

logs covered with bark and much of their original moss still dangling in all its varieties—the walls 3 logs high above the chamber floor—in the inside of the house strips of wood are driven between the logs to fill the crevices—on the outside they are filled with a plaster of mud—(The architects of this country call it mudding and chinking). A door out each way north and south a window in front with 12 lights—one in the west end of the same number—the floor “above and below” made of plant split out of ash or basswood, with beetle and wedges and is far from being level or smooth, and clatters finely when walked over. And now comes the chimney which is made of tiles about 3 inches wide and 1 thick—laid up cob house fashion and plastered with mud within a hearth of mud pounded down and paved with stone. The roof is covered with long shingles reaching from one rib to another to which they nailed, with no other covering. The shingles are split out of oak are not shaved and are called shakes—on the back side and the whole length of the house is a “linter”, one half of which is enclosed for a bed-room and a study—The other half open with only a roof covered with bark and a floor.¹²

Although the struggle to make their imprint on the forested wilderness dominated the life of the Vermontville pioneers, they remained true to their original purposes of promoting religion and education. Throughout Vermontville's early history the church and school stabilized the colony. On February 27, 1837, Rev. Cochran, who was pastor for five years, organized the Congregational Church. Only two of the original twenty-two settlers did not become members of the church. They were not allowed to join because they drank and swore.

By the summer of 1838, school had begun in a private home. A log school house built on the northwest quarter of the public square by the fall of that year also served as a church. An academical association was formed in 1843 and continued to 1860 when the academy joined with the district school to form the Vermontville Union School. The chapel built in 1843 on the northwest corner served as church, school, and meeting house. Rev. W. U. Benedict, who arrived in 1842, was the first headmaster of the academy. In 1862 the present structure of the First Congregational Church was erected on the southwest quarter of the public square.

Due to Vermontville Township's small growth in the early years, the colony's members, the officials of the township, and the members of the church overlapped extensively. And the religious and civil functions of the young community became intertwined. A dispute over the organization of the academy in 1839 spurred the formation of a

12. Cochran papers, 65-66.

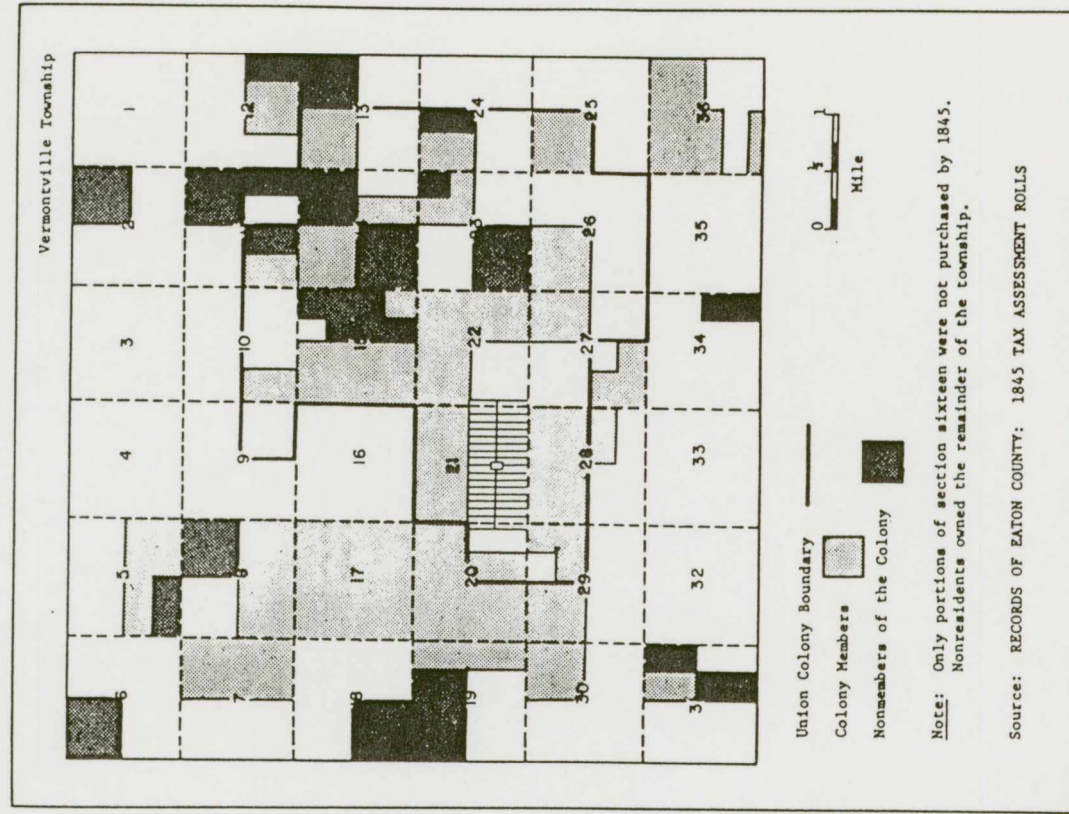


Fig. 3. Resident Land Ownership, 1845.