilities has had varying effects on the communities under consideration.

It was found that the growth of Westmoreland can be attributed to its role as a county seat, and its importance as a trade center. This occurred prior to 1900. The construction of a railroad to Westmoreland contributed little to the growth of the community. Since 1900, the town has been able to maintain its population size. This can be associated with the increasing number of commuters and government-employed persons.

The city of Louisville reached its population peak in 1884 and has experienced a population decline since then. The early growth of the community has primarily related to

its function as the county seat and as a trade center, and its location on the Military Road. With the loss of the county seat to Westmoreland, a decline in population in its trade area, and the routing of the Kansas Pacific Railroad four miles south of Louisville, there was an associated population decline within the community. The use of the automobile as a means of transportation has enabled the working force to commute to other towns for employment. This has temporarily terminated the population decline.

Wamego received its initial impetus from its location on the Kansas Pacific Railroad. Its population increased at a rapid rate from 1866 to 1900 and has continued to increase to the present time. The importance of the community as a trade center was evident in 1874 and it has continued in this role. The town's location on a major thoroughfare has enabled a large number of persons to live in Wamego but commute elsewhere for employment. The town has also been an important retirement town with several nursing homes and boarding houses specializing in the service. These factors have contributed to the growth of Wamego's population.