

Frontier Settlement and Community Development in
Richardson, Burt, and Platte Counties, Nebraska,
1854-1870

by

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University of Nebraska, 2007

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The Nebraska Territory was established in 1854. Consisting of lands that encompass modern-day Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado, and parts of Montana, the region was quite extensive. Originally, this land was part of the Louisiana Purchase, and some of the land had been reserved for Native American relocation following various treaties of the 1830s and 1840s. As pressures mounted to open the land for white settlement, both Nebraska and Kansas were established as territories in 1854.

The objective of this research is to examine the foundations of community in Nebraska Territory during the years 1854-1870. Specifically, this dissertation examines the origins of community in Richardson, Burt, and Platte counties. An evaluation of the origins and demographic characteristics of the citizens is described. This includes analysis of a database of the citizens including examination of age, gender breakdown, and birthplace of early frontier dwellers.

This dissertation analyzes settlement patterns in the three counties with reference to the new environment of the Great Plains, cultural background of the settlers, and economic activities. In addition, this study pursues the question of motivation for creating certain institutions in this Great Plains territory and state. A brief study of community politics and legal affairs as well as the impact of creating school and religious institutions is examined.

Residence in the counties of Richardson, Burt, and Platte in Nebraska afforded their citizens the opportunity to construct the social institutions of their choosing while

starting life anew. Farmers, businessmen, craftsmen, and political figures all contributed to the new communities while marginalizing the original Native American inhabitants.

PREVIEW

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank a number of people for aiding me in the completion of this dissertation. Dr. Kenneth Winkle's infinite patience and advice was immeasurably helpful as I worked through this project. Dr. Winkle always had the extra reference, be it article, book, or dissertation, at the tip of his mind to share with me when more historical literature was needed to frame my research. He read through drafts quickly and with care, providing direction and corrective measures when necessary.

The History Department of the University of Nebraska awarded me the Addison E. Sheldon Fellowship as well as the Viola Florence Barnes Fellowship. In addition, I was given two teaching assistantships before the History Department entrusted me to a classroom of my own. That staff at the University of Nebraska's Love Library Special Archives was immensely helpful in tracking down all sorts of books that had disappeared off the regular Love Library shelves as well as some local material in the Botkin and Sandoz collections. Pete Brink and Carmella Orosco in particular, but also Mary Ellen Ducey and Traci Robison, endured endless requests for materials but also pointed me in new directions which I had previously not considered.

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Matt Engel created the locator map on page three and showed me the basics of using Adobe Illustrator to generate my own maps. Greta Clinton-Selin, a former student and friend, read this manuscript as well as certain sources in order to provide intellectual direction as well as edits to syntax. Her work in these avenues and in taking care of my daughter Willa allowed for the completion of this dissertation.

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INTRODUCTION

"We shouted hurrah for Nebraska as we first touched its fertile soil & sniffed its balmy breezes," New Yorker Benjamin R. Folsom wrote in October 1854. After a few days of exploration, Folsom and the men accompanying him had examined much of what would soon become Burt County, Nebraska. They saw "very little timber...the fattest deer" and potentially fertile land in great quantities, before returning to Council Bluffs, Iowa.¹

Folsom and others like him moved to Nebraska in increasing numbers after the territory was officially established in May 1854. Who were these people? From where did they come and why? What sort of life did they establish for themselves upon arrival? These and other questions about Nebraska's more recent residents have yet to be thoroughly investigated.

This dissertation is a community study of territorial Nebraska between 1854 and 1870. Detailed analysis of three counties, Burt, Richardson, and Platte (see map 1), provides a portrait of Nebraska communities prior to and immediately following the Civil War. Some additional analysis will provide a glimpse into rural communities on the Great Plains frontier more broadly. It has been argued that much of Nebraska was not settled until after statehood, which in all likelihood explains the paucity of studies covering the period before 1867. More often than not, if the Nebraska frontier is discussed at all when considering western movement during the 1840s and 1850s, it is either in reference to travel on the Oregon Trail, or lumped in with the story of Kansas.

¹Benjamin R. Folsom, Journal, Record Group 4300, Nebraska State Historical Society.

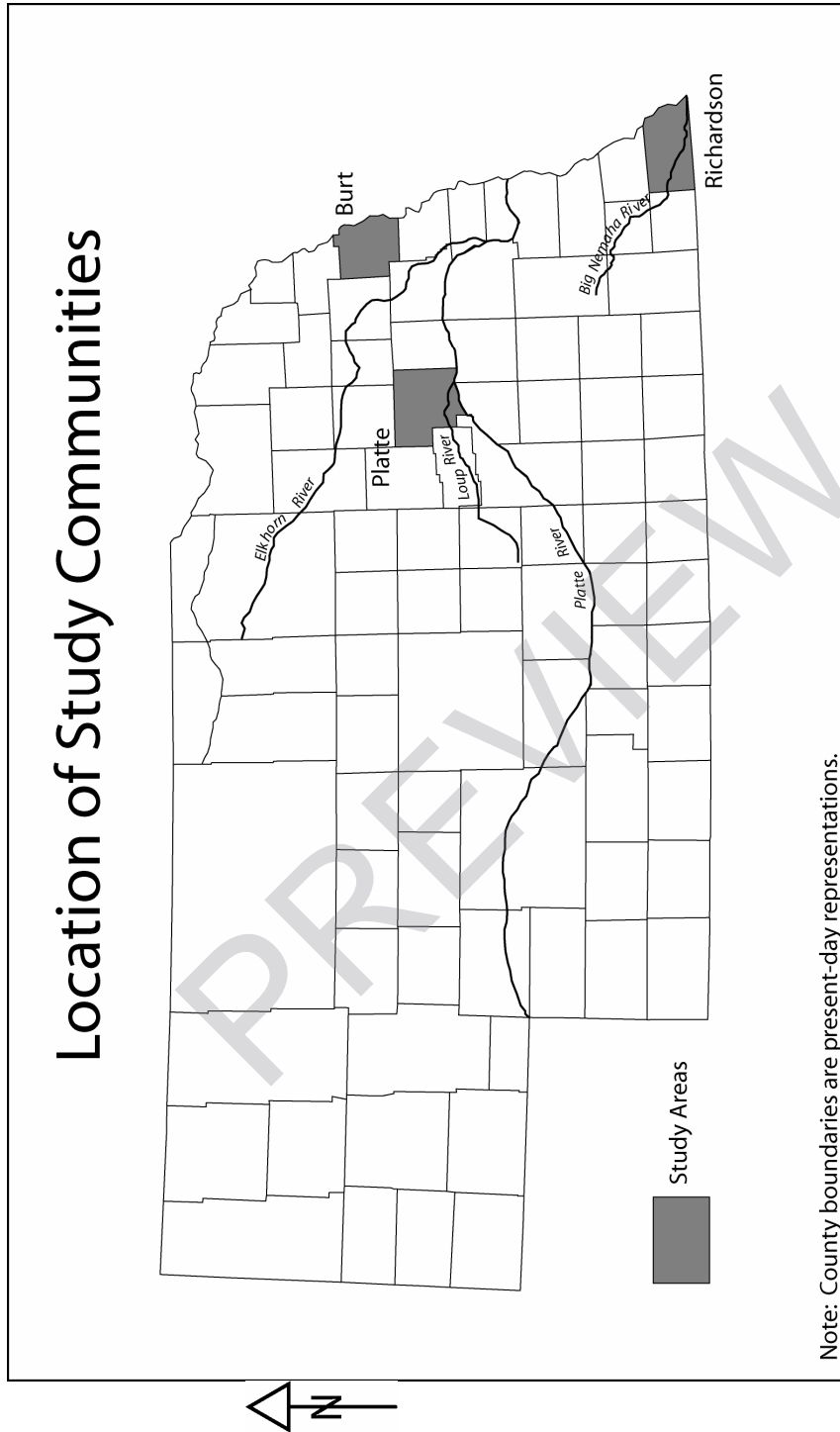
The examination of community development has long been the subject of sociological studies. These studies often sought to address questions of continuity and change in American society, specifically looking at social change as a movement from one definite point in time to another and looking at trends in data that reveal demographic compositions, employment patterns, housing, school attendance, class stratification and much more. Communities, which consist of a body of people with a degree of consensus, inhabiting a common territory, develop social structure which is the totality of the relationships among community members. How newer residents are assimilated into a given community can also be an important issue as can analyzing the process by which social structures emerge.² Commonality is not the only important facet of community building however. Arguments have been advanced that suggest that conflict can have a positive influence in relation to developing and maintaining social order. Conflict is not necessarily dysfunctional in community construction, nor is it a situation to avoid.³

Some past approaches to community study have been undertaken by sociologists, anthropologists, and historians. Particularly after the 1950s, historians have taken on the task of defining community as a place in which citizens' efforts are engaged in order to build a better place and an activist social life is crucial to developing this community. Questions of whether economic change or geographic mobility effect community are considered as well as the issue of how people who live together try to create a neighborhood or association from place. The structure, function, and behavior

² Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in American Culture* (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1929); William Lloyd Warner and Paul Lunt, *The Social Life of a Modern Community* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941)

³ Lewis A. Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1954); Coser, *Continuities in the Study of Social Conflict* (New York: Free Press, 1967).

Map 1: Nebraska with Richardson, Burt, Platte Counties identified⁴



⁴ Map created by Matthew R. Engel.

of residents combine to determine evolution of community. Occasionally, researchers even examine the idea of how a community comes to fail. Historians in particular examine these questions in relation to themes over time.⁵

In *River Towns in the Great West*, Timothy Mahoney traced the development of a regional urban system in the Upper Mississippi Valley. He examines that the region is largely determined by economic and geographic factors, particularly transformation due to the arrival of the railroad. In *Provincial Lives: Middle Class Experience in the Antebellum Middle West*, Mahoney returned to these previously examined towns, this time focusing on individuals and looking at their community structure. Mahoney effectively examines the coming of “order” and “gentility” to these towns and budding urban centers ultimately concluding that a series of regional communities are constructed. As in *River Towns*, Mahoney finds in *Provincial Lives* that the arrival of the railroad does something to these communities. While this type of transportation technology can make connections between divergent towns and regions, perhaps the railroad also signals the end of a form of community as a “metropolis” and national culture become more dominant.⁶

⁵ Dwight Sanderson, *The Rural Community* (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1932); Elvin Hatch, *Biography of a Small Town* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979); Lewis Atheron, *Main Street on the Middle Border* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954); Merle Curti, *The Making of an American Community: A Case Study of Democracy in a Frontier County* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959); Don Harrison Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825-1870* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1978); Michael H. Frisch, *Town into City: Springfield, Massachusetts, and the Meaning of Community, 1840-1880* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972); Herman R. Lantz, *A Community in Search of Itself: A Case History of Cairo Illinois* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972); Stephan Thernstrom, *Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).

⁶ Timothy R. Mahoney, *River Towns in the Great West: The Structure of Provincial Urbanization in the American Midwest, 1820-1870* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Timothy R. Mahoney, *Provincial Lives: Middle-class Experience in the Antebellum Middle West* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

This notion of a distinct regional culture is an interesting one and to develop such a culture necessarily forces the mashing together of people from different walks of life. The communities and social structure of western and frontier locales is based on efforts by Americans to bring their own values, traditions, etc. with them to new locations. Settlers who were what Timothy Mahoney terms “contributors” (farmers and entrepreneurs) start community building and sometimes conflict arises between newer and older waves of settlers as a result.⁷ Underlying it all however, is the idea that these communities can and will come into being so as to “civilize” these western regions.

The internal migration that Frederick Jackson Turner suggested was crucial to developing American values and spreading American understanding of community gets some play here. If the nineteenth-century is the stage of America’s highest levels of migration and these high levels came about due to long distance westward movement to farms and rural areas, there must be some reason. Turner’s notion that there was a relationship between geographic and social mobility is important to consider in examining community construction.⁸ Mahoney describes these community structures as the result of some Americans coming and saying there was a need for “gentility” and perhaps this need might partially be explained by physical movement of new residents combined with their desire for social status or improved economic opportunity.⁹

⁷ Mahoney, *Provincial Lives*, 5.

⁸ Patricia Kelly Hall and Steven Ruggles, “‘Restless in the Midst of Their Prosperity’: New Evidence on the Internal Migration of Americans, 1850-2000,” *Journal of American History* 91, no. 3 (2004): 829-846; Hall and Ruggles provide findings consistent with Turner’s theories that the nineteenth-century saw the highest levels of migration in American history and that most of these migrations resulted from long travel west to farms. In addition, their study explores the relationship between geographic and social mobility.

⁹ Mahoney, *Provincial Lives*, particularly Chapter 4; for agreement on the idea that residents of the West hoped to tame the frontier quickly, also see C. Robert Haywood, *Victorian West: Class and Culture*

Whereas Mahoney's discussion centers on urban communities of the Midwest, this study will focus on rural neighborhoods. There is some overlap in that urban or semi-urban communities develop in both locales and that in both regions monetary advancement and social systems on par with national examples are desired. These rural communities which Turner and later Merle Curti would argue are built on the desire for economic opportunity afforded by cheaply available land are a part of nineteenth-century migration patterns. Migrating to a rural location was an opportunity for both foreign and native born residents. The crowded laboring urban men of Stephan Thernstrom's Newburyport did involve formerly rural denizens, but in the period immediately preceding and following the Civil War, the possibility increased for opportunity in the West. People sought to "start over" to paraphrase William Willingham's discussion of the eastern Oregon Frontier. In studying these evolving communities, regardless of location or time frame, it is important to discuss social structure, economic successes and failures, why community exists and can explain human action and the impact of environment on community construction.¹⁰

While it may be old-fashioned and somewhat Turner-like to make this claim, the communities constructed in Burt, Richardson, and Platte counties and the opportunities these neighborhoods represented to residents were for the most part developed through the utilization of cheaply available land. Through the work of Nebraska's newest

in Kansas Cattle Towns (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1991). Haywood challenges the idea that there was no civilized component to the cattle town societies. He argues that most residents of Kansas wanted their communities to tie together the values and philosophies of East and West, but most importantly, they sought to "tame" the West. Finally, Haywood concludes that ideology and what people had in their minds was more important than environment in shaping community.

¹⁰ Curti, *The Making of an American Community*; Thernstrom, *Poverty and Progress*; William F. Willingham, *Starting Over: Community Building on the Eastern Oregon Frontier* (Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 2006); Mahoney, *Provincial Lives*, 6-11.

arrivals, the frontier of Nebraska moved from territory to state and a model of development was provided for the larger region of the Great Plains. These communities were part of a period in Nebraska's development after white settlement had been firmly established in the eastern portions of the territory. In examining frontier development historians have taken either optimistic or, arguably, overly pessimistic views. This study of the Nebraska territory's development draws on a vast array of historical research and writing on the question of community creation and to a lesser degree, what that means for developing the frontier. Some of the literature does not directly relate to the origins of communities in the nineteenth-century American West, but still sheds light on the ideology and strategies behind human societies in development.

As a community study, an important component of this work is the relationship between community and politics within the study's area. Did the more recent residents of Nebraska create new forms of political expression? Were their systems altered at all by their surroundings? How much influence did their individual pasts have on democratic institutions? Democracy, it can be safely said, was not born on the frontier, but was it even practiced? Most historians today argue that it was more than just an Eastern culture that influenced the West. There were Canadians, Native Americans, Germans, Swiss, French, Irish, Southerners, Yankees and even the odd Sardinian residing in Nebraska.¹¹

¹¹ Dixon Wecter and others would argue that cultural advance on the frontier shaped the region. Eastern culture, Wecter believed, transformed the frontier. Dixon Wecter, "Instruments of Culture on the Frontier," *Yale Review* 36 Winter 1947, 242-256; Thomas Wertenbaker, "The Molding of the Middle West," *American Historical Review* 53, January 1948, 223-234. One question that is commonly asked is whether the "new" culture in the West was inferior to that of the East or merely different. See Arthur K. Moore, *The Frontier Mind* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1957). For cogent treatment of the concept of the frontier in American History, see David Wrobel, *The End of American Exceptionalism: Frontier Anxiety from the Old West to the New Deal* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1993). For a discussion on politics and participation in antebellum America, see Glenn C. Altschuler and Stuart Blumin,

This study explores political, social, and cultural trends in the years preceding the Civil War, as well as the five years immediately following its conclusion. By correlating existing political records with social, cultural, and economic data, I believe portions of Nebraska's political identity and choices come to be revealed. The community of voters evolves in each of the three case-study counties, in some ways disclosing cultural and ideological divisions that manifest themselves in political struggle. Each county contributes a different group as the majority, be it Northerners, Southerners, or immigrants. The tracking of political behavior in these communities exposes much about allegiance systems within the counties. The history of the residents, in addition to their economic and institutional lives says much about Nebraska as a whole, as well as commenting more generally on communities in the American West.

Another point of debate centers on whether or not the frontier created economic and political equality for these new Nebraska neighborhoods. Initial examination seems to indicate the answer to be no. Was there truly a spirit of freedom on the frontier? If so, why are residents of Burt County eager to implement laws demanding repayment for damage caused by loose stock? Why are mark and brand records so important in Richardson County? Was individuality in these Western communities considered an important attribute or were tight-knit communities, replete with government and laws more crucial to success stories?

"Limits of Political Engagement in Antebellum America: A New Look at the Golden Age of Participatory Democracy;" Altschuler and Blumin, "Politics, Society, and the Narrative of American Democracy;" Harry L. Watson, "Humbug? Bah! Altschuler and Blumin and the Riddle of the Antebellum Electorate;" Jean Harvey Baker, "Politics, Paradigms, and Public Culture;" and Norma Basch, "A Challenge to the Story of Popular Politics," in "Political Engagement and Disengagement in Antebellum America, A Round Table," *Journal of American History* Vol. 84, No. 3 December 1997, 855-909.

The communities created in Nebraska during the territorial period and after may have made an effort to hold onto some of these unique cultural traditions. This question has been insufficiently studied. Most histories of Nebraska covering the period between 1854 and 1867, concentrate on the political significance of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. James C. Malin's *The Nebraska Question* is one such example. Similarly, in the later editions of *History of Nebraska* by James Olson and Ronald Naugle the authors largely address political concerns within their section on the territorial days. In addition, James Potts' dissertation, "Nebraska Territory, 1854-1867," provides a clear synthesis and analysis of territorial politics in Nebraska.¹²

Older histories of Nebraska, such as A.T. Andreas' *History of the State of Nebraska*, provide more insight into the individuals who made up Nebraska's populace. This more distant history by Andreas, as well as similar books by Addison Sheldon, tends to concentrate on those men who became extremely successful and influential within the state.¹³ Little has been said about those who struggled through day to day existence and even less has been said about the fate of women, children, and minorities in those early years.

The origins of community construction in Nebraska emerged prior to the arrival of whites in the region, although the focus of this study will be on the time period of the

¹²James C. Malin, *The Nebraska Question, 1852-1854* (Lawrence, Kansas: privately printed, 1953); James Byron Potts, "Nebraska Territory, 1854-1867: A Study of Frontier Politics" (Ph.D. dissertation, History, University of Nebraska, 1973), especially 27-55; James C. Olson and Ronald C. Naugle, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997),

¹³A.T. Andreas, *History of the State of Nebraska* 2 volumes. (Chicago: The Western Historical Company, 1882); Addison Sheldon, *Semi-Centennial History of Nebraska; historical sketch* (Lincoln: Lemon Publishing Company, 1904); Sheldon, *History and Stories of Nebraska* (Lincoln and Chicago: The University Publishing Company, 1913); Sheldon, *Nebraska, the land and the people* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1931).

“white frontier.” Looking backwards from circa 1854, one can see scant evidence of an Anglo-European community in the region. There were efforts made by the French in St. Louis to create trade networks across the region, but these were a different type of community altogether. Additionally, these communities were, for the most part, determined by access to certain trade goods of value as well as by the Native American presence in the region.¹⁴ As Timothy Mahoney argues in *Provincial Lives* some examination of these social systems can help one ascertain the types of restraints and dynamics that shaped later societies.¹⁵ For many years, between the sale of Louisiana lands and the official organization of Nebraska by law in 1854, the notion of an Anglo-American community was fleeting. The presence that did exist will be fleshed out in chapter two when the background of the region is more fully explored.

The community development of Nebraska on which I shall focus includes Richardson County in the southeastern section of the state, Burt County on the northeast central border of the Missouri River, and Platte County, located along the Platte River. Each county possesses different demographics that are clearly revealed in the census records. Richardson, at least through 1860, was settled by a high percentage of Southerners. Burt held high numbers of Northerners and Platte was a haven for migrants from Europe. As a result, each county reveals different habits and traditions manifested in agricultural practice, house building, and other approaches to rural life. From

¹⁴ David J. Wishart, *The Fur Trade of the American West, 1807-1840: A Geographical Synthesis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979). Wishart focuses on the geography of the fur trade, contrasting the Upper Missouri with the Rocky Mountains. While examining the mechanics and strategy of the trade, he also focuses on the trade's significance in the development of the West. This book's focus is not community, although descriptions of how the fur trade undermined native communities are part of the story.

¹⁵ Mahoney, *Provincial Lives*, 13.

analyzing these three counties, generalizations about behavioral patterns, gender ratios, and politics in Nebraska and other Great Plains territories may be made.

A combination of statistical analysis from the censuses of 1854, 1855, 1856, 1860 and 1870, along with an examination of county histories, tax lists, marriage records, newspapers, and selected land office records is the basis for much of the dissertation. The censuses provide a great deal of data and allow for an in depth study of the residents of the Nebraska Territory. For each year of the census, the name and sex of the household head is identified as well as the number of people in each household. The place of birth for each head of household is also noted. In some cases additional information, such as political party membership, is also noted. For the years 1860 and 1870, each member of the household is identified by name, gender, race, age, and occupation. Further, the 1860 and 1870 censuses identify the birthplace of each household member, the occupation, and the value of real and personal estate. There is also information about such questions as marital status, schooling, literacy, and criminal conduct.

By examining existing mortality sheets for 1860 and 1870, details on deaths for the previous year can be ascertained. Study of the agricultural records from the censuses of 1860 and 1870 record the types of crops planted and the amount of livestock owned. Therefore, from census records, a fairly detailed portrait of the regional origins, ethnicity, and lifestyles of the population base from these three counties can be drawn for the years 1854-1870.

Studies of the American West invariably deal with geography and population movement; although this study will primarily be focused on community development,

some discussion of this phenomenon must include discussion of geographic mobility and the reasons for it. In the past, it was argued that the American West possessed unique properties that affected its historical development as both a geographic place and a time in history. Frederick Jackson Turner and Walter Prescott Webb argued that the frontier, specifically the western frontier, contributed to American progress in ways very different from other regions of the country. For Turner, economic development was the key to his analysis of the West. Webb agreed with Turner to a degree and added that the environment played an important role in shaping the lives of settlers as they spread out onto the Great Plains. Adherents to the New Western Historians' philosophy however, disagree with the interpretation of both Turner and Webb. It has become increasingly clear that any explicit following of the Turner Thesis does not always adequately reveal the history of the American West.¹⁶

Although Turner and Webb discuss the influence of the open lands on those who moved west, neither historian did much research on detailing what aspects of eastern culture may have been brought with the early settlers. Many older histories of westward movement spend little time examining the roles of the individuals who uprooted themselves, while more recent works do address this issue.¹⁷ More emphasis is placed on

¹⁶Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," American Historical Association, *Annual Report*, 1893 (Washington, DC: 1893); Walter Prescott Webb, *The Great Plains*. (Boston: Ginn, 1931). Further critiques of the Turner thesis can be found in Burton J. Williams, "The Twentieth-Century American West: The Old Versus the New," *Rocky Mountain Social Science Journal* Vol. 6 October 1969 and Patricia Nelson Limerick, Clyde A. Milner II, and Charles E. Rankin, eds., *Trails: Toward a New Western History* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1991).

¹⁷Peter Boag, *Environment and Experience: Settlement Culture in 19th Century Oregon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Paul Burke and Donald DeBats, *Washington County: Politics and Community in Antebellum America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

discussing the political development of western states or the implications of American expansionism than in presenting the community life of the West's newest residents.

Works like Jack Eblen's *The First and Second United States Empires* are clear examples of the former. Eblen discusses American expansion west from the Northwest Ordinance to the admission of Arizona and New Mexico as states. Eblen utilizes a legal framework, studying the entire process of creating settlement and government in the United States. The political aspect of this westward movement is the most important to Eblen. He argues that the United States, in pushing across the continent and then beyond into the Pacific, was composing its own empire. He contends that the establishment of territories like Nebraska was very similar to the development of colonies by the British before 1775. The United States would use these territories for natural resources and as outlets for their population, while dangling the full powers of statehood before them. In discussing the politics and government of the territories, however, Eblen does not seek to include any details from the lives of the residents of these regions, native or immigrant.¹⁸ These criticisms aside, Eblen's other important work in the field of demography has made contributions to advance the study of the frontier community.¹⁹

In sharp contrast to Eblen's work on American empire stand John Mack Faragher's *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* and Glenda Riley's *The Female Frontier*.²⁰ Both works concentrate on the lives of the people in the West, although not

¹⁸Jack Ericson Eblen, *The First and Second United States Empires: Governors and Territorial Government, 1784-1912* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1968).

¹⁹Eblen, "An Analysis of Nineteenth-Century Frontier Populations," *Demography* 2 (1965): 399-413.

²⁰John Mack Faragher, *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979); Faragher, *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press,

specifically Nebraska, rather than focusing on the political story. While politics and government are obviously important parts of the story and theories like Eblen's have merit, the lives of those people who moved west must be considered. This is why I raise questions about the origins of the residents of Nebraska. The political process was often out of their hands; clearing fields, choosing livestock and building houses were not.

Don Harrison Doyle studied the urban frontier in *The Social Order of a Frontier Community*. In addition to suggesting that the terms urban and frontier can have multiple definitions, Doyle examined in close detail the community development of Jacksonville, IL as it grew from a few hundred residents in 1825 to over 5,000 by 1860. Jacksonville never became the major city some of its residents hoped for, but what Doyle reveals about the community structure is important to examine. Despite limited industrial capacity and a significant lack of connection via railroads, Jacksonville's voluntary associations and the growing level of public control over time allow Doyle to attempt analysis of problem solving in the community, especially considering the difficulties inherent within a constantly changing community.²¹

Kenneth Winkle's *The Politics of Community* deals with this last point effectively – the ever changing community and the challenges it presents. This study fits in with social and community history as it focuses on the constant and widespread population turnover that seemed to occur throughout American society in the nineteenth-century. Winkle takes the themes of movement and community construction and puts them into a

1986); Glenda Riley, *The Female Frontier: a Comparative View of Women on the Prairie and the Plains* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1988).

²¹ Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community*; Especially on page 255 where Doyle points out that in some people's minds the small town's failure was revealing an element of "chosen success."

new framework – electoral political participation. Examining relationships between migration and political participation, Winkle discusses the issue of self-defining in relation to whether someone is considered part of a community or not. Voting, an expression of community participation for adult white males was undertaken in order to confer order and authority in a region. Because antebellum Ohioans were constantly on the move, eligibility in voting was difficult to determine. In some cases, one's residence in a community for voting purposes could be determined by agreement within the community that you indeed lived there – in other cases a simple statement that you intended to be a part of the community sufficed. Winkle's study reveals that it was the more persistent residents of towns and counties who maintained authority. While voter participation was certainly encouraged – this helped new arrivals feel a part of the community – Winkle concludes that the non-transients had significantly more power than transients.²²

James Shortridge's *Peopling the Plains, Who Settled Where in Frontier Kansas*²³ is an excellent demonstration of how to study the origins of migrants to the Great Plains. Indeed, in his preface, Shortridge encourages work in his wake. By examining the origins of the local citizenry, much can be revealed about why the area took shape the way it did. As David Hackett Fischer argues in *Albion's Seed*, migrants do not abandon

²² Kenneth J. Winkle, *The Politics of Community: Migration and Politics in Antebellum Ohio* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988); see also, Winkle, "The Voters of Lincoln's Springfield: Migration and Political Participation in an Antebellum City," *The Journal of Social History* 25, no. 3 (1991): 595-611.

²³ James Shortridge, *Peopling the Plains, Who Settled Where in Frontier Kansas* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1995). See also, John Modell, "The Peopling of a Working Class Ward: Reading, Pennsylvania, 1850," (*Journal of Social History* Fall 1971, p.71); John C. Hudson, "Who was 'Forest Man?' Sources of Migrations to the Plains," (*Great Plains Quarterly* Vol. 6 No. 2 Spring 1986, p.69). Modell and Hudson examine internal migration.

their cultural heritage after they move. Often they embrace it, seeking to create ever stronger ties to the place from which they have removed.²⁴ In the American West, white citizens were almost always migrants from somewhere. Even if they were merely from different geographical regions of the United States itself, the young nation had already developed unique cultural traditions, ones that might blend or clash along the “new” frontier.

In both style and methodology, I borrow from works not usually associated directly with the study of community development of the American West. *Albion's Seed*, while somewhat flawed, does provide a fascinating model with which to examine the flow of culture from east to west. Because community will be an important element of this work, examining New England provides an established model of focused neighborhood study. Michael Zuckerman's *Peaceable Kingdoms* and Kenneth Lockridge's *A New England Town* provide opposing, but interesting, viewpoints on the development of community in the northeast.²⁵

²⁴David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

²⁵Michael Zuckerman, *Peaceable Kingdoms; New England Towns in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Knopf, 1970); Kenneth Lockridge, *A New England Town: The First Hundred Years, Dedham, Massachusetts, 1636-1736* (New York: Norton, 1970). Further examples of New England study can be found in Sumner Chilton Powell, *Puritan Village; The Formation of a New England Town* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1963); Philip J. Greven, Jr., *Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970); John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Edward Cook, *The Fathers of the Towns: Leadership and Community Structure in Eighteenth Century New England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976) and Charles S. Grant, *Democracy in the Connecticut Frontier Town of Kent* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961). For a different time period, see Robert Doherty, *Society and Power: Five New England Towns, 1800-1860, a Comparative Study* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977).