

## Landscape Change in the Inner Bluegrass: 1830-1870

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### Abstract

A “Southern rural Whig ideal” is suggested to describe a settlement pattern that developed in the early nineteenth century in a series of adjoining farms in the Inner Bluegrass Region of central Kentucky. In time this ideal produced a local and rural sense of community including a church and schools linked by a turnpike and the particular example is not the exception for the region. This contrasts with a modified pattern which developed after the Civil War. The “modernization” which resulted, most explicitly in the alignment of houses to face the road, the articulation of the farmstead structures, and the decline in local community, is related to the decline in local population, Anglo and African American, with the end of the war and a shift in emphasis away from the country to the local towns.

### Contrasts

The 1860 Hewitt wall map of central Kentucky was adorned with marginal engravings depicting public buildings with two exceptions. These were views of Brutus Clay’s farm, three miles from the Bourbon County court house seat of Paris. They were there because of the importance of the man as a successful farmer in an age when the agricultural life set the tone for society. Quite possibly, Brutus, as I shall call him, paid for the engravings and for the honor of having them displayed on the wall map for with them he was making a political statement as well.

Despite their prominence, these illustrations are in a sense ambiguous and their ambiguity is a clue to the values and ideals of not only Brutus but the rural community in which he lived. The first is the head-on view of his house built in 1837 (Langsam and Johnson 1985:182-183) (Figure 1). The point of this illustration is rather evenly divided between several features, importantly the bull to the left, and, in the center, an elaborate cast iron porch which Brutus installed the year before in preparation for his daughter’s marriage.

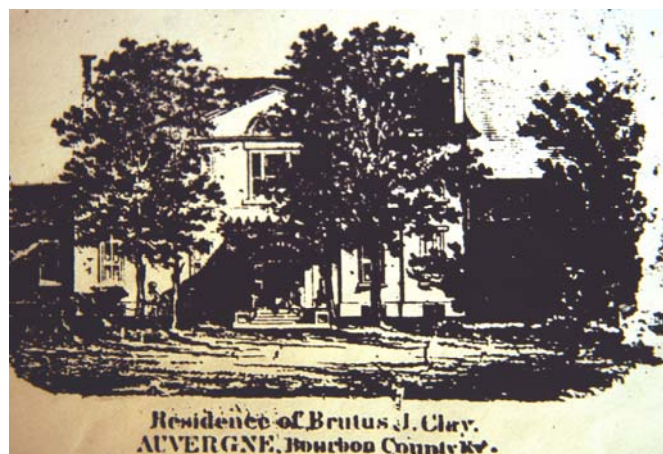


Figure 1. Brutus Clay’s residence, marginal illustration of Hewitt Map, 1860.

But this view of an elaborate house hardly gives one an accurate impression of its size or complexity (Riesenweber and Hudson 1990:29-44). It is a transitional, two-story double pile, center hallway structure of generous dimensions with a distinctive and stylish (for the time) pediment framing the entrance. With flanking one story wings and an extensive back house with kitchen and work rooms, and well built brick outbuildings, it was at the time of its construction the largest house in the county. Even trees dull the impact of the central mass. The picture, then, is perhaps a half-hearted attempt to impress the viewer with the total complex, rather it focuses on some recent details like the bull and the porch. As a contemporary photograph illustrates (Figure 2), the general effect fortunately has been preserved although the bull has been replaced by more modern symbols. In the second image (Figure 3), which is even more ambiguous, the homestead is seen from a distance. True, there are cows, colts, and prancing horses with riders, but any structure is carefully disguised. For a man who was a noted farmer, president of *both* the county and state Agricultural Societies (Hood 1977:214), one gets little feeling from this picture that the man was engaged in farming. Nor is the landscape highly ord-



Figure 2. Contemporary view of Brutus Clay's home.

ered. Just what *was* the point of the illustration?



Figure 3. View of Brutus Clay's Farm, marginal illustration from Hewitt Map, 1860.



A contemporary photograph (Figure 4) indicates, again, that the effect of this view has fortunately survived, as ambiguous as ever. However, the intentional coyness of the nineteenth century view is emphasized when the modern photographer moves about 100 feet to the west as the earlier illustrator could have done and redefines the view with a head-on view of the house. This bucolic scene then easily resolves into an elaborate built environment, dominated by Brutus' not-so-humble house which faces south for warmth in the winter. In the understatement of these two marginalia Brutus makes an important political statement. True, the man was wealthier than many of his neighbors -- he was for example in 1860 the largest slave owner by far in the county -- and he could build more elaborately. But in what amounts to a considerable reticence, even where he had wealth to flaunt, and in an ability to focus on details at the expense of the whole, he is expressing a local world view which cross-cut economic class. This might aptly be called the Southern rural Whig frame of mind.

The scale of the homestead is evident from air photos (Figure 5). Considering the fields and lots which were enclosed by rock fences, it is quite large. Scattered around are the structural elements which combined made the diversified live stock and crop farming enterprise which was so successful for the decade of the 1850s. Defined on the northeast by a cemetery dedicated to the African American bondsmen and their families, on the southeast by a large pond specifically built as an ice source for a generous ice house, on the southwest a cow lot with its cow barn and a bull lot, and beyond it a large quarters on the northeast, the total complex is nearly a half mile on the diagonal.



Figure 4. Contemporary view from entrance road.



Figure 5. Brutus' homestead from the air.

Two period photos also indicate the nature of the homestead which amounts to a series of “field barns” and not an articulated set of buildings, and so they have been remembered. The first view is of the eastern side of the complex taken about 1910 (Figure 6), showing in the center a threshing barn built in 1841 and centered in a fold



Figure 6. Eastern end of homestead: threshing barn on right, Jack barn on the left, orchard in the background (photo c 1910).

The second photograph (Figure 7), of the core of the “lots” or the center of farm activities west of the house, focuses on a young man, Hamp Ayres Jr.. He holds an armful of corn which he has just obtained from a log crib built in 1813. To one side is a one-room domestic structure, probably built for slaves in the 1840s. In the distance is a quarter, built as early as 1813, still surviving at the date of the photo which is about 1895. One is impressed in both pictures with the highly dispersed nature of the components of this built environment.



Figure 7. Hamp Ayres Jr. in the “lots,” one-room house on right, corn crib on the left, “quarters” in the background on the left (photo c 1895).

Concluding this brief survey of a large, complex, dispersed homestead, it must also be realized that the structures, when built, were literally “in the woods.” The complex was nearly two miles from the nearest public trace, tucked away at one end of a long

rectangular tract of land which Brutus’ father, Green Clay, obtained in 1782 from Virginia. Elaborate as the house may have been, it was built literally shielded from public view by virgin forest. Even today it

is a mile from the nearest public thoroughfare.

As he was planning to build, Brutus' mother specifically warned him to build with moderation (Sally Clay to Brutus Clay 1837, Clay Papers, University of Kentucky Library)....*"you have no idea of the expense of furnishing and keeping so large a house clean. In your retired situation you might not have company in seven years to fill it....with my experience in those things I would not have a house as large as you intend to build.....* She sadly concluded, *"..... I am sure that my advice is good (and that you will then do as you please".....* which he did!

Contrast this farmstead with the adjoining one (Figure 8) built in 1865 by Brutus' neighbor and distant relative, Samuel Clay, at the close of the Civil War, paid for by financial success at selling farm products to the Union armies. The illustration of the house, called Marchmont (Langsam and Johnson 1985:180-181), was a centerpiece in a history of Bourbon County published in 1882 (Perrin 1882), itself a typical product of the times, in which, interestingly, there no mention, let alone illustration, of Brutus' elaborate structure just two miles away!

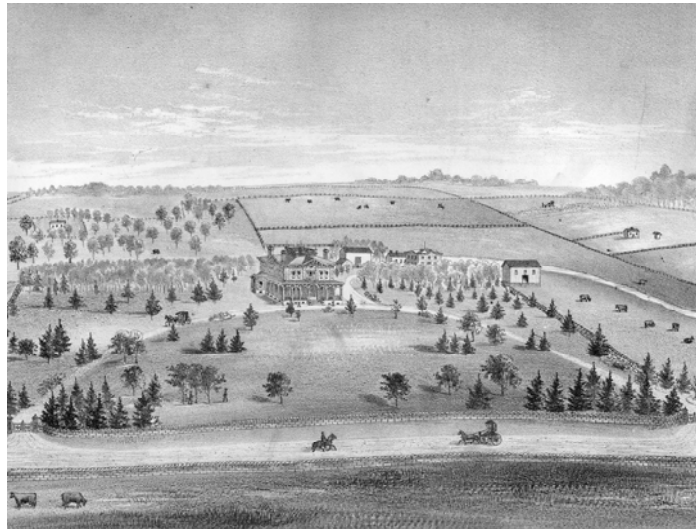


Figure 8. Marchmont, Brutus' neighboring homestead built 1866 (Perrin 1882:43).

Built on the public road, Marchmont was placed to be seen (Figure 9) and from the birds-eye perspective we immediately comprehend it in all its complexity for the parts are highly articulated and anchored to the public byway by dual entrances and a semi-lunate approach drive. Significantly, Samuel faced his house west to the nearby road, not south as had Brutus, despite the fact that this exposed it to the full force of the prevailing weather. There is none of the ambiguity of the earlier illustrations of Brutus' home. Interestingly the view *does* retain a tie to the past: in the distance on the left is pictured the house of Samuel's

deceased father, a relatively simple brick "I" house, like Brutus' built about 1820 far from any trace, in the middle of the man's farm tract and facing south. Samuel, however, has moved considerably beyond these relatively simple beginnings. He too makes a political statement, but by comparison it is a whopper, quite different from the restrained one made less than twenty years before by his slightly older neighbor, Brutus. It is probable that Samuel, like Brutus, paid for the artist's rendering for inclusion in Perrin's county history. It is also quite possible that Brutus, by then elderly, refused

to pay for an illustration of his, thus its

omission.



Figure 9. Marchmont viewed from the turnpike, a contemporary photo.

From the air this new Marchmont complex is revealed as much more compact. All structures associated with the operation of this farm are concentrated around the main house and all are there for the world to assess as they ride by. But beyond recording the achievements of this particular farmer in the hog and mule trade, the view of Marchmont is indicative of a general shift in comprehension of the rural community which occurred between circa 1837 when Brutus built his house and 1882 when the county history was published.

While Hewitt's 1860 wall map illustrated only one rural homestead (the rest were commercial establishments and public buildings), Perrin's (1882) publication is replete with them, all seen from a birds-eye perspective emphasizing the relationship of the house to the road. Other homesteads in this neighborhood were similarly changed during the years after the war, if not with radical reconstruction, then with additive construction, whose end goal was to align the facade of the domestic context with the road so all could see it. Along with this,

outbuildings were drawn together to cluster around the home itself.

This phenomenon of rural structural reorientation has been noted widely, perhaps most forcefully in New England, and related in a general way to "modernization." In his classic study of the connected barn of the New England farm, Thomas Hubka (1984) has charted how, in the years between roughly 1760 and 1830, houses were shifted from a generally southern orientation to face the road. As a very general statement he relates this shift to the increasing commercial importance of the town over the countryside in the lives of New England farmers. In one area of New England this ultimately led to the physical rearrangement of existing buildings and their consolidation into the New England connected structure (big house, little house, back house, barn). In each part of the country the timing of the change and the actual reasons for its occurrence differed. For Brutus' world in rural Bourbon County in the nineteenth century there was a particular set of circumstances which dictated the stages in "modernization" through the century.

### **Lewis F. Allen's Vision and Historical Causes**



Writing in 1844, the New York State agricultural journalist Lewis F. Allen, author of *Rural Architecture* (1852), contrasted styles of rural settlement in the country at the time:

*"Your true Southerner, and Pennsylvanian, and South Western farmer, nestles down simply in a convenient spot on his estate; let the traveled highway go where it may, and there he awaits the call of the public, attending solely to his own domestic affairs, content to see what comes upon him, hieing out from his domcil (sic) when occasion demands it: while your inquiring Yankee as universally plants himself on the main road, determined to see everything as it passes, and dreading nothing so much as to be shut out from the gaze of the passer by, and not to know as it occurs, everything of public import as well as private rumor."*

He followed with specific advice to the Southern farmer:

*"Were I to locate my buildings on the farm, proximity to the road would have little influence on my choice. Access to good water, a central position on the farm, by which every part of it might be easily reached in getting in the crops and superintending the labor would be the main object; while the passing on the highways and the neighborhood gossip would be the last requisites I should consult."*

Allen was a correspondent of Brutus Clay's and they shared a common interest in blooded Durham cattle. Brutus' large stock barn built in 1856 followed, in a general way, Allen's plans of his own barn in New York state (Allen 1952:299). It is even possible that Allen visited the Kentucky Bluegrass, authoring a series of sketches of the rural scene for the Country Gentleman, one of which "A visit to the Bourbons," was an actual visit to Clay's farm presenting it as a classic example of Allen's 1844 characterization of the southern farm.

Brutus' establishment *was* isolated, and this immediately impressed visitors. But then, and this is important to remember, so were the less elaborate homes of his neighbors. Still, Brutus and Lewis Allen were clearly of the same frame of mind when it came to rural planning.

While some have suggested (McMurry 1988:45-46) that Allen's hyperbole is principally an example of a "progressive agriculturist" rhetoric which developed in the first half of the century, there were good historical reasons for the Kentucky settlement pattern which impressed Allen and produced Clay's homestead. The pre-war homestead pattern here in Kentucky was as much conservative as it was progressive, stemming from the manner in which land ownership was taken up in the late eighteenth century. The opening of the Virginia Land Office to accept land surveys west of the mountains in Kentucky initiated a chaotic method of survey by metes and bounds which, in due time and in reaction, would result in Jefferson's drastic modifications of public survey in the Northwest Ordinance in 1785 (Price:1995:190-192, Hammon 1980). By 1783 literally all the land in a county like Bourbon had been taken up by early claims. Many of these bore little relationship to "existing" claims. Rather, early land surveyors literally shingled the countryside with deliberately overlapping land surveys in the hopes that, by these efforts, they could lay claim to some piece of land which had not already been alienated.

As result, land was not divided up so as to be accessible to the roads: communication was largely coincidental to the surveyed tracts and in fact roads really did not exist. The process of taking up land, and defending one's title against all comers, was a process of building upon these far-flung parcels. This meant that the first constructions in the wilderness were often widely separated. Such was the case of Brutus' farming neighborhood. Although his house was one of the last to be built, he was following his father's earlier

improvements of log cabin and crib, built as early as 1813 in utter isolation. Around his home were other early farms likewise in similar isolation; the homesteads of Richard Clay, the Martins, Thomas Duncan (Langsam and Johnson 1985:150), Thomas Kennedy (Langsam and Johnson 1985:181-182) and Daniel Bedinger (Langsam and Johnson 1985:183-184), all of which would be bought up as Brutus expanded his farm in the post-Civil War era. The dispersed pattern which Allen noted was powerfully a product of this simple factor.

But beyond its role in the seemingly random placement of improvement homesteads, the early surveying methods laid an indelible imprint on the lives of the first settlers which persisted for at least several generations and was at the root of the Whig "idea." Land was by no means freely available to all who desired it. Rather it was the prize for those with the wealth and connections to make the claim and the energy to defend them. Land ownership produced an instant class structure, creating a class contrast between land owners and landless. But the practice of preemption (the right to take up land by clearing in addition to one's purchased tract) rapidly made even the small landowner into the land speculator (Aron 1992) and Turner's "frontier thesis" (Turner 1992 reprint) must be tempered with this realization. Despite the fact that there would always be landless pioneers, for large and small landowners, land ownership, even land speculation, rapidly became a value which cross-cut rich and poor --if you owned land, you tended to think the same way about it, despite how much land you might own.

Given this fact, although the homesteads which might be built were isolated, the act of surveying land which preceded their construction was an explicitly political act in which the community participated. Similarly, the defense of a land claim could be a drama worked out on the surveyed lines serving as the court of public opinion, if not actually a court of law (although Kentucky was famous for its land disputes which were

common fare in the court system for the first thirty years of the nineteenth century). Two generations after initial discovery, land claims were still being debated in Kentucky.

For example, when deposed by the court on the details surrounding an early land survey in Madison County (probably made during the 1780s), Brutus' father, Green Clay, a highly successful surveyor, answered as follows (Dorris 1945:339):

*Q. - How many persons were along at the time said survey was made?*

*A. - When James Estills (sic) preemption was surveyed as well as my memory now serves me I think there about 7 or 8 men along or perhaps more at different parts of the survey but I do not recollect that the whole company went all around the survey but am rather inclined to think they did not.....*

The survey of this preemption was clearly a public event. Years later, succeeding generations would similarly survey their land before the public eye. The fact of land survey was to become a central political act, identified with the homestead ethic itself, for the Kentucky farmer who hoped to establish a home, prosper on the frontier, and leave his widow and children with the resources to continue their hard-won prosperity. Settling his father's estate after Green's death in 1828, Brutus was intimately involved in surveying lands, establishing claims, and defending existing claims when necessary. In 1831 his brother-in-law J. Speed Smith advised him of the tension occasioned by one such survey of lands which Brutus had sold William Pearson in Estill County (Smith to Clay Apr.14, 1831, Clay Papers, University of Kentucky Library):

*Oakly  
April 14, 1831*

*Dr. Sir,*



*Wm. Pearson came to see me a few nights since, upon the subject of the land he purchased from you in Estill. Kelly (\*\*son) and Bob Asbille claim part of Pearson's purchase and have had a survey made by the surveyor of Clark and not surveying to your corners as marked, but stopping at the end of the distnce (sic) called for in your \*\*\* that you do not cover the ground. I am told that three of your corners are standing and can be shown and proved - if so, by projecting the side and end lines, the point of intersection, will give you the lost corner. Pearson has behaved well, for he has laid a warrant on the land which seemed to be left out of your claim by \*\*\* the distance called for and was at Campbell's not more than twenty minutes before Asbille was there for the same purpose. The \*\*\* of laying out a warrant will be much better than a law suit. He did so, after advice, for your benefit. There were two cabbins (sic) on the land, \*\* \* a family of \*\*\* his son is in one and hung up a blanket, by way of protection, \*\*\* the other. I told him by all means to keep his negroes in the one and burn down (emphasis in text) the other, so as to give them no means of entering. He wishes much to see you at court and take with you \*\*\* paper having reference to your title. I told him not to yield an inch and that you would back him.*

This latter day excursion into the act of land survey links the act of delineation with the second crucial act, that of actually building on the delineated claim. The construction of a shelter, however simple, was viewed as an act of staking out a claim. In this instance the discovery of “two cabbins” on the land poses an immediate threat to the new owner (who had just bought the tract from Brutus). The advice, to “put his negroes in the one and *burn down*

the other” is a clear statement to fill one with your people and destroy the other.

This ritual of occupancy, in itself also responsible for the dispersed early homesteads, runs as a constant theme through the first 30 years of the nineteenth century. Again, Brutus’s family papers provide impressive examples. In his memoranda book, circa 1803-1805, Green made the following note for himself (GC “Memo Book”): “.....a tennant (sic) should be settled on each tract of land & his lease should be *RECORDED* (emphasis in the original).”

Occupancy, so it seems, could be accomplished by the owner’s tenant, as well as the owner himself. The critical point, whether it be accomplished with a public demonstration of moving on to the land and building one’s self a house, or a house filled with your slaves, or merely through getting a lease for the individual one happened to find having built on your property, was to get the act of “occupancy” recorded for all the public to see.

One final note indicates how the initial generation of settlers passed on the significance of this political act is seen clearly from Green’s letter to Brutus’ elder brother, Sydney, when he left home to look after his father’s affairs in Western Kentucky at age 22. Green had the following advice which he made about as strongly as he could

(Green Clay to Sydney Clay Apr. 4, 1822 Filson Club Collections):

*I want you to ride all over my land see who have settled on it since I left there & give them leases on the best terms you can from 7 to 10 years git (sic) all the tennants (sic) you can everywhere. Don’t miss one if possible that you can git (sic). Shew (sic) my patents where you go if need be.*

*But your principle business will be to examine (by) what offices surveys are made on my land & where and in whose name, the amount of acres- git all the information you can on that \*\*\**

*write to me all these things once in every two weeks.....There is three leases at the clerks office in Salem left there to be recorded. Git (sic) them out and bring home & all those that Thos. Jarrett and Jno. Martin gave.....*

*My son Sidney, you are to proceed to the Tennessee lands and give all the leases you possibly can, never loose a tenant (sic) if you can help it, give from seven to ten years, the shorter the better for us, never have a lease less than 2 years six is better.....*

*Run & remark the south line of Jn. Mayos 17,000 and the next line north from his SSW corner to the next corner and measure both with the chain run by the compass and find the next corner if possible. Cut GC on three or 4 trees at each corner.....appoint one agent on each of the other tracts and give them a part of the blank leases: request them in the strongest terms to write me once a month.....*

*Go and see the corner I shewed (sic) Jno. Humphries & his sons...corner to Clark and myself..see it before you return by all means and shew it to every body you can git to go see it. Make it notorious as possible (emphasis added)..*

*Read these instructions once a week at least*

And so on... Brutus' generation, which included his near neighbors in Bourbon County, were raised upon, and had drummed into them by their parents, the importance of land, through a particular frontier perspective which had been shaped by the dynamics of early settlement. This, more than perhaps any other factor, created the initial conditions for settlement in this part of the Kentucky Bluegrass. By itself it produced the dispersed, almost isolating settlement pattern practiced by Brutus and his neighbors and praised by the northerner Lewis Allen. For Brutus I suggest that at one level at least his land was more important to him than his home, however elaborate that may have been.

### Changes

There were several forces pushing towards change in this dispersed settlement pattern at different levels. At the household level, as families grew in size they needed additional living room. The normal way to expand the house was to add to it and houses throughout Brutus' neighborhood are evidence of this process of growth. Neighboring Ulsterman Thomas Kennedy, who built a stone hall and passage home as early as 1785, added an additional bay (Langsam and Johnson 1985:181), also of

stone, as his family grew. Jeremiah Duncan (Langsam and Johnson 1985:150), whose large farm adjoined Brutus', beginning with a single pen log cabin, expanded it with additional pens (Figure 10), finally encasing it in siding and adding a frame wing and two ells as his family grew, creating by 1840 a vernacular Federal frame structure from a pioneer log cabin aided in construction with sash sawn framing and siding purchased from Brutus' horse powered mill.



Figure 10. “Building out” as the family expanded: Jeremiah Duncan homestead, central two-storey log pen with log wing on right (c. 1790) expanded with frame ell on left, all covered with sawn siding from Brutus’ mill (c. 1840).

Brutus moved into a two-story saddle bag log cabin his father had built in 1813 as an improvement and had leased to tenants for the next 15 years. As his family grew to include three children, he chose to build a new house altogether, the elaborate transitional brick structure which is the striking survival today. In doing so he was clearly making a political statement of his wealth and position in the community, but he was responding to the same need for additional domestic space as his neighbors. His younger brother put the problem to him in the form of advice which he offered as Brutus was planning to build. (This brother, Cassius M. Clay, was quite brash, and had no qualms about offering advice to his elder, in fact to anyone who would listen to him).

*“.....I think it advisable not to build a partially neat house, but wait until you can go “whole hog”. Much money is generally expended in building out houses, which, when the “great house”: is completed, are generally consigned to the flames; unless you could, like the Yankees*

*here (he was writing from college in Connecticut) , put your house in a wheel barrow and run off with it (CMC to BJC June 19, 1831).”*

Despite this, Brutus pointedly saved the earlier log cabin (as did Cassius when he came to build almost 30 years later in Madison County), and lined up the new structure with the old, side by side. Thereafter house servants lived in the cabin. In this process of homestead modification, all before 1845, the orientations of homesteads remained the same, responding to several factors. Many faced south to maximize warmth and light during the winter months even if they could not, in so doing, avoid the heat of long summer days. There could be variations: Kennedy’s stone house, the earliest home in the neighborhood, in fact remained facing east looking over Kennedy’s Creek which at the time (circa 1785) probably served as *the* track through the neighborhood, a fact that has escaped recent architectural historians (Wooley 2008:110-111).

### **The Community Arrives**

Two elements were added to this dispersed neighborhood in the 1840s creating the built framework of a rural “community,” a church and schools (note plural). Moved by Jesse Kennedy’s

encounter in 1845 with Universalism (Anon.1845) (a religious group which ultimately would merge with Unitarianism in the 1960s) the three neighbors, Kennedy, Brutus Clay, and Daniel Bedinger, sought

bids for a “Universalist Meeting House” which was built during the following year on land donated by Kennedy, with funds from all three and lumber from Brutus’ saw mill. The plan of this building, which can be reconstructed from the bid specifications and apparently replaced meetings in Kennedy’s stone house, indicates a fairly large though simple building for what would appear to have been a relatively small congregation, set in a double door structure with a simple classical pediment and gable end porch. It was called the Concord Church after the name Jesse Kennedy had given his father’s stone house which he had inherited. A probable explanation for its size was that it was built to house not only the land owners but their slaves as well. In fact the floor plan of the church is an indication of an African American slave population which by then in this community far out numbered the white.

Significantly, this church was the first structure in the immediate community built to face the road. In addition it was politically a *community* feature which was built on the road for common access in the way the houses of its parishioners had not. The second was a school house for white children. In 1848 Brutus sawed lumber for

neighbor Henry Clay’s schoolhouse which, as a local resident who went there remembers, was a “one room structure taught by a red haired school marm, where the neighborhood children went to elementary school” (C.M.Clay, Jr., written in one of his school books). Beyond the folk lore and the sawing bill, this structure has disappeared although the curve in the road where it was built remains, reduced by subsequent road grading.

This effort for the children of the whites was apparently paralleled by a school for the children of the slaves that has survived. Brutus’ neighbor, Daniel Bedinger, was an avowed emancipationist. He owned far fewer slaves than Brutus, in 1837 only seven while Brutus had 38 at that time. One of these, a woman, was educated, taught school, and for her efforts and abilities gained her freedom and was repatriated to Liberia where she and her family suffered intensely. Bedinger built his school behind his house, probably one of two rooms in a detached kitchen dependency, where it still survives (Figure 11). There is some suggestion from Brutus’ sawmill records that the building was built in the early 1840s.



Figure 11, Daniel Bedinger homestead c 1820 with dependency that reputedly served as school for African American children (photo 1999).

The final element, equally important although in quite another way, was the

formalization of a road out of the traditional lanes which linked dispersed homesteads.



In 1848 the Paris-Winchester turnpike company was formed financed with stocks and bonds held by the adjacent landowners, one of several in the county. The construction of a macadam roadway began shortly thereafter. This produced a superior road surface (not substantially changed until 1941) which was a great improvement over the existing trace. It also involved the construction of facilities, the tollhouses every five miles (Figure 12), bridges over the watercourses, and fencing paralleling the highway which was constructed by landowners, often in dry stone.



Figure 12. Toll house of Paris-Winchester turnpike, 2 miles from Concord Church (photo 1999).

In addition, a covered bridge was built across Kennedy's Creek (Figure 13) at the church and in front of the farms of Brutus and his neighbors. Although not a

substantial structure, it made crossing a minor but difficult water course subject to flooding all that easier.



Figure 13. Covered bridge over Kennedy's Creek at Concord Church (demolished 1941, photo 1940).

While it is difficult to determine the size and composition of the local population around Brutus' farm, by the decade of the 1850s it was probably far higher than it had ever been or ever would be thereafter. Although the number of slaves varied tremendously between neighbors, most owned several and it is certain that the black population far outweighed the white. The lack of stores in this community reflects the

fact that, in many respects, the farms were still self-sufficient. In addition, Paris was only three miles away and purchases in the town rapidly replaced homestead self-sufficiency. Yet despite even this, Brutus' wife -- with the aid of her women slaves -- would continue to spin and weave flax for the everyday cloths of slaves and her family until the late 1840s. So also would her neighbors.

### Life and Death of “Community”

What had developed here was a sense of a local community. Anchoring it were the dispersed farm homesteads of the vicinity. They varied in size but, during the 1850s, for the most part were enjoying financial prosperity. Added to it were the school houses and the church, an expression of the stability which this wealth had created. Even though built on slavery, both included an ordered place for black and white. This, I venture to say, was part and parcel the rural Whig ideal here in Central Kentucky.

This southern rural Whig “community,” both the society and the structures, did not survive the Civil War. Like the Whig political world in general, it was buried with the end of slavery although death had occurred earlier, symbolically, with the death of Henry Clay in 1852. However, it is far too one-dimensional to view the change as simply the result of the end of slavery for it was more complex than that. As an indication of how conservative and backward-looking it was, its roots lay in the political acts of land survey and alienation before 1800.

The major change came in population numbers. During the war the slave population drifted away from the local farms, enticed to join the Union Army, principally to free themselves from their owners who were not yet subject to the Emancipation Proclamation (slavery would not end in Kentucky until 1866). For example, 17 young African American men left Brutus’ farm to join the Union Army in addition to three of his sons. Most of the bondsmen did not return after the war as cash laborers. In the end the freedman population would virtually disappear to the county seats like Paris, three miles away. There they and their descendants existed until the 1960s in segregated housing, gerrymandered out of the town and into the county (still voting in the county precinct that included Brutus’ farm), yet side by side with the white towns themselves. The

nearest of these, built in 1866 was, appropriately, called Claysville.

The white population also declined, but for generational reasons. The mid-century saw the maturing of the generations first born on these scattered rural homesteads. In more than one case declining farm size through inheritance and the lure of the still-open frontier deprived the now elderly farm family of heirs and a process of land consolidation began. Jesse Kennedy died in 1866 leaving at least four heirs scattered west of Central Kentucky. Brutus bought them out one-by-one. Daniel Bedinger and his wife were childless. With advancing age they sold out to Brutus and moved to Lexington. Jeremiah Duncan died in 1876, pre-deceased by his one son who had died in 1847. Again Brutus bought his farm.

This massive depopulation, which for this rural community probably saw the exodus of over 200 individuals, may have moved people little more than three miles. However, it removed them from the rural *community* which had grown up before the war. In the era of wage labor and tenant farming which would develop replacing slave labor, quite a different domestic organization of the country would develop. In this particular community the wage laborers would come out from town to work, and the tenants, as these developed with the tobacco industry in the latter part of the century, would set up homesteads in widely dispersed simple structures and houses abandoned by their former white owners. A significant structural addition to the neighborhood, particularly after 1900, were the dispersed, large, air cured tobacco barns.

The quaint Concord Universalist congregation would also break up during the war and there would be an attempt to convert the structure to a blacksmith’s shop which failed when it burned (Perrin 1888:88). No such business was ever again attempted in the neighborhood nor was a new church raised to serve the spiritual needs of this community, its place taken by

churches in the nearby towns. In part this was also due to population shifts: with the slaves gone, the white masters were left preaching to each other. In part the congregation foundered due to war time strains. Quite literally one side of the road became notably Confederate in its sympathies, while Brutus' side retained its

Whiggish Unionist ties (he was a Unionist member of Congress from 1863 to 1865). Also the Universalist denomination, which had been a highly distinctive feature of this community in a world which was generally evangelical, would be submerged in the currents of evangelicalism.

### Synthesis

The final stage in modernization, which is most visible today, which clearly followed the above and neither anticipated nor preceded them, was the modification of homes anywhere near the road to face the road. Of these, Samuel Clay's Marchmont was the most extreme example. Leaving his father's brick "I" house buried in the farm, Samuel built his imposing house on the road, producing the total effect so well recorded in the Perrin (1882) birds-eye view. Less extreme examples, because they involved modification of existing structures, were the effects on other neighbors.

Also elaborate, although it involved the modification of an existing structure rather

than construction of a new one, was the transformation of Richard Lindsay's home (Langsam and Johnson 1985:184) across the road from Brutus. Built initially as a log cabin early in the nineteenth century, the home was transformed into a frame Federal structure by 1850 keeping pace, perhaps, with Brutus' home building and still facing north/south. Finally, in the latter part of the century the orientation of the house was shifted to face west towards the road and redone into an eclectic structure with Georgian and Greek Revival elements (Figure 14). Tightly grouped around the homestead were the farm structures.



A.



B.

Figure 14. Richard Lindsey homestead: A. contemporary frontal view from main road, B. side view showing far right, surviving log wing (c. 1810), center, "Greek Revival" main block facing north (note Greek influenced portico)(c. 1840), on left revivalist front added in 1900 (photo 1999).

More typical was the adjoining Bedford homestead (Figure 15). Beginning as a log structure facing south, with the postwar

period it was reoriented to face the road and embellished with a large frame addition dwarfing the log beginning.



A.



B.

Figure 15. Bedford homestead: A modified front (c. 1880) facing main road, B. two-storey saddle bag log structure of original structure (c 1810) facing south.

Even Brutus' house did not escape a degree of modernization. Always far removed from the road, there was no attempt to change its orientation. But Brutus' son's third wife (two died in childbirth) insisted in 1880 that one of the wings be replaced with a two-story structure with bay windows, a bracketed roof, and a touch of fashionable stained glass. This structure enclosed stacked bathrooms, one for each floor and the first such fixtures in the rambling old house, and a primitive central heating system. Apparently the changes were regarded with deep foreboding by her new husband and her step children who would rather have done nothing and who apparently preferred chamber pots, privies and coal fire grates.

This final step in "modernization," creating what is essentially the landscape of today plus or minus a few structures, can

best be seen as a race to establish status in a new world, the social vacuum created by the self-destruction of Whig society. In the wide-spread desire to face the road and to make a statement with a neat, tidy, and comprehensible farmstead, if not a highly elaborate home, this part of the country, indeed much of the old south, was perhaps 20 to 25 years behind the rest of the country. The statements which were made in vernacular architecture, whether in the rebuilt Whig homestead or the new "Queen Ann" frame structure, or in the elaborate bracketed Italianate pile, were made from an insecure vantage point. The late nineteenth century for these local farmers was a period of uncertainty in which the values of their fathers and grandfathers would be tested by a far more complicated world than they had known, one created once and for all by the Civil War.

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