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DURING THE LATTER PART of the nineteenth century, farmers in extreme southern Illinois, along with farmers throughout the state and region, organized politically and economically. The first big upsurge of organization was in 1873 with the organization of farmers' clubs and granges of the Patrons of Husbandry. In Union County, Illinois, all sectors of the local society appear to have been swept up in the tide of discontent, although a close analysis of those active in the movement and the associations that succeeded it indicates that the movement gave voice and organized expression to a specific class. To use McNall's (1988) analysis of

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the later populist movement, the agrarian movement of the mid-1870s was an incipient "class movement," although it failed to articulate a program that effectively welded farmers into a unit that could contend for political power, even as it provided a vehicle for elite farmers to transform preexisting economic relationships. "A class movement," McNall (ibid.: 5) writes, "is one in which the participants are involved in a struggle over the very definition of their political, economic, and ideological interests. All class movements have at their core an economic dimension and, like class relationships, are about relationships of power." The organizations formed in the populist era, he argues, were attempts by farmers to create a "class *in* and *for* itself" (ibid.: 12).

The process of welding a cohesive class out of the disparate groupings that farm the earth is a complex one, with specific regional configurations. The movement persistently risked domination by a planter or other elite grouping (e.g., Billings 1981; Schwartz 1976) unless a popular leadership could successfully invent a program that appealed to a broad cross section of farming people, as Barnes (1984) argues the Texas Alliance subtreasury plan did. Farmers have historically been divided not only by the regional and commodity specialties on which agricultural economists and policy analysts focus (e.g., Kile 1948; Ladd 1964; McConnell 1953) but also by disparate relations to the means of production—the bases for structural analyses of class position (e.g., Banaji 1980; Goss et al. 1980; Howe 1986; Rodefeld 1978). The major class categories through which American agriculture has been historically organized—landlord, tenant, laborer, and independent ("yeoman") farmer—while blurred by relations of kin, career mobility, and size of operation, have militated against the creation of a farming class acting for itself. As Hahn (1983) argues, these structural arrangements, along with racial and other communal identifications, strongly shaped farmers' responses to changes within the larger political economy, particularly during the prolonged and uneven transition to capitalism within rural regions such as the Georgia upcountry.

Taylor (1953) writes of a "farmers' movement" with roots that preceded the transformation of agriculturalists into market- and profit-oriented producers. Mooney (1989) points out that agrarian movements differed before and after the Civil War: prior to the Civil War, he observes, conflict usually took the form of political

actions against taxation (the Whisky Rebellion, Shays's Rebellion, etc.), while after the war it took a largely economic form of cooperative development. I suggest that these differences are indications of the different political economies within which farmers functioned and of the different forms of production that farmers themselves created. During the antebellum period largely noncapitalist farmers directly challenged the power of the state and its major mechanisms of accumulation—taxes—while after the war, with industrial capitalism ascendant, they increasingly grappled to create or resist forms of economic organization. The political and economic organizations and rebellions that farmers created stood at the intersection of global structural transformations and the self-activity of knowledgeable actors (Giddens 1981).

This view rejects narrowly economic interpretations of farmers' movements, such as Taylor's (1953: 10), which correlates upsurges of discontent with times "when farmers found themselves at comparative disadvantage in relation to prices, markets, and credits." Buck (1910, 1913, 1921) attributes the upsurge of activism in the 1870s largely to immediate economic deprivation and interests. It was, he says (1910: 10–12), primarily a response to falling commodity prices coupled with rising production costs, along with other, presumably less central, economic grievances. According to this narrowly economic interpretation, the granger movement was coterminous with and largely caused by the inevitable recession and associated policy questions following the Civil War. Similarly, Hicks (1931) attributes the populist upsurge to economic deprivation.

Deprivation, however, explains neither the passions that inflamed the aroused farmers nor the particular rhetoric and programs that they developed. Opposition to monopolies and their political and social as well as economic influence dominated agrarian rhetoric, both in the granger and in the later populist periods. This suggests that the upsurge of activism in 1873–75, and the particular forms it took, represented responses to deeper social phenomena implicating the enduring structures of society. In the decades of agrarian ferment and mobilization, economically and politically active people dissolved old classes and created new ones. The years 1873 and 1874, in particular, were years when farmers enthusiastically mobilized. I suggest that social movements are in many ways comparable to the liminal phase analyzed

by van Gennep (1960) and Turner (1974) in rites of passage and other transformative social phenomena. Liminality, a time of "betwixt and between," is a state in which existing social relations are dissolved and reformulated; it is a period of what Turner terms "anti-structure," when salient aspects of social life are raised to discursive consciousness and actively contested and reconstructed. As such, factional and other schisms within a given social formation are at least temporarily dissolved or set aside and have the potential to reconsolidate in a new configuration. The very fluidity of periods of movement mobilization creates a sense of a "movement culture"—what Turner calls "communitas"—at the same time that it allows multiple, potentially contradictory, ideologies, programs, and alliances to be created. In rites of passage, formal "rites of reaggregation" reconstitute the subjects of the rite in their new social persona (e.g., having moved from youth to adult, from parents' children to married couple). Social movements have no comparable external structure to perform such rituals. However, as movements lose their enthusiasm, they become routinized; they take on specific configurations, and relations between people assume structured, predictable forms. Generally, however, these forms are significantly different from those that preceded the onset of enthusiasm. Ambiguity is increasingly eliminated; a new orthodoxy is installed.

The farmers' movement of 1873 and 1874 had several primary themes that were held in creative tension until practical, organizational forms began to emerge out of the ferment. At least three strands in the overall dynamics of the movement can be distinguished: the preexisting (precapitalist or "traditional") social order; its associated ideology of radical republicanism, with its adherence to grass-roots democracy and labor-cost theory of value, that in the antebellum period was expressed as opposition to taxation (government power) and in the post–Civil War period as opposition to monopolies (corporate power); and the structural transformations in the U.S. political economy as corporate industrial capitalism became ascendant after the Civil War.

Destler (1944), Goodwyn (1976, 1978), McNall (1988), and others identify a commitment to grass-roots democracy as central to the nineteenth-century agrarian movements. The "granger laws" that purported to address the economic difficulties besetting post–Civil War farmers were clothed in the rhetoric of justice and

of a moral civil order that predated liberal capitalism (Miller 1971: 26–32).[1] The passionate core of the movement was, as Destler (1944) argues, articulated through the rhetoric and ideology of radical republicanism. The suspicion of government that was part of this intellectual heritage deeply shaped, and limited, agrarians' programmatic formulations. As Laurie (1989: 217) observes for labor, "Political radicalism [restrained] economic radicalism," with conservative producer cooperatives playing the role in agriculture that "prudential unionism" did in redirecting the labor movement from ends that would transform the social order in ways consistent with the radical vision.

This agrarian democracy, at least in its initial formulations, grew out of the specific mode of production of independent farmers and constituted the ideological portion of what Bourdieu terms a *habitus*. The habitus, Bourdieu (1977: 85) states, "is the product of collective history, the objective structures (e.g., of language, economy, etc.) to succeed in reproducing themselves more or less completely, in the form of durable dispositions, in the [individuals] lastingly subjected to the same conditionings, and hence placed in the same material conditions of existence." These ideological and cultural predilections—"durable dispositions"—were made articulate by agrarians in their critiques of the new order and in some formulations of their programs.

Bourdieu's notion of habitus encompasses more than the intellectual formulations through which people explain their activities; it points to the entire range of human activities through which people reproduce their social existence. These include what Giddens (1981) terms "practical reason"—those habitual activities that are rarely brought to discursive consciousness—as well as more calculated activity. The second dynamic contributing to the particular forms in which farmers organized themselves is, therefore, the preexisting social order, understood as a body of practices and social relations.

Durable dispositions were called into question by the third dynamic that shaped the movement of the 1870s: the structural transformation of the U.S. political economy after the Civil War. Taylor (1953: 88) refers to the "agricultural revolution [that] took place in the United States [between the Civil War and the close of the century] which was as significant in its effects as the Industrial Revolution had been in England a century earlier." Bardolph

(1948: 245) asserts that the "most striking aspect of the revolution was a shifting from self-sufficient to commercial farming—a gradual substitution of farming as a business for farming as a way of life." Nordin (1974: 3) opens his study of the grange with the assertion that post–Civil War farmers "were torn by two contradictory forces—Jeffersonian agrarianism and a new industrial urbanism." The corporation emerged as the dominant form of economic organization through the agency of the rising industrial capitalist class (Trachtenberg 1982), while a hungry industrial proletariat, located in rapidly growing cities, provided an expanding market to U.S. farmers. Corporate industrial capitalism dissolved old foundations of power and status and created new ones. As the new order became increasingly hegemonic, the old social order was undermined. All sectors of society were affected: small farmers, both propertied and landless, whose livelihood became more precarious and increasingly dependent on wage labor; and old elites, both mercantile and agrarian, whose traditional bases of power, grounded in kinship and participation in civic, political, religious, and military organizations, were supplanted by the power of the purse.

In general, rural people in regions like southern Illinois experienced the new order as a force coming from outside—from eastern manufacturers and bankers, from the railroads, and from the radical Republicans. To some degree, however, the rising entrepreneurial class rose out of preexisting propensities associated with boosterism, speculative development, and an ideology of progress that many educated members of rural society shared with the newly dominant industrialists. These propensities worked against creating a program that included poor, "backward" farmers and unpropertied laborers, even as corporate capitalism overrode the ability of small producers to compete successfully. The movement that was briefly generated in 1873 and 1874 therefore expressed contradictory analyses and programs. Despite their enthusiasm and vigorous intellectual work, its members failed to create a program that would weld all farming people into a potent political force. The organizational forms that sedimented out of the movement—marketing cooperatives and a town-oriented economy—accepted the ascendancy of commodity production. The movement appears to have provided a vehicle through which members of the precapitalist elite reorganized their social relationships in

ways that permitted them to retain their status in the corporate era, even as the quality of those relationships was transformed. In other words, the *structure* of class relationships appears to have been transformed, even as many individuals retained a semblance of their prior status and power. Simultaneously, rural voters appear to have adhered to the antebellum focus on small government by persistently defeating ballot measures for township organization, a proxy for increased taxation to improve roads, and measures to require the fencing of livestock, which would have redefined the rights accruing to private property (see Adams 1992 for an analysis of these issues).

This article examines the processes of class transformation and formation through a close analysis of the actors in the agrarian movement of the 1870s in one county in extreme southern Illinois.[2] The county's weekly newspaper, the *Jonesboro Gazette*, a militantly Democratic mouthpiece, provided a forum for the debates and events that shaped the county's changing political economy and reported the activities of farmers' clubs, granges, and other associations in considerable detail. This analysis is based on news items and editorial commentary in the *Gazette*, on election returns, on county commissioner records and other records in the County Clerk's Office, particularly incorporation documents, and on other documentary sources as noted.

THE SETTING

Union County, along with the rest of southern Illinois, was largely settled by immigrants from the upland South, that is, southwestern Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and western Virginia, via Tennessee and Kentucky (Buck 1917; Elbert 1985; Eller 1987). The Germans and Scotch-Irish who created the upland South culture during the eighteenth century were in many ways distinct from both Yankees and tidewater planters (Newton 1974; Otto and Anderson 1982; Price 1969; Rohrbough 1978) and were, according to many early accounts, resistant to dependence on commodity production (Cole 1919: 14; Kofoid 1906; Power 1953). During the first half of the nineteenth century, they created a durable political economy resting on the multiple bases of a county seat–oriented political organization; a large number of freeholding farmers, some of whom were simultaneously millers and mechanics (e.g.,

coopers, blacksmiths, carpenters, tanners and leatherworkers, and operators of saw, grist, flour, and wool-carding mills); an organized militia; an active religious life, largely Baptist, Lutheran, and Christian (Cambellite);[3] an active Masonic brotherhood; and a bilateral, although quite strongly patriarchal, kinship system. The county was almost entirely white; the proportion of African Americans never rose over 1.5% and was below 1% during most of the county's history (derived from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population 1820–1900). Relations between kin and neighbors, organized through these institutions, mediated most families' subsistence needs with little if any recourse to wage labor and only marginal commodity production. As late as 1860 only 178 hands were enumerated as laborers in manufacturing, out of a male population between 15 and 60 years of age of 3,052 (5.8%), and only a shingle manufactory and a pottery employed more than 6 people (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Manufactures 1860: Table 1; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population 1860: Table 1). In contrast, the census enumerated 1,256 farms (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Agriculture 1860: 197), indicating the almost completely rural nature of the county.[4] In 1850 the county seat, with a population of 584, was the only recognized town; a decade later the county seat and its competitor at the railroad station had a combined population of only 832. Because of a growing population, the proportion of town residents actually declined between 1850 and 1860, from 7.7% to 7.4%. A few merchants in the county seat acted as the node for what limited commercial exchange existed (see, e.g., Brush 1944). During most of this period, little money was in circulation, markets were weakly developed, and manufacturing was extremely small-scale.

Although this society is frequently characterized as egalitarian, differentials in wealth, status, and political power existed. Country "squires"—respectable landowners—formed the backbone of rural society and served as justices of the peace, constables, grand and petit jurors, election judges, road overseers, and so forth. Voters in the county voted heavily Democratic and were generally opposed to internal improvements and state and federal banking policies, but they were divided on the issue of building the Illinois Central Railroad (ICRR) (Jones 1955; Pease 1923; Perrin 1883: 298; Simon 1969). Inasmuch as property was privately owned and recognized as a commodity, and to the extent that wage labor

and commodity production existed, although in a form marginal to the predominant relations of production, the region's political economy is best characterized as precapitalist, rather than noncapitalist.[5]

The new industrial order pushed into the county in the 1850s with the construction of the ICRR (Gates 1934), although it does not seem to have had much impact initially outside the area directly contiguous to the line. With the railroad came links to urban markets and an influx of Yankee and other entrepreneurial farmers and investors. The loess-covered hills through which the railroad passed favored fruit and vegetable production. In the 1850s progressive horticulturalists migrated to the region, particularly to the railroad village of South Pass. The village was eventually renamed Cobden in honor of Sir Richard Cobden, the British free-trade advocate who is said to have visited the town in 1859 as a representative of British stockholders in the ICRR (DuBois 1927).[6] A number of these immigrant horticulturalists were active boosters of scientific and progressive agriculture and were linked to state and national networks through various agricultural organizations and the new land-grant colleges.[7] Despite their commercial proclivities, they, like the older agrarian elite, initially organized agricultural societies oriented to education and display rather than economic cooperatives. Many of the original settlers who owned land near the railroad also adopted commercial fruit and vegetable production; however, according to family recollections (see also *Jonesboro Gazette* 21 May 1870), some swapped land near the tracks for more remote acreage.

The Civil War had a deep impact on the county. The Ninth Congressional District rendezvous was encamped near the railroad at Anna (Carter 1987a: 283); a reputed chapter of the Knights of the Golden Circle operated in the northern part of the county (Kennedy 1910).[8] Local Republicans worked with the Union army, imprisoning individuals, including a number of local leaders, accused of desertion and sedition; the *Jonesboro Gazette* was closed for six months for sedition; and the 109th Regiment, one of several units organized and led by Union County gentry, was disbanded in 1863 in disgrace for allegedly failing to fight the Confederate forces vigorously (Carter 1987b: 300–302; Perrin 1883: 328–33). Whatever effects these factional conflicts had on subsequent political behavior, the war sharply increased demand for the county's

agricultural products, in particular wheat and wool. Wheat production increased significantly between 1850 and 1860, from 31,902 to 168,530 bushels. Strong international markets stimulated even greater production between 1870 and 1880, when wheat yields increased from 180,231 to 371,620 bushels. Union demand for wool to replace Southern cotton was reflected in the county's wool production, which increased from 12,563 pounds in 1860 to 24,653 pounds in 1870, with a corresponding increase in the number of sheep (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Agriculture 1850, 1860, 1870). Farmers also began growing cotton; the 1870 Census of Agriculture listed 63 bales of cotton produced in the county.[9]

Other economic and demographic changes signaled increasing integration in commodity markets and the greater importance of towns. Between 1860 and 1870 the proportion of the population that lived in towns rose to 14.4%; by 1880 more than one-fifth of the county's people lived in towns, all of which were sited along rail lines (for a table of these figures, see Adams 1987: 60). Despite persistent attempts by residents of more remote hamlets during the 1860s and 1870s to boost their area and attract manufacturers (e.g., *Jonesboro Gazette* 13 Oct. 1866, 28 Sept. and 28 Dec. 1867, 27 June and 5 Dec. 1868, 23 Apr. and 3 Sept. 1870, 28 Nov. 1874), these communities dwindled as rural mills and other small manufactories were supplanted by larger operations in the railroad towns (e.g., Karraker 1947; Rowe 1940; Perrin 1883: 409, 427, 428).

The growing importance of draft stock, associated with greater permanently cleared acreage and with increased dependence on horse- or mule-drawn equipment (plows, reapers, etc.), is indicated by the increasing numbers of horses and mules: from 2,605 to 4,820 to 5,407 in 1860, 1870, and 1880, respectively (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Agriculture 1860, 1870, 1880). Mules, in particular, increased sharply, from 901 in 1870 to 1,425 in 1880, an indication of rising dependence not only on commodity production but also on hired labor. Mules, according to oral accounts (Aldridge 1976), could not be overworked or driven into dangerous situations by a careless operator, as horses could. Mules were also raised for sale on southern markets (Perrin 1883: 415) and to the nearby coal mines. Fruit, vegetable, and potato production also increased sharply (see Table 1).

The rich hardwood forests of the hills and the creek and river

Table 1 Indicators of commercial agriculture

Year	Orchard ($)	Market garden ($)	Irish potato (bu.)	Sweet potato (bu.)	Wheat (bu.)	Horses (head)	Mules (head)
1850	1,615	—	13,221	7,862	31,902	2,280	68
1860	32,894	7,784	29,672	24,596	168,530	2,253	352
1870	150,576	24,510	95,352	75,052	180,231	3,968	852
1880	37,101	136,653	83,967	50,085	371,620	3,982	1,425

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Agriculture 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880.

bottoms provided another source of wealth. Although they had been exploited for sale to the St. Louis market during the antebellum period, large-scale timbering boomed during the 1860s and 1870s, supplying lumber to the growing cities, railroad ties to the expanding rail system, and mine timbers to the coal mines directly north of the county. Both newcomers and members of old families purchased steam-powered sawmills and, in most cases, used them in conjunction with farming operations (Brush 1944: 160–62; Krause 1983; Perrin 1883: 587, B135–B136). In 1840 only 3 sawmills were enumerated in the county; by 1860 there were 11 small mills, employing only 44 hands, with a value of production of only $51,600. A decade later, 12 mills were enumerated, with 84 hands and a value of production of $131,400; in 1880, although the number of mills had dropped to 8, they employed 100 hands (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Manufactures 1840, 1860, 1870, 1880).

The enlargement of commodity production created other opportunities for investors to profit from ownership of expensive technologies. Some farmers invested in threshing equipment that permitted them, like the grist, flour, and saw millers who predated them, to levy a toll on other farmers. With the possibility for increased commercial exchange, entrepreneurial individuals adopted (and sometimes invented) relatively expensive technologies.[10]

These technologies and the growing importance of commodity production utilizing wage labor brought about a new moral code. While the producer ideology and actual bonds between people valued mutual dependence between neighbors—for example,

blacksmiths who made plows for local use and poorer farmers who needed credit from wealthier neighbors to make it through to harvest (see, e.g., *Jonesboro Gazette* 18 Apr. 1867, 25 July 1868, 24 Jan. and 14 Apr. 1874)—the new order valued individual, competitive enterprise and wage labor in an environment dominated by corporations, rings, and combinations (e.g., ibid. 24 Nov. 1866, 30 Nov. 1867, 10 May 1873). These new relationships, as the ones between owners of threshing equipment and farmers, sometimes met with resistance from those experiencing a new form of dependency: a farmers' club in July 1873 "passed a resolution . . . that none of them would thresh until all were ready. They intend to control those machine men, instead of letting the machine men control them" (ibid. 19 July 1873).

Immediately following the Civil War, "Negro equality" also offended many white Union County residents' notions of racial superiority; until about 1872 race and economics were conflated in rhetoric, if not in logic, as when U.S. Congressman A. J. Kuykendall visited his district and the *Jonesboro Gazette* (23 Mar. 1867) wrote: "Mr. K. stands on the record against negro equality and negro suffrage every time. His speech against the bank monopolies was a most creditable effort." Similarly, a regular correspondent to the *Gazette*, Dr. M. V. B. Harwood, combined vitriolic attacks on federal policies toward the South and Negro suffrage with attacks on "the unjust doctrine that the rich, untaxed bondholder is title to good interest and principal, while the poor soldier, artisan, mechanic, farmer and laborer shall take promises to pay in the shape of greenbacks. In the 'language of Lincoln' it should be all one thing or all the other: all gold or all paper" (ibid. 9 May 1868).

Given the passion with which *Gazette* correspondents expressed racist sentiments, it is all the more surprising that by 1873 the issues surrounding Reconstruction had been almost completely muted in the pages of the *Gazette* and was completely absent from reporting on the farmers' movement. It was, perhaps, submerged in the newfound unity between Republican and Democratic agrarians, who often shared leadership in movement organizations. The issue was not dead in the county, however, for the *Gazette* (3 Oct. 1874) spoke out against a Ku Klux Klan threat against a county businessman who hired black men.

At the same time that these structural and moral changes were being thrust upon the people of the region, currency contractions

following wartime inflation severely hurt the local economy. The financial crisis most seriously affected those who had most aggressively adopted the new order by tying their fortunes to commercial, commodity, and capital markets. Displeasure fell not only on distant monopolists and bankers but on the railroad express companies and the Illinois Central, whose rates were frequently prohibitive for commercial farmers. Tariff and trade policies were issues that had long divided western and southern farmers from Yankee manufacturers (Benson 1955). These policies now became even more important in southern Illinois as more leading figures wished to invest in equipment that, they alleged, was made more expensive by federal trade policies that placed protective tariffs on manufactured goods. These views were repeatedly aired in the pages of the *Jonesboro Gazette*. The contributors inveighed against high prices, high transportation costs, high tariffs, and corrupt public officials as well as "the iron pirates of Pennsylvania, and the New England Manufacturers, who have become rich out of our poverty" (*Jonesboro Gazette* 1 Mar. and 19 July 1873).

The period following the Civil War was one of rapid structural transformation, when social sectors appeared fluid. Nonetheless, three discrete groupings of political actors could be discerned. First, a relatively well defined elite who formed a largely rural "gentry" developed prior to the building of the railroad and the onset of the Civil War. Their political base, and the basis of much of their formal power, lay in the courthouse and the judicial system (including local justices of the peace). They were tied through bonds of neighbor and kin to a large number of "substantial farmers" and, preliminary research indicates, tended to rise out of this broader grouping.[11] The gentry, although I characterize it as a discrete grouping, appears to have been factionalized along party lines and also, perhaps, between farmers and town-based merchants, lawyers, and functionaries (e.g., the "courthouse ring"). As such, it contained both potential entrepreneurs (who would join the second group) and individuals whose interests and sentiments were better served through precapitalist social relations. The Agricultural Society, organized in 1857 to sponsor the annual county fair, and similar societies oriented to education and the display of crops were the primary agricultural organizations formed by this grouping prior to 1873.[12]

Second, a rising class of commercial farmers, merchants, and

manufacturers, drawn largely from immigrant (predominantly Yankee) families but also including some members of the old elite (including substantial farmers and town-based merchants and professionals), became increasingly dominant. Stimulated by but generally following the decline of the movement, this group organized a wide variety of shipping and other producer associations.

Finally, a disparate grouping of smallholders, squatters, tenants, and casual laborers formed a largely voiceless (but not voteless) citizenry. The few strong agrarians writing in the *Gazette* defended their interests. Although they appear to have been largely unorganized, they persistently defeated measures that promoted commercial farming, particularly fencing livestock and improving roads (see Adams 1992).

THE MOVEMENT

In 1873 the first big upsurge of movement activity swept over the state (Benson 1955; Buck 1910, 1913, 1921; Howard 1972; McCabe 1969 [1873]; Nordin 1974; Periam 1874; Scott 1958, 1961, 1962; Taylor 1953). Farmers' clubs sprang up in Union County; by the end of that year at least 15 clubs were meeting in schoolhouses, and a county association had been formed. Scott (1961: 157) reports that 820 clubs, with a membership of 46,473, were reported in Illinois in December 1873. In an area that counted not quite 2,000 farms in the 1870 census, the county newspaper reported that 100 substantial farmers belonged to the Friendship Farmers' Club (*Jonesboro Gazette* 15 Nov. 1873), while other clubs reported memberships from 16 to 30 or reported a "goodly number" of members (ibid. 15 Mar., 26 Apr., 24 May, 27 Sept., 25 Oct., and 13 Dec. 1873). Using a conservative number of 20 members per club, approximately 15% of farmers joined these movement organizations.[13] They could, however, mobilize larger numbers of people. A Fourth of July picnic organized in 1874 by some of the movement's leaders drew an estimated 4,000 people (ibid. 11 July 1874).

Rifts soon emerged that pointed to structural schisms between town and country in the county's polity. At an organizing meeting of a local club in September 1873 a substantial farmer in the northern part of the county, Ephraim Kimmel, "pitched into the society of the county association for not being accustomed to stand

in the sunshine of the harvest field. Mr. Kimmel felt no sympathy with any movement which admitted to membership men who made their living, or any considerable part, under shelter" (ibid. 27 Sept. 1873). The newspaper editor and other nonfarmers were among the leaders of the county association, and, while they initially supported the independent "farmers and mechanics" based on the producer ideology (e.g., ibid. 30 May 1874), they soon became proponents of industrial development. This transformation is an indication of the instability of the gentry.[14]

Other schisms were tied to state and party politics. Many of the leading elements in Illinois, Lincoln's home state, were Republican, while Union County was heavily Democratic. Party alliances on the state level and in many counties were extremely complex; it is likely that the dominance of the strongly oppositional Democratic party in Union County weakened county support for the State Farmers' Association and the Independent Reform party it supported (Scott 1961: 157). Unlike farmers in many other Illinois counties, they did not approve a slate of candidates for the fall elections in 1873 (*Jonesboro Gazette* 19 July 1873; Scott 1961).[15] Instead, the ferment was expressed through the candidacy of a large number of men, including 14 for two seats on the Board of County Commissioners (*Jonesboro Gazette* 8 Nov. 1873). In 1874 four men competed for sheriff and five for commissioner (ibid. 7 Nov. 1874). By 1877 political tempers had cooled; election returns showed only two candidates for commissioner, and the following year only three serious candidates ran for sheriff (ibid. 10 Nov. 1877, 9 Nov. 1878).

With the stimulus of a local activist who in 1873 was named state deputy of the grange (ibid. 20 Dec. 1873), and with increasing disaffection with the State Farmers' Association throughout the state (Benson 1955; Buck 1913; Newcombe 1945: 426; Scott 1961, 1962), many of the farmers' clubs reorganized as granges of the Patrons of Husbandry. The grange was explicitly and strongly nonpartisan, although it encouraged political action by farmers. It nonetheless eschewed a role in developing a political program that might unify farmers in opposition to the existing parties, both of which courted farmers assiduously. In January 1875, after a meeting of the greatly diminished State Farmers' Association,[16] the *Gazette* (30 Jan. 1875) editorialized: "There was a small attendance at the meeting, and it is evident that the Grange, if it makes

no mistakes, will soon swallow the association, except the officers, [Willard C.] Flagg and [S. M.] Smith, who are most interested." [17] In May 1875 the paper further editorialized (ibid. 15 May 1875): "The Farmers' Association of Illinois is a well-meaning organization and stands upon a sound platform of principles; but we regret to say it enabled the radical party of this state, last fall, to elect a state treasurer, and did a great many foolish things. It is run and controlled by a party of impractical men, and the sooner it disbands, the better."

Partisan politics and alleged ineptitude were not the only bases on which the *Gazette* opposed the association. It joined the debate about the movement's direction on a more fundamental level, that of the role of the state in the economy. Railroad rates were among the most important issues taken up by the movement. According to the *Gazette* (30 Jan. 1875), the grange, in its state meeting, declared that "more can be done by competition than by legislation" and therefore favored "the construction of lines of railroad which would naturally compete with each other . . . with laws preventing combination." In contrast, the association "announced in favor of Government Railroads and Canals, to be controlled by the central power at Washington." The *Gazette* strongly denounced this program, since it would create "a monopoly of transportation destructive to our free institutions." Unable to foresee that the new corporate industrial form of production would make it impossible for the independent artisan—mechanic—to compete successfully, the editor and other contributors to the paper's columns promoted laissez-faire competition as the counter to monopoly.

A three-way debate may be discerned. First, some state leaders advocated state control of major transportation systems. This tendency had no representatives among *Gazette* correspondents, and I find no evidence of significant support for such policies in Union County. Second, the grange, as interpreted by the newspaper, promoted laissez-faire capitalism and urged farmers to think of themselves as businessmen.[18] Despite a defense of the farmer and mechanic (which decreased through time), they increasingly identified with the new order and sought to emulate industrial and commercial capitalists by organizing agricultural combinations. Attempts by farmers to organize combinations created tensions with small-town merchants, who sometimes found themselves the target of the farmers' anger and with whom the farmers' coopera-

tive associations sometimes directly competed. While antipathy between merchant and producer had had a long history in rural America, farmers' organizations of cooperative associations for the first time created institutions that both expressed this antipathy and provided an alternative to merchant control of local commerce.

Finally, some farmers advocated organizing economically and politically, as a class, to retain agrarian social forms. Assuming a primarily defensive posture, these farmers held to the Democratic platform on racial, tariff, tax, and monetary issues but cast the class struggle not in terms of one business faction combining against others for a fair share of the pie, but in terms of retaining rights and social relationships threatened by monopoly capital.[19] Programmatically, this meant sustaining local farmers and mechanics in order to retain the political economy made up of independent producers. The *Gazette* (24 Jan. 1874) expressed this tendency when it appealed to the movement to support local mechanics:

> Deere, the plow monopolist, of Moline, says that small country manufacturers cannot compete with them, and that he, and his agents, can defy the farmers association. This is O.K. We have good plow makers in Dongola, Anna and Jonesboro, and our farmers can carry out the true principle of co-operation by buying of our home plow makers. This Moline concern gets the timber used in making plows from this county; and with the advantage of good timber, free of Railroad freights, our people can get their plows at home, and build up our own mechanics.

Although all strands in this submerged debate used physiocratic appeals to a "producer ideology" (Kulikoff 1989; Mitchell 1987), it was most fully developed by such agrarians. A growing body of scholarship as well as evidence from Union County indicates that these farmers were not explicitly anticapitalist, inasmuch as their ideological perspectives arose during the preindustrial beginnings of the capitalist mode of production. However, their notion of private property was not primarily competitive and profit-oriented; rather, they saw property ownership as the basis for providing "a competency" (Vickers 1990). They envisioned a locally interdependent, relatively autonomous economy made up of independent farmers and mechanics, in which any capable (white) man could become an independent producer.[20] These agrarians sought

to organize a defensive shield against "the enemy," namely, large-scale business interests (and probably, along the way, local merchants, although that perspective did not explicitly appear in the pages of the *Gazette*). They appear to have stood in much the same relationship to the new order as the English Luddites did, as reinterpreted by E. P. Thompson (1963). Like the Luddites, they did not pose a radical alternative to the rising industrial capitalist order but instead adhered to and attempted to preserve older relations of production that the new order undercut, using a rhetoric of radical democracy. In more modern terms, the predominant tension within the agrarian movement appears to have been between those who saw the conflict in terms of opposing classes and therefore sought to fight to regain farmers' declining power and way of life—those who experienced the movement as a "class movement," to use McNall's phrase—and those who saw it in terms of competing interest groups and therefore sought to integrate, as businessmen, more equitably into the new order.[21]

The fight to retain precapitalist social relations appeared more clearly in votes on two issues, fencing livestock and township organization, than in published documents (Adams 1992). In southern Illinois, as in the Georgia upcountry (Hahn 1983), croplands were fenced with all other lands considered available for common usage. Small farmers relied heavily on their livestock's access to forage and water that their own smallholdings did not have. The assertion of rights of private property over these lands, therefore, was implicitly class legislation and was seen as such by many farmers. Similarly, township organization was advocated as a means by which taxes could be established to maintain a road system adequate to carry crops to market. Both these measures were placed on the ballot throughout the 1870s and 1880s and were persistently defeated. Close examination of precinct voting returns, however, indicates that the voters in precincts along the railroad line became more and more sympathetic to these issues. Finally, in 1891 a narrow majority voted for fencing all livestock. Township organization ceased to be an issue when the state legislature allowed independent road-taxing districts to be established (*Jonesboro Gazette* 14 July 1894).

It is impossible to determine the positions that the leadership of the agricultural organizations and county government took on these issues. The *Gazette* (1 Jan. 1871), initially hostile to the state-

passed fencing law, soon became editorially noncommittal, and its correspondents were divided. It can be inferred that commercial farmers—the members of shipping associations, at least—supported both stock laws and township organization, or at least improved roads. For example, the Big Creek Gravel Road Company, a joint-stock cooperative, was organized in 1884 by the farmers along its route. Unlike earlier merchant-organized toll roads that linked the county seat with river landings, it linked two railroad towns. It represented the new, market-oriented farmer, and its failure to break even during the next several years indicated the refusal of most farmers to join the new order willingly. According to the *Gazette* (18 Jan. 1890), most farmers took alternative, poorly maintained, tracks to town.

Two types of organizations correlate more or less with the different elite groupings: agricultural societies helped organize the leading elements of the antebellum gentry, while economic associations—cooperatives—helped forge a coherent polity out of the emergent commercial growers of the post–Civil War era. The upsurge of political activism, organized briefly through the farmers' clubs and somewhat more substantially by the Patrons of Husbandry, expressed the potential to create an agrarian alternative to the increasingly hegemonic corporate order, but it ended up providing an organizational and ideological bridge between these two eras and a vehicle through which some individuals could move as active participants from one order to the other.

Agricultural societies predated and coexisted with both movement organizations and joint-stock cooperatives. The first of these, the Union County Agricultural and Mechanical Society, was organized in 1857 under the auspices of the State Agricultural Society to sponsor the annual county agricultural fair and to encourage better quality of agricultural products (Illinois State Agricultural Society 1858: 174–75; see also Scott 1970: 10–11, 16–17; Neely 1967 [1935]).[22] It had been preceded by a shipping association, formed in 1844 with 33 members (*Jonesboro Gazette* 8 Apr. 1887).[23] There is no indication that this association survived into the 1870s, and similar organizations did not appear until the 1880s. Societies similar to the county society, representing horticulturalists and fruit growers, were formed in Cobden and Anna. Their primary role was educational, with an artisanlike concern for quality, although the fruit and vegetable growers' associations also nego-

tiated with the Illinois Central Railroad to establish convenient schedules and special trains for fragile fruits, such as strawberries (e.g., ibid. 22 Dec. 1866; 30 Mar., 25 May, and 22 June 1867). Cobden growers formed the Cobden Fruit Growers' Association and built a horticultural hall as early as 1863; the Union County Horticultural Society and the Anna Fruit Growers organized in 1867 (Perrin 1883: 398; *Jonesboro Gazette* 30 Mar. 1867); and by 1868 the *Gazette* regularly listed the Agricultural and Mechanical Society, the Union County Horticultural Society, and the Southern Illinois Fruit Growers' Association (Cobden) in its agricultural column.

These societies were eclipsed by the cooperative associations that grew out of the clubs and granges.[24] The first movements toward creating formal marketing associations appeared as part of the upsurge of farmer activism. As early as 1873 some farmers' clubs organized produce pools in order to ship at carload rates (ibid. 9 and 16 Aug. 1873, 10 Jan. 1874), and in 1874 the national grange provided cooperative purchasing of seed, implements, and fertilizers (ibid. 28 Feb. 1874). In 1875 the Cobden grange bought a flour mill, which operated until 1880 (ibid. 15 May 1875 and many more reports), and the county grange planned to build a sweet potato house "on a gigantic scale," organized as a joint-stock company (ibid. 17 Apr. 1875)—a project that apparently never materialized. Over the next two decades a considerable number of associations were formed on the principle of a joint-stock company, more or less according to the Rochdale plan (in most of these corporations some individuals held more than one share, but stock was widely distributed) (Union County Corporate Records 1875–97).[25] Late in 1874 a regional attempt to form a fruit-distributing association to prevent glutting the Chicago market (*Jonesboro Gazette* 14 Nov. 1874) quickly joined similar regional attempts elsewhere, culminating in the Western Fruit Distribution Association (ibid. 9, 16, and 30 Jan., 13 Feb., 6 and 27 Mar., and 10 and 24 Apr. 1875). In January 1876 more than 150 fruit growers along the ICRR circulated a petition for "a fast fruit train . . . at a reasonable rate of freight" (ibid. 22 and 29 Jan. 1876). Discontent with rates and timetables led in the 1880s to shipping associations. These associations were major vehicles for marketing the fruits and vegetables that were a significant part of the local agricultural economy, particularly in the areas with easy access to the railroad.

They came to act as agents for their members, negotiating good terms with Chicago and other produce brokers.

Three distinct types of organizations can therefore be distinguished: agricultural societies formed during the antebellum period that were oriented toward exhibitions and education; marketing associations established during and after the 1873–74 farmers' movement that negotiated with the railroads and acted as agents for growers; and "movement" organizations that protested perceived injustices. For a brief period in 1873 and 1874 these organizations created what Goodwyn (1976, 1978), writing of the later populist movement, terms "a movement culture," a liminal period in which the definition of farmers' political, economic, and ideological interests were contested as new relations of power were structured (see also McNall 1988).

THE ACTORS AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS

At the beginning of this article I asserted that farmers' political and economic organizations stood at the intersection of global structural transformations and the self-activity of knowledgeable actors. A close analysis of the individuals involved in these organizations reveals that the latter served to unite relatively discrete groupings of the farming elite. Membership in organizations and service in county and local offices were determined by entering all relevant data from the *Jonesboro Gazette* and Union County Corporate Records for the years 1867 through 1883 in a computer database. Organizations classified as agricultural or professional societies and those lumped together as marketing associations had little overlap in membership. Only 7 individuals were leaders of both types of organizations. In contrast, the relatively ephemeral movement organizations included significant numbers of members of both enduring types of organizations. Fifteen of the 59 leaders of professional societies were active in movement organizations; 34 of the 158 identified members of shipping associations were movement leaders.

The degree of political participation also varied by type of organization. Only 9 individuals active in shipping associations (6%) held county offices, while 25% of the leaders in agricultural societies were county officers. Perhaps even more significantly, 45% of the bondsmen for county officers were members of professional

societies, while only 29% of them were members of shipping associations. This finding is consistent with the forms of class organization that the earlier and later modes of production would tend to produce. The prewar (or pre-railroad) agrarian formation gave rise to a loosely class-divided society in which elite display and control of political offices were important dimensions of both material accumulation and the social construction of power relations. Capitalist relations of production moved the major means of accumulation and control over economic processes into the wage-labor relationship. Direct control of the judiciary and public treasury were no longer central to economic power. In fact, given the exigencies of operating a business, such offices and participation in display-oriented societies are seen to have been relatively low priorities in a businessman's time allocation decisions.[26]

The movement organizations appear to have mediated the transformation of class organization by the agricultural elite. They included members of professional societies and shipping associations, the organizations that have been identified as representing the old and new orders, respectively, although they involved many people who were not members of either. Relatively few bondsmen or county officers were leaders in movement organizations, suggesting that the "courthouse ring," as a correspondent to the *Gazette* (29 Oct. 1882) characterized county officers, although active in professional societies, was not generally friendly to the insurgency or deeply interested in the economic associations formed later.

Both the leaders of movement organizations and members of shipping associations tended to be drawn from local communities. In contrast to county officers and leaders of agricultural societies, they tended to be leaders in their local communities: more than one-third of the 137 local and minor officeholders tabulated were leaders of movement organizations, and 40% were members of shipping associations. In contrast, fewer than one-fourth of local officeholders also held county offices or were members of agricultural societies. This suggests that the strains within the precapitalist elite, articulated by Ephraim Kimmel as between working farmers and town interests, were systematic.

The leaders of movement organizations also tended to be drawn from an economic elite, at least in 1870, although their relative position was eroding (see Table 2). According to data drawn from

Table 2 Number and sizes of farms

	1860		1870		1880	
Size (acres)	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Under 10	62	5	240	12	19	1
At least 10, under 20	200	16	494	25	40	2
At least 20, under 50	587	47	804	40	528	32
At least 50, under 100	324	26	318	16	487	29
At least 100, under 500	83	7	130	7	586	35
At least 500, under 1,000	—	—	—	—	8	0.5
1,000 or over	—	—	—	—	5	0.3
Total farms	1,256		1,986		1,673	

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Agriculture 1860, 1870, 1880.
Note: Due to rounding, percentages do not necessarily total 100.

the agricultural censuses of 1870 and 1880, the average size of leaders' farms in 1870 was 128 acres ($n = 28$), putting these farmers in the upper 7% of landowners; in 1880, the average farm was 164 acres ($n = 33$).[27] Because, in 1880, the number of very large farms had increased, the agrarian leaders, despite having larger farms, on average, than in 1870, had slipped to the lower end of the top 44%. None of the movement leaders seem to have developed the vast holdings characteristic of some "gentlemen farmers" of the 1880s and 1890s.

It might be possible to interpret the 1870s agrarian movement in Union County as the initial form of organization by the new, commercial farmers who immigrated into the area with the railroad. The "backwardness" of "Egypt" has been a common stereotype held by northern visitors to the region (e.g., Home Missionary 1831; Kofoid 1906; Power 1953), and current residents of Union County often attribute the introduction of "progressive" agriculture to Yankee immigrants (e.g., Casper 1976; Cobden History Committee c. 1955). However, participation in the movement cut across most apparent lines of origin, with the exception of recent German-speaking Catholic immigrants. Seventeen of the 52 leaders for whom I have data were born in a northern state; 16 were born in a southern or midsouth state; 17 were born in Illinois; and 2 were foreign-born. Significantly, of the 17 Yankees, 12 resided in the Cobden area, previously mentioned as a center of educated commercial fruit growers who settled in that region as soon as

the railroad was completed. That precinct had a larger number of Republicans than any other precinct; it and the adjoining Rich precinct ran up Republican majorities in most elections (see returns published in the *Jonesboro Gazette*). Nonetheless, even in Cobden and in the Friendship Club, whose leadership had a large number of Republicans, party affiliation seems not to have significantly affected participation, inasmuch as both Republicans and Democrats participated as officers. Nor was the movement made up of youthful hotheads. The leaders appear to have been largely mature men: the average age in 1870 was 38 years, and the vast majority of activists were in their 30s and 40s.

The movement of the mid-1870s therefore appears to have been generated, or at least led, by mature men, substantial farmers who were active in local politics. Not only were they likely to be among the most integrated into commodity markets and therefore most affected by the economic deterioration of the postwar period, but they also formed a rural elite whose position was being undermined by the new order, as indicated by the decline in the relative size of their landholdings. The mixed rhetoric through which they articulated their grievances reflects their unstable position as individuals with persistent interests in retaining the old order (represented in practice by popular rejection of township organization and stock laws) and as relatively disadvantaged participants in the newly ascendant corporate industrial order.

A number of these men transformed their livelihoods during the latter part of the century to become fully commercial operations, often with multiple cognate enterprises, and some identified themselves in the 1887 county history as "capitalist" (e.g., Perrin 1883: B142). George Penninger, the only man to appear in every category of officeholder except bondsman, exemplifies these men. As the following biographical sketch indicates, he successfully changed himself from a country squire to, among other things, a dealer in jacks and mules.

Capt. George W. Penninger, born in 1832 in Salisbury, North Carolina, came with his parents to join their kinsmen in Union County in 1838.[28] Close relatives were among the earliest settlers of the county, establishing the first Lutheran church in the Illinois Territory. The family settled on the farm in the southeastern part of the county where George was to die 75 years later, in 1913. By 1881 he owned 488 acres in two parcels. Approximately half of

his acreage was on his home place; another 261 acres lay a few miles away near the main east-west road. His holdings represented a substantial amount of land by county standards, but land transfer records indicate that he was not a speculator in land, as were many of the new class of entrepreneurs. Penninger was active in the organizations that, in part, defined the county elite: the 109th Regiment of the Union army; the Masons, organized in the county in 1822; the Union County Agricultural and Mechanical Society, the body authorized by the state to sponsor the annual county fair; and the Democratic party. He held a number of elective offices, appearing in county records of the 1860s as a county judge (commissioner), justice of the peace, fence viewer, election judge, and grand and petit juror. He was also active in his church, helping organize the Union County Sabbath School Convention. Like other prominent individuals, he acted as guardian for a number of nonrelated orphans in addition to his orphaned nieces and nephews. (Guardianship may not have been entirely altruistic; oral accounts indicate that orphans frequently served as a source of dependent labor and were put to the more demanding and unpleasant tasks.) Penninger appears to have deviated somewhat from the majority of his elite cohort, however. Unlike three-quarters of the membership of the Agricultural and Mechanical Society, he joined the farmers' movement in the 1870s. He appears in the record as president of the Sivia Farmers' Club in 1874 and was one of the organizers of a county council for the grange, indicating that he was also active in his local grange.[29]

By the end of the decade Penninger had become a promoter of broader commercial development. In 1880, breaking from the Jonesboro-based Agricultural Society, he helped organize the Southern Illinois Fair Association to establish a competing fair in the neighboring railroad town of Anna. In 1884 he joined with others to organize the Big Creek Gravel Road Company, indicating his interest in improved transportation, and in 1887 he bought stock in the newly organized Anna Creamery. When the next wave of cooperative organization occurred, during the populist period,[30] he became a director of the cooperative Dongola Store Company.

In his business and organizational activities Captain Penninger did not confine himself to publicly held joint-stock companies or cooperatives. He manufactured sorghum molasses on his farm, taking the miller's toll, and entered the new order as a stock dealer

and breeder "of fine jacks and mules." Although horse trading had a history that long predated the development of capitalism, mules signaled both commercial production and the increased use of wage labor, as well as increased demand from the South and from nearby coal mines. Penninger thus appears to have been one member of the old elite who successfully made the transition to the new order. Perhaps significantly, at least symbolically, his first wife, who died in 1872, was a southerner from Tennessee, while his second wife, whom he married in 1874, came from New York stock.

Although Penninger made his farm operation and his personal life correspond to the emergent commercial order and helped determine the form it took locally, he and his cohort lost ground in relative wealth and power. By 1880 those farmers active in movement organizations for whom I have data owned slightly more acreage but had fallen from the upper 7% of landowners to the lower end of the top 44%. The 1860 and 1870 censuses showed no farms in Union County of over 500 acres; by 1880, 13 such farms were listed, and 5 of them were over 1,000 acres. Four of these 13 farms (31%) were operated by tenants. At the same time, town-based manufacturing and commercial businesses were joining agriculture as pillars of the local economy. Town population increased dramatically between 1860 and 1870, and continued to increase in both absolute and relative numbers throughout the century.

The increasing commercial focus of farmers' organizations reflected and enhanced the redirection of rural social life from the largely self-provisioning networks of agrarian society, weakly articulated with commodity markets, to cash-dependent, profit-oriented capitalist society. The shipping and other economically based associations that came to dominate farmers' organizations failed, however, to provide a voice for the smaller farmers and working people ("mechanics") whose livelihood was tied to the old agrarian order. With small acreages and few resources and frequently distant from the railroad, these people did not welcome the requirements of the new order. The majority of farmers persistently rejected two issues, the fencing of livestock and township organization, that clearly divided commercial farmers from those who largely ignored the market.

SUMMARY

During the 1870s and 1880s local economies, like the national economy of which they were part, became more differentiated. Agriculture became more specialized as distant markets established its production priorities; mills and factories established primarily in the towns served both local and distant markets; the professional class grew; and the class structure became more elaborate and varied. The farmers' movement—a truly popular movement, at least initially—appears to have been only an incipient class movement, in McNall's (1988) terms, insofar as large numbers of "farmers and mechanics" mobilized and actively contested many fundamental assumptions and organizational forms of their social relationships. Virtually all participants in the movement experienced the rising corporate industrial capitalist order as unjust and exploitative; some strove to articulate an alternative, largely rooted in their past experiences, that would allow valued relationships between farmers and mechanics to persist. They sought to weld (white) farmers and mechanics into a class that could effectively oppose monopolists and industrialists. Other participants who viewed the new order more optimistically sought to create economically based associations and antimonopoly laws that would permit farmers to join forces and compete on more equitable terms. Over the course of the movement, different individuals changed positions, among them the editor of the *Gazette*, who first supported local artisans and later boosted efficient factory production of tools.

A new class consciousness was embedded in the new relations that sedimented out of farmer activism. Some farmers, defined by their structural relationships to the means of production, constituted themselves as an element of an increasingly self-conscious petit capitalist class, organized through various cooperatives, particularly shipping associations (Adams 1986). The movement provided a vehicle—a liminal period—for "substantial farmers" to shift from a social economy based largely on kinship and neighborhood to one based on commercial production and wage labor. Predictably, this new class rarely sought political office, since the new institutional forms guaranteed them wealth and political influence through economic processes. The identity of farmers and labor-

ers as producers faded, and the majority of farmers now lacked both a strong voice to defend the older structures that favored their interests and an alternative, more equitable, relationship to the new order. The century closed with commercial agriculture firmly entrenched and the institutional foundations of capitalist relations of production and exchange well established.

NOTES

1 Thomas Jefferson (1955 [1784–85]) articulated these agrarian principles.

2 A close study of one specific case cannot create generalizations that hold for the movement as a whole. Social formations and the social classes constituting them do not exist reified within county boundaries. Scott's (1961) study of the grange in Champaign County, Illinois, the last portion of the state to be settled, and one dominated by very large, speculative investors, indicates the range of variation possible within one state. Prescott (1970, 1977) studies agrarian leaders in Wisconsin and California. Rothstein (1988) summarizes this literature.

3 This description is specific to Union County. Methodism and Cumberland Presbyterianism were also popular religious denominations in the upland South and developed a following in Union County in the 1850s, and Anabaptists, Quakers, and other dissenting sects formed religious communities in the region, including one Quaker (later Universalist) settlement in Union County (Sweet 1964a [1936], 1964b [1939], 1964c [1946]; for Union County see Perrin 1883: 360–61, 365–66, 406–7, 413, 417–18, 424, 429–30; Clear Creek Baptist Association 1988).

4 The 1860 census does not provide ownership/rent information, so it is impossible at this point to determine what percentage of farms were owner-operated. Searches of the manuscript schedules, both population and agriculture, have frequently failed to locate individuals whom we know to have resided in Union County in the year enumerated (1860, 1870, 1880). The agricultural schedules appear to be less complete than the population schedules. These lacunae indicate that the census figures should be used with caution.

5 Research in progress aims to develop a more complete analysis of pre–Civil War society in Union County. For summaries of the important debates concerning whether or not there was a dominant precapitalist mode of production in rural America, see Kulikoff 1989 and Barron 1986. See also studies by Cassity (1989), Hahn (1983), Hahn and Prude (1985), Faragher (1986), and Thelen (1986) that attempt to reconstruct antebellum rural life in different areas.

6 Perrin (1883: 393) says that Cobden toured the railroad in the summer of 1860.

7 An antimonopoly society was created in Cobden; Parker Earle, a Cobden horticulturalist, was nationally recognized as a leader in fruit and vegetable culture (Bardolph 1948: 79) and was chosen as judge for the pomological

exhibits at the 1893 World's Fair (*Jonesboro Gazette* 22 Nov. 1890). See also Benson 1955, Destler 1944, and Scott 1970.

8 For the divisions in the Old Northwest over the Civil War, see Gray 1942 and Klement 1960.

9 See Gates 1965 for the impact of the Civil War on agriculture.

10 Parker Earle is locally credited with inventing one of the first refrigeration units for railroad shipments (undated handwritten note [by Charles Thomas?] Cobden History Committee c. 1955: 37; see also Perrin 1883: 345), and plans for a fruit-drying apparatus are on file at the County Clerk's Office, apparently to establish patent rights for the (unnamed) inventor.

11 The term *substantial farmer* is used by the *Gazette* to refer to respectable landowning farmers. It appears to refer to the same people Hahn (1983) refers to as "yeomen." Prior to the mid-1880s, such farmers were often referred to as, for example, "Eph. Kimmel, Esq." or "Squire Kimmel" if they did not have military titles.

12 On the history of the agricultural fair, see Neely 1967 [1935].

13 Buck (1913: 76) estimates 25% for Illinois. However, he adds together the memberships of farmers' clubs and the granges of the Patrons of Husbandry, and since it appears that there was considerable overlap in membership, his figures may be inflated. See also Rothstein 1988 for the problems of estimating membership in these organizations.

14 Some of the divisions appeared around issues of temperance and gambling, but the data are not sufficient to determine who was on which side. In 1871 the County Agricultural Fair was accused of "being deleterious and pernicious to the morals of the people," which the president denied (*Jonesboro Gazette* 28 Jan. 1871). This controversy suggests that the Agricultural and Mechanical Society had not adopted the temperate life advocated by modernizers. The temperance movement was also inflamed during this period, but I find no evidence that the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) had a chapter in the county (on the relationship of temperance, especially the WCTU, to industrial development, see Bordin 1981).

15 In neighboring Jackson County the farmers were "compelled" to nominate a slate of county officers opposed to the "Radical pipe-layers," who nominated "a very weak, clique ticket" (*Jonesboro Gazette* 4 Oct. 1873).

16 Buck (1913: 76) says that only 21 counties attended this January 1875 meeting, compared to the 80 counties that had reported clubs in 1873.

17 Flagg was president and Smith secretary of the association (Buck 1910: 20).

18 For an explicit statement of this perspective, see Asa Harmon's reply to a tirade against the grangers by a correspondent to the *Gazette* (21 Feb. 1874), in which Harmon argued that "we [the grangers] are trying to have the farmers recognized as one class of businessmen" (ibid. 28 Feb. 1874).

19 In other areas, farmer-labor alliances were formed, and ideas associated with the creation of a cooperative commonwealth were proposed as alternatives to capitalism; Destler (1944: 355–56) argues that collectivism was an inherent part of the antimonopolism at the core of the later populist movement. This tendency can be seen in the program of government ownership of railroads advocated by the Illinois State Farmers' Association. As far as I can tell, no radical alternatives to capitalism established roots in Union County;

the radical opposition to monopoly capital, to judge from the documentary and electoral record, remained backward-looking and defensive.

20 For statements reflecting this defensive posture, see comments by "Howard," the Dongola correspondent (*Jonesboro Gazette* 10 Jan. 1874), and by an anonymous correspondent from the eastern side of the county (ibid. 27 Mar. 1875).

21 Kulikoff (1989) distinguishes this opposition as characteristic of American interpretations of agricultural history: "market historians" interpret U.S. agriculture as capitalist from its inception, whereas "social historians" argue that in most parts of the United States noncapitalist modes of production preceded engagement with capitalist ones.

22 The Agricultural and Mechanical Society appears in the *Gazette* as the Agricultural Society in 1867, although it continued to be called the Agricultural and Mechanical Society until at least 1874, when the Agricultural Board first appeared. Perrin (1883: 337) states that the name change was due to a new state law governing agricultural societies that sponsored state-recognized (funded) agricultural fairs. Dropping "mechanics" from the organization was one more indication of the transformation of the older order and the rupture between the former "producing classes."

23 This was a remarkable early case of cooperative organization. I tentatively interpret it as an attempt by the early settlers, who made up its directorate, to bypass Jonesboro merchants. See Smith 1980 for a chronology of significant events in American agriculture.

24 In 1880 some 70 people organized the Southern Illinois Fair Association, which successfully moved the county fair from the county seat to the adjoining railroad town. Only 5 of these men were members of an agricultural society, while 58 were members of a shipping association, building and loan, cooperative creamery, and/or farmers' club or grange.

25 For an inventory of these and other associations and corporations, see Adams 1987: 385–89.

26 For an extended theoretical discussion of these issues, see Giddens 1981.

27 Of the 84 movement leaders identified, I was able to obtain acreage data on 45, or 53.6%. I have acreage information for 33% in 1870 and 39% in 1880. Fifty-two, or 62%, were located in the census of population, in which the place of birth is given. I entered political party opportunistically, using Perrin 1883 as my primary source. The characterizations of leaders' landholdings must therefore be viewed with caution and need confirmation through analyses of tax and landownership records. I obtained landownership data on 11 of 49 (22%) county officers, 4 of whom overlapped with leaders of movement organizations. The rest were located in Perrin 1883. At least 8 county officers who were also active in professional associations were not farmers but held town-based jobs, such as miller and merchant, grocer, or paid county functionary.

28 Biographical data for George Penninger were compiled from information in Dexter [1987]; Elbert 1985; Illinois State Archives n.d.; *Jonesboro Gazette* 8 Dec. 1866, 3 Feb. and 30 Mar. 1867, 10 Mar. and 10 Oct. 1868, 31 Jan.

and 28 Mar. 1874; Griffing 1881; Parks 1987: 315; Union County Commissioner's Records 1866–81, bk. 2; bk. 3: 103, 193, 315, 412, 460; Union County Commissioner's Records, Register of Justices of the Peace and Constables 1861, 1863; Union County Corporate Records 1875–97: 15, 110; Union County Miscellaneous Records 1889; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Agriculture 1870, 1880; Warner and Beers 1876; Webb 1983: 81–82.

29 An active grange was noted in Penninger's neighborhood, but no list of officers appeared in the *Jonesboro Gazette*.

30 Southern Illinois was organized through the Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association (FMBA), which Scott (1962) characterizes as conservative. While some individuals appeared sympathetic to the larger populist movement, and "Sockless" Jerry Simpson, in particular, seems to have caught their imagination, the FMBA failed to develop a radical political program, and very few people in Union County voted third-party tickets or candidates (election returns in the *Gazette*).

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