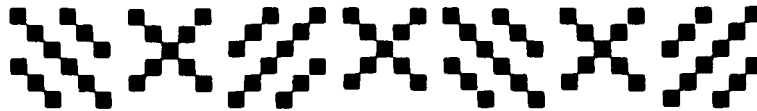


## Indianapolis in the 1850s: Popular Economic Thought and Urban Growth

*Carl Abbott\**



The years from 1848 through 1857 were an era of decision for almost every city of the Middle West. After a decade in which the region's towns had staggered under the impact of financial panic and depression, the later 1840s brought a new set of conditions for growth. The construction of eight thousand miles of railroad altered each city's access to resources and markets. Accelerating migration and the expansion of agricultural production both in older and younger states presented new economic opportunities and forced quick decisions on urban entrepreneurs. The rapid growth of Chicago and St. Louis, the relative lag of Cincinnati, Louisville, and Columbus, and the emergence of Detroit, Milwaukee, Cleveland, and Dayton as major cities were all products of the antebellum decade.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly these were crucial years in the growth of Indianapolis. Although the \$10 million state internal improvements program of the 1830s had triggered a brief boom that raised the city's population to four thousand, financial collapse and the end of payments on the public works in 1839 had blighted the city's hopes and reduced its population to 2,692 by 1840. In the early 1840s, Indianapolis was scarcely more than a country town. "Its business was purely local," wrote one native in retrospect. "It produced little, and it distributed little that it did not

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<sup>1</sup> Douglass C. North, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1961), 136-40, 201-14; Walter B. Smith and Arthur H. Cole, *Fluctuations in American Business, 1790-1860* (Cambridge, Mass., 1935), 55-57, 63; Frederic L. Paxson, "The Railroads of the 'Old Northwest' before the Civil War," *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters*, XVII (1914), 268-75.

produce. . . . The manufacturing, except for home demand, was even more trifling than the mercantile business."<sup>2</sup>

The city's career changed dramatically with the completion of the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad in September, 1847. Contemporaries were of one mind that Indianapolis' first railway link to the Ohio River opened a new era of growth by stimulating trade and setting off a local railroad mania.<sup>3</sup> In the brief period from 1852 to 1854, seven new railroads connected Indianapolis to other Indiana towns. New manufacturing industries appeared in response, and merchants began to expand their businesses by experimenting with jobbing as well as retailing. By the middle of the decade, the town's population was nearly fifteen thousand, and natives were styling it the "Railroad City."<sup>4</sup>

The growth of Indianapolis slowed when the panic of 1854 killed several additional railroads and destroyed many of the state's banks. Poor crops made 1855 another bad year, but the city recuperated with a moderate real estate boom in 1856.<sup>5</sup> The financial troubles of 1857 again damaged new enterprises and threatened serious unemployment, but the ensuing depression was probably less severe than in larger cities.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, by

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<sup>2</sup> The quote is from William R. Holloway, *Indianapolis: A Historical and Statistical Sketch of the Railroad City* (Indianapolis, 1870), 82. Also see Holloway, *Indianapolis*, 48, 52-53, 73-74; Ignatius Brown, "History of Indianapolis from 1818 to 1868," in *Logan's Indianapolis Directory* (Indianapolis, 1868), 34; Berry R. Sulgrove, *History of Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana* (Philadelphia, 1884), 114; "Historical Sketch," in *Indianapolis Directory, City Guide and Business Mirror* (Indianapolis, 1855), 37-39; *Indianapolis Indiana State Journal*, November 10, 1838.

<sup>3</sup> Gayle Thornbrough and Dorothy L. Riker, eds., *The Diary of Calvin Fletcher*, Vol. III: 1844-1847 (Indianapolis, 1974), 417; Joseph Mix to William Gray, February 18, 1848, William Gray Papers (Indiana Division, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis); *Indianapolis Indiana State Sentinel*, October 9, 1847, and *Indiana Journal*, November 2, 1848, both quoted in Wylie J. Daniels, *The Village at the End of the Road: A Chapter in Early Indiana Railroad History* (Indiana Historical Society Publications, Vol. XIII, no. 1; Indianapolis, 1938), 41; Indianapolis Board of Trade, "Indianapolis: Its Manufacturing Interests, Wants, and Facilities," in *Indianapolis Journal*, March 25-26, 1857; Holloway, *Indianapolis*, 4-5.

<sup>4</sup> Oliver H. Smith, "Address Delivered before the Agricultural Society of Marion County," in Indiana, State Board of Agriculture, *Fifth Annual Report* (1856), 256; *Indianapolis Directory* (1855), v; Brown, "History of Indianapolis," 52; Victor M. Bogle, "Railroad Building in Indiana, 1850-1855," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LVIII (September, 1962), 215-16; Holloway, *Indianapolis*, 83.

<sup>5</sup> *Indianapolis Locomotive*, January 26, 1856; *Indianapolis Indiana Republican*, May 24, 1855; *Indianapolis Indiana Journal*, November 11, 1853.

<sup>6</sup> *Indianapolis Indiana Journal*, November 24, 1857, March 24, 1858; *Indianapolis Freie Presse von Indiana*, November 5, 1857; Oliver H. Smith, "The Railroads of Indiana," in Indiana, State Board of Agriculture, *Fifth Annual Report* (1856), 458.

1860 Indianapolis was the focal point of Indiana. With railroads that tied together the corners of the state, it was the nerve-center where churchmen argued dogma, reformers planned crusades, and politicians scratched each others' backs. Citizens responded to its importance by claiming a population of twenty thousand, twenty-five thousand, or even twenty-nine thousand at the end of the decade.<sup>7</sup> The 18,611 inhabitants counted by the census still matched it with Dayton and Columbus as one of the largest inland towns in the West.<sup>8</sup>

In Indianapolis and in other western cities, the antebellum boom triggered spirited public discussion about the character of the new commercial opportunities, about the economic needs of each city, and about the measures which might satisfy these wants. Newspapers, corporate reports, directories, pamphlets, and orations considered how each town could best exploit its new opportunities. Residents described current activities, advocated new projects, and detailed strategies for growth in a diverse and substantial body of literature which later historians frequently lumped under the term "boosterism." The resulting debate helped business and civic leaders to assess the situation they faced and to define a coherent economic program to be carried out by public and private action.

Such single-minded attention to the questions of economic growth accompanied by an excited use of the various media of communication was especially characteristic of the antebellum Northwest. Although David R. Goldfield, Arthur H. Shaffer, and Lyle W. Dorsett have recently explored the large body of booster literature produced in the antebellum South and have discovered a strong interest in urban growth, even southerners themselves in the 1840s and 1850s agreed that "the land of advertising" lay north of the Ohio River and complained that the "books, pamphlets, maps, cards and descriptive plates" which publicized every town in the Northwest were seldom

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<sup>7</sup> *Indiana State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1860 and 1861* (Indianapolis, 1860), 175-77; *Indianapolis Indiana Sentinel*, June 11, 1851; *Indianapolis Indiana Journal*, August 3, 1857; *Indiana State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1858-59* (Indianapolis, 1858), 126; *Indianapolis City Directory and Business Mirror for 1860-61* (Indianapolis, 1860), 286.

<sup>8</sup> Eighth Census, *Preliminary Report on the Eighth Census: 1860* (Washington, 1862), 242-44; Frederick D. Kershner, Jr., "From Country Town to Industrial City: The Urban Pattern in Indianapolis," *Indiana Magazine of History*, XLV (December, 1949), 327-38. Although somewhat dated, Kershner's work remains a good short introduction to the history of Indianapolis.

imitated in the South.<sup>9</sup> Daniel Boorstin has identified the fast-growing "upstart cities" of the antebellum West as the natural habitat of the American booster.<sup>10</sup> Where publicists in the East might dwell on the history or the cultural refinement of their city and southerners might concern themselves with the political implications of commercial growth, citizens of the antebellum Northwest ignored cultural attainments and social advantages to write about population, money-making, and the volume of trade.<sup>11</sup>

Boosting one's city in the antebellum Northwest was both a solemn duty and an exercise in creative writing. Westerners delighted in reading bold and bombastic descriptions of their region's future prosperity. Their editorials and pamphlets were frequently romantic, fanciful, and enthusiastic, with more care lavished on the adjectives than the nouns. At the same time, the resulting boosterism was deeply serious, for urbanites took economic development as a moral imperative. Pompous and stiff with the conviction of high purpose, they often wrote sermons of worldly enterprise. "We owe it to the new home we have all of us chosen," wrote the *Chicago Journal*, "to this land . . . to our posterity, and to the general good of the human race, that we do not sit idly by and see others grasp the improvements to their benefit, which an advancing age has placed within our reach."<sup>12</sup>

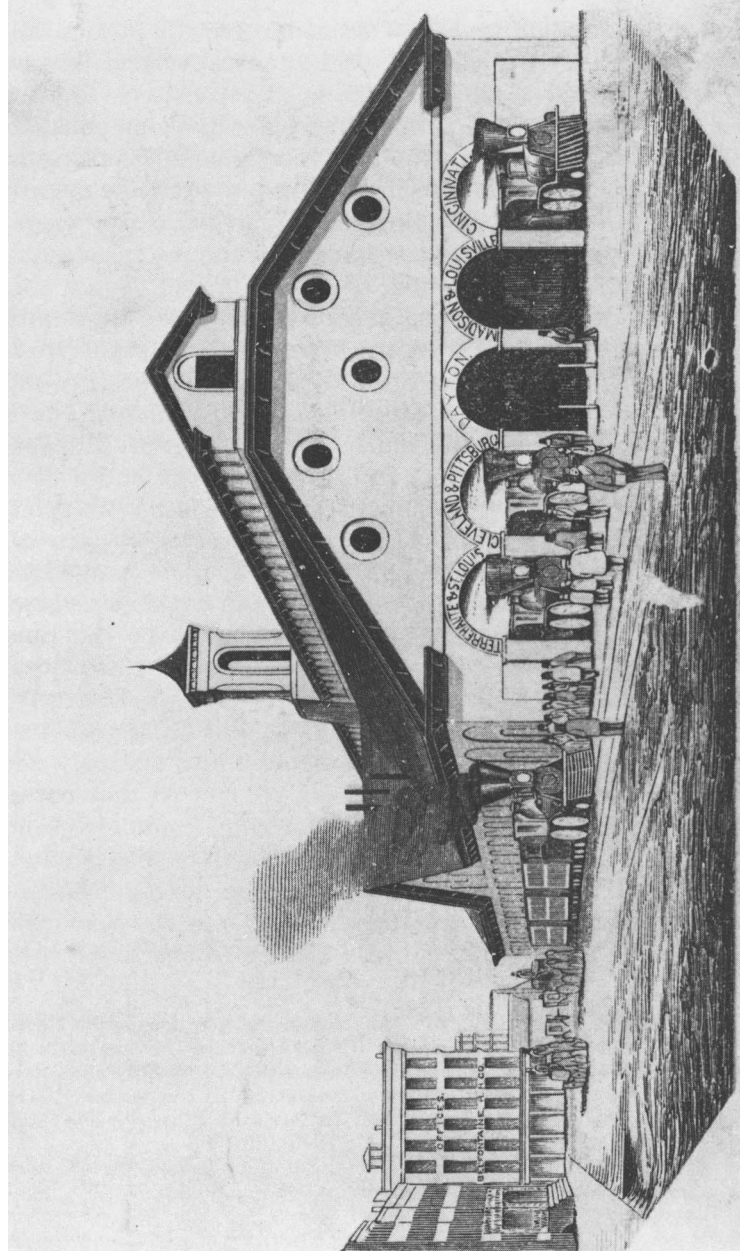
Given this context for boosterism in the antebellum West, it is important to examine the degree to which it was rooted in local circumstances and had reference to the problems of spe-

<sup>9</sup> Lyle W. Dorsett and Arthur H. Shaffer, "Was the Antebellum South Antiurban? A Suggestion," *Journal of Southern History*, XXXVIII (February, 1972), 93-100; David R. Goldfield, "Pursuing the American Dream: Cities in the Old South," in Blaine Brownell and David R. Goldfield, eds., *The City in Southern History* (Port Washington, N.Y., 1977); Edward Deering, *Louisville: Her Commercial, Manufacturing and Social Advantages* (Louisville, 1859), 5; *Louisville Journal*, quoted in Ben Casseday, *History of Louisville from Its Earliest Settlement Til the Year 1852* (Louisville, 1852), 6.

<sup>10</sup> Daniel Boorstin, *The Americans: The National Experience* (New York, 1965), 113-34, 161-68.

<sup>11</sup> Walter S. Glazer, "Cincinnati in 1840: A Community Profile" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Michigan, 1968), 83; Richard Wohl, "Urbanism, Urbanity and the Historian," *University of Kansas City Review*, XXII (October, 1955), 54; Carl Abbott, "Civic Pride in Chicago, 1844-1860," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, LXIII (Winter, 1970), 414-15.

<sup>12</sup> *Chicago Journal*, January 19, 1846. Also see William Bebb, *Cincinnati: Her Position, Duty and Destiny: An Address before the Young Men's Mercantile Library Association of Cincinnati* (Cincinnati, 1848), 22-24; Stephen Douglas in *Railroad Record*, VII (June 23, 1859), 205.



UNION DEPOT, INDIANAPOLIS, c. 1850

Courtesy Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis

cific cities. Popular discussion of economic growth in fact balanced between the two poles of vague generality and narrow self-interest. Taking their clue from such satirists as Charles Dickens and Mark Twain, several historians have emphasized the deficiencies of much antebellum boosterism. According to this interpretation, public discourse on urban economic growth usually had the purpose of aiding individual real estate speculations and business enterprises rather than the interests of the larger community. In the words of Daniel Aaron, "what was popularly interpreted as 'vision' meant hardly more than faith in Cincinnati real estate."<sup>13</sup> At the other extreme, many western boosters thought in terms of an urban manifest destiny and expected to read their city's future directly off a map of North America. Such an orientation made it easy to ignore the specific circumstances of each city in favor of a broad enthusiasm about regional growth.<sup>14</sup> William Gilpin and Jesup W. Scott, two writers with elaborately developed theories of western urbanization, found no problem in transferring their predictions of urban greatness from one city to another in rapid succession. If the Valley of the Mississippi was destined to be the final home of empire, it made relatively little difference if its capital was to be Toledo or Chicago, Kansas City or even Denver.<sup>15</sup>

Businessmen in each city in fact ranged at different points between the two extremes. While some could scarcely see beyond their own bank balance, others recognized that entrepreneurial success in land dealing, banking, commerce, and transportation was closely linked to the growth of the community as a whole. In some cities it is possible to distinguish clear central tendencies—an unwillingness in one town to look beyond individual concerns toward a "combined exertion for the

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<sup>13</sup> Daniel Aaron, "Cincinnati, 1818-1838: A Study of Attitudes in the Urban West" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of History, Harvard University, 1942), 102. Also see Bayrd Still, "Patterns of Mid-Nineteenth Century Urbanization in the Midwest," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XVIII (September, 1941), 197; Leslie Decker, "The Great Speculation," in David M. Ellis, ed., *The Frontier in American Development* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1970), 364-80.

<sup>14</sup> James Pullan, Diary, June, 1857, James Pullan Collection (Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio); Luther Bixby to John C. Bixby, April 4, 1850, Luther Bixby Collection (Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Ill.); Cincinnati *Gazette*, March 18, 1851; Chicago *Democratic Press*, *Review of Commerce for 1855*, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Charles N. Glaab, "Jesup W. Scott and a West of Cities," *Ohio History*, LXXIII (Winter, 1964), 3-12; Charles N. Glaab, "Vision of Metropolis: William Gilpin and Theories of City Growth in the West," *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XLV (Autumn, 1961), 21-31; Thomas L. Karnes, *William Gilpin: Western Nationalist* (Austin, Tex., 1970).

general good," a strong concern with community growth among opinion leaders in another. Key residents in the more successful cities identified their personal future with community growth and believed firmly in the importance of joint action through "the self-imposed labors . . . of earnest-souled, iron-willed, active-minded citizens." The acceptance of clearly stated ideas about future economic directions made it easier for "community-focused" entrepreneurs to discover financial backing and to rally popular support. The same consensus helped these business and civic leaders to coordinate their use of private corporations, commercial organizations, and governmental bodies in pursuit of economic goals for their city.<sup>16</sup>

The key in judging the role of boosterism in antebellum urban growth is therefore not the flamboyance of its rhetoric but the scope of its concerns and its accuracy of judgment. Popular discussion of a city's economic future could have positive impact to the degree that it involved the realistic analysis of the particular circumstances of that community. The notoriously highflown prose of Chicago boosters thus did not affect the basic accuracy of their economic analysis or its usefulness as a rallying point for city leaders. In Cincinnati, in Galena, and in St. Louis, in contrast, lack of consensus stemming from wishful rather than hardheaded thinking helped to justify conflicting and wasteful transportation projects and investment schemes.<sup>17</sup>

Popular economic thought in antebellum Indianapolis as judged within this framework generally involved accurate description of the local situation and well-measured suggestions for future development. The following analysis describes the city's growth process during its first era of rapid development in the late 1840s and 1850s in terms of the entrepreneurial sequence of observation, planning, and implementation of economic ideas. With an approach to urban development closer to that in Chicago than to that in Cincinnati or St. Louis, the

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<sup>16</sup> The quote is from the Cincinnati *Commercial*, June 5, 1855. Also see the description of the "community-focused" entrepreneur in Arthur Cole, *Business Enterprise in Its Social Setting* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), 108-109, 124-28, 161-64; and Gunther Barth's discussion of the identification of individual urbanites with the larger community in *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver* (New York, 1976), 129-35.

<sup>17</sup> Wyatt W. Belcher, *The Economic Rivalry between St. Louis and Chicago, 1850-1880* (New York, 1947); Carl Abbott, "The Divergent Development of Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Chicago and Galena, 1840-1860: Economic Thought and Economic Growth" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Chicago, 1971).

residents of Indianapolis shared a realistic interpretation of their city's geographic situation and its chances for growth. In addition, they pursued well-measured economic goals with a unified spirit of public enterprise which helped to reduce internal strife and wasted effort.

In a region noted for journalists who appointed themselves instant advocates of new communities, Indianapolis produced relatively little boosterism directed at outside investors or emigrants. Many of its newspapers—the *American*, *Republican*, *Free Democrat*, *Democrat*, and *Statesman*—dealt largely with issues of politics for a statewide audience. Those newspapers which had greater concern for the particular needs and interests of the city—the later *Sentinel*, the *Journal*, the *Locomotive*, and at the end of the decade the *Atlas*—directed their economic discussions inward, analyzing the bases of growth and urging local action. Occasional correspondents called for greater efforts to advertise the city, arguing that publication of its advantages would cause capital to flow to the city “as the rivers do to the ocean.”<sup>18</sup> Most editors, however, remained content that Indianapolis should enjoy a “spontaneous” prosperity rather than a growth “worried out of a victimized Eastern public by systematic advertising and fabulous puffing.” Better than such boosterism, they said, was a local and state pride which sought the rapid development of the city by its own efforts.<sup>19</sup>

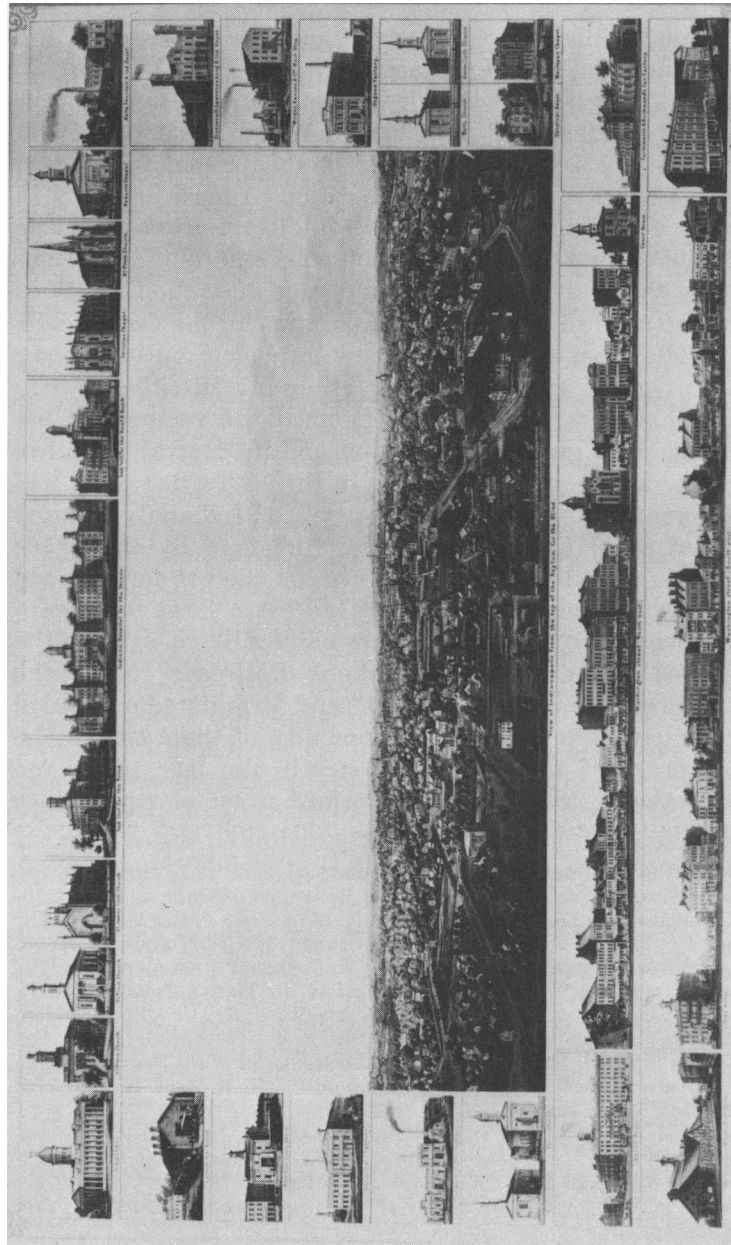
In the statistically minded West, the city also lacked local residents who assiduously compiled and published numerical data on its growth. Apart from railroad pamphlets designed explicitly to raise capital, the only such publicity specifically for an outside audience came from the Board of Trade. In 1854, the new organization prepared a circular to show “the advantages Indianapolis possesses as a central business point.” After two years of dormancy, the organization revived to issue new pamphlets in 1856 and 1857, the latter accompanied by a great ado of public meetings and newspaper blurbs. The bustling activity was an empty gesture, however, for the Board was unable to raise even \$1,000 to defray its expenses and left stacks of pamphlets undistributed. Three years later the *Sentinel* remarked sourly: “Spasmodically, our people arouse to the importance of this great interest [manufactures] and talk freely

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<sup>18</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, August 3, 1857.

<sup>19</sup> Indianapolis *Sentinel*, December 25, 1852, August 5, September 10, 1857.





# INDIANAPOLIS IN 1854

Courtesy Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis

of publishing to the world the advantages we possess; but the fever dies out and nothing is accomplished."<sup>20</sup>

Internal discussion of the city's economic situation, in contrast, was plentiful and consistent. When the men of the Hoosier capital pored over the map of the Union, they again and again remarked their central location. Almost precisely in the middle of Indiana and roughly equidistant from the large cities of the lakes and rivers, Indianapolis was the "great central City of the West."<sup>21</sup> Even in the decade after the Civil War, natives continued to believe that its location in the very middle of the Middle West was the "primary influence" on its growth and gave it great advantages over other inland cities.<sup>22</sup>

Indianapolis writers also recognized the reciprocity between their city's geographic position and its centrality within the western transportation system. In the 1830s, the town had been designated as the "grand centre" of Indiana's ill-fated program of canal and turnpike construction.<sup>23</sup> By the 1850s westerners noted that its location was a magnet for railroad lines, whose presence in turn added an extra facet to its centrality.<sup>24</sup> Boosters and entrepreneurs habitually referred to the city as the "Union Center of Indiana Railroads" or as the "Great Railroad Center of the West" and formulated a railroad strategy intended to increase the nodality of their city.<sup>25</sup> The railroads projected to or from the city in the late 1840s and finished between 1852 and 1854 formed a set of rays. Lines

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<sup>20</sup> The quotes are from the *Indianapolis Journal*, October 12, 1853, and the *Indianapolis Sentinel*, May 2, 1860. Also see *Indianapolis Sentinel*, August 10, 24, 1857; *Indianapolis Locomotive*, August 29, 1857; *Freie Presse von Indiana*, September 10, 1857; *Indianapolis Journal*, October 12, 1853, June 14, 1856; John H. B. Nowland, *Early Reminiscences of Indianapolis* (Indianapolis, 1870), 416; Samuel E. Perkins, "Address Delivered before the Marion County Agricultural Society," in *Indiana, State Board of Agriculture, Report* (1854/55), 388; Brown, "History of Indianapolis," 59.

<sup>21</sup> *Indiana Sentinel*, May 23, 1844. See also *Memorial of the Board of Trade and the Common Council of the City of Indianapolis*, H. R. Rept. No. 43, 37th Cong., 2d Sess., 1861, serial 1144, pp. 162-64.

<sup>22</sup> Nowland, *Early Reminiscences of Indianapolis*, vi; *Indianapolis: Its Advantages for Commerce and Manufactures, Published and Compiled by the Manufacturers and Real Estate Exchange* (Indianapolis, 1874).

<sup>23</sup> Henry W. Ellsworth, *The Valley of the Upper Wabash, Indiana, with Hints on Its Agricultural Advantages* (New York, 1838), 17.

<sup>24</sup> Holloway, *Indianapolis*, 316; *Railroad Record*, II (December 14, 1854), 693.

<sup>25</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, August 30, 1853; Oliver H. Smith, *Early Indiana Trials and Sketches* (Cincinnati, 1858), 286; Lawrenceburg and Upper Mississippi Railroad, *Engineer's Report and Report of the Board of Directors* (1850), 14; *Exhibit of the Terre Haute and Richmond Rail Road Company* (New York, 1851), 4-5.

were built south to Lawrenceburg, Madison, and Jeffersonville on the Ohio, west and north to Terre Haute, Lafayette, and Peru on the Wabash, and east to connect with Ohio railways. In the middle of the decade Indianapolis entrepreneurs attempted to add missing radials by agitating for lines to Fort Wayne, Evansville, Vincennes, and Decatur, Illinois. A Board of Trade map displaying the various lines built and proposed by 1853 shows clearly that the city regarded itself as "the hub of a wheel—the railroads leading from it forming the spokes."<sup>26</sup> The whole system was designed to create a vortex centered on Indianapolis by cutting across east-west and north-south railroads in the lower Middle West and diverting their trade to a single focus.<sup>27</sup>

There was also a strong belief that the interests of Indianapolis required that it become a point of intersection for major through railroads. Several promoters viewed central Indiana as a narrow isthmus of dry and level land. To the south were hills along the Ohio River, to the north were Lake Erie, Lake Michigan, the Calumet and Kankakee marshes southeast of Chicago, and the Black Swamp southwest of Toledo. East-west railroads, they thought, would of necessity pass through this narrow band of suitable terrain and through its pivotal city like sand through the neck of an hourglass.<sup>28</sup> Many entrepreneurs consequently introduced their projects to Indianapolis businessmen as links in the hypothetical "great central Atlantic and Western Railroad."<sup>29</sup> Local writers called for the construction through their town of lines connecting the important peripheral cities of the West.

Indiana businessmen tried several times to promote or put together such a trunk line. In 1847 Marion County interests held a convention to convince outside capitalists that a Cincinnati-St. Louis railroad could most economically make use

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<sup>26</sup> Board of Trade Map reproduced in Jacob P. Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis* (Chicago, 1910), I, 355. The quote is from the *Indianapolis Locomotive*, November 20, 1852.

<sup>27</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, July 30, 1860; *Indianapolis Journal*, July 23, 1855, June 24, July 14, 1856; Indianapolis Board of Trade, "Indianapolis," in *ibid.*, March 25-26, 1857; Brown, *History of Indianapolis*, 55.

<sup>28</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, May 24, 1848; *Indianapolis Journal*, May 29, 1848, April 15, 1857; Indianapolis and Bellefontaine Railroad Company, *First Annual Report* (1849), 12-13; Lafayette and Indianapolis Railroad Company, *Annual Report for 1851*, pp. 7-8; *Lafayette Courier*, November 19, 1850; Smith, *Trials and Sketches*, 422-23.

<sup>29</sup> Indianapolis and Bellefontaine Railroad Company, *Third Annual Report* (1851), 4.

of the tracks of the planned Terre Haute-Indianapolis-Richmond railroad. The proposal received strong support in Indianapolis and was revived in 1849 when Samuel Merrill, Nicholas McCarty, and several other leading citizens advocated the plan at a railroad convention in Steubenville, Ohio.<sup>30</sup> In the early 1850s, the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad aspired to become a major link between the Ohio and the Great Lakes. It provided equipment for the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine Railroad, coordinated its operations with those of the Lafayette and Indianapolis, and for a few months in 1854 entirely absorbed the Peru and Indianapolis Railroad, the merger being dissolved only after suit by stockholders of the latter road.<sup>31</sup> John Brough, the enterprising president of the Madison company, moved to Indianapolis and assumed control of the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine Railroad in 1853. In the next few years he consolidated that line with the Bellefontaine and Indianapolis in Ohio, gained control of the line to Terre Haute, and tried to build an extension from Terre Haute to St. Louis. When the Illinois legislature frustrated his efforts, he abandoned Indiana to live in Cleveland and tend his Ohio railroad interests.<sup>32</sup> Oliver H. Smith, ousted by Brough as president of the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine, took up a new project in the same years. He consistently described the Evansville, Indianapolis and Cleveland Straight Line Railroad as a great highway between Lake Erie and the Ohio River and as a replacement for the Wabash Canal.<sup>33</sup>

Belief in the importance of the city's centrality also underlay discussions of the most suitable economic activities. Its position sharply limited its agricultural export business, for example, because central Indiana farmers shipped their grain and pork directly to the Wabash and Ohio rivers en route to

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<sup>30</sup> *Proceedings of the St. Louis and Cincinnati Railroad Convention Held at Indianapolis, May 12, 1847* (Terre Haute, 1847); Thornbrough and Riker, eds., *Diary of Calvin Fletcher*, III, 373; *Indianapolis Sentinel*, February 17, April 24, 1847; *Indianapolis Journal*, March 24, 1847, April 20, May 4, 1849.

<sup>31</sup> Lafayette and Indianapolis Railroad Company, *Annual Report for 1851*, pp. 6-7; *Indianapolis Journal*, May 17, 1848; John Brough, *A Brief History of the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad* (New York, 1852), 13.

<sup>32</sup> John H. B. Nowland, *Sketches of the Prominent Citizens of 1876* (Indianapolis, 1877), 413; Smith, *Trials and Sketches*, 588; Alvin F. Harlow, *The Road of the Century: The Story of the New York Central* (New York, 1947), 353-67.

<sup>33</sup> "Railroads in the Valley of the Mississippi," *Western Democratic Review*, II (November, 1854), 325; Evansville, Indianapolis and Cleveland Straight Line Railroad, *Address of the President* (Indianapolis, 1853), 10-14; Evansville, Indianapolis and Cleveland Straight Line Railroad, *First Annual Report* (1855), 13, *Second Annual Report* (1856), 8-9.

southern markets.<sup>34</sup> The completion of the Madison Railroad did make the city an assembly point for produce from the region north of the city and allowed the establishment of several commission houses.<sup>35</sup> At the most, however, Indianapolis' export trade area extended sixty or seventy miles north and northwest in the early 1850s. One writer in 1846 stated that local merchants expected to control only the area within forty miles, and a later list of twenty-five towns whose flour mills traded through Indianapolis included none more than forty miles away.<sup>36</sup> Such a radius of influence would have brought the Indianapolis hinterland roughly to the edge of the area trading through Fort Wayne and Toledo. Maps of the frequency of stagecoach service prepared by Michael Conzen also show a hinterland oriented toward the north. The diversion of business from counties east of the city with the opening of the Indiana Central and Bellefontaine railroads to Ohio was probably balanced by new flows from the area between Indianapolis and the Wabash and brought little basic change in its export trade before the Civil War.<sup>37</sup>

Given the city's limited possibilities for grain and produce trade, Indianapolis newspapers and magazines devoted little time to the analysis of farming in central Indiana or the advocacy of commerce in farm commodities. Many residents in fact complained about the incomplete development of their small agricultural hinterland. They worried about the slow settlement of the Miami Reservation between Noblesville and Peru

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<sup>34</sup> *Western Cultivator*, I (January, 1845), 18; *Indiana Gazetteer, or Topographical Dictionary of the State of Indiana* (Indianapolis, 1849), vii-viii, 38-39; Sulgrove, *Indianapolis*, 14, 152, 444; Holloway, *Indianapolis*, 69.

<sup>35</sup> Between 1846 and 1848, the Madison Railroad reported an increase in southward freight amounting to 24,000 barrels of flour and 200,000 bushels of corn, much of it from the new connection at Indianapolis. Exports on the railroad showed an even larger increase with the completion of rail lines north and west of Indianapolis in 1851-1852, with flour shipments rising by seventy thousand barrels and grain by close to a million bushels. Madison and Indianapolis Railroad, *Eighth Annual Report* (1850), 17, *Eleventh Annual Report* (1853), 24.

<sup>36</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, October 31, 1846, quoted in Daniels, *Village*, 35; *Indianapolis Sentinel*, November 11, 1857.

<sup>37</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, June 19, 1851; John G. Clark, *The Grain Trade in the Old Northwest* (Urbana, Ill., 1966), 149-50; A. L. Kohlmeier, *The Old Northwest as the Keystone in the Arch of American Federal Union* (Bloomington, Ind., 1938), 89, 196, 203; Michael Conzen, "A Transport Interpretation of the Growth of Urban Regions: An American Example," *Journal of Historical Geography*, I (1975), 371; Charles Poinsette, *Fort Wayne during the Canal Era, 1828-1855* (*Indiana Historical Collections*, Vol. XLVI; Indianapolis, 1969), 239; Daniels, *Village*, 16-17, 72, 77-78, 82.

(Indian lands opened to white settlers only in 1847) and admonished farmers to make better use of the acres they had already cleared.<sup>38</sup> Nor did they show jealousy of the agricultural export business transacted by a potential rival such as Lafayette except when its railroad plans interfered with local schemes.<sup>39</sup>

Indianapolis devoted considerably more attention to the possibilities of supplying merchandise and manufactured goods to Indiana farms and towns over its radial rail system. Newspapers in 1854 and 1855 called for the establishment of wholesale houses and in 1857 backed efforts to publicize the city's advantages as a jobbing center.<sup>40</sup> Some boosters believed that the "quick, cheap, uninterrupted and abundant communication" offered by its railroads would make Indianapolis a "concentrating wholesale emporium," for the various lines supposedly allowed the supply of "more than two million customers . . . quicker and as cheaply as from any other point in the country."<sup>41</sup>

The city's hinterland for imported merchandise was in fact limited by the competition of Cincinnati. Located between eastern suppliers and Indiana buyers, Queen City merchants could control the business of many Indiana retailers almost to the grounds of the statehouse and serve markets along the Wabash by steamboat. The numerous Cincinnati advertisements in Indianapolis newspapers and directories show that its businessmen expected to make large sales within the Hoosier capital itself. Within the commercial sphere of Cincinnati, Indianapolis in the 1850s probably supplied goods to merchants only within a fifty or sixty mile radius.<sup>42</sup> Although as many as seventy retailers and forty manufacturers in Indianapolis shared this limited wholesale business by 1856 and 1857 and a

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<sup>38</sup> *Indiana Statesman*, November 13, 1850; *Indianapolis Journal*, May 8, 1848; *Indiana Sentinel*, June 2, 1847; *Indianapolis Locomotive*, October 6, 1855.

<sup>39</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, July 13, August 2, September 10, 1853, April 17, 1860.

<sup>40</sup> *Indianapolis Locomotive*, April 1, September 9, 1854; *Indianapolis Journal*, October 4, 1855, August 3, 1857; *Indianapolis Sentinel*, April 11, 1854; *Indiana Statesman*, October 1, 1851.

<sup>41</sup> The quote is from the Indianapolis Board of Trade, "Indianapolis," *Indianapolis Journal*, March 25-26, 1857. Also see Evansville, Indianapolis and Cleveland Straight Line Railroad Company, *Second Annual Report* (1856), 12; Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 346.

<sup>42</sup> Holloway, *Indianapolis*, 375; Sulgrove, *Indianapolis*, 99. All of the customers listed in the Sawyer and Company Account Book, 1862-1863 (Indiana Division, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis) lived in such an area.

dozen merchants liked to think of themselves as "wholesalers," not a single firm devoted exclusively to the jobbing trade survived for more than a few months in the 1850s.<sup>43</sup>

Indianapolis publicists were equally eager to discuss their city's advantages for manufacturing. The completion of the Madison Railroad helped to set off an industrial boom by reducing the cost of coal imports from the Ohio River. Most of the steam-powered factories which developed during the next several years processed local farm products or furnished sawed lumber, furniture, machinery, and agricultural implements to residents of nearby counties.<sup>44</sup> Although boosters in 1853 and 1854 pointed with pride to the "wonderful progress" of Indianapolis manufactures, industrial growth slackened in the later 1850s as businessmen failed to raise capital to expand existing plants or to prosecute successfully an ambitious project for a large rolling mill.<sup>45</sup>

The local response to the diminishing pace of industrial growth was a renewed discussion of the city's need and advantages for manufacturing. Every important newspaper in the later 1850s bristled with statements about the city's want of industry, and the Board of Trade prepared an elaborate circular on "such additional branches of Manufactures as may be profitably and successfully established in this city." As far as editors were concerned, the city had no hope for the future unless it conserved its energy and resources for manufacturing. "The question whether Indianapolis is to continue to increase in population and wealth," said one, "must depend mainly on whether she becomes a manufacturing city."<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> George W. Sloan, *Fifty Years in Pharmacy* (Indiana Historical Society Publications, Vol. III, no. 5; Indianapolis, 1903), 333, 340; *Indianapolis Journal*, August 3, 1857; *Indianapolis: Its Advantages for Commerce and Manufactures*, 13; Holloway, *Indianapolis*, 89, 108, 368-87; Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 345-46. The William and Thomas Silver Business Papers (Indiana Division, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis) show a Madison County firm beginning to buy from Indianapolis about 1850.

<sup>44</sup> *Indiana Journal*, May 8, 1849; "Historical Sketch," in *Directory of the City of Indianapolis* (Indianapolis, 1857), 44; *Indiana State Gazeteer for 1858-59*, p. 126; *Indianapolis: Its Advantages for Commerce and Manufactures*; Sulgrove, *Indianapolis*, 440-75.

<sup>45</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, August 5, 1853, February 21, April 7, 20, 1854; *Indianapolis Sentinel*, April 18, June 7, 1859; Perkins, "Address," 388.

<sup>46</sup> The quotes are from Indianapolis Board of Trade, "Indianapolis," in *Indianapolis Journal*, March 25-26, 1857, and *Indianapolis Journal*, June 24, 1856. Also see *Indianapolis Atlas*, August 24, September 7, 1859; *Freie Presse von Indiana*, August 14, 1856; *Indianapolis Sentinel*, August 26, 1857, May 2, 1860; *Indianapolis Locomotive*, August 29, 1857, July 16, 1859.

Analyses of local advantages for manufacturing stressed the city's central location and its purportedly unrivalled railroad facilities which were thought to give it entry to extensive markets.<sup>47</sup> With connections to all parts of the state, the city was considered an excellent site for producing wagons and farm machinery and for processing farm products.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, Indianapolis was not only "the Commercial Metropolis, the largest City and geographical center" of Indiana, but also had easy access to inhabitants of adjoining states. Natives were convinced, in short, that "the admitted principal in political economy, that the producer and consumer should be brought as near together as possible, must act with increasing force for years to come, in building up manufactures here in the very center of the great producing interests of the Northwest."<sup>49</sup>

Most perceptively, the citizens of Indianapolis in the 1850s argued that its position at the center of the Indiana rail system opened the entire state as a hinterland for service activities and made the city a gateway for westward travel. Because railroads placed it within a half-day journey of eighty of the state's ninety-two counties, Indianapolis was the most appropriate site for conventions, for the state university, or for "any Institution or business that looks to the patronage of the people of the State."<sup>50</sup> Newspapers praised the city's hotels, recommended its schools, argued for the removal of the state university to Indianapolis, and supported a campaign to serve as host

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<sup>47</sup> Indianapolis Board of Trade, *Circular and Map*, printed in Indianapolis *Journal*, September 10, 1856; Smith, *Trials and Sketches*, 114; Perkins, "Address," 388-89; Indianapolis *Sentinel*, August 28, 1851, April 11, 1854; *Indiana Statesman*, October 1, 1851; Indianapolis *Journal*, October 12, 1849, June 10, 1859; *Memorial of the Board of Trade*, 162-64.

<sup>48</sup> Indianapolis *Atlas*, August 26, 1856; Indianapolis *Journal*, August 4, 1856; Indianapolis *Locomotive*, April 3, 1853.

<sup>49</sup> Indianapolis Board of Trade, *Indianapolis*. It was in fact the Civil War which allowed the expansion of the city's control over Indiana markets. The city's central position made it the assembly point for munitions and soldiers, whose presence at nearby camps increased the demand for imports and local manufactured goods. In the later years of the conflict, large wholesaling houses and factories developed as Indianapolis wrested much of the state's business from faltering Cincinnati. See Albert E. Dickens, *The Growth and Structure of Real Property Uses in Indianapolis (Indiana Business Studies, Vol. XVII; Bloomington, Ind., 1939)*, 29-32; Frederick D. Kershner, Jr., "A Social and Cultural History of Indianapolis 1860-1914" (Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of Wisconsin, 1950), 53-55, 67-70, 327-28.

<sup>50</sup> Smith, *Trials and Sketches*, 425; *Indiana State Gazetteer . . . for 1860 and 1861*, p. 177; Indianapolis *Sentinel*, January 11, 1851. The quote is from the Indianapolis *Locomotive*, July 25, 1857.



to the Republican National Convention of 1860.<sup>51</sup> In addition, residents realized that the city's function as state capital reinforced its centrality by making it a major point for the dissemination of political and commercial information through personal contacts and through its newspapers and magazines.<sup>52</sup>

Service activities had in fact been a vital part of the local economy since the 1830s. In the city's first decade, hotel owners, saloon keepers, and retailers had looked forward to the \$30,000 that lobbyists and legislators could be expected to spend during each meeting of the General Assembly and had made all debts payable at the time of the session when hard cash was most plentiful.<sup>53</sup> As the state capital and as the site of a federal land office, moreover, Indianapolis was the place where Hoosier lawyers gathered throughout the year to transact their most profitable business and swing their biggest deals. The economic base was further enlarged in the 1840s by the decision to build state schools for the deaf and the blind and a public hospital for the insane. Together, state expenditures for asylums, permanent officers, and public printing amounted to perhaps \$200,000 per year in the 1850s.<sup>54</sup> Although local spokesmen denied that the city depended on state expenditures when challenged by jealous rivals, they regarded its public institutions with pride and admitted that removal of government offices might ruin many businesses.<sup>55</sup>

In the same decades, Indianapolis' centrality made it the place "where the delegates of the different benevolent societies converge twice a year, and the Legal, Medical, and Clerical Professions are frequently together in a body."<sup>56</sup> In May of 1856, for example, the city hosted the Indiana Medical Society and the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church; three years later it held a meeting of the General Association of the old school Presbyterians and a convention of Indiana Episcopalians. The most important among conventions were the

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<sup>51</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, August 12, 1851, April 17, 1852, November 16, 1859; *Freie Presse von Indiana*, July 23, 1857; *Indianapolis Locomotive*, January 22, 1853; Smith, "Address," 438.

<sup>52</sup> *Railroad Record*, II (December 14, 1854), 693; *Indianapolis Sentinel*, March 14, 1855.

<sup>53</sup> Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 81; "Historical Sketch," in *Directory of the City of Indianapolis* (1857), 27; *Indianapolis Locomotive*, December 9, 1848.

<sup>54</sup> Holloway, *Indianapolis*, 77-78; *Indianapolis Journal*, June 10, 1859.

<sup>55</sup> *Indianapolis Locomotive*, March 8, 1851; *Indianapolis Journal*, September 29, 1853, June 10, 1859; Smith, "Address," 438.

<sup>56</sup> *Cincinnati Commercial*, May 27, 1856. The quote is from the *Indianapolis Locomotive*, July 25, 1857.

fairs held six times before the Civil War by the State Board of Agriculture. About twenty-five thousand sightseers attended each year, crowding the city's trains, packing its fifteen-odd hotels, and spending perhaps \$100,000.<sup>57</sup> In order to secure the permanent location of the state fair, Indianapolis leaders fought off the claims of rival towns, and its voters approved a public contribution toward the purchase of new fairgrounds by a margin of six to one.<sup>58</sup>

Related to these government and service activities was Indianapolis' role as a financial center for Indiana. Since the 1830s it had been the headquarters of the State Bank and in 1854 was proposed as the site for a "Union Bank" intended to support the currency of the state's other banks. Most of the state's free banks, which were officially located in other towns, did their business through "agencies" in the capital.<sup>59</sup> Several fire insurance companies also transacted a statewide business from Indianapolis, and formal and informal business organizations normally convened there.<sup>60</sup>

Having marked out a coherent set of goals, entrepreneurs pursued them without fanfare. The city's growth, as a result, came not from a few spectacular enterprises but from the measured operations of numerous small businesses. According to the 1860 federal census, for example, its largest factory employed sixty workers, and its average manufacturing establishment had fewer than ten employees.<sup>61</sup> Residents of Indianapolis were justly proud that wealth was distributed relatively evenly among its citizens. In 1850, 37.9 percent of its employed males twenty years or older owned real property. Ten years

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<sup>57</sup> *Indianapolis Locomotive*, February 11, 1860; *Indianapolis Journal*, October 23, 1852, October 8, 1858; *Indianapolis Directory* (1855), 58; Holloway, *Indianapolis*, 95.

<sup>58</sup> *Indianapolis Locomotive*, October 15, November 5, 1859, February 4, 8, 1860; *Indianapolis Atlas*, November 22, 1859; *Indianapolis Sentinel*, October 8, 1857; Indiana, State Board of Agriculture, *Report for 1859*, pp. lxxvi-lxxviii.

<sup>59</sup> *Cincinnati Gazette*, July 18, 1854; *Bankers' Magazine*, XII (August, 1857), 152.

<sup>60</sup> *The Indiana Annual Register and Pocket Manual* (Indianapolis, 1846), 201; Sulgrove, *Indianapolis*, 230.

<sup>61</sup> The 1860 Census reported one hundred manufacturing firms in Marion County, with a total of 713 employees, of whom 477 were in Indianapolis. Eighth Census, *Mortality and Miscellaneous Statistics*, xviii, *Manufactures*, p. 128. The *Indianapolis City Directory 1860-61*, 287-88, lists 200 manufacturing enterprises for Indianapolis. A sample of employed persons from the manuscript returns of the 1860 Census indicates that manufacturing employment totaled 1600. See Carl Abbott, "Popular Economic Thought and Occupational Structure in Three Middle Western Cities in the Antebellum Decade," *Journal of Urban History*, I (February, 1975), 175-87.

later the proportion was 35.7 percent. Both figures were significantly above levels in Cincinnati and Chicago and were slightly higher than the 35 percent average which Lee Soltow has calculated for nonfarm workers in the Middle West.<sup>62</sup> Of major immigrant groups, only the Irish fell below native Americans in percentage of workers holding property, while the British and Germans matched or exceeded the native American level.<sup>63</sup>

A successful Indianapolis entrepreneur was Calvin Fletcher, a lawyer and officer of the State Bank revealed by his diary as a man of intense uprightness and enterprise. Having grown up with the city, Fletcher enjoyed close ties with many of its leaders in manufacturing, commerce, and law. Since the core of Indianapolis' financial community was distinguished by stability over time, many of the leaders he had known in the 1830s wielded influence and held positions of trust into the 1850s.<sup>64</sup> Others in the group resembled Fletcher in character. Contemporary biographies of Indianapolis entrepreneurs show less admiration for the aggressive go-getter than for the steady citizen who pursued his own business and attended to his duty.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Indianapolis Board of Trade, *Indianapolis; Indiana State Gazetteer . . . for 1858-59*, pp. 125; Lee Soltow, *Men and Wealth in the United States, 1850-1870* (New Haven, 1975), 41. The figures for individual cities are computed from the census sample described in Abbott, "Occupational Structure." For 1850 the precise comparative figures from these sources are: Chicago, 14.9 percent; Cincinnati, 13.6 percent; Ohio, 36.0 percent; Indiana-Illinois-Michigan, 35.0 percent.

<sup>63</sup> The following table, based on the census sample described in Abbott, "Occupational Structure," shows the percentages of all workers in Indianapolis owning real property:

	1850	1860
All workers	36.2%	27.6%
Workers born in U.S.	36.3%	25.1%
Workers born in Great Britain	37.0%	23.8%
Workers born in Germany	43.2%	39.1%
Workers born in Ireland	15.3%	17.7%

<sup>64</sup> See James H. Madison, "Businessmen and the Business Community in Indianapolis, 1820-1860" (Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, Indiana University, 1972), 222; and lists of leading businessmen and citizens in the following: D. T. Kimball to Augustus Kimball, February 12, 1837, Kimball Manuscripts (Indiana Division, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis); *The Indiana Annual Register and Pocket Manual*, 123-24; Daniels, *Village*, 93. Out of a sample of fifty-five business leaders of the antebellum years who received biographical sketches in Sulgrove, *Indianapolis*, or Nowland, *Reminiscences*, forty-three had arrived in the city by 1837.

<sup>65</sup> Nowland, *Reminiscences*; Samuel Smith, Autobiography (Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis).

Indeed, antebellum Indianapolis possessed only one truly flamboyant entrepreneur. Oliver H. Smith, erstwhile lawyer, Whig politician, and United States Senator, tried to make himself the town's preeminent publicist and promoter in the late 1840s. In speech after speech he boosted railroads, supported the Board of Trade, and found evidence in the city of wonderful growth. His writings were so enthusiastic that they sometimes parodied the booster style. In practice, however, Smith had difficulty in securing loans from the Indianapolis branch of the State Bank, perhaps the city's central economic institution. The chief fruit of his energetic promotional efforts was the construction of the Bellefontaine Railroad between 1848 and 1852. After he lost control of this line in 1853, however, his further schemes created acrimonious controversy and foundered without broad support.<sup>66</sup>

At the same time, Indianapolis in the 1850s was open to well-mannered newcomers. According to a sample from the manuscript census returns, the average age of employed persons owning \$5000 of real estate fell from 46.5 in 1850 to 40.0 in 1860. The proportion of the same group born in the Middle West rose during the decade from 17 percent to 35 percent, indicating that the Indiana capital was a haven for ambitious young Middle Westerners and a center of opportunity for the state. A study by historian James H. Madison has found that a total of eighty-nine businessmen—bankers, merchants, manufacturers, real estate agents, railroad officers, livestock, lumber, and produce dealers—owned at least \$10,000 of property in 1860. Fifty-eight had arrived in the city since 1850 and only seven had been present before 1835. Wealth and presumably local influence were held by relatively young men, for only 46 percent of these eighty-nine wealthiest business leaders were over forty.<sup>67</sup>

The absence of divisive local issues helped to maintain a calm and measured tone in the economic growth of Indianapolis. The antebellum decade saw little of the labor strife and awareness of economic class divisions which marred the career of other cities.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, the perennially troublesome issue of

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<sup>66</sup> Smith, *Trials and Sketches*; Smith, "Address"; Smith, "Railroads of Indiana"; Oliver H. Smith, letter in *Indianapolis Journal*, July 21, 1856; Holloway, *Indianapolis*, 326; *Indianapolis Sentinel*, November 17, 1853; Thornbrough and Riker, eds., *Diary of Calvin Fletcher*, III, 244.

<sup>67</sup> Data from the census sample described in Abbott, "Occupational Structure," and from Madison, "Business Community in Indianapolis," 215-37.

<sup>68</sup> Kershner, "Social and Cultural History of Indianapolis," 19-22, 79-80.

banking was treated as a question of state rather than civic policy. Although the city's newspapers and businessmen divided over the hotly contested issues of state banking policy, they spent their energy within the framework of political parties, attempting to influence the state legislature rather than fighting with each other. Nor were there rivalries among local railroad interests important enough to threaten local growth. Of the several lines which followed the Madison Railroad into Indianapolis during the 1850s, only the Bellefontaine and Indianapolis and the Indianapolis and Cincinnati required local money and enterprise.<sup>69</sup> With the entrepreneurs of Terre Haute, Lafayette, Peru, Richmond, and Jeffersonville energetically extending lines to converge at the capital, one of the major problems of economic development was solved by outsiders. Between the completion of the Madison Railroad and the start of the Civil War, the voters of Indianapolis did not once face the question of public aid to railroads which plagued other cities.<sup>70</sup>

In the absence of serious controversies about the basic issues of economic growth, public arguments about economic policy in antebellum Indianapolis were relatively calm debates on specific measures. The advocates of manufacturing at various times disagreed among themselves whether a rolling mill was a practical project, scolded the council for exiling slaughterhouses beyond the city limits, and argued whether real estate speculation hampered the expansion of manufacturing by raising land prices and diverting local capital.<sup>71</sup> The first years of railroad development similarly saw argument whether the several lines should be connected by tracks through the center of town or by an encircling belt line. In an era when fierce competition among railroad companies gave eight passenger terminals to Boston, five to Chicago, four to

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<sup>69</sup> For the Bellefontaine Railroad, see Ared Murphy, "The Big Four Railroad in Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History*, XXI (June, 1925), 109-71; Benjamin Homans, *The United States Railroad Directory for 1856* (New York, 1856), 125, 127-28, 132. For the Indianapolis and Cincinnati Railroad see *Indianapolis Journal*, January 30, 1850, July 18, 1851; *Indianapolis Locomotive*, September 22, 1849, January 26, 1850; *Indianapolis Sentinel*, September 11, 1851.

<sup>70</sup> The experience of other cities with municipal aid to railroads is detailed in Carter Goodrich, *Government Promotion of American Canals and Railroads* (New York, 1960).

<sup>71</sup> *Freie Presse von Indiana*, August 14, December 18, 1856, March 5, 1857; *Indianapolis Sentinel*, June 10, 1853, February 9, March 23, 1858; *Indianapolis Atlas*, August 29, 1859; *Indianapolis Locomotive*, March 20, 1858.

Richmond, and two or three to a host of cities, however, there is little evidence that anyone seriously tried to prevent the construction of a union passenger depot south of the business district.<sup>72</sup>

Efforts to free Indianapolis from Cincinnati's commercial dominance after the completion of eastern rail connections in the early 1850s demonstrate the character of collective entrepreneurship in the city. Businessmen were encouraged to invest in local manufacturing "so that we may declare our independence of Cincinnati" and were urged to use the new railroads to bypass Queen City merchants.<sup>73</sup> The desire to build an Indianapolis economy free from Cincinnati influence came to a head in a controversy over the redemption of currency from Indiana's free banks. Cincinnati brokers in 1854, 1855, and 1856 gathered the Indiana bank notes which accumulated in the Queen City and sent them to Indianapolis for conversion into specie. Where Ohioans considered this merely a routine procedure, Indianapolis editors and businessmen thought it a blatant effort to destroy the state's merchants and bankers. As Cincinnati newspapers looked on in sincere puzzlement, Indianapolis prepared to repel the "piratical incursion" of Ohio "rascals" and "bloodsuckers" and called for a boycott of Cincinnati businesses.<sup>74</sup> After two years of verbal salvos, a commercial convention met at Indianapolis in April, 1856, and resolved that the state should trade exclusively with Louisville, Toledo, and Cleveland.<sup>75</sup> Two years later, Indianapolis' attitude was summarized in the *Journal*: "All the objection Cincinnati has to Indianapolis and other Indiana towns is that they will not permit themselves to be squeezed, at all times, without resistance."<sup>76</sup>

<sup>72</sup> For Indianapolis, see *Freie Presse von Indiana*, October 2, 1856; Indianapolis *Locomotive*, January 20, February 24, March 3, 10, 1849, February 16, 1850, June 19, 1852; Indianapolis *Journal*, July 26, 1851; Daniels, *Village*, 99. For other cities, see Harold M. Mayer, "Railroads and City Planning," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, XII (Fall, 1946), 3; George R. Taylor and Irene D. Neu, *The American Railroad Network, 1861-1890* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), 28, 39, 45-47.

<sup>73</sup> Indianapolis *Locomotive*, January 1, April 2, 30, July 23, 1853; Indianapolis *Journal*, July 30, December 7, 1857; Indianapolis *Sentinel*, May 6, 1848, August 29, 1850, August 28, 1857; *Indiana Statesman*, October 1, 1851; Indianapolis and Bellefontaine Railroad, *First Annual Report* (1849), 12-14.

<sup>74</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, April 5, August 18, 30, 1854; Indianapolis *Sentinel*, October 21, 1854, February 22, March 15, 1855.

<sup>75</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, March 21, April 11, 1856; Indianapolis *Locomotive*, March 22, 1856; Cincinnati *Times*, March 24, 1856; Cincinnati *Price Current*, April 26, May 10, 1854; Cincinnati *Commercial*, March 24, April 4, 1856; Cincinnati *Enquirer*, March 23, 30, 1856.

<sup>76</sup> Indianapolis *Journal*, February 25, 1858.

The pursuit of economic growth in Indianapolis was a coherent and practical process. It was not only leading businessmen, but the majority of its articulate residents who shared a general agreement on the desirability of economic expansion. Henry Ward Beecher, the city's most popular religious leader in the 1840s, for example, edited an agricultural journal in order to develop the state's "incomparable resources" and to promote "a large-minded, intelligent, settled PUBLIC SPIRIT."<sup>77</sup> The city's German community also accepted the objectives of growth defined by the native leadership. Affirmations of faith in the town's growth were a staple of Indianapolis newspapers, and few inhabitants doubted that "Indianapolis bids fair to become the largest inland capital in the Union."<sup>78</sup>

At the same time, the city's inhabitants possessed a clear view of their prospects, accepting many of the limitations arising from their location and making the most of its centrality. Within the range of types of boosterism outlined earlier, Indianapolis was marked by realistic attention to local circumstances rather than grandiose visions of spectacular growth. Even the scarcity of eastern capital prevented the promotion of quixotic projects and dampened the cycle of boom and bust. An early interest in retrospective articles on the not very historic town indicated the pride which citizens took in their city and affirmed their belief that "it is no longer a rugged, scattered village—but a city, young, vigorous and healthful, with a bright future before it."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Henry Ward Beecher, in *Indiana Farmer and Gardener*, I (November 15, 1845), 370.

<sup>78</sup> Lafayette and Indianapolis Railroad Company, *Annual Report for 1851*, p. 6.

<sup>79</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, March 28, 1853. Also see *Indianapolis Journal*, October 29, 1847, and a series of articles, November 4, 24, December 1, 1846, March 10, 17, 1847; "Historical Sketch," in *Directory of the City of Indianapolis* (1857).