

Methodist church in the township. Few non-New England elements were introduced into the community, but the religious zeal declined.

During the early years little population growth occurred in the village and township. The first State of Michigan census in 1837 showed but 145 inhabitants in the township, and in the 1840 United States census the population was only 182. By 1850 the population had more than doubled to 539. Most of the adult population of the township were Vermonters in origin in 1840; however, New Yorkers slightly outnumbered Vermonters by 1850. These changes developed in the mid 1840's as a comparison of the names of residents listed in the earliest (1845) tax assessment rolls with those listed in the 1850 Eaton County census enumeration sheets reveals. Many pioneers who moved into the township in the 1840's purchased land within the original Union Colony boundaries (Fig. 3). Also, many sections of the township were owned by nonresidents, the majority probably speculators.

The agricultural schedule of the 1850 United States census shows a mixed agricultural character in the township. Seventeen of the twenty-two original settlers were still farming fourteen years after the initial settlement. Even though their farms were the largest in area and highest in cash value, the major portions were still unimproved land. Between 1850 and 1860, the number of farms in the township increased from 41 to 63, the acreage of improved land more than doubled, and the population increased from 539 to 875. During this period the two leading farm products were butter and maple sugar, with the total value of maple sugar worth approximately double. With the completion of the Grand River Valley Railroad in 1870 just south of the village, wheat and lumber became the two most important cash products.

Before completion of the railroad, Vermontville was experiencing a rapid growth in population and in the building of homes. About 1850 the colonists began to move out of their log houses and into permanent frame and brick homes. In the 1860's homes were built south of the original platted village along South Main Street. Resurveying of the original plat in 1867 resulted in smaller house lots and new streets added. Land was also annexed at this time, while additional area was acquired in 1869 and 1870.¹³ Now the village extended southward three-fourths of a mile to the railroad depot and grain elevator.

With the coming of the railroad, the early pioneering history of Ver-

montville came to a rapid close. Few of the original twenty-two settlers were still farming or living in 1870. Their original log cabins had also passed from the scene. And since only three of the forty-eight sons of the early colonists had become farmers, the farm lands passed into the hands of new settlers while second generation pioneers looked elsewhere for new opportunities.¹⁴ By 1870 Vermontville's status as a service center expanded with the increase in population to 1,801 and the establishment of the railroad depot and grain elevator. And the distinctive New England conservative character with its union of church, school, and government changed with the influx of new blood and new economic opportunities.

Due particularly, then, to the origin of the Union Colony and its strong religious and educational bonds, the visible record of the New England tradition has persisted longer here than elsewhere on the Michigan frontier. Today several diagnostic elements of the settlement pattern provide visual evidence of the colony's original imprint: church and meeting house architecture, village pattern, and house and barn types.

13. *Records of Department of Treasury Auditor General Division 1836-1965*, RG 67-97, vol. 131, 9587, 9594, 9597. This contains the records of the county plats for Michigan. There are 786 volumes.

14. Edward W. Barber, "Beginnings in Eaton County: Its Earliest Settlements and Settlers," *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, 29 (1899), 384.