

were assessed to pay the expenses of the committee who purchased the site. Since Vermontville was planned as a group project, those members who failed to colonize by the specified time forfeited their village and farm lots. Thus, the New England mode of settlement of the Union Colony was very different from the typical frontier town.

Outwardly life was very primitive and isolated for the colony in the frontier wilderness. During the first two years inadequate acreage cleared for crops or lateness in arriving at the colony curtailed crop yields. Rev. Cochrane's wife, Sarah, wrote to her sister in Vermont on October 3, 1838, describing the conditions:

There have been months that we have not seen a drop of milk or butter. We have lived six weeks at a time without a morsel of anything to eat except potatoes and salt and bread. But I think that the worst is over. . . . There was not half enough raised here last year to supply the inhabitants. Those that came on before us had their houses to build and land to chop and clear off, so that but few crops could be got in seasonably. Provisions were high for this country last winter, money scarce, and teams poor for want of keeping and teaming very expensive, so that our prospect of getting anything to eat sometimes seemed dark.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, the colonists were not uneducated or unrefined individuals for they had been chosen by a committee of two, Rev. Cochrane and I. C. Culver.<sup>11</sup> But instead the settlers represented the best of New England rural stock. By December, 1837, the village of Vermontville extended a mile in length from east to west. Two rows of log houses ten to forty rods apart fronted the street, with the only exception a frame house built by W. J. Squier.

Sarah Cochrane's October 3, 1838, letter also vividly describes the village lots and log houses:

You may if you please imagine an inclosure of 10 acres which is the size of our village lots with 7 acres chopped over and 4 or 5 mostly cleared off except here and there a huge tree left standing—a fence of rails, logs, trees and polls—a garden fence with [manuscript torn] and one rail instead of 5. A cow-house, a hog-house a pig-house and a corn crib all made of polls and cradled together as they call it here. At the east and within 5 or 6 rods of the house is a deep forest—at the west a prospect of the street and 9 or 10 cottages all of logs but one and that a two-story dwelling house—The house enclosed in the lot—surrounded with green grass fronting the street, north.

The main body of the house which is 24 feet by 16 is constructed of

10. Selections from Papers of Sarah Ann Cochrane, "From Vermont to Vermontville," *Burton Historical Collection Leaflet*, I, No. 8 (January 23, 1923), 63-64.

11. *Plat Book Eaton County, Liber A of Miscellaneous*, 15.

