# THE AGRARIAN ORIGINS OF INDUSTRY IN LEICESTERSHIRE, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE 1660 - 80 PERIOD

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an analysis of the conditions which promoted the industrialization of the countryside in Leicestershire in the second half of the seventeenth century and the transformation of its agricultural economy from a peasant-subsistence level to market-oriented production. Although the particular focus of the thesis is the emergence of rural industrialization in West Goscote and agricultural commercialization in Framland (both of which are hundreds in Leicestershire), it was necessary to place the Leicestershire experience both within a broader national context and in a historical perspective.

The years following 1660 were marked by the accelerated progress of agricultural modernization on the national, county and local level. An important by-product of this agricultural modernization was the creation not only of food surpluses but also of rural underemployment as the land became concentrated into a relatively small number of large-scale productive units. As labour was freed from agriculture it could be engaged in industrial activity.

In our examination of West Goscote and Framland it was found that as the soil type was not consistent within each

hundred it was necessary to distinguish sub-regions: the Soar river valley, and the Coal Measures and Charnwood Forest in West Goscote; the Vale of Belvoir, the Wreak valley and the Eastern Uplands, and North-east Framland in Framland. By using the Probate Inventories for the 1660 - 80 period (stored in the Leicestershire County Record Office) to reconstruct the socio-economic profiles for the average villages in each of these sub-regions, we could see the influence of soil structure in retarding or accelerating the modernization of the individual agrarian economies. The inability of the peasant society in the Soar valley to transform itself from peasant-subsistence farming to market-oriented production resulted in the emergence of endemic underemployment and desperate poverty. The existence of cheap labour in the Soar valley attracted merchant capitalists who established the framework knitting industry in the over-populated, poverty-stricken villages.

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# INTRODUCTION

The dissolution of the peasant subsistence economy and its replacement by a market economy for agricultural products was an initial pre-condition for economic modernization. In England, industrialization was preceded by the modernization of agricultural production. In the first chapter we will examine the technical and institutional changes in English agricultural activity which occurred in the 1650 - 1750 period, permitting the redeployment of resources into commerce and industry. This study of economic modernization within the national economy will enable us to see the industrialization of Leicestershire within a broad historical perspective.

In order to see the interconnexion between the commercialization of agriculture and the emergence of rural industry our second chapter will study the transformation of Leicestershire from a county of peasant farmers to a county in which almost 90% of the land was worked by capitalist tenant farmers. Agricultural activity was first modernized in those areas whose soil was unsuitable for subsistence farming. A crucial by-product of agricultural modernization was the creation of a large body of dispossessed family

farmers who were forced out of the grazing villages in eastern Leicestershire. Many of these dispossessed peasants migrated to the open-field villages of the Soar valley where institutional circumstances had enabled a large class of cottager-labourers to remain on the land. The combined effect of these two processes was the emergence of relative overpopulation and desperate poverty among the class of indigent cottager-labourers. The existence of plentiful cheap labour attracted merchant capitalists who established the framework knitting industry in the overpopulated, poverty-stricken villages. Rural industrialization emerged in response to the breakdown of the peasant society in the Soar valley. The commercialization of agriculture in eastern Leicestershire, by intensifying the pressures within the backwards peasant society of the Soar valley, played an integral role in facilitating the emergence of rural industry.

The framework knitting industry was established in rural Leicestershire in the second half of the seventeenth century. In the third chapter we will examine the emergence of differentiated forms of socio-economic organization and, in particular, of industrial activity, in the neighbouring hundreds of Framland and West Goscote. As the soil type

within each hundred was not consistent, it was necessary to distinguish sub-regions: the Vale of Belvoir, the Wreak valley and the Eastern Uplands, and North-East Framland in Framland; the Soar valley, and the Coal Measures and Charnwood Forest in West Goscote. By creating average parishes for each of these five areas, we can see their socio-economic profiles in relation to their dissimilar progress towards agricultural modernization. In this way the agricultural origins of industry in Leicestershire will be seen in the context of peculiar circumstances.

In brief then, the thesis moves from a focus on national, long-term historical patterns to a consideration of the particular problems in Leicestershire, and will attempt to show the inter-relationship in that county, between agricultural change and the beginnings of industry.

# CHAPTER I

## THE BROAD NATIONAL CONTEXT: THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC MODERNIZATION OF ENGLAND, 1650 - 1750.

From the mid-seventeenth century to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the 1780's the structure of English society was being significantly altered. The modernization of the agricultural and commercial sectors of the economy that began in the seventeenth century had opened the way for the growth of industrial enterprises. The transition from an agrarian to an industrial economy was so inordinately complex that rather than observing its movements in minute detail one must be satisfied with an explanation which points out major structural changes. The growth of industry in a pre-industrial environment resulted from the redeployment of investment into non-agricultural activities. But, because pre-industrial populations expanded in response to increases in agricultural productivity, the growth of capital per head tended to be neutralized. Therefore, a significant transfer of income into industry could only be sustained when an increase in agricultural productivity was accompanied by a decrease of population pressure on food resources. But the appearance of these

favourable conditions did not mean that capital would immediately flow into the development of modern industry because mass-production was the least remunerative form of investment in a proto-industrial economy. Nonetheless, there was a considerable amount of small-scale domestic industry scattered about the countryside of England in the period prior to the Industrial Revolution. This manufacturing activity differed from 'modern' industry insofar as it was technologically simple, powered by human energy, diffused in small units and engaged a semi-permanent labour force. Substantial capital investment in industry proceeded only after all other outlets had been filled.

The pre-industrial economy had been composed of a large number of peasant-subsistence farmers who were unable either to produce an agricultural surplus or to purchase industrial goods, a small non-agricultural population, and a stable demand for luxury goods from a limited market of wealthy consumers. By examining the general transformation of the national economy and its effects on the size and composition of the population we will see the process which resulted in the creation of a new form of social organization. The modern, industrial economy that emerged in England was characterized by a small number of wealthy, professional

farmers who were able to produce large food surpluses and purchase industrial products, a large industrial and commercial population, and manufacturers producing to satisfy a rising demand for mass-consumer goods from expanding markets both at home and abroad.

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Steady population growth from 1500 to 1650 was combined with a relatively inelastic supply of food to cause a very steep rise in the price of food. Agricultural prices rose from a base of 100 in 1450-99 to 644 for the decade 1640-49.[1] However the changing price of food was important only insofar as it differed from wage-rates. During these 150 years wages were almost tripled but the real purchasing power of these wage-rates fell drastically. One day's labour in 1650 was worth only 40% of an equal effort in 1500. Added to this enormous depreciation in purchasing power was an increase in the proportion of the population dependent upon wages, exacerbated by the rise in the total population.

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1 P.J. Bowden, "Agricultural Prices, Farm Profits, and Rents", in J. Thirsk, ed., The Agrarian History of England and Wales 1500 - 1640, in H.P.R. Finberg, ed., The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol. IV, (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 593-617. Hereafter this text will be referred to as Thirsk, ed., Agarian History.

Furthermore, wage-earners found themselves in an economy that was unable to supply them steady employment with the result that this group experienced extreme hardship, which was particularly intense from the later sixteenth century until the Restoration. Famine was a recurrent phenomenon since the production of regular crops was inhibited by the soil's inability to sustain regular cropping. Then, throughout the century following 1650, the pressure of men upon resources was relaxed not only because of a drop in the rate of population growth but also because a revolution in farming methods had enabled farmers to consistently produce bumper crops. In this section we will examine the technical and sociological innovations which transformed a crisis-stricken, stagnating agrarian economy into an efficient, expanding enterprise.

The sixteenth century population boom created a demand for marketable food surpluses which the contemporary farmers were unable to satisfy. In essence there were two obstacles to efficient agricultural production: the land could not bear almost continuous cultivation without being severely depleted while the proliferation of small, subsistence farmers meant that a considerable portion of the total crop was withheld from the market. The survival of subsistence

farming was positively harmful since, under this regime, the land was never taken out of cultivation long enough to restore its fertility. Thus, a satisfactory solution to the technical aspect of this problem was dependent upon the dispossession of the customary peasant farmers and their replacement by large-scale capitalist farmers. Only large farmers had enough resources to practise mixed farming, alternating their land as pasture and arable thereby saving it from nitrogen starvation.

The failure of the small subsistence farmer was a precondition to agricultural modernization. Peasant society was destroyed as a result of the population boom of the sixteenth century. Upon a small peasant's death either his land was divided amongst his children so that their holdings became too small to support themselves or the land was all given to the eldest son in which case the younger children became mere wage-earners. Landlords were reluctant to renew their small tenants' leases while the small tenant was often unable to come up with the money to pay for renewal of his lease or copyhold. Population growth, therefore, by inevitably creating a large number of people who had to buy their food reinforced the movements towards capitalist farming.

Large farmers, unworried about subsistence needs, were consistently able to supply the market with produce, earning large profits. With their large productive units capitalist farmers were able to improve their land by sufficiently resting and manuring it which meant that their crop yields were improved. Since landlords regarded their estates as a source of income it was in their interest to have wealthy tenants who would, unlike the small subsistence farmers, be able to pay their rents punctually. Moreover, landlords received a share of their tenants' profits insofar as wealthy tenants paid higher per acre rents. Therefore, the increased demand for food created by a growing population accelerated the concentration of agricultural production into fewer hands. Furthermore, productive units were enlarged and enclosed by landlords in order to attract wealthy tenants.

The Agricultural Revolution was a period of qualitative improvements whose main achievements fell before 1673.[1] The

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1 E. Kerridge, The Agricultural Revolution, (London, 1967), passim. My account of agricultural change follows the work of Kerridge and E.L. Jones who both stress the significance of technical innovations in transforming landholding arrangements and promoting the tremendous increase in the productivity of English farming in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A more cautious, but less convincing argument is put forward by J.D. Chambers and G.E. Mingay who not only push back the date of the 'revolution' but also minimize the structural changes which it wrought. (See their combined effort The Agricultural Revolution 1750 - 1880, (London, 1966), passim.).

major technical innovations were: the practice of convertible husbandry; the use of more effective crop rotations; the increased use of inorganic fertilizers such as lime, marl and chalk; and the floating of water-meadows. By the middle of the seventeenth century the Great Level of Fen was being drained so that almost 750,000 additional acres of rich land were placed in cultivation. The introduction of these new practices gave farmers the ability to increase their food production. The long inflation of food prices slowed down in the years 1630-60, and, then, for the century after 1660 the upwards movement, for all intents and purposes, stopped as the price of a composite unit of consumables fluctuated around 650 (1450-99 being 100).[1] A century of relatively constant prices enabled wage-earners to regain some of the purchasing power they had lost during the price rise of the sixteenth century. By 1750 the purchasing power of a building craftsman's wages had increased 50% over the 1660 value of his labour.[2] However, because the proto-industrial economy did not require enough non-agricultural labour to erase the pervasive under-employment that depressed

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1 Brown, E.H.P. and Hopkins, S.V., "Seven Centuries of the Prices of Consumables Compared with Builders' Wage-rates", in Carus-Wilson, E.M., ed., Essays in Economic History, Vol. 2, (London, 1962), pp. 194 - 5.

2 Brown and Hopkins, Ibid., p. 195.

wages, the mid-eighteenth century purchasing power of a day's labour was still only 60% of what it had been in 1500.

The crucial technical innovation was the practice of convertible husbandry. This type of farming "married the livestock to the soil and extracted the greatest possible cereal and animal produce from the farm."[1] Farmers found that by using fodder crops (legumes such as clover, sanfoin, ryegrass and turnips), they received a three-fold benefit:

(1) Because of the nitrogen-fixing qualities of the legumes the land was more fertile, giving higher crop yields.

(2) The farmers had a larger amount of fodder to feed and improve their animals while being able to keep more of them over the winter.

(3) These animals produced extra dung for increased manuring and fertilization.

The use of legumes distinguished convertible husbandry from mixed farming. By feeding nitrogen into the soil, farmers avoided having to let their land lay fallow to slowly regain its 'heart'. They were able to cultivate their land almost continuously without depleting its fertility with the result that a significantly larger portion of the country's arable area was available to feed the population.

Convertible husbandry was particularly well suited to the light soils of southern and eastern England which had

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1 Kerridge, Agricultural Revolution, p. 202.

previously been worn out by permanent cropping. The use of nitrogen-fixing legumes remedied this deficiency with the result that, from the mid-seventeenth century, farmers began to produce cereal surpluses and England became an exporter of grain. During the gentle subsidence of food prices after 1660 "light land farmers found that by innovating they could profitably expand their output. By putting a bigger volume of produce on the market, even at reduced prices, they could at least maintain their income."[1]

The first to feel the squeeze of declining profits were the cereal farmers on the clay soils of the midlands. Prior to the introduction of convertible husbandry the midlands had been the granary of the country, but because the clay soils were unsuitable for growing legumes they received only marginal benefits from the revolution in agricultural techniques. In addition the heavy clay land was more difficult to work than the free-draining, light soils so that production costs were higher for the farmers in the midlands. Thus the growth of large-scale cereal surpluses from the south and east placed unbearable pressure on those midland farmers who

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1 E.L. Jones, "Agriculture and Economic Growth in England 1660 - 1750: Agricultural Change", in Jones, ed., Agriculture and Economic Growth in England 1650 - 1815, (London, 1967), pp. 162 - 8.

tried to compete in the grain market.

The clay soils of the midlands, however, were most suitable for dairy farming and the production of meat, hides and wool. But livestock farming and grazing required large capital expenditures which many farmers did not possess. These small men were, therefore, unable to reallocate their resources into these more profitable activities. The combination of these factors intensified the pressures on the peasant farmers of the midlands and resulted in the rapid turn-over of tenants and the selling-out of owner-occupiers. The beneficiaries of this situation were those landowners who possessed extra capital to invest in the land market, with the result that professional, tenant farming became more common as the small subsistence farmers were being driven off the land.

The relocation of arable farming, which resulted from the introduction of convertible husbandry, had forced farmers to suit their land's soil type with a complementary form of agricultural activity. When farmers on the light soils moved away from the pasture farming that had been enforced by their land's inability to sustain permanent cropping they moved into cereal farming. Farmers on the

heavier soils who had been the principal grain producers were forced into pasture farming. This wholesale restructuring of the national division of agricultural labour was a long, drawn-out process that began early in the seventeenth century, gained momentum after 1660, but was still not completed by the middle of the eighteenth century. There were a number of important reasons for the protracted character of the transformation:

(1) Soil types were not everywhere either heavy or light, many places had soil of a mixed texture and quality.

(2) The transmission of the new techniques was slow. They moved by word of mouth and, at first, were practised on a trial and error basis.

(3) In the mid-seventeenth century there were still a great many peasant-subsistence farmers who were reluctant to change their habits and this traditional frame of mind was only gradually replaced by a more modern one.

(4) Peasant farmers were not summarily dispossessed but were often able to persist for a considerable time in the face of adversity, and this persistence held back the growth of the market-oriented, capitalist farmers who were willing to innovate.

(5) Regional economic demand might be in conflict with the national pattern thus mitigating the impact of the transformation.

(6) For some farmers the short-term price structure might be unfavourable to a switch-over in their mode of farming.

These qualifications can only explain the relative slowness of the transformation, but they cannot negate its existence.

Therefore, while the restraints were local limiting factors, the transformation was a pervasive national phenomenon.

Those inefficient farmers who did not keep up with the changing requirements for success were dispossessed. England became a country of:

> "mainly large landlords, cultivated by tenant farmers working the land with hired labourers. This structure was partially hidden by an undergrowth of economically marginal cottager-labourers, or other small independents and semi-independents, but this should not obscure the fundamental transformation which had already taken place. By 1790 landlords owned perhaps three-quarters of the cultivated land, occupying freeholders perhaps fifteen to twenty per cent and a 'peasantry' in the usual sense no longer existed."[1]

The modernization of the agricultural economy, then, resulted in the growth of agricultural productivity, in the enlargement of the productive units, and in the reduction of the number of farmers. The creation and maintenance of an agricultural surplus throughout the 1660 - 1780 period freed labour and investment for redeployment into non-agricultural acitivities.

- 2 -

The modernization of English industry and commerce be-

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1. E.J. Hobsbawm, Industry and Empire, (London, 1968), p. 78. The occupying freeholders that Hobsbawm mentions were not all small farmers, many of them held as much as five times the acreage of the smaller freeholders. Thus, the amount of land cultivated in large units might have been as high as 85% of the total.

gan in the 1620's in response to the collapse of its traditional markets. Heavy woollen broadcloths had been the staple of a single-product export economy, entirely at the mercy of foreign demand. The cloths had been sold to eastern and central Europe by the Merchant Adventurers, a London-based monopoly which had controlled cloth exports by right of royal patents. The trading company had regulated production to ensure itself high per unit profits. English cloth exports had ceased to grow in volume after 1550. This conservative organization desired only to maintain its share of the international market. During the 1620's the Thirty Years' War wracked central Europe causing English broadcloth exports to decline precipitously. Even more important, however, was the growth of a domestic woollen industry in Germany whose inexpensive products were reducing English sales. In 1606 the traditional broadcloths had accounted for 72% of London's exports. By 1640 their share had fallen to 35%.[1] Furthermore, the quality of the English wool supply was changing due to the increasingly careful pasturing of sheep flocks which caused these sheep to bear as much as seven times more wool than rough-pastured sheep. However, these abundant supplies were coarse and had a long

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1 B.E. Supple, Commercial Crisis and Change in England 1600 - 42, (Cambridge, 1959), p. 137.

staple so that they were unsuitable for use in the production of heavy woollen broadcloths.[1]

Woollen manufacturers responded to this crisis by producing a new type of cloth to be sold to Mediterranean markets. By 1640 "the new draperies had profoundly altered the nature of the English textile industry and the geographical pattern of English trade."[2] The transformation of the woollen industry had important repercussions in the traditional sheep counties such as Leicestershire since it gave farmers an incentive to forego arable farming at just the time when the agricultural revolution was creating unfavourable circumstances for them in the grain market.

The introduction of the new draperies was of fundamental importance because it possessed many of the characteristics of modern industrial enterprise. The light fabrics were produced in many varieties and sold to consumers who demanded fashionable clothing. This pattern of consumption was highly favourable to a rapid increase in purchases because the new draperies were sold for considerably less than the traditional woollens. Mass pro-

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1 P.J. Bowden, The Wool Trade in Tudor and Stuart England, (London, 1962), pp. 25 - 40.

2 Supple, Ibid., p. 159.

duction responsive to changing tastes was able to proceed because these colourful, cheap textiles were such a popular commodity that low quality goods were eagerly purchased. By selling a large volume of inexpensive fabrics, the manufacturers of the new draperies expanded output and maintained profits.

The low production costs of the new draperies promoted the independence of small-scale manufacturers. Unlike the traditional broadcloth manufacturers whose standardized production had been enforced by the exporting monopoly of the Merchant Adventurers and the regulations of the guilds, these independent producers were able to respond to changing fashions. The expanding demand for light textiles enabled the independent producers to realize a quick turnover of their capital and, thus, to avoid becoming subordinated to the merchant-financiers. Between 1600 and 1640 production of the new draperies increased fivefold so that by 1640 they had drawn even with the old draperies in export value.[1]

However, in 1640, the English economy was still de-

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1 F.J. Fisher, "London's Export Trade in the Early Seventeenth Century", in W.E. Minchinton, ed., The Growth of English Overseas Trade in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, (London, 1969), p. 68.

pendent on wool for 80% of its exports. The prospects for diversifying their exports to Europe were slight so long as the Dutch controlled the European carrying trade. The English responded to these limitations by developing a colonial empire and subordinating its economy to the welfare of the home market. "The most careful analysts have concluded that without its (i.e. the Navigation Code) protection and stimulus, the English trade and shipping would have found it difficult to develop against the greater skill, better technology and entrenched interests of the Dutch."[1]

The Navigation Acts of 1651 and 1660 created a closed commercial system thereby enabling English merchants to receive windfall profits from the re-sale of colonial goods in Europe. The colonial produce, mainly bulky items such as tobacco, sugar and fish, had to be transported in English vessels so that the merchant marine was insured preferential treatment. The influx of wealth from the colonies facilitated the modernization of the English commercial infrastructure. Banking, merchandising and inland transportation were made more efficient so that a greater degree of regularity and certainty became possible.

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1 C. Wilson, England's Apprenticeship 1603 - 1763, (London, 1965), p. 184.

The colonial system fostered growth in English industry by protecting an expanding market for its manufactured goods. North American colonists and West Indian slaves were both clothed in English light woollens. The Manchester cotton industry grew in response to demands from the tropics for lighter clothing. Indeed, the raw materials for the production goods were imported from the very same places which bought the manufactured cloth. Ship building in Liverpool received an enormous boost as a result of the city merchants' involvement in the Atlantic trade. For the Birmingham hardware industry the colonial system was an invaluable stimulus which promoted its early growth in the late seventeenth century and sustained it throughout the eighteenth century.[1] "The colonies were the destinations of great exports of iron wares and later of cottons which played a vital part in the building of these industries to the point where technical change transformed the momentum of growth."[2]

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1 W.H.B. Court, The Rise of the Midland Industries, (Oxford, 1953), passim. The importance of the English colonies in the Americas is also dealt with by Eric Williams (Capitalism and Slavery, (New York, 1965), pp. 51 - 84.).

2 R. Davis, The Rise of the English Shipping Industry, (London, 1962), p. 393.

A stagnating economy had been replaced by a dynamic one that was amenable to change and growth. "The transformation was so rapid, that by the 1690's England seemed actually on the verge of industrial revolution.... Moreover, this transformation in the world position of the British economy was not due merely to spontaneous economic developments within it, but plainly to a major revolution in policy, which henceforth subordinated all other ends to an aggresive mercantilism, to the accumulation of capital and profit."[1] However, the industry that did exist during the proto-industrial period was transitional insofar as it sold its products to a mass market but was organized on a domestic, handicraft basis. English goods were sold extensively rather than intensively. As long as the Atlantic trade was highly profitable, entrepreneurs saw no reason to invest in manufacturing and this bias was re-inforced by the relative ease of disinvestment which gave trade its advantage over industry as a magnet for funds until the development of a market for industrial shares.[2] It was not until the decline of the mercantile economy in the later eighteenth century

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1 E.J. Hobsbawm, "The Seventeenth Century in the Development of Capitalism", Science and Society, XXIV/2, p. 110.

2 R. Grassby, "English Merchant Capitalism", Past and Present, 46, (1970), p. 106.

that capital investment in industry was sufficient to revolutionize production.

- 3 -

The population of England and Wales was about 2.8 million in 1500. By 1800 it was 9.1 million. However, this growth was not continuous but was divided into three distinct periods whose broad outlines[1] were as follows:

(1) From 1500 to 1650 the population grew from 2.8 million to 5.3 million; a growth rate of .47% per annum.

(2) From 1650 to 1750 the population grew from 5.3 to 6.3 million; a growth rate of .18% per annum.

(3) From the middle of the eighteenth century to 1800 the population grew from 6.3 million to about 9.1 million; a rate of growth of .72% per annum.

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1 Before the nineteenth century there are no accurate figures on the actual size of the English population so that the suggested numbers are only rough estimates. The figure of 2.8 million for 1500 is only the best approximation possible under such circumstances (G.S.L. Tucker, "English Pre-industrial Population Trends", Economic History Review, 2nd Ser., XVI/2, (1963), pp. 205-18). The population grew rapidly throughout the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth century but this rapid population growth halted about 1650 (E.A. Wrigley, Population and History, (London, 1969), p. 78.) As there are no figures for 1650 the best source for our approximation of the 1650 population must be Gregory King's estimate of 5.5 million in 1688 (quoted in M.D. George, England in Transition, (Harmondsworth, 1931), p.11.). Under the regime of slow growth, the population was only 6.3 million in 1750. This figure has been suggested by Farr, Brownlee and Griffith (quoted in J.D. Chambers, The Vale of Trent, (London, 1957), p. 23.). The figure of 9.1 million for 1801 was also suggested by Farr, Brownlee and Griffith (Ibid.).

There are a number of reasons why the population's growth rate was significantly slower during the second period that it was either before 1650 or after 1750:

(1) Large cities were so notoriously unhealthy that they required continuous infusions of rural blood merely to maintain their size. During the century from 1650 to 1750 there was an increase in the number, size and importance of urban centers in England. In 1650, 350,000 people lived in London, while in 1750 its population had grown to 700,000 or 11% of England's total population. Maintaining London's growth had required a net immigration of eight to ten thousand a year. "Its continued growth acted as a brake upon the growth of the English population."[1] Moreover, the growth of smaller urban centers such as Liverpool, Bristol and Nottingham similarly helped to restrain population increase, though on a smaller scale than London. Thus, the creation, continued existence and expansion of substantial urban centers was accomplished by the absorption of some of the surplus rural population.

(2) In the late seventeenth century Gregory King estimated that at least half of the households in England had incomes that were inadequate by contemporary standards. The commercialization of agriculture that proceeded throughout the 1650-1750 period resulted in the disappearance of peasant-subsistence farming and the concomitant expansion of a class of wage-earning labourers. Unlike the peasant-farmer who had a measure of security in his land, the wage-earner's only asset was his labour for which there was often little demand. Throughout the economy there was endemic underemployment, this phenomenon was particularly acute among farm labourers. Until the Industrial Revolution manufacturing occupied such a small part of the total labour force that redundant farm

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1 Wrigley, Population and History, pp. 95-8, 148-50.

labour could not be transferred into industrial employments. Therefore, a substantial section of the community did not enjoy a steady, secure income with which to support a family.

From the sixteenth centure to 1911 the mean household size was relatively constant at 4.75.[1] This meant that when population growth did occur it was not the household's size but the number of households themselves that were increased. A higher proportion of those people of marital age created households. When the average age at marriage was reduced the generations were more closely spaced and more households were created. However, between 1650 and 1750 English population growth was being limited because the proto-industrial economy did not provide steady, secure employment for the labouring class. Many underemployed labourers were reticent to marry or to have children, "most of the evidence suggests that poverty was a major cause of family limitation and that it was the poor who often restricted the size of their families."[2] Because people did not marry until their new household could be economically viable the age at first marriage was rarely under twenty-five, with the average age being twenty-eight. This marriage pattern kept women childless for a substantial portion of their fertile period (i.e. from the ages eighteen to forty when conception was possible). Furthermore, illegitimacy seems to have been relatively uncommon even though many people never married. A great amount of the community's potential fertility remained unused.

(3) Between the early years of the seventeenth century and the 1770's new societies were created in North America and the West Indies by emigrants from

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1 T.P.R. Laslett, "Size and Structure of the Household in England Over Three Centuries", Population Studies, XXIII/2, (1969), pp. 199 - 223.

2 J.T. Krause, "Some Neglected Factors in the English Industrial Revolution", in M. Drake, ed., Population in Industrialization, (London, 1969), p. 107.

England who were seeking a better life with land of their own. Many more Englishmen were transported to the colonies as indentured servants or convicts since this "emigration was in tune with the mercantilist theories of the day which strongly advocated putting the poor to industrious and useful labour and favoured emigration, voluntary or involuntary, as relieving the poor rates and finding more profitable occupations for idlers and vagrants abroad."[1] The white population of the colonies was over three million in the 1770's and it seems plausible that as many as 500,000 people had left England by this time.

(4) Another social control of population growth was created by the almost systematic infanticide of the foundling hospitals during this period. "The infant death rate in workhouses in 14 London parishes in the eighteenth century was estimated at 88 per cent by a contemporary, Jonas Hanway, who inquired into this matter."[2]

Not all parts of England, however, had stable or declining populations in the 1650-1750 period. Urban centers and manufacturing districts both experienced increases.

People from the countryside in search of employment were drawn to the prosperous commercial cities. This movement of labour did not cause the national population to grow because the city's gain was the countryside's loss as the population was being redeployed away from those economic regions which could not fully employ all their residents.

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1 Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, pp. 9 - 10.

2 Wrigley, Population and History, p. 126.

Furthermore, the economies of the commercial cities could not provide enough employment for all the immigrants with the result that a hugh transient population flourished within a social underworld. This form of social dislocation was particularly acute in London.

Within the manufacturing districts the population increased steadily. This population growth was sustained because industry provided relatively steady, year-round employment. The decay of apprenticeship regulations meant that young men earned full wages and so were able to marry considerably earlier than farm labourers. Moreover, women and children also worked to support their household, supplementing the man's often inadequate wages. Unfortunately, rudimentary manufacturing was usually a small-scale operation, confined to a few localities, with the result that it was unable to absorb the mass of the redundant farm labourers. The distinct patterns of population growth in agricultural and industrial economies were exemplified within the Vale of Trent after 1650. Between 1674 and 1743 sixty-two agricultural villages increased 12.7%; then in the 1743-64 period, 6.4%; and 1764-1801, 38.7%. In forty industrial villages in the same time periods population in-

creased 47.8%; 35.9% and 96.5%.[1] Within the regional economy of the Vale of Trent migration was exceptionally high, immigrants from agricultural villages seem to have been a constant source of labour for industrialized villages, Nottingham and even nearby agricultural villages. However, it was uncommon for people from outside the neighbourhood to migrate to the industrialized villages in search of work. The early growth of Birmingham supports the argument that while the population was highly mobile, its horizons were limited. Most movement was within a small area. An examination of the settlement certificates of immigrants to Birmingham in the 1686 - 1726 period showed that over 75% came from the immediate area.[2] Similarly, the growth of Sheffield was fueled by immigration from the adjacent parishes as only 25% of the immigrants came from over twenty miles away.[3]

The proto-industrial economy was, therefore, characterized by structural underemployment which was particularly acute within the agricultural sector. Unless and until the national economy broke through to full industrialization

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1 Chambers, The Vale of Trent, pp. 19 - 35.

2 Court, Midland Industries, p. 50.

3 E.J. Bukatzsch, "Places of Origin of a Group of Immigrants into Sheffield, 1624 - 1799", Economic History Review, 2nd ser., II/3, (1950), pp. 303 - 6.

and full employment, any increase in the size of the total population was necessarily accompanied by the immiseration of rural wage-earners. Insofar as a part of their redundant agricultural population found regular employment in industry, the manufacturing areas differed from the farming communities.

- 4 -

Economic conditions favouring the creation of small-scale domestic industry were developed in the later seventeenth century. General, nation-wide improvements were vital since the progress of the whole exerted modernizing pressures on the individual parts. For example, the expansion of the colonial system and the Atlantic triangular trade was of profound importance for the development of a larger, more sophisticated hardware industry in the Birmingham region. The consumer demand from overseas presented a new opportunity for the Birmingham iron work district to increase production at the expense of its English rivals, and, by so doing, prepared that district for eventual control of the home market.[1] This concentration of industry was accompanied by the fact that a growing number of industrial labourers

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1 Court, Midland Industries, passim.

(many of whom were divorced from the land) had to purchase their food: agricultural production became geared to consumer demands. Together with London, the industrial districts were the prime agents of consumer demand for foodstuffs; and this in turn stimulated the rationalization of agricultural enterprise. This brief example has illustrated a few important changes in industry and agriculture resulting from the shifting structure of the national economy. Economic expansion, by creating new needs to be fulfilled, enabled the English economy to extricate itself from its heavy dependence on the wool trade. Improvements in agricultural production, entrepreneurial ability, business organization as well as in transportation and technology all combined to hasten the socio-economic modernization of England.

# CHAPTER II

## AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF LEICESTERSHIRE OVER 4 CENTURIES

In this chapter we will examine how historical and geographical forces combined to transform the traditional Leicestershire peasant society into diverse modern economic systems. An examination of the process of modernization in rural Leicestershire will enable us to see the origins and growth of commercialized agriculture and rural industrialization in historical perspective.

Rural industrialization emerged in response to, and as a result of, the modernization of agricultural production. In fact, the modernization of agricultural production created the necessary conditions for the development of manufacturing in several ways:

(1) The population's food requirements were produced by a small number of specialized farmers. Not only were these farmers specialized, but they were also efficient which meant that they produced a large surplus for sale. These capitalist farmers earned their income by satisfying the non-agricultural population's demands. By providing the basic, subsistence needs for a large number of people engaged in non-agricultural activities, therefore, the modernization of the agricultural sector laid the foundations for an industrial economy.

(2) An important preliminary stage of agricultural

modernization was the reorganization of the land into large, efficient productive units. This process was accompanied by the creation of a large class of wage-labourers who were not fully employed by the capitalist farmers. Until the introduction of industrial activity the labour market was characterized by endemic underemployment. Labour-intensive rudimentary manufacturing was, however, established where a sufficient number of indigent labourers existed to keep costs down.

(3) Consumer demand for manufactured articles was initially re-inforced by the wealthier parts of the community. The emergence of a mass market for consumer goods was very late. In addition to the landlords with fixed incomes, secured by primogeniture and strict settlement, and their relatives who often joined a sub-class of 'ladies and gentlemen living on incomes', there were a large number of tenant-farmers who commanded large incomes and "did not try to hoard or try to add parcel to parcel of their holdings as peasants might do, but who spent reasonably freely on manufactured articles, gee-gaws and fripperies - the things whose production the Industrial Revolution was all about."[1]

(4) While direct investment by agrarian capital in industrial activities was slight, its indirect, supporting investment created an infrastructure that was highly favourable to manufacturing. The large capital reservoir of the wealthiest landowners was instrumental in providing the financial backing for not only rural improvements but also overseas trade, internal communications and resource development. Moreover, a banking system of considerable sophistication was developed in response to the demands of investors.

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1 F.M.L. Thompson, "Landownership and Economic Growth", in E.L. Jones and S.J. Woolf, eds., Agrarian Change and Economic Development, (London, 1969), pp. 57 - 60.

(5) The incursion of market considerations into economic matters led to rational calculation and a breakdown of traditional forms of activity and habits of mind.

During the second half of the seventeenth century the complementary advance of industry and agriculture was rapid. Thus, rural industry grew in a symbiotic relationship with the modernized agricultural sector of the expanding economy.

- 1 -

The period of transition from a traditional, peasant-subsistence system of cultivation to modernized, market-oriented agricultural production had lasted for more than four hundred years. The modernization of Leicestershire's farming was substantially completed by 1800. The rationalization of agricultural enterprise, however, had proceeded on a piecemeal basis. Change was continuous, but slow and uneven. Rather than evolving at a steady rate across all parts of the county, the stages of modernization varied in application from region to region.

The modernized agricultural economy of Leicestershire differed from the traditional system of peasant farming in three basic respects. First, rather than having strips in the community-controlled common fields, each farmer held

his land in individual parcels. Individual enterprise was not restrained because innovations could be more readily undertaken since experiments with new methods could be practised without fear of interference from the village council. Competition replaced co-operation. Second, rather than working to satisfy their own simple needs of subsistence, farmers produced for sale in the market-place, making profit and loss a consideration of overriding importance. Because the degree of specialization depended upon the size of the market, the creation of a national division of agricultural labour in the seventeenth century was a most important advance. Third, specialized agricultural activity had to be closely suited to a complementary soil type because the scramble for profits made it imperative that production be as efficient as possible. Indeed, it may be stated as a rule of thumb that the propensity to modernize agricultural enterprise was inversely related to the quality of the soil; providing, of course, that the soil was not barren. Peasant society flourished on the very best land which was usually found in the river valleys whereas it was on the more difficult land, such as heavy clay or light sandy soils, that heavily capitalized agricultural activities were first introduced.

The character of the soil played an important role in determining the type of farming enterprise that was practised on it. In order to be successful, farmers had to work with their land, trying not to burden it with an unsuitable form of husbandry. Even the best land could be worn out by permanent cropping while soil of an inferior quality could be rarely cultivated for more than two or three years without needing substantial rest or manuring to restore its fertility. Moreover, there was some land which was not easily worked so that the family farmer could not cultivate a large enough area of it to meet his food requirements and pay his rent. Such intractable land went untenanted or else it was put under permanent pasture. Geological peculiarities defined, therefore, the permanent features in a farmer's life with which his work was inescapably linked. Leicestershire's geographical make-up was divided into two roughly equal areas by the River Soar. Apart from a small patch of light, upland soil in the extreme north east, the land in Leicestershire east of the Soar was a fertile but mostly heavy Liassic clay. This land was both difficult to work and slow-draining and in some parts a high water table made it liable to flood. West of the River Soar the lighter clay soils were more friable to the plough. The land in western Leicestershire, however,

greatly varied in quality over short distances. In addition, the barren, stony and badly drained land of Charnwood Forest occupied a prominent place in west Leicestershire as it was scarcely settled as late as the seventeenth century when it was described as "that vast and decayed Forest of Charnwood." The agricultural land in the river valley of the Soar was of very good quality, the best in Leicestershire. The smaller Wreak valley also had good soil but since it was liable to flood it was more suitable for pasture farming rather than arable cultivation. In medieval agriculture the differences in soil type were of minimal importance since farmers were primarily concerned with wresting their subsistence from the land. But the search in a capitalist society for the most profitable type of agricultural production enhanced the importance of physical variations.[1]

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1 The information for this section on physical variations was drawn from W.G. Hoskins assisted by R.A. McKinley, eds., The Victoria History of the County of Leicester, Vol. II, in R.B. Pugh, ed., The Victoria History of the Counties of England, (London, 1954), pp. 145 - 6, 224, and W.G. Hoskins and R.A. McKinley, eds., A History of the County of Leicester, Vol. III, in R.B. Pugh, ed., The Victoria History of the Counties of England, (London, 1955), p. 129. Hereafter these two volumes will be referred to as V.C.H., II; or V.C.H., III.

The breakdown of the traditional system of subsistence farming was an essential pre-condition to the economic modernization of agriculture in Leicestershire. Modernization occurred only after the traditional method of farming had shown itself to be unable not only to satisfy demands for a marketable surplus but also to maintain itself as a viable system. In order to meet his subsistence requirements the peasant-farmer overworked his land and so depleted it. The result was that his future crop yields were smaller and his ability to pay his rent was diminished. This vicious circle of overwork, depletion and default doomed the small farmer, for landlords were reluctant to renew those leases which were to be so very expensive to them and ruinous to their land. The small tenants' inability to make regular rental payments dealt the death-blow to subsistence farming. Moreover, the persistence of peasant farming had held back progressive agricultural change because the peasant-farmer had been unable to provide the substantial investments that were necessary to make his enterprise large enough to produce a marketable surplus. Enlarging the size of each tenanted farm meant that, although the total number of productive units was diminished, the creation of an agricultural surplus was facilitated for two reasons: a smaller part of the total output was needed for immediate

subsistence requirements, while the total output itself was increased by capitalist farmers who suited their land with a complementary form of husbandry, and so increased its productivity and maintained its fertility. In addition, wealthy tenants provided landlords with a steady income. However, the limited supply of such tenants partially restrained the movement towards larger productive units and slowed down its progress.

We will now survey the progress of agricultural modernization in Leicestershire from the fourteenth century to the Parliamentary Acts for Enclosure of the later eighteenth century.

The Black Death of 1348, the recurrent incidences of the plague and the socio-economic dislocation of the fifteenth century combined to reduce the population of Leicestershire. Evey by 1563 the county's population had not regained its pre-plague level.[1] The decimation of the population and its very gradual reassumption of its former

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1 V.C.H., III, pp. 132 - 8. The county's population was estimated to have fallen by almost 40% in the second half of the fourteenth century. Little repopulation occurred during the fifteenth century. It appears that substantial growth resumed only about the beginning of the sixteenth century.

size had important repercussions on the county's economic life.

The early fourteenth century's dominant condition of land-hunger was abruptly transformed into a situation in which resources were plentiful but labour was scarce. At Groby, near Leicester, in 1445 both arable and meadow were worth only one-third of what they had been in the period of land-hunger.[1] Rentals fell because landlords had difficulty retaining their tenants and had to offer beneficial terms in order to attract new tenants or retain their existing tenants. Moreover, the peasantry's prospects were enhanced by the fact that manorial services were relatively light in Leicestershire.[2]

The relative abundance of land combined with the peasantry's mobility to enable the surviving farmers to choose the land they would rent and cultivate. Villages whose soil was unsuitable for subsistence farming were forsaken and turned to permanent pasture. Only a few villages were completely abandoned. In some villages enterprising farmers took advantage of the situation to gain control of

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1 W.G. Hoskins, Leicestershire: The History of the Landscape, (London, 1957), p. 27.

2. V.C.H., II, p. 173.

individual parcels of land thereby separating themselves from the demands of communal farming. However, in those villages whose soil had satisfactory arable qualities, the depopulating consequences of the plague were hardly noticeable as the traditional peasant society persisted along with the communal farming of the open-fields.

Before 1450 there was little benefit for landlords in turning their land to permanent pasture as the demand for wool and meat was low. But in the second half of the fifteenth century the Low Countries' demands for English wool promoted the depopulation of Leicestershire villages in which there were too few people to farm the land properly. "Most of the abandoned villages lie upon the heavy Liassic clays of East (or High) Leicestershire, which were in general more suitable for grassland than for tillage, and we find some landowners defending their apparently anti-social activities on this ground."[1] By 1530, more than fifty villages had been deserted to make way for sheep runs. Most of the enclosure for pasture came between 1450 and 1530, the most intense activity happening in the years between 1490 and 1510.[2] By 1530 perhaps 15% of the county's

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1 Hoskins, Leicestershire, p. 27.

2 V.C.H., II, pp. 192 - 5.

total area had been withdrawn from the traditional system of peasant farming and turned into capitalist farming units.

The period from 1530 to 1650 was characterized by rising food prices and rapid population growth. The enclosure for pasture movement was temporarily slowed down even before the collapse of wool prices in 1551 because capitalist farmers produced grain in order to supply the expanding food market. The rise in population had greatly enlarged the ranks of the poor. A peasant-farmer with a small landholding either divided his land amongst his children who subdivided it again thereby leaving the third generation with a mere fragment, or else the peasant-farmer bequeathed all his holdings to his elder son alone in which case his younger children were left propertyless. In any event, there were more poor people who had to purchase their grain in the local market week-by-week. The problem of rural poverty was complicated by the fact that demographic growth had outstripped agricultural productivity with the result that while food prices rose rapidly wages lagged behind, thus intensifying the impoverishment of the landless labourers.[1]

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1 A. Everitt, "Farm Labourers", in Thirsk, ed., Agrarian History, pp. 430 - 42.

High cereal prices throughout the sixteenth century promoted the prosperity of many peasant-farmers who had a self-sufficient economic life and sold their available surpluses in increasingly favourable market conditions. Furthermore, until the later sixteenth century rents were fixed at very low levels; farmers who held long leases enjoyed economic security. In addition, it appears that in some Leicestershire villages the copyhold of inheritance was the dominant form of land tenure. In Wigston Magna, for example, a confrontation occurred in 1558 between the lord and tenants:

> "On the one hand we have customary tenants who claim copyholds of inheritance with all the rights that flow therefrom, who pay a fixed and ancient rent more appropriate to the thirteenth century, and who claim to pay only a small and ancient fine. On the other hand we have a new lord who has purchased the manor (no doubt at a price appropriate to the rising price-level of the 1580's, but we do not certainly know this) and who is anxious to sweep away this rabbit warren of medieval rents, customs and services, and to exploit its full economic possibilities in the form of leases at rents that bear some relation to the real annual value of the land."

The peasants proved that they held their land by copyhold of inheritance and gained an almost freehold interest in their land inasmuch as the inflation of prices had yielded their payments nominal. Since the landlord could not re-adjust the terms of the copies without the peasants' con-

sent he was forced to sell out.[1] Particularly after 1580 as land became relatively scarce and, hence, more valuable there was a steep increase in rents when landlords, not burdened with copyholders of inheritance, readjusted the terms of leasehold as the "uneconomic" leases were expiring. Moreover, the growth of a class of propertyless labourers reinforced the pressures that were dissolving the traditional social system. The small farmers' ability to supplement his income with wage-labour was thwarted by the proliferation of masterless men and sturdy beggars who drove down the price of labour. As more people sold their labour in exchange for cash, the market for the purchase of subsistence requirements expanded. Production for this market was a profitable activity, but the farmer who could not produce a marketable surplus nevertheless had to pay higher rents without benefit of an enlarged income. The economics of market production were, therefore, favourable for the professional farmer while being disastrous for the subsistence farmer. These conditions began the dissolution of the egalitarian peasant community and its replacement by individually-operated, market-oriented production.

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1 W.G. Hoskins, The Midland Peasant: The Economic and Social History of a Leicestershire Village, (London, 1957), pp. 106-7.

In many Leicestershire villages a few families benefited from the misfortunes of their neighbours by becoming money-lenders to these struggling peasants. During the recurrent dearths and famines, mortgaged land was often foreclosed and extra pieces of land were bought up by the wealthier peasants.[1] The extremely active land market in Leicestershire from the later 1570's to the 1640's made it possible for the progressive, capitalist elements in rural society to augment their holdings and to create compact parcels of land. From the 1510's to about 1580 enclosure had proceeded slowly, but after 1580 the pace quickened once again. By 1640 nearly one village in three was entirely enclosed and many others were partially enclosed.[2] In the 1580 - 1640 surge of enclosure small farmers who had managed to consolidate their strips by purchase or exchange joined forces with the squirearchy to reduce the size and importance of the common fields.[3] Beneficial marriages, small families, primogenitural inheritance and a fair degree of business acumen were all combined in elevating the enterprising men who

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1 R.H. Tawney, "Historical Introduction", T. Wilson, A Discourse Upon Usury, (London, 1925), pp. 24 - 7.

2 V.C.H., II, pp. 203 - 6.

3 V.C.H., II, p. 203.

formed a tiny village oligarchy. Indeed, throughout the 1580 - 1650 period there was a massive redistribution of income in favour of the wealthier sections of the community.

The high demand for farm produce which had partially protected the fragile economic position of many Leicestershire peasant-farmers abated in the middle decades of the seventeenth century. The combined effect of a slowdown of population growth and a revolution in farming techniques hastened the movement away from arable farming in most of Leicestershire. Farmers on the clay soils were at a comparative disadvantage in marketing large-scale grain crops because their land was unsuitable for the use of legumes which meant that they did not benefit from the introduction of convertible husbandry. Of course, a few farmers could still sell their cereal crops in the local markets, but this was merely a stop-gap measure. In response to the changing market conditions, many capitalist farmers in Leicestershire redirected their investment into pasture farming.

The advance of capital-intensive pasture farming placed enormous pressure on small landowners and the smaller tenant farmers. Small-scale grazing operations in the pasture regions were unusual because landlords preferred to lease compact holdings to stable, professional tenants.

Dairy farming, however, required far less capital investment that did stock-breeding, grazing or fattening. This labour-intensive activity flourished in the rich land of the river valleys where it could be practised in small, efficient units.

Enclosure for pasture was most important on the heavier clay soils of eastern Leicestershire, although it also occurred in the western half of the county. Between 1660 and 1760 73 places were entirely enclosed, which when added to the pre-1640 enclosures meant that by 1760 "at least 197 out of 396 places in Leicestershire (50 per cent.) were entirely enclosed."[1] It has been estimated that about 52% of Leicestershire's total acreage was enclosed by private agreements between 1607 and 1730.[2] In many open-field villages large sections of land were fenced, removed from the demands of communal farming and farmed privately. The grazier became the dominant force in Leicestershire farming as "the movement towards large-scale grazing had received immense impetus from the 1660's onwards."[3] These men

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1 V.C.H., II, pp. 223 - 5.

2 W.G. Hoskins, "The Leicestershire Farmer in the Seventeenth Century", in Provincial England: Essays in Social and Economic History, (London, 1963), p. 163.

3 Ibid., p. 165.

"specialized not only in wool but in producing meat for the towns and in particular for London."[1]

The dissolution of the self-sufficient village economy meant that rural society became polarized between the few who possessed land and capital and the poverty-stricken multitude. The enterprising members of the peasantry rose to become either tenant-farmers or substantial freeholders who were wholly engaged in production for the market. The combination of low and fluctuating agricultural prices for more than a hundred years before 1750, and heavy taxation, especially between 1688 and 1715, obliterated the independent status of many peasant landowners.[2] They became indigent cottagers possessing a few acres and relying upon seasonal employment at low wages to eke out a miserable living. Enclosure for pasture, by reducing employment opportunities and forcing the uprooted peasants into overcrowded open-field villages, created rural slums. In unenclosed villages the co-existence of numerous poor peasants alongside several substantial farmers was quite common.

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1 V.C.H., II, p. 220.

2 G.E. Mingay, Enclosure and the Small Farmer in the Age of the Industrial Revolution, (London, 1968), p. 29.

Parliamentary Enclosures of the later eighteenth century put the finishing touches to developments that had been progressing since the fourteenth century. Enclosure by Act of Parliament imposed a heavy burden on the remaining small farmers in several ways: the cost of an Act of Parliament rose steadily throughout the later eighteenth century; supplementary expenses (e.g. ditching and fencing) were high; the compensation of the titheholder also required a relatively large sum; and many post-enclosure holdings were too small to be farmed at a profit.[1] In Wigston Magna, enclosed by Act in 1766, 46.1% of the land was held in 7 parcels of over 100 acres, another 37.9% was held in units of 20 to 100 acres by another 23 farmers. On the other hand, the remaining 67 allotments comprised only 16% of the parish's total area. Although the enclosure of the parish did not create any greater inequality than had existed beforehand, the peasants' loss of their common rights dealt a death-blow to their traditional way of life.[2] Parliamentary Enclosure finalized the triumph of agrarian capitalism. Thus, by the time that the Industrial Revolution commenced the process of modernization in rural Lei-

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1 Mingay, Enclosure and the Small Farmer, pp. 22 - 5.

2 Hoskins, Midland Peasant, pp. 253 - 4.

cestershire was complete.

- 2 -

In the medieval subsistence economy, household handicraft production and some guild regulated production existed, but there was little point in producing a large volume of goods as long as there was no consumer market. The breakdown of the subsistence economy, however, was accompanied by the creation of a class of capitalist farmers who provided not only a food surplus to feed a population employed in manufacturing consumer goods but also a market for manufactured products. But the transformation of 'secondary' production from the household handicraft stage to machine-powered, market-oriented modern industrial activity was retarded by the deliberate progress of agricultural modernization which necessarily restrained the development of consumer demand.

The modernization of industrial activity was also limited by inherent restrictions in the techniques and the organization of production itself. Handicraft manufacturing was characterized by the fact that the processes of production and distribution were carried out by one person whose economic horizons were necessarily limited. Handicraft producers were generally committed to quality produc-

tion and relatively high prices. Moreover, since most workers engaged in handicrafts possessed too little capital to expand the scale of their operations, an enlargement of consumer demand could only be satisfied by the utilization of wage labour. The emergence of wage labour not only made it possible to expand the scale of production, but also reduced production costs, thus ruining the inefficient journeyman manufacturers but creating a new class of successful entrepreneurs. These successful merchants not only controlled production by 'putting out' work to dependent craftsmen but also dominated the merchandizing of the finished goods. This form of economic organization was non-progressive inasmuch as most merchant-capitalists found it profitable to maintain relatively high prices at the expense of further enlarging the scale of production. The manufacture of inexpensive articles for a mass consumer market rendered the merchant-capitalists' profitable middleman position obsolete insofar as such mass production was solely responsive to consumers' demands. In order to make the production of cheap goods a profitable venture, human skill and effort had to be replaced by rapid, regular, precise and tireless machines. The separation of capital and labour, the production for a mass consumer market and the use of machine power were, therefore, the three most

prominent characteristics of modern industrial activity.

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It was only about 1570 that the practise of knitting jersey or worsted hosiery became common in England. The hand-knitting industry was connected with the home market; it was not an export trade. By the middle of the seventeenth century hand-knitting was well established as a Leicestershire domestic industry in which knitting was 'put out' to women by hosiers who organized the production and distribution of the finished products.[1] Even at this early date, the hand-knitting industry was characterized by the subordination of labour to capital.

The knitting frame was invented in 1587 by William Lee. It was a highly specialized machine which was made up of over 2,000 separate pieces of steel, wood and lead each requiring precision craftsmanship. It was a first-rate technological breakthrough which enabled a framework knitter to do "1000 to 1500 stitches a minute, compared with about 100 stitches a minute in hand knitting." However, the

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1 R.A. McKinley, ed., A History of the County of Leicester, Vol. IV, in R.B. Pugh, ed., The Victoria History of the Counties of England, (London, 1958), pp. 90 - 2. The hand-knitting industry in Leicestershire was merely of local importance; the national center of the industry was in Norfolk.

first knitting frames cost a prohibitive £ 80 per frame so that the introduction of this machine into general use was retarded. Furthermore, the earliest models of the knitting frame required two operatives which meant that labour costs were another factor limiting its dissemination. Nonetheless, the demand for knitting frames created a subsidiary frame-making industry which not only improved Lee's prototype so that it could be worked by a single operative but also reduced its cost.[1] Cost reduction was rapid after the middle of the seventeenth century. The "frame and implements" of George Pogson, a silkstocking weaver of Dishley near Loughborough, were valued at £ 31 in the inventory of his belongings made in 1660.[2] By the early eighteenth century the cost of a frame had been greatly reduced since in 1718 "the value of two frames in the possession of a farmer and framesmith of Selston, Nottinghamshire was only £ 8 and

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1 J.D. Chambers, "The Worshipful Company of Framework Knitters (1657 - 1778)", Economica, 27, (1929), pp. 296 - 312.

2 Leicestershire County Records Office, Inventories, 1660 (Before the Archdeacon), 266. A man who owned a machine worth £ 31 cannot be considered to be a pauper, although he may have been a dispossessed peasant-farmer who had liquidated his assets in order to engage in a trade which was independent of the land.

£ 7 10s. respectively."[1] But even a frame costing as little as £ 10 must have been out of reach of most cottagers. These high initial capital costs, therefore, necessarily enabled the production of machine-wrought hosiery to be dominated from the outset by men with large capital funds. These capitalist hosiers were able "to control the hiring out of frames to domestic craftsmen; and although the domestic system continued despite the new machine, it continued on the basis of the ownership of the instruments of production by capitalists and the hire of these instruments to the individual producer."[2] The money from the domestic workers' frame rentals defrayed a large part of the hosiers' capital costs. The subordination of the labourer to the capitalist hosier was intensified by the practise of giving work only to those craftsmen who paid a frame rent. Moreover, the fact that the knitting frame was initially used to produce luxury goods (i.e. silk stockings) enabled a small group of London-based merchant-hosiers to control the export of finished goods by maintaining close contact with their consumers' changing tastes.

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1 Chambers, Ibid., p. 298.

2 M. Dobb, Studies in the Development of Capitalism, (New York, 1963), p. 146.

In order to safeguard their profitable position, the London-based oligarchy of capitalist-hosiers twice secured government orders of incorporation enabling them to exercise control over the whole framework knitting industry. The 1663 charter of the Worshipful Company of Framework Knitters invested governing powers in a closed, self-perpetuating body of officials.[1] Through the use and abuse of their incorporated powers, a small group of wealthy merchant-hosiers completely dominated the hosiery trade for as long as the Company's authority was respected. By imposing a scale of exorbitant fees on the journeyman members of the Company for the employment of apprentices the oligarchy put large-scale production beyond the reach of the smaller craftsmen, but the wealthy masters ignored these apprenticeship regulations whenever it was in their interest to do so. The royal patent also gave the Company supervisory powers to forbid the export of knitting frames thus securing a large measure of protection from foreign competition for the framework knitting industry. In addition, the Company was empowered to fix prices and fine any hosiers who tried to undercut the established rate.

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1 Chambers, Ibid., pp. 303 - 5.

Framework knitters outside London were not independent producers insofar as they manufactured luxury goods that were sold through the London merchant-hosiers. The Company expressed the interests of the London oligarchy by keeping the provincial masters firmly under control. However, the Company's authority was effectively challenged when provincial masters used the knitting frame to produce cheap woollen or cotton stockings. By turning their attention to the domestic market for these cheaper goods, the country manufacturers not only escaped from their subjection to the London merchant-hosiers, but also rendered the Company ineffective, in that its power had been dependent upon a commitment to luxury production.

The country manufacturers were mainly located in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire. In the Midlands there were favourable conditions that reduced production costs. Because both food and accommodation cost less than in London, wages could be commensurately lower than those paid to London workers. Many operatives combined framework knitting with either rural labouring or the cultivation of a small plot of land, and as framework knitting merely provided a supplement to their regular income, they could be paid very low wages. Proximity to the supply of coarse,

inexpensive Midland wool further reduced the production costs. In addition, the reduced purchase price of frames enabled hosiers to employ more operatives, and the frame-rentals that these men were paying provided the hosiers with another source of income which could be ploughed back into the purchase of still more knitting frames. Furthermore, an improvement in the knitting frame itself had made it possible for a single man to operate it. The process of mechanical knitting was further simplified with the result that apprenticeship or prolonged training became unnecessary. These developments were behind the prodigious increase in the number of frames in the three Midland counties: from 140 in 1664 to 3500 in 1727.[1]

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In Leicestershire, the accelerated pace of enclosure for pasture in the second half of the seventeenth century produced a large class of wage labourers. These men, unable to find employment in their native villages, drifted into the remaining open-field villages where they formed a large pool of underemployed labour. Furthermore, the population in these open-field villages, such as Wigston Magna in the Soar valley south of Leicester, "had long ago outgrown the avail-

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1 Chambers, J.D., The Vale of Trent, p. 13.

able supply of land, and would have done so even had there been no growing concentration of land in fewer and fewer hands."[1] Thus, agricultural modernization had freed labour for industrial employment. Provincial hosiers with knitting frames to rent were attracted by the cheap, unskilled and unapprenticed labour of the rural poor. Framework knitting was an ideal form of employment for absorbing the poor and dispossessed as it was carried on with a minimum of equipment: a hired frame, wool supplied by the hosier and a small workshop were all that was necessary.[2] By 1750 framework knitting was a prominent component of the economy of Leicestershire as there were 1,000 frames in Leicester and probably another 2,000 frames scattered among the industrial villages.[3]

The introduction of framework knitting into the county town of Leicester was similar to the process of industrialization in many Leicestershire villages. Indeed, Leicester was really an overgrown village as its mid-seventeenth cen-

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1 Hoskins, Midland Peasant, p. 228. The first knitting frames to reach Leicestershire had been set up in Hinckley, another open-field village with a surfeit of indigent cottagers, about 1640. (V.C.H., III, p. 2.)

2 Hoskins, Midland Peasant, p. 227.

3 V.C.H., III, p. 3.

tury population was only about 5,000. Dispossessed family farmers from the enclosed villages of eastern Leicestershire and the overcrowded villages of the Soar valley had drifted into Leicester in search of work. From 1678 to 1730, 57% of the migrant apprentices had come from less than 10 miles away, while 60% of the youths apprenticed in Leicester hosiery trades came from the immediate area.[1] 'Apprenticeship' had, however, a broad range of meaning in the late seventeenth century that was dependent upon the class of the apprentice and the terms of his apprenticeship. On the one hand, substantial farmers from nearby agricultural villages succeeded in establishing their younger sons in the hosiery business by apprenticing them to wealthy merchant-hosiers. These people joined the ranks of the capitalist hosiers after their apprenticeship was completed.[2] On the other hand, apprenticeship was often a form of cheap labour as it was "in this industry that we come across the first collective indentures of apprenticeship, by arrangement between manufacturers and parishes. It was a good opportunity for the parish to get rid of its workhouse children and it en-

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1 V.C.H., IV, p. 193. Hoskins, Midland Peasant, pp. 257 - 9.

2 Hoskins, Midland Peasant, p. 258.

abled the manufacturer to obtain free labour, and thus force down the wages of adult workers."[1]

Industrial employment caused a startling sociological innovation: men were able to earn full wages at an early age with the result that it was common for industrial employment and early marriage to go hand-in-hand. We have already noted that the age at marriage acted, in agricultural communities, as a voluntary method of birth-control because men did not establish households until they had an independent source of income. But the genius of industrial employment was that it provided young men with enough money to get married and support a family. However, framework knitters were paid subsistence-level wages so that contemporaries noted a close association between the coming of rural industry and a rise in the poor rates.

Rural industrialization was a prominent feature of the Leicestershire economy during the eighteenth century. The absence of institutional checks, such as the rigid control of settlement by landlords and parish officers, had facilitated the relative over-population of open-field villages.

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1 P. Mantoux, The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century, (New York, 1965), p. 193.

The indigent cottagers supplied the cheap labour that was crucial to the success of domestic industry. In Wigston Magna, for example, at least one-third of the village's population in 1765 were industrial workers, renting frames and being paid subsistence wages.[1] The Industrial Revolution had little impact in Leicestershire until the mid-nineteenth century when framework knitting was finally organized within factory walls. This final stage in the transformation of knitting from handicraft to machine industry was achieved only after steam power had replaced human effort in driving the knitting frame.[2]

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1 Hoskins, Midland Peasant, p. 228.

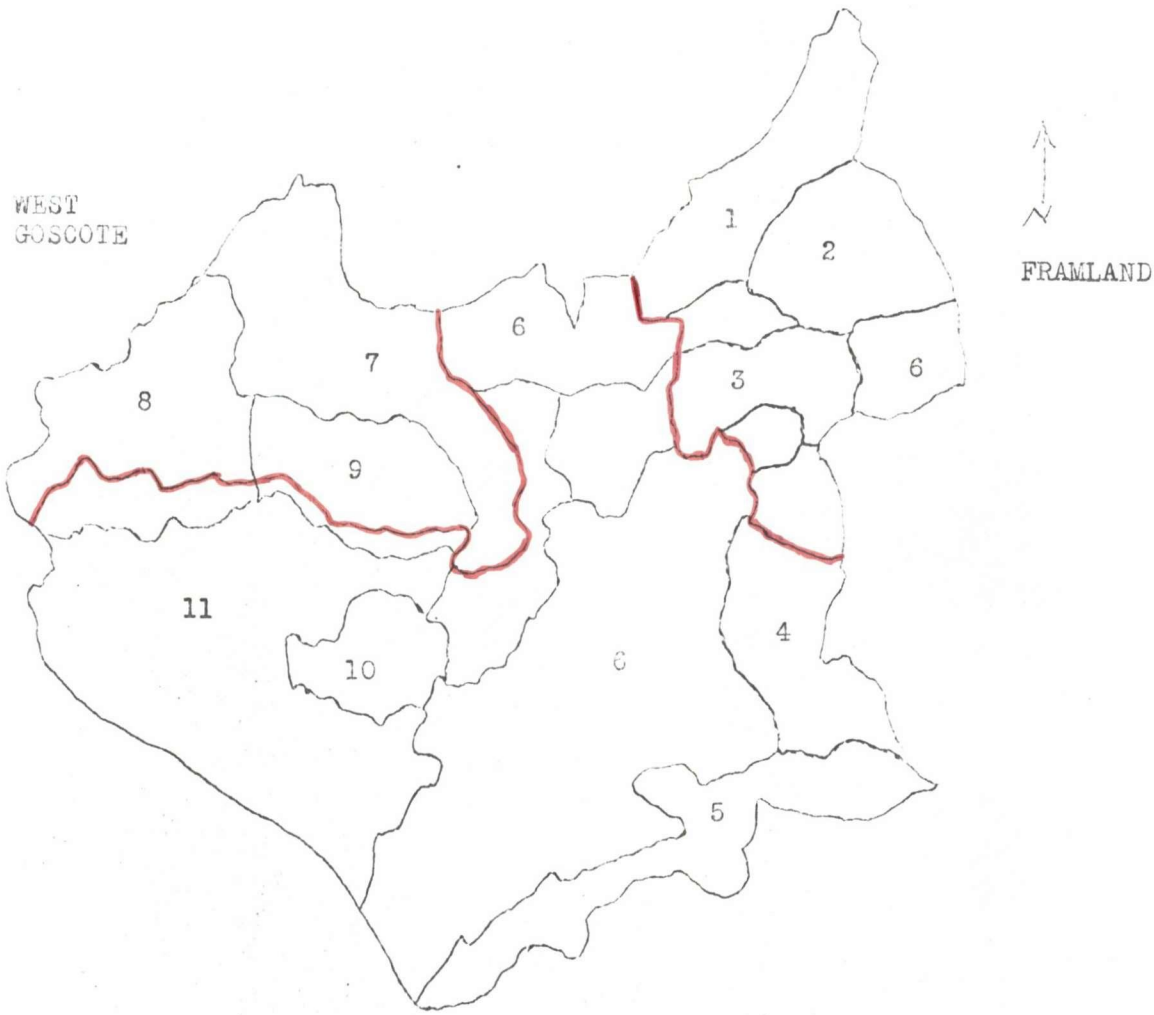
2 V.C.H., III, p. 16.

# CHAPTER III

## THE PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH PROMOTED SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIFFERENTIATION: THE EMERGENCE OF AGRICULTURAL COMMERCIALIZATION IN FRAMLAND AND RURAL INDUSTRIALIZATION IN WEST GOSCOTE, 1660 - 80.

Modern industrial activity was initiated only after a more efficient division of agricultural labour had created a food surplus and had thereby enabled labour and capital to be redeployed into such secondary undertakings as manufacturing and service industries. Our examination of national and regional economic development has shown that this economic modernization began on a substantial scale during the middle of the seventeenth century. In this chapter we will examine specific, local conditions in two neighbouring parts of Leicestershire during the 1660's and 1670's. By this time one can already see the bifurcation of social and economic organization that was to be intensified throughout the proto-industrial period.

In the 1660's farming was the primary economic activity of the bulk of the population in both Framland and West Goscote. Apart from such traditional village craftsmen as the blacksmith or the carpenter, there was very little industrial activity. By the 1660's, however, the agrarian society of Framland was very wealthy in comparison with the poverty-




1 Vale of Belvoir
2 Light Soils of North-east Framland
3 Wreak valley
4 Eastern Uplands
5 Welland valley
6 Liassic Clay Soil of East Leicestershire
7 Soar valley
8 Coal Measures
9 Charnwood Forest
10 Leicester Forest
11 Remainder of West Leicestershire

stricken villages in West Goscote. In order to explain the disparity of wealth distribution between these two regions we must review the dissimilar progress of agricultural modernization. We will then see that the origins of agricultural commercialization in Framland and of industrialization in West Goscote resulted from their peculiar responses to particular socio-economic crises within their traditional economic systems. Moreover, we will observe that these fundamental economic transformations occurred when the pressures of adversity had forced men to abandon their habitual activities.

- 1 -

In Framland hundred perhaps 60% of the land belonged to the belt of Liassic clay soils which covered the eastern half of the county.[1] None of this land was infertile although there were places where it was heavy and, therefore, difficult to cultivate. Enterprising farmers on the clay soils became graziers rather than cereal farmers because their land was more productive when it was used for pasture than when it was cultivated. The other 40% of the land in Framland was a mixture of sandstone and limestone which was

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1 See the accompanying map on soil structure.

lighter and more easily worked than the dominant clay soils which surrounded it on three sides. However, as this land was more susceptible to nitrogen depletion than the clay soils it required substantial fertilization if it was to realize its full potential. In this section we will see that when circumstances forced farmers to become efficient, specialized producers, they could only do so if they suited their land with a complementary form of husbandry.

Subsistence farming in Framland broke down first on the light soils which were worn out by continuous cultivation.[1] Without the aid of legumes, farmers on this type of land had to practise a form of mixed farming in which their animals' manure replenished the nitrogen that was extracted from the soil by their cereal crops. Mixed farming was, however, beyond the economic competence of the small farmer since, by demanding that a large part of his land be put to pasture, it required him to own a large number of animals.

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1 By the later fourteenth century the villages on the light soils were poor as evidenced by the fact that they were already sparsely populated, after having been the most densely populated part of Leicestershire at the time of the Domesday survey in 1086. Until the later seventeenth century this region was among the most thinly populated parts of Leicestershire. (V.C.H., III, pp. 131, 135, 138, 143.).

Many members of the traditional peasant society were disenfranchised because they could not adapt to the new demands which pressed upon them after they had contributed to the soil's nitrogen depletion. After the small family farmers had lost their tenancies the system of landholding was reorganized and the land was rented to a smaller number of capitalist farmers. This process was well advanced by the 1660's when 6 of the 13 parishes on the light soil belt had been totally enclosed.[1]

Enclosure in the light soil belt of Framland was for mixed farming and not for permanent pasture, so that while the villages shrank they were not deserted. There were, on the average, only 36.3 households per parish.[2] The labour force was reduced because this enclosure was accompanied by the creation of large farms which utilized labour more efficiently. In our examination of probate inventories for the years 1660 to 1670 we found that only 26.32% of the

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1 The dates at which enclosure was finalized for these 6 parishes were as follows: Bescaby (1538); Croxton Kerrial (1538); Eaton (1575); Stonesby (1579); Eastwell (1656); and Goadby Marwood (1638-74). (V.C.H., III, pp. 254 - 9.)

2 See Appendix 1 for the source of this figure and those following which relate to the social structure of the light soil region of Framland.

estates from this area were worth less than £ 25. The relative absence of poor people was also noted in the Hearth Tax returns of 1670 in which 25.6% of the households were exempted because of their poverty. However, in the 6 parishes which were enclosed by the mid-seventeenth century the poverty rate was only 17% as compared to 29% for the unenclosed parishes.

Although the family farmer was being replaced by the market-oriented commercial farmer, this process was not complete by the 1660's. Indeed, the largest part of the population, 43.43%, was composed of small independents whose estates varied in size from £ 25 to £ 100. However, almost 75% of this group owned goods worth less than £ 50 suggesting that their independence was very fragile.

In the light soil area of Framland the wealthy farmer had become the most important figure by the 1660's. 30.28% of the inventories from this region were made for people who owned more than £ 100 in possessions at the time of their death. In addition, this group controlled 75.32% of the moveable wealth, and since the land was the primary source of wealth it follows that perhaps 75% of the land was being farmed in large units by the 1660's.

The inability of subsistence farmers to survive on the light soils had, therefore, enabled the market-oriented commercial farmer to become the characteristic unit of production. While the mixed farming which they practised was a definite improvement over the disastrous system of subsistence farming, it was not an especially productive form of husbandry. These light soil farmers were not taking advantage of their land's tractability or its free draining qualities. Mixed farming was a remedial measure rather than an activity which promoted an intensification of cultivation. The technical aspect of farming in this region began to be modernized sometime in the later seventeenth century, after the introduction of convertible husbandry had enabled the light soil farmers to specialize their production by becoming cereal farmers. Arable husbandry demanded a larger labour force than mixed farming had needed, with the result that the population of the light soils increased 25% between 1705 and 1801 compared with an increase of only about 4% in the grazing regions of eastern Leicestershire.[1]

On the clay soils in Framland agricultural efficiency could only be achieved when the land was used for pasture

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1 V.C.H., III, p. 155.

farming. Because they were difficult to work and poorly drained, most clay soils were not suitable for intensive, market-oriented cereal production. Subsistence farmers did not, however, possess enough capital to establish themselves as pasture farmers. Agricultural commercialization could not, therefore, proceed until the family farmers were replaced by capitalist graziers whose activities were connected with the world of cash and credit.

In response to the price rise of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, landlords demanded higher rents from their tenants.[1] The smaller tenants were placed in a terribly difficult position because many of them could not earn more money from their farms' produce. Those family farmers who were unable to meet the demands for higher rents did not get their leases renewed. Their land was rented to

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1 Of course, landlords could only demand higher rents if their land was not held by copyhold of inheritance tenure. The terms of tenancy have not been discovered; however, the speed with which the belt of heavy clay soil was enclosed supports the contention that landlords were not restrained by their tenants' legal right to traditional rental payments. Indeed, it was in the landlords' interest to have his land enclosed for pasture in view of the fact that this type of farm could be rented for almost three times as much as open-field arable, between 9s.6d. and 11s. an acre against 3s.6d. an acre in the mid-seventeenth century at Dalby-on-the-Wolds, the parish adjoining Melton Mowbray on the south. (V.C.H., II, p. 225.)

men who could provide landowners with more money. Whereas the reorganization of landholding was completed during the seventeenth century in the villages on the heavy clay soils of the Wreak valley and the Eastern Uplands, it did not reach fulfilment in the Vale of Belvoir until after the Parliamentary Acts for Enclosure of the later eighteenth century had divided the traditional common fields into individual farms.

The disenfranchisement of the subsistence farmer was very rapid in the Wreak valley and the Eastern Uplands. By the end of the seventeenth century only 3 of the 18 parishes on the heavy clay soils were not fully enclosed. Furthermore, of these 3 unenclosed parishes at least one, Stapleford, had experienced some movement away from open-field farming by 1603.[1]

Much of the enclosed land was devoted to grazing: a capital-intensive activity with a built-in bias in favour

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1 The dates when enclosure was completed in these 15 parishes were as follows: Melton Mowbray (1601); Kirby Bellars (1536); Cold Overton (1631); Little Dalby (before 1679); Burton Lazars (1649); Thorpe Arnold (1601-1700); Wyfordby (1612-74); Saxby (1674-1736); Wymondham (by 1607); Edmonthorpe (by 1607); Buckminster (1579); Sewstern (1597); Coston (1634-9); Garthorpe (1674); and Sysonby (early seventeenth century). (V.C.H., II, pp. 254 - 9.).

of large-scale enterprise. Because pasture farming created little employment for the dispossessed, those people who could not adapt to the agrarian economy's new structure were driven off the land. Between 1603 and 1676 the population of the enclosed villages of the Wreak valley and the Eastern Uplands was declining, 12% and 31% respectively.[1] Leaving aside the market town of Melton Mowbray, the purely agricultural villages in this region had an average of only 30 households each.[2] The dispossession of the poor farmers was well advanced by 1670 when only 19.27% of the households in this area were exempted from payment of the Hearth Tax because of poverty.

Our figures on the distribution of wealth in the 1660's showed that men with estates valued at more than £ 100 composed 30.7% of the population in the villages on the clay soils. This group controlled 78.2% of the community's wealth. The following examination of the structure of livestock ownership in Melton Mowbray will illustrate the concentration of wealth into the hands of a particular kind of farmer - the

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1 V.C.H., III, pp. 144 - 5.

2 See Appendix 2 for the source of this figure and those following which relate to the social structure of the heavy clay region of the Wreak valley and the Eastern Uplands.

grazier.[1] 23 of the 57 inventories from Melton noted that the deceased had owned at least one sheep. In 22 of these inventories there was a record of the number of the deceased's sheep: 9 people owned fewer than 19 sheep; another 9 people held between 20 and 99 sheep; and 4 men owned more than 100 sheep. The 4 men who each had flocks of more than 100 sheep owned 68% of the total; those with medium-sized flocks had 26.8%; while the small men held only 5.7% of the total. The ownership of cattle and horses followed along the same lines: 17 people owned fewer than 5 animals apiece; 13 held between 5 and 19 beasts; and another 5 men owned more than 20 animals each. The wealthiest man in the community, Edward Stokes, a mercer who died in 1669, owned animals worth £ 1,273.[2] He had 591 hogs, 445 sheep, 16 oxen, 9 horses and 41 head of cattle. His involvement in arable farming was limited to 8 acres of barley and another 8 acres of peas and beans which

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1 This information was gathered from the probate inventories made for Melton Mowbray residents between 1660 and 1680. The importance of the largest farmers may have been underestimated in view of the fact that men who held land in more than one county had their inventories registered in London at the Chancery. The Leicestershire inventories are located in the Leicestershire County Record Office in Leicester.

2 Stokes' estate had the total value of £ 1,449. (Leicestershire County Record Office, Inventories, 1669, 14.).

were valued at £ 30. The fact that Stokes had invested 87.8% of his capital into his livestock underlines the importance of grazing in the agricultural economy of the clay soils.

In the 1660's the rural economy of the Vale of Belvoir was not entirely devoted to pasture farming. During the early seventeenth century its rich clay land was renowned for its arable qualities. Because open-field farming was a flexible system it was possible for a few graziers to remove themselves from its demands without ruining the remaining family farmers. In the parish of Bottesford, for example, graziers and family farmers seemed to have co-existed.[1] Only 1 parish of the 11 in the Vale of Belvoir was fully enclosed during the seventeenth century.[2]

By successfully practising arable husbandry the small men were able to hold onto their land during the seventeenth

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1 In Bottesford there were 8 people with possessions valued at more than £ 200 as against only 3 people of similar wealth in the other 10 parishes in the Vale of Belvoir. See Appendix 3 for the source of this figure and those following which relate to the social structure of the Vale of Belvoir.

2 Plungar was completely enclosed by 1612. Other enclosure was noted in the extra-parocial area of Belvoir which was fully enclosed by 1734, while some enclosure took place in Hose and Nether Broughton in 1605 and 1651 respectively. (V.C.H., II, pp. 254 - 9.).

century. The successful survival of the peasantry was evident in the 1670 Hearth Tax returns which 80.33% of the households were able to pay. The villages in the Vale of Belvoir each had, on the average, almost twice as many households as the purely agricultural, enclosed villages of the Wreak valley and the Eastern Uplands - 54.7 compared to 30. The commercialization of the Vale of Belvoir's agricultural activity was completed only after the Parliamentary Enclosures of the later eighteenth century when the land was divided into separate farms, the rents were trebled, grazing became the predominant form of husbandry and the small family farmer was forced to give up his farm, looking elsewhere for employment.[1]

The inability of family farmers to practise arable husbandry in the Wreak valley, the Eastern Uplands and the light soil belt in Framland resulted in their replacement by large-scale farmers who were not pressed by immediate subsistence requirements and could suit their land with a

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1 W.G. Hoskins, "The Leicestershire Crop Returns of 1801", in Hoskins, ed., Studies in Leicestershire Agrarian History, (Leicester, 1949), pp. 131 - 3. It was noted in this article that the Duke of Rutland owned land in and around the Vale of Belvoir worth £ 21,000 per year in 1809. Apparently the Duke had been moved to enclose his land by Parliamentary Act in order to make it more profitable.

complementary form of husbandry. In contrast, the commercialization of the Vale of Belvoir's agrarian economy was held back by the peasant farmers' inability to practise arable husbandry on its rich clay soils. The establishment of modern, efficient farming in Framland occurred, therefore, after the family farmers were dispossessed by either their own inefficiency or their landlords' reluctance to put up with the inadequate income they provided him.

- 2 -

The quality of the land in West Goscote fell into two dissimilar and distinct categories: poor and very good.[1] The rocky, barren soil of Charnwood Forest and the West Leicestershire Coal Measures covered perhaps 60% of West Goscote. The fertile soil of the Soar river valley extended over the other 40% of West Goscote.

Charnwood had never been a royal forest but had been divided among the adjacent manors as a part of their manorial waste. But the soil in Charnwood Forest was very poor quality, badly drained and impossible to cultivate because of its stony composition. It was only suitable

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1 See the accompanying map on soil structure.

for rough pasture. Nonetheless, the Forest was useful to the peasantry of the surrounding villages who pastured their animals in it.[1] In addition, this uninhabited waste-land was probably one of the havens chosen by squatters or other masterless men whose numbers mushroomed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. "Driven partly by the depopulation of old-established villages, partly by the rapid rise of population and morcellation of their ancestral tenements, and in part by the attraction of new industries like mining and smelting, many labourers were drifting away from the old centers of rural population in this period, and resettling themselves, wherever land remained unappropriated, in royal forests, on sandy heaths, and beside wooded spaces."[2]

Poverty was also a major problem in the parishes situated on the Coal Measures. The peasantry were unable to wrest their subsistence needs from the region's sandy, acidic soil. All 9 parishes on the Coal Measures experienced some enclosure during the seventeenth century with at least 4 of them being fully enclosed before

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1 V.C.H., II, pp. 269 - 9.

2 A. Everitt, "Farm Labourers", in Thirsk, ed., Agrarian History, p. 409.

1710.[1] By enclosure, landlords salvaged some income from their land. Because the land was unsuitable for cultivation, the population's main source of employment was in the coal mines. The Leicestershire mines had greatly expanded the scale of their operations in response to the growing demand for domestic fuel which emerged during the later sixteenth century after the natural forests had been rapaciously denuded.[2] The growth of mining created employment for landless labourers. Of the probate inventories, 37.7% were recorded for people whose possessions were valued at less than £ 25.[3] Similarly, in the 1670 Hearth Tax returns, 37.3% of the population were granted exemption from payment of the tax. Nearly two households in every five were considered to be destitute by their contemporaries. There was, therefore, almost twice as much poverty in the

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1 The following parishes were fully enclosed before 1710: Ashby de la Zouch (1601); Cole Orton (1638); Packington (1609); and Whitwick (by 1704). In addition, enclosure was first noted for the following parishes before 1700: Breedon on the Hill (1541); Charley Forest (1618); Ulverscroft (1540); Worthington (1506); and Woodhouse Eaves (1656). (V.C.H., II, pp. 254 - 9.).

2 V.C.H., III, pp. 32 - 4.

3 See Appendix 4 for the source of this figure and those following which relate to the social structure of the poor soil region of West Goscote.

mining region as in the purely agricultural villages of Framland in which only 20% of the population were exempted from paying the Hearth Tax. Moreover, the average inventory from the mining region was worth only 50% of the average inventory in the enclosed villages in which the grazier figured so largely. By the 1660's, when mining had become a major economic endeavour in the poor soil belt of West Goscote, industrial poverty was already present.

The farmland in the alluvial valley of the Soar was very rich and fertile:

> "The broad flood plains produced hay as well as summer pasture, and it was often the supply of winter fodder that limited stock-rearing. The gravel terraces provided excellent settlement sites with a reliable water-supply as well as good, well drained loams for arable farming."[1]

As a result of these beneficial conditions, the Soar valley had been the most densely populated region in Leicestershire, at least since the Domesday survey of 1086. Since willing immigrants had always been available to fill any vacant tenancies, the traditional system of peasant farming was able to survive until the seventeenth century. Then, the population boom of the later sixteenth century caused an excessive subdivision of landholdings and the fragile

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1 V.C.H., III, p. 131.

fabric of peasant society was destroyed.

The deleterious effects of population growth on the peasant communities of the Soar valley can be seen most clearly in Loughborough. An ecclesiastical census made in 1563 found that there were 277 households in Loughborough. If we assume that there were 4.75 persons per household then the population of Loughborough was 1,316 at this time.[1] In 1603 another survey, the Liber Cleri, recorded that there were 1,200 communicants in Loughborough. Non-conformity was negligible. By using a ratio of 2.8 communicants per household we found that there were 430 households in the parish. In a period of forty years the population had risen 62.3%; to 2,042 persons.[2] A large part of this increase must have been absorbed by Loughborough's agrarian economy. In 1563 the Soar valley was the most densely populated farmland in Leicestershire with over 20 households per 1000 acres. The population explosion of the next forty years intensified

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1 V.C.H., III, p. 166. The assumption that each household had 4.75 persons was the results of the research of Peter Laslett which found that household size in England had remained almost constant from the mid-sixteenth century to 1911. ("Size and Structure of the Household in England over Three Centuries", Population Studies, XXIII/2, (1969), pp. 199 - 223.).

2 V.C.H., III, pp. 142 - 3; 168.

this land-population ratio to more than 35 households per 1000 acres.[1] The saturation point seemed to have been reached by about 1603 because by 1670 the town's population had declined slightly as there were 17 fewer households at the later date. The population had contracted to 1,961, a decline of 4%.[2] The Hearth Tax returns for 1670 recorded that 178 of the town's 413 households were so poor that they were exempted from paying the tax.[3] Poverty-stricken households, 43% of the total, were more than twice as common in Loughborough as they were in Melton Mowbray.

The impact of additional people meant that either landholdings were divided and inequality among the farmers became more common or else an enormous labouring population grew up in Loughborough. Probably a combination of these two alternatives occurred. The reduced output from the farms of many cottagers were too small to sustain their families. In order to purchase enough food to continue living these men were driven into either wage labour or

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1 V.C.H., III, pp. 138; 143.

2 V.C.H., III, p. 171.

3 See Appendix 5 for the source of this figure and those following which relate to the socio-economic structure of the villages in the Soar valley.

mortgaging their land. In the Loughborough inventories for the years 1660 - 1680 there was a remarkably large amount of money from outstanding debts credited to people's estates. Altogether 75 out of 134 noted that the deceased had money owing to him upon his death. 23 of these people had lent out sums totalling £ 2,760. Undoubtedly some of the town's wealthier residents had benefitted from their neighbour's misfortunes by first lending them money and then receiving strips of land when payments could not be met. Those households whose landholdings were reduced by such foreclosures did not, like their counterparts in Framland, get thrown off the land. The fertility of the soil enabled the cottager to realize large yields from his few strips of land. Furthermore, the fact that many farmers turned their attention to dairy farming was advantageous to the cottager since this labour-intensive enterprise created part-time employment which gave him additional income. Perhaps the land was alienated strip by strip in which case the process of attrition would have been prolonged. The existence of a very large number of indigent cottagers combined with the survival of many family farmers to frustrate most attempts to reorganize the common fields into large, individually-operated farms. Enclosure was not an important phenomenon in the Soar valley during the seventeenth century as only 1 place

was fully enclosed, while 2 others experienced some enclosure.[1]

Because the poor were neither thrown off the land nor given non-agricultural work, endemic underemployment was common in the villages of the Soar valley during the 1660's. The portion of the population which sold its labour was caught between the Scylla of a low demand for labour and Charybdis of the oversupply of labourers. Poverty was, therefore, a major problem in the villages of the Soar valley in the 1660's. 40.5% of the inventories were made for people whose estates were valued at less than £ 25. Another 21.4% of the inventories were made for people whose possessions were worth between £ 25 and £ 50. Thus, 61.9% of the population, three households in five, were either indigent or uncomfortably close to poverty. Furthermore, the problem of poverty in the Soar valley was compounded by the fact that the villages were very large which meant that,

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1 Belton was fully enclosed by 1625, while Thurcaston and Long Whatton experienced some enclosure in the seventeenth century, first noted in 1600 and 1664 respectively. However, some enclosure had taken place in the Soar valley in earlier times: Dishley was fully enclosed by 1529 and Wanlip was described as being an "old enclosure" in 1625, while a section of Castle Donington had been imparked in 1482. (V.C.H., II, pp. 254 - 9.).

in absolute terms, there were a great many poor people in each village. There were an average of 104 households per parish with the result that each parish had an average of 42 households which were indigent. In comparison, the smaller villages in Framland, which had an average of only 45 households and a poverty rate of 20%, had an average of only 9 indigent households.

Primary poverty, signified by the ownership of possessions worth less than £ 10, was a much greater problem in the Soar valley that in the enclosed villages of the Wreak valley and the Eastern Uplands. In the Soar valley 18.3% of the inventories were made for people who can be considered destitute. Whereas in the enclosed villages on the heavy clay soils in Framland only 7.3% of the population were in such straits. When we look at this problem in absolute terms, primary poverty in the average village in the Soar valley can be seen to be an even more serious social evil. There were 18.9 destitute households per parish in the Soar valley compared to 3.4 destitute households in the Framland villages which were devoted to grazing. Thus, primary poverty was almost six times as common in the economically backwards villages as it was in villages which were agriculturally commercialized. Poverty

in the Soar valley was qualitatively different from that in Framland because the poor existed as a class which still played a role in the region's economy in comparison to the irrevelance of their counterparts to the grazing economy of Framland.

The progress of agricultural specialization in the Soar valley was hindered by the cottagers' inability to survive on the produce from a few strips of land, supplemented by the income which they received from part-time wage labour. In order to supply subsistence needs a considerable amount of land was not available for conversion to dairy pasture. Moreover, the wealthier farmers were reluctant to devote their attention solely to dairy farming as long as they could profitably supply the cottagers' and labourers' demands for food. The commercialization of the Soar valley's agrarian economy was not completed by the 1660's because arable husbandry and subsistence farming could be successfully practised on its rich alluvial soil.

The Soar valley's socio-economic profile in the 1660's was characterized by a substantial number of poverty-stricken households. Many of these households were destitute; all of them were underemployed. The existence of a large number of poor people was, at once, both cause and effect of the

agrarian economy's breakdown. Stagnation was inevitable as long as new forms of employment were not found to remedy this situation. The abundance of labourers who were desperately in need of employment and supplementary income, however, attracted capitalist hosiers who needed cheap labour in order to establish the framework knitting industry.

Industrialization was not only a response to the agrarian economy's breakdown but became a powerful reason for its continued stagnation. In addition to creating a wholly new form of employment which drew labourers away from their almost total dependence upon farm work, industrialization triggered a growth in the ranks of those landless wage workers who had to purchase their food and sustenance. In Loughborough, for example, the introduction of framework knitting was accompanied by rapid population growth. The population which for 70 years had been stagnant, shot upwards between 1670 and 1705. In these 35 years the town added 556 people, an increase of 29%. The rapid growth continued throughout the eighteenth century and by 1801 Loughborough had 4,603 residents.[1] The bulk of this growth

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1 V.C.H., III, p. 145.

was divorced from the land. Indeed, growth was possible only insofar as the town's economy became non-agricultural. The agrarian economy's response to the enlarged demand for food was inconclusive: on the one hand the fortunes of the farmers producing for the market were promoted, but on the other hand the cottagers' ability to retain their parcels of land was reinforced with the result that the reorganization of the land into large, efficient productive units was frustrated.

## SUMMARY

The rationalization of agricultural enterprise was a tremendously important stage in economic modernization. It has been cogently noted that "an obligatory pre-condition for the continuous expansion of cities and a specialist workforce must be a food surplus; however small a percentage of the total crop this surplus represented, it had to be present and it had to be reliable."[1] As a result of the revolution of agricultural techniques and organization which was initiated during the seventeenth century this pre-condition was satisfied. Indeed, until the population boom of the later eighteenth century, England exported cereals. A new division of agricultural labour emerged in the century prior to the Industrial Revolution despite the fact that a poor system of distribution kept the results of agricultural innovation from being felt immediately throughout the country.

In addition to feeding more people, the creation of large cereal surpluses directly affected the many marginal producers who found that when grain prices were falling

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1 E.L. Jones and S.J. Woolf, "Introduction", in Jones and Woolf, eds., Agrarian Change and Economic Development, p. 14.

they either had to innovate or else be slowly forced out of farming into the labour market. The period between 1660 and 1750 witnessed the final decline of the small owner-occupiers and the small tenant farmers. The disappearance of the peasantry during this period was caused by a combination of low and fluctuating prices, heavy taxation particularly between 1688 and 1715, as well as the inexorable pressures of the market economy which intensified the differentiation and stratification within the peasantry. The fact that landlords favoured leasing their land in large parcels meant that the process of concentration was accelerated: small tenants experienced difficulties in having their leases renewed. By the last years of the eighteenth century the traditional, subsistence farmer had ceased to exist while the numerous small peasants had been converted into wage-earners.

The formation of an enormous pool of underemployed labour was a most important by-product of agricultural modernization. No longer did most men have to struggle with the land in order to feed themselves. As a result of the revolution in farming the most necessary form of economic activity could be performed by a fraction of the community. The remainder of the labour force was freed for

employment in such 'secondary' activities as business, industry and service. The products of these 'secondary' activities were demanded and bought by the prosperous farmers whose purchasing power was of great significance in sustaining infant industries.

Areas in which domestic industry located had been unable to become agricultural market producers. Rural industrialization, therefore, emerged in response to a crisis within the agrarian economy. Because the technical aspect of domestic industry was usually simple it could easily be combined with part-time agricultural activities. Cottager-labourers purchased grain in the local market while using their land to provide their families with milk and cheese. Labourers with two sources of income were cushioned from the uneven demands of the labour market. The man whose sole source of income came from industrial employment, however, was in a precarious position because he had no insurance to tide him over during slow periods.

The subservience of labour to capital was institutionalized by the exploitative practice of underemploying a very large number of outworkers. Production was controlled by a merchant capitalist who 'put out' work to cottagers, paying them a piece-rate to perform simple, repetitive

operations. The rural domestic worker could be paid a very small wage since his living costs were low while his need for work was great. In this way the working man's desire to agitate for higher wages was restrained by his knowledge that he was only too dispensable. He had to accept what he was offered. Furthermore, it was in the capitalists' interest to move his enterprise away from high-wage centers like London. The relative lack of industrial concentration, therefore, presented labour dissidents with formidable problems in organizing opposition to working conditions. Since the brunt of the deficit could be passed on to the labour force, the structure of industrial organization freed the entrepreneur from incurring losses during trade recessions, while during times of heavy demand, he could call on the large reservoir of underemployed labourers who were only too happy to be fully employed for a change. Such a loose form of business organization was well-adapted to industrial activity so long as industrial technology remained backwards, relying on man-power rather than machine-power.

In particular, our examination of the socio-economic transformation of Leicestershire has shown that economic modernization was achieved in two ways: Framland became

agriculturally commercialized as farmers became devoted to improving their particular, specialized form of agricultural enterprise; while in West Goscote the breakdown of the agrarian economy created conditions which resulted in rural industrialization.

# STATISTICAL APPENDICES

## Introduction

The 1670 Hearth Tax returns and probate inventories were the sources from which the socio-economic profiles of the farming communities were drawn. The Hearth Tax returns have been reprinted in the V.C.H., III, pp. 170 - 2. The probate inventories were studied at the Leicestershire County Record Office in Leicester. These documents, made by a man's neighbours shortly after his death, summarized the deceased's possessions and estimated their value, sometimes article by article, but more often in groups such as livestock, furniture, household utensils, ready money and credit, as well as his crops either in the ground or in storage. In an economy without banking facilities men showed their thrift in accumulating those things which passed at their death.[1] Thus, probate inventories provide the historian with an extremely rare insight into the distribution of wealth in rural communities.

The raw statistical information has been used to construct three tables: Table I repeats the 1670 Hearth Tax

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1 R.H. Tawney, "Historical Introduction", T. Wilson, A Discourse Upon Usury, (London, 1925), pp. 103 - 4.

returns in order to show the relative prevalence of poverty in the various regions and to show the size of the population in each parish so that we can create an average parish size; Table II described the distribution of population among different economic stations; and Table III reconstructs the average community for each region, showing how many households from this average parish were found in the various economic stations. By creating ideal parishes for our 5 regions we can contrast their socio-economic profiles, and therefore see their dissimilar progress towards agricultural modernization. The ideal or standard parish was, in fact, very rare, but for the purposes of analysis it is a necessary conceptual tool.

| REGION | SOIL TYPE | DEGREE OF AGRICULTURAL MODERNIZATION (late 17th century) | ENCLOSURE (before 1700) | SIZE OF AVERAGE VILLAGE (households 1670) | WEALTH DISTRIBUTION Average (Inventory 1660's) | COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wreak Valley and the Eastern Uplands - MELTON MOWBRAY | HEAVY CLAY SOIL<br>- difficult to cultivate<br>- poor draining | Subsistence farming long since superseded; agriculturally commercialized grazing | 15 of 18 parishes fully enclosed; 1 other parish partially enclosed | 30<br>Melton Mowbray, the market town, had 430 households | £ 112 7s. | Wealthiest area, little poverty. Large-scale commercialized grazing. |
| VALE OF BELVOIR | RICH CLAY SOIL<br>- not difficult to cultivate<br>- liable to flooding | Subsistence farming was practised on the Vale's rich clay soil - very little progress towards agricultural commercialization | Enclosure negligible as only 1 of 11 parishes fully enclosed; 2 other parishes experienced some enclosure | 54.9 | £ 75 | Persistence of peasant farming |
| NORTH-EAST FRAMLAND | LIGHT UPLAND SOIL<br>- easy to work<br>- free draining<br>- susceptible to nitrogen depletion | Unsuitable to subsistence farming because of susceptibility to nitrogen depletion; agriculturally commercialized - mixed farming | 6 of 13 parishes completely enclosed | 36.3 | £ 92 8s. | Wealthy region; mixed farming |
| Soar Valley - LOUGHBOROUGH | FERTILE ALLUVIAL SOIL<br>- excellent arable loams<br>- easy to work, fertile<br>- good meadowland on river banks | Rich soil enabled subsistence farmers to survive; large numbers of cottager-labourers | 2 of 15 villages enclosed by 1530's; 1 more village enclosed by 1625; 2 other villages experienced some enclosure in later 17th century | 81.4<br>Loughborough, the market town, had 413 households | £ 68 10s. | High receptivity to industrialization because desperate agricultural poverty pushed people into industrial labour |
| REMAINDER of WEST GOSCOTE | COAL MEASURES<br>- thin acidic soil<br>- poor for arable<br>CHARNWOOD FOREST<br>- hard stony soil that was impossible to cultivate | Unsuitable for subsistence, arable farming. Coal mining. | All 9 parishes experienced some enclosure; 4 parishes fully enclosed | 62.2 | £ 57 10s. | Commitment to coal mining; rough grazing |

# Appendix 1

## Table I

| Parish | Paying | Exempt | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bescaby[1] | - | - | - |
| Branston | 27 | 10 | 37 |
| Croxton Kerrial | 37 | 12 | 49 |
| Eastwell | 22 | - | 22 |
| Eaton | 28 | 10 | 28 |
| Goadby Marwood | 20 | 3 | 23 |
| Harston | 18 | 7 | 25 |
| Knipton | 22 | 15 | 37 |
| Saltby | 25 | 8 | 33 |
| Scalford | 41 | 26 | 67 |
| Sproxton | 36 | 5 | 41 |
| Stonesby | 27 | 4 | 31 |
| Waltham on the Wolds | 50 | 21 | 71 |
| | 351 | 121 | 472 |
| | 74.4% | 25.6% | |

## Table II

| Value of Possessions £ | People | Total Value £ | % of Population | % of Wealth |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 - 10 | 9 | 48.60 | 11.8 | ..7 |
| 10 - 25 | 11 | 199.05 | 14.5 | 2.8 |
| 25 - 50 | 24 | 861.90 | 31.6 | 12.3 |
| 50 - 100 | 9 | 624.60 | 11.8 | 8.9 |
| 100 - 200 | 12 | 1,746.05 | 15.8 | 24.8 |
| 200 - 500 | 10 | 3,010.50 | 13.2 | 42.9 |
| 500 over | 1 | 533.55 | 1.3 | 7.6 |
| | 76 | 7,024.25 | | |
| | average £ 92 8s. | | | |

## Table III

| Value of Possessions £ | Households |
|---|---|
| 0 - 10 | 4.6 |
| 10 - 25 | 5.7 |
| 25 - 50 | 12.4 |
| 50 - 100 | 4.6 |
| 100 - 200 | 6.2 |
| 200 - 500 | 5.2 |
| 500 over | .6 |

At the time of the 1670 Hearth Tax the average size of the 12 inhabited parishes in the belt of light soil in Framland was 39.3 households each.

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1 Bescaby had been completely enclosed and depopulated by 1538 and became a part of the parish of Saltby (W.G. Hoskins, "The Leicestershire Crop Returns of 1801", in Hoskins, ed., Studies in Leicestershire Agrarian History, p. 151.

# Appendix 2

## Table I

| Parish | Paying | Exempt | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ab Kettleby | 26 | 4 | 30 |
| Buckminster | 25 | 10 | 35 |
| Burton Lazars | 30 | 10 | 40 |
| Cold Overton | 20 | 6 | 26 |
| Coston | 22 | 9 | 31 |
| Edmonthorpe | 15 | 9 | 24 |
| Garthorpe | 23 | 6 | 29 |
| Kirby Bellars | 25 | 2 | 27 |
| Little Dalby | 18 | 9 | 27 |
| Melton Mowbray | 284 | 56 | 340 |
| Saxby | 18 | 3 | 21 |
| Sewstern | 30 | 6 | 36 |
| Somerby | 39 | 11 | 50 |
| Stapleford | 29 | - | 29 |
| Sysonby | 7 | - | 7 |
| Thorpe Arnold | 24 | - | 24 |
| Wyfordby | 16 | - | 16 |
| Wymondham | 40 | 24 | 64 |
| | 691 | 165 | 856 |
| | 80.7% | 19.3% | |

## Table II

| Value of Possessions £ | People | Total Value £ | % of Population | % of Wealth |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 - 10 | 10 | 51.05 | 7.3 | .3 |
| 10 - 25 | 27 | 463.20 | 19.7 | 3.0 |
| 25 - 50 | 34 | 1,148.55 | 24.8 | 7.5 |
| 50 - 100 | 24 | 1,677.10 | 17.5 | 10.9 |
| 100 - 200 | 19 | 2,763.75 | 13.9 | 17.9 |
| 200 - 500 | 19 | 5,882.65 | 13.9 | 38.2 |
| 500 over | 4 | 3,403.45 | 2.9 | 22.1 |
| | 137 | 15,389.75 | | |
| | average £ 112 7s. | | | |

## Table III

Socio-economic profile of the purely agricultural villages which had an average of 30 households each.

| Value of Possessions £ | Households |
|---|---|
| 0 - 10 | 2.1 |
| 10 - 25 | 5.9 |
| 25 - 50 | 7.5 |
| 50 - 100 | 5.2 |
| 100 - 200 | 4.2 |
| 200 - 500 | 4.2 |
| 500 over | .8 |

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The 18 parishes which were located in the Wreak valley and on the Eastern Uplands had a total of 856 households in 1670. The average size of each parish was, therefore, 47.6 households. However, if we only look at the purely agricultural villages then the average size of these parishes was 30 households each. The market town of Melton Mowbray had 340 households, making it more than 10 times as large as the purely agricultural villages which surrounded it. Poverty was not a serious problem in either Melton Mowbray or the surrounding villages as only 16.5% of Melton's residents and 21.1% of the people living in the grazing villages were exempted from paying the Hearth Tax.

# Appendix 3

## Table I

| Parish[1] | Paying | Exempt | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Barkestone | 29 | 9 | 38 |
| Bottesford | 52 | 15 | 67 |
| Harby | 49 | 5 | 54 |
| Hose | 42 | 20 | 62 |
| Long Clawson | 75 | 11 | 86 |
| Muston | 35 | 14 | 49 |
| Nether Broughton | 47 | 8 | 55 |
| Plungar | 19 | 8 | 27 |
| Redmile | 43 | 6 | 49 |
| Strathern | 50 | 12 | 62 |
| | 441 | 108 | 549 |
| | 80.3% | 19.7% | |

In the 10 parishes of the Vale of Belvoir there were 549 households in 1670. Each parish had, therefore, an average of 54.9 households.

## Table II

| Value of Possessions £ | People | Total Value £ | % of Population | % of Wealth |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 - 10 | 9 | 55.80 | 9.2 | .7 |
| 10 - 25 | 19 | 291.60 | 19.4 | 4.0 |
| 25 - 50 | 27 | 977.20 | 27.6 | 13.3 |
| 50 - 100 | 19 | 1,330.50 | 19.4 | 18.1 |
| 100 - 200 | 13 | 1,702.10 | 13.3 | 23.2 |
| 200 - 500 | 11 | 2,991.40 | 11.2 | 40.7 |
| 500 over | - | | | |
| | 98 | 7,347.60 | | |

average £ 75 0s.

## Table III

| Value of Possessions £ | Households |
|---|---|
| 0 - 10 | 5.0 |
| 10 - 25 | 10.6 |
| 25 - 50 | 15.2 |
| 50 - 100 | 10.6 |
| 100 - 200 | 7.3 |
| 200 - 500 | 6.1 |
| 500 over | |

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1 The extra-parochial area of Belvoir, the residence of the Manners family who were the Dukes of Rutland, was not included in the 1670 Hearth Tax returns.

# Appendix 4

## Table I

| Parish | Paying | Exempt | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ashby de la Zouche | 167 | 49 | 216 |
| Breedon on the Hill | 29 | 24 | 53 |
| Cole Orton | 38 | 39 | 77 |
| Charley Forest | 8 | 4 | 12 |
| Packington | 40 | 13 | 53 |
| Seal | 21 | - | 21 |
| Ulverscroft | 7 | - | 7 |
| Whitwick | 42 | 17 | 59 |
| Woodhouse Eaves | 32 | 41 | 73 |
| Worthington | 46 | 67 | 113 |
| | 430 | 254 | 684 |
| | 62.7% | 37.3% | |

The 10 parishes in the poor soil region of West Goscote had 684 resident households at the time of the Hearth Tax in 1670. Each parish had, on the average, 68.4 households.

## Table II

| Value of Possessions £ | People | Total Value £ | % of Population | % of Wealth |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 - 10 | 20 | 95.10 | 15.4 | 1.3 |
| 10 - 25 | 29 | 488.85 | 22.3 | 6.5 |
| 25 - 50 | 36 | 1,280.30 | 27.7 | 17.1 |
| 50 - 100 | 20 | 1,356.30 | 15.4 | 18.1 |
| 100 - 200 | 20 | 3,055.40 | 15.4 | 40.9 |
| 200 - 500 | 5 | 1,199.85 | 3.8 | 16.1 |
| | 130 | 7,475.79 | | |

average £ 57 10s.

## Table III

| Value of Possessions £ | Households |
|---|---|
| 0 - 10 | 10.5 |
| 10 - 25 | 15.2 |
| 25 - 50 | 19.1 |
| 50 - 100 | 10.5 |
| 100 - 200 | 10.5 |
| 200 - 500 | 2.5 |
| 500 over | |

# Appendix 5

## Table I

| Parish | Paying | Exempt | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Belton | 47 | 21 | 68 |
| Castle Donington | 99 | 51 | 150 |
| Diseworth | 57 | 26 | 83 |
| Dishley Thorpe Acre | 15 | 6 | 21 |
| Hathern | 61 | 11 | 72 |
| Kegworth | 63 | 50 | 113 |
| Lockington | 20 | 21 | 41 |
| Long Whatton | 44 | 31 | 75 |
| Loughborough | 235 | 178 | 413 |
| Mountsorrel | 84 | 84 | 168 |
| Osgathorpe | 21 | 9 | 30 |
| Quorndon | 61 | 50 | 111 |
| Shepshed | 120 | 33 | 153 |
| Thurcaston | 24 | 12 | 36 |
| Wanlip | 12 | 4 | 16 |
| | 966 | 587 | 1,553 |
| | 62.2% | 37.8% | |

The average size of the 15 parishes in the Soar Valley was 103.6 households each. Loughborough, the market town, had 413 households in 1670. If we exclude it from consideration, then the average size of the remaining 14 parishes was 81.4 households each.

## Table II

| Value of Possessions £ | People | Total Value £ | % of Population | % of Wealth |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 - 10 | 56 | 326.10 | 18.3 | 1.5 |
| 10 - 25 | 68 | 1,134.80 | 22.2 | 5.4 |
| 25 - 50 | 65 | 2,345.95 | 21.4 | 11.2 |
| 50 - 100 | 63 | 3,760.20 | 17.3 | 17.9 |
| 100 - 200 | 41 | 5,637.30 | 13.4 | 26.9 |
| 200 - 500 | 19 | 5,301.55 | 6.2 | 25.3 |
| 500 over | 4 | 2,266.85 | 1.3 | 10.8 |
| | 306 | 20,962.75 | | |

average £ 68 10s.

## Table III

| Value of Possessions £ | Households |
|---|---|
| 0 - 10 | 18.9 |
| 10 - 25 | 22.9 |
| 25 - 50 | 22.4 |
| 50 - 100 | 17.9 |
| 100 - 200 | 14.0 |
| 200 - 500 | 6.7 |
| 500 over | 1.3 |

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