# Urban History in a Regional Context: River Towns on the Upper Mississippi, 1840-1860

Timothy R. Mahoney

In the past decade urban historians have grown increasingly uneasy in their reliance on the case-study method to analyze the process of urbanization in nineteenth-century America. The general tendency to use analyses of individual cases to comprehend a spatially selective, diverse, and complex process such as urbanization has led to, at best, an episodic, fragmented, and simplistic understanding of urban development. The result has been a general inability to connect the process of urbanization at any place to larger processes of social and economic change.[1]

In response to this dilemma, some scholars have begun to study the development of regional urban and economic systems as a means to sharpen their understanding of how different cities develop along different lines over time and how such local processes relate to broader, systemic ones. Each of these "new regionalists" defines regions by economic and functional, as opposed to less precise political, social, cultural, or environmental, criteria.[2] For them a regional system is a set of interdependent urban units that facilitates the production and exchange of goods and services around an entrepôt by means of

Timothy R. Mahoney is instructor of history at the University of Maryland.

[1] Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Quantification and the New Urban Hisory," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 13 (Spring 1983), 653-77. See also Charles Tilly, "The Urban Historian's Dilemma: Faceless Cities or Cities without Hinterlands," CRSO Working Paper, no. 248 (Center for Research on Social Organization, Ann Arbor, Mich.); and Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Community Studies, Urban History, and American Local History," in *The Past before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States*, ed. Michael Kammen (Ithaca, 1980), 290.

[2] David R. Goldfield, "The New Regionalism," *Journal of Urban History*, 10 (Feb. 1984), 171-86; Frederick C. Luebke, "Regionalism and the Great Plains: Problems of Concept and Method," *Western Historical Quarterly*, 15 (Jan. 1984), 19-38; Michael C. Steiner, "The Significance of Turner's Sectional Thesis," *ibid.*, 10 (Oct. 1979), 437-66; Richard Jensen, "On Modernizing Frederick Jackson Turner: The Historiography of Regionalism," *ibid.*, 11 (July 1980), 307-22. For an excellent survey of the literature in the field, see Michael P. Conzen, "The American Urban System in the Nineteenth Century," in *Geography and the Urban Environment: Progress in Research and Applications*, ed. D. T. Herbert and R. J. Johnston (6 vols., Chichester, 1978-1984), IV, 295-397.

specialization, integration, and differentiation among its units.[3] What distinguishes such a framework from earlier endeavors to understand regional systems, in particular Central Place Theory, is its emphasis on understanding urban places not as units in a rigidly organized functional hierarchy but, rather, as particular places constantly interacting with the system around them. The primary consequence of that shift in perspective has been the formulation of new ideas about how urban systems work and thus a considerable weakening of the validity of the case-study method as a means to study the process of urbanization.

As postulated by Walter Christaller and later applied by others to dynamic American conditions, Central Place Theory argues that over time a dense matrix of small agricultural depots evolved, by means of upward-moving competition, into a hierarchy of functional urban types.[4] When a town's functional development stopped, it hardened into a "real type," sharing similar characteristics with other towns that stagnated along with it. Thus a case study from any level of the hierarchy has a dual role. It informs one about typical structural characteristics among a large group of units and illuminates the detailed process, frozen in that town's current structure, associated with a particular stage in the larger, universal process of urbanization.[5] On such a theoretical basis a case study of certain types of towns could claim broad representativeness.

The discovery by historical geographers of long-distance wholesaling chains, extraregional penetrations by means of planned transport and production net-

[3] Allan Pred, *Urban Growth and City-Systems in the United States, 1840–1860* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), 2; Brian J. L. Berry, "Cities as Systems within Systems of Cities," *Regional Science Association Papers*, 13 (1964), 147–63; Goldfield, "New Regionalism," 177–80. On the problems of defining regional systems, see Glenn Porter, ed., *Regional Economic History: The Mid-Atlantic since 1700* (Wilmington, Del., 1976), esp. 9–10. The argument for a regional analysis of urban and economic systems implies that it is on the regional level of reality that aggregate processes such as urbanization actually work themselves out and are defined. See, for example, Joseph A. Pratt, "Regional Development in the Context of National Economic Growth," in *ibid.*, 35; Jane Jacobs, "Cities and the Wealth of Nations," *Atlantic*, 253 (March 1984), 41–66; and Goldfield, "New Regionalism," 185.

[4] Walter Christaller, *Central Places in Southern Germany*, trans. Carlisle W. Baskin (Englewood Cliffs, 1966), 27–83; Eric E. Lampard, "The Evolving System of Cities in the United States: Urbanization and Economic Development," in *Issues in Urban Economics*, ed. Harvey S. Perloff and Lowdon Wingo, Jr. (Baltimore, 1968), 81–138; Ralph Thomlinson, *Urban Structure: The Social and Spatial Character of Cities* (New York, 1969), 127–35. For applications of Central Place Theory to historical analysis, see Morton Rothstein, "Antebellum Wheat and Cotton Exports: A Contrast in Marketing Organization and Economic Development," *Agricultural History*, 40 (April 1966), 91–100; James T. Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* (Baltimore, 1972), 193–216; and Diane Lindstrom, *Economic Development in the Philadelphia Region, 1810–1850* (New York, 1978), 141–44. For critiques of Central Place Theory, see James E. Vance, Jr., *The Merchant's World: The Geography of Wholesaling* (Englewood Cliffs, 1970), 2–6, 9–12, 82–90, 140–48; Conzen, "American Urban System in the Nineteenth Century," in *Geography and the Urban Environment*, ed. Herbert and Johnston, IV, 311–12; Leslie J. King, *Central Place Theory* (Beverly Hills, 1984), 28–91; and David Ward, *Cities and Immigrants* (New York, 1971), 15–18.

[5] See, for example, Jerome Blum, *The End of the Old Order in Rural Europe* (Princeton, 1978), esp. 8. See also Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (New Brunswick, 1978), 16–25; and Peter Kolchin, "Comparing American History," in *The Promise of American History: Progress and Prospects*, ed. Stanley I. Kutler and Stanley N. Katz (Baltimore, 1982), 78.

works, and complex patterns of interregional, nonhierarchical urban interactions, however, indicates that many towns did not functionally evolve as hypothesized by Central Place Theory. In most regional systems the relative functions of any unit were neither stable, continuous, nor internally derived, but flexible, discontinuous, and often caused by external factors. Instead of maintaining for long periods a stable functional position in the hierarchy of towns and cities as is usually assumed, many towns, especially those toward the center of the regional hierarchy, fell in rank while others rose, and still others had up-and-down careers through different stages of regional development. A wide variety of scenarios, in which skipping of stages of development, acceleration or deceleration of normal development, and juxtaposition of new functions with the remnants of past ones were commonplace, unfolded.[6] In the context of such a varied reality, case studies, perceived as samples, lose much of their representativeness and thus much of their general explanatory power.

Rather than analyze a town in relative isolation, therefore, we must learn how that town has interacted with and functioned within the regional system of towns of which it is a part. The interaction of the town with the system, its responses to larger forces of economic change, and the responses of townsmen to the disruption caused by such external-directed change ought to be the center of attention and the point of comparisons with other regional histories.

This article develops a regionally based understanding of any town's history by analyzing it on three distinct levels of reality: (1) The changing functional structure of the regional urban system derived from the shifting patterns of production, exchange, and consumption of goods and services; (2) the shifting patterns of interaction among towns and cities within the system and any evidence of more complex, nonhierarchical functional interactions outside the regional system, resulting from shifting economic bases; and (3) the specific functional histories of particular towns as they responded to shifts in systemic forces, with particular emphasis on the responses of merchants and manufacturers.[7] The potential richness of such a three-tiered analysis can be demonstrated by looking at the complex urban system on the upper Mississippi River during the mid-nineteenth century.

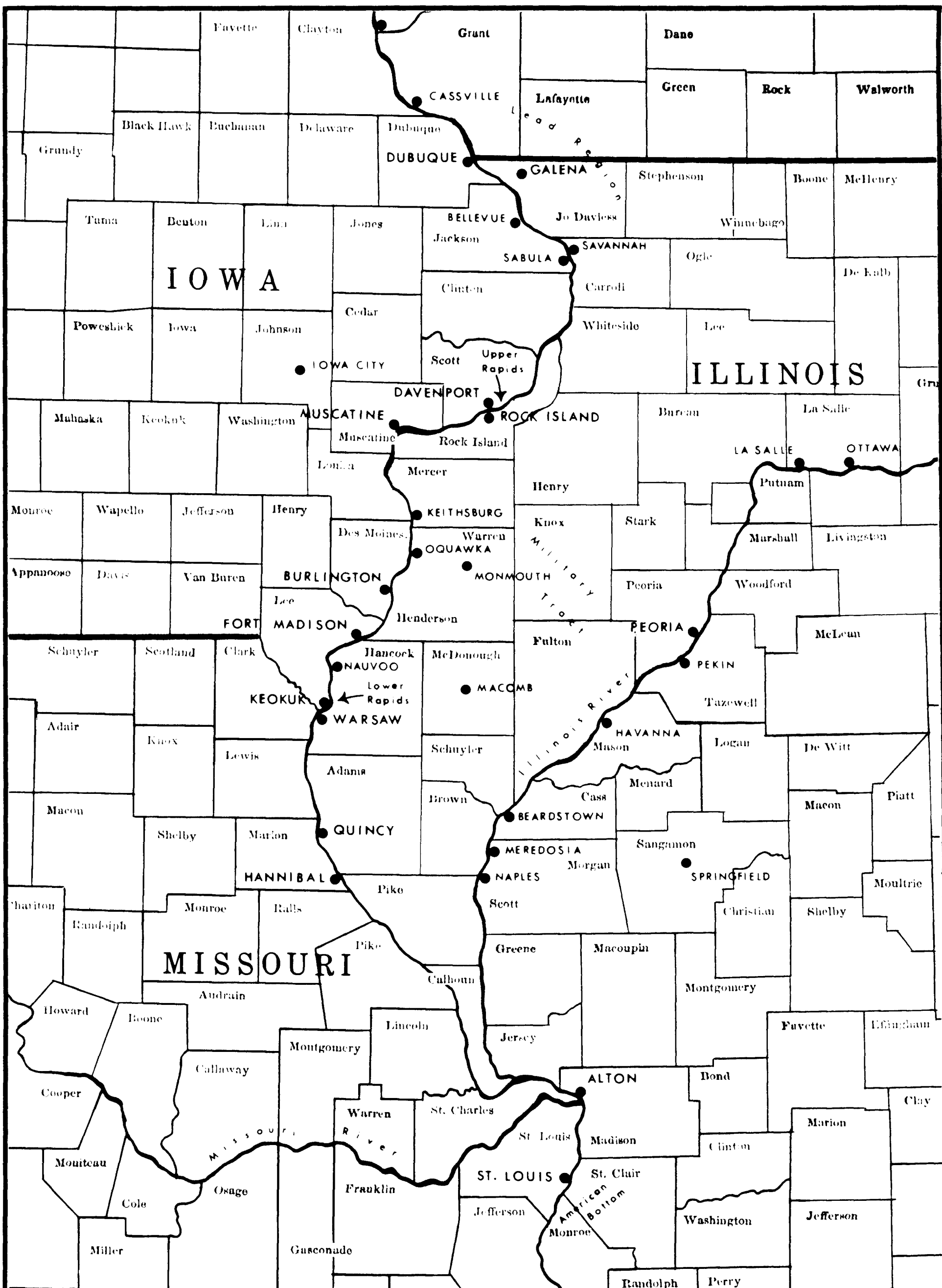
On the first level, the interactions between local functions and regional economic forces occurred in each sector of the economy. Given the mercantile basis of the economy, however, they were especially strong in the flow of

[6] Conzen, "American Urban System in the Nineteenth Century," in *Geography and the Urban Environment*, ed. Herbert and Johnston, IV, 311–15; Vance, *Merchant's World*, 80–98; John C. Hudson, "The Plains Country Town," in *The Great Plains: Environment and Culture*, ed. Brian W. Blouet and Frederick C. Luebke (Lincoln, 1979), 99–118; Michael P. Conzen, "Capital Flows and the Developing Urban Hierarchy: State Bank Capital in Wisconsin, 1854–1895," *Economic Geography*, 51 (Oct. 1975), 321–38; Allan Pred, *City-Systems in Advanced Economies: Past Growth, Present Processes and Future Development Options* (New York, 1977), 16–20, 66–70; Ward, *Cities and Immigrants*, 13–21; Carl H. Madden, "On Some Indications of Stability in the Growth of Cities in the United States," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 4 (April 1956), 236–52; William D. Walters, Jr., "The Fanciful Geography of 1836," *Old Northwest*, 9 (Winter 1983–84), 331–43.

[7] Fernand Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce*, trans. Siân Reynolds (New York, 1982), 184–90.

wholesale and retail goods through the river-based urban system. On the upper Mississippi River, St. Louis's regional system began as an outpost wholesaling chain connecting the entrepôts of Cincinnati and New Orleans with a series of military forts and trading posts strung out along the frontier after the War of

FIGURE 1
Upper Mississippi River



1812. In time, St. Louis merchants found themselves a marketable export, lead from southwestern Wisconsin, and began shipping it east to New York and Philadelphia. In return, goods from New York and New Orleans were transported west on the accounts of forwarding merchants who had established themselves at St. Louis in order more effectively to sell to wholesalers in the Lead Region. Afterward, an enlarged fleet of steamboats stimulated the immigration of more settlers and the reciprocal production of wheat and hogs, both of which became the foundation of St. Louis trade in the upper valley. Despite its developing functional independence as a regional entrepôt, however, St. Louis did not find itself commercially unchallenged on the upper river. Through the mid-1830s Alton, Illinois, supported by Cincinnati merchants,

FIGURE 2
Legend for Figures 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Town and City Functions

○ Regional Entrepôt

■ Secondary Entrepôt

★ Central Marketplace

• Local Marketplace

(Clear symbols indicate a town or city interacting nonhierarchically with a town or city outside the system.)

——— Hierarchical Trading Contacts

- - - - - - Nonhierarchical, Bypassing, etc.

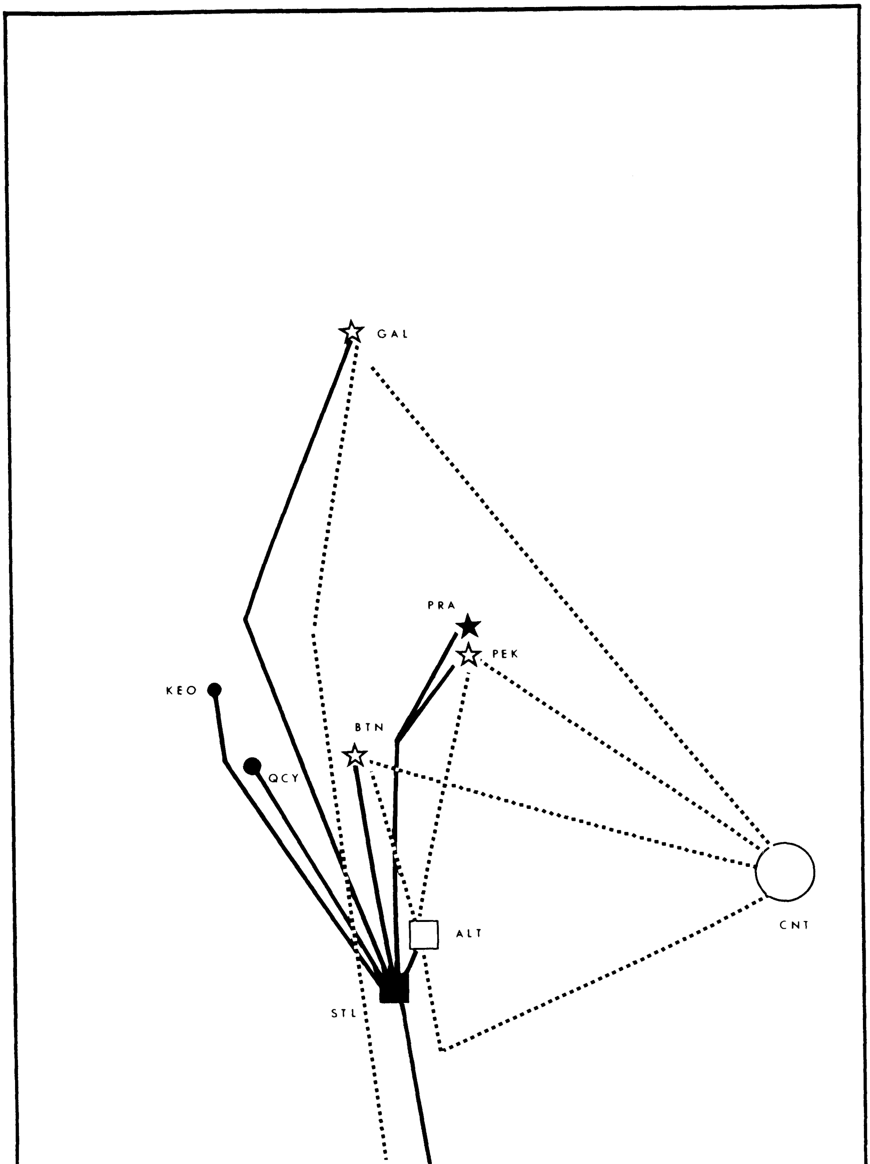
(Width of lines indicates relative volume of trade as based on trade and transport figures.)

Abbreviations of Towns and Cities

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ALT | Alton, Ill. | IWC | Iowa City, Iowa |
| BTN | Beardstown, Ill. | KEO | Keokuk, Iowa |
| BUR | Burlington, Iowa | LAS | LaSalle, Ill. |
| CDR | Cedar Rapids, Iowa | MUS | Muscatine, Iowa |
| CHI | Chicago, Ill. | NYC | New York, N.Y. |
| CNT | Cincinnati, Ohio | PEK | Pekin, Ill. |
| DUB | Dubuque, Iowa | PRA | Peoria, Ill. |
| DVN | Davenport, Iowa | QCY | Quincy, Ill. |
| FRE | Freeport, Ill. | ROC | Rock Island, Ill. |
| FTM | Fort Madison, Iowa | SAV | Savannah, Ill. |
| FUL | Fulton, Ill. | SPL | St. Paul, Minn. |
| GAL | Galena, Ill. | SPR | Springfield, Ill. |
| GBR | Galesburg, Ill. | STL | St. Louis, Mo. |
| HAN | Hannibal, Mo. | | |

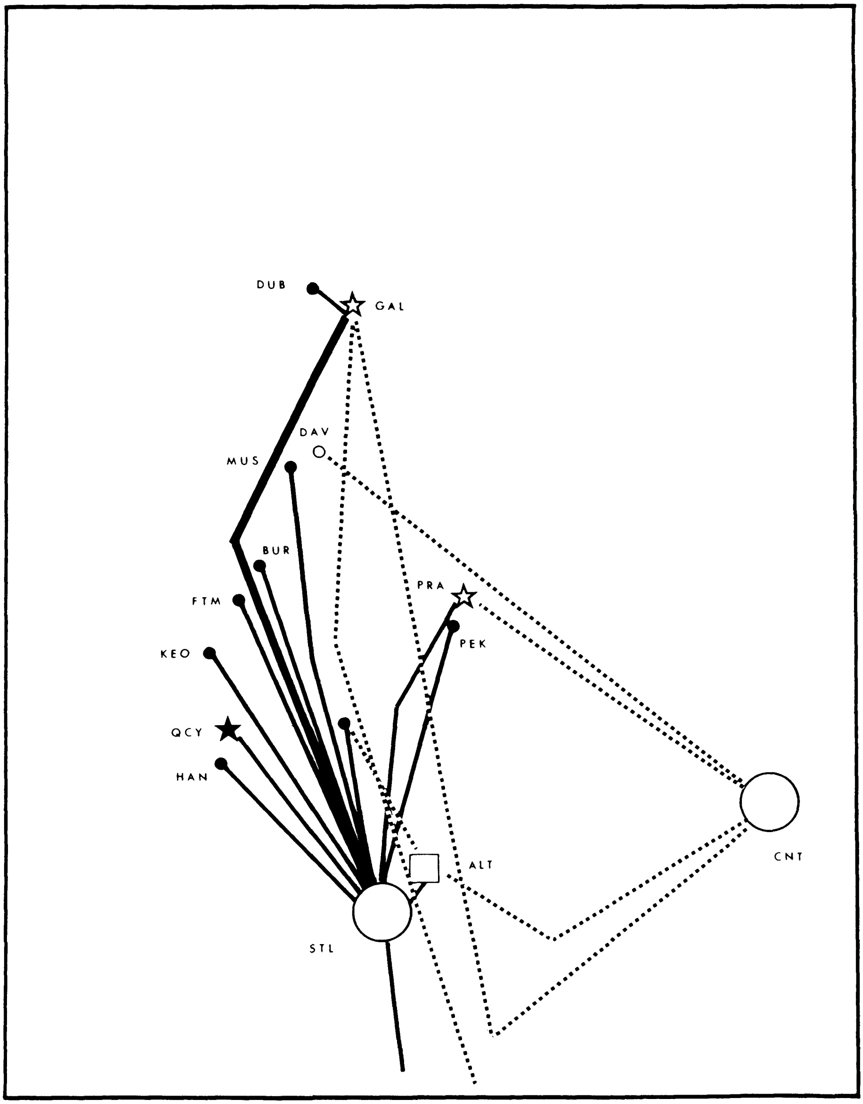
(Locations of cities outside area of base map are schematic.)

FIGURE 3
Structure of Mercantile System, St. Louis's Northern Hinterland, 1830–1837



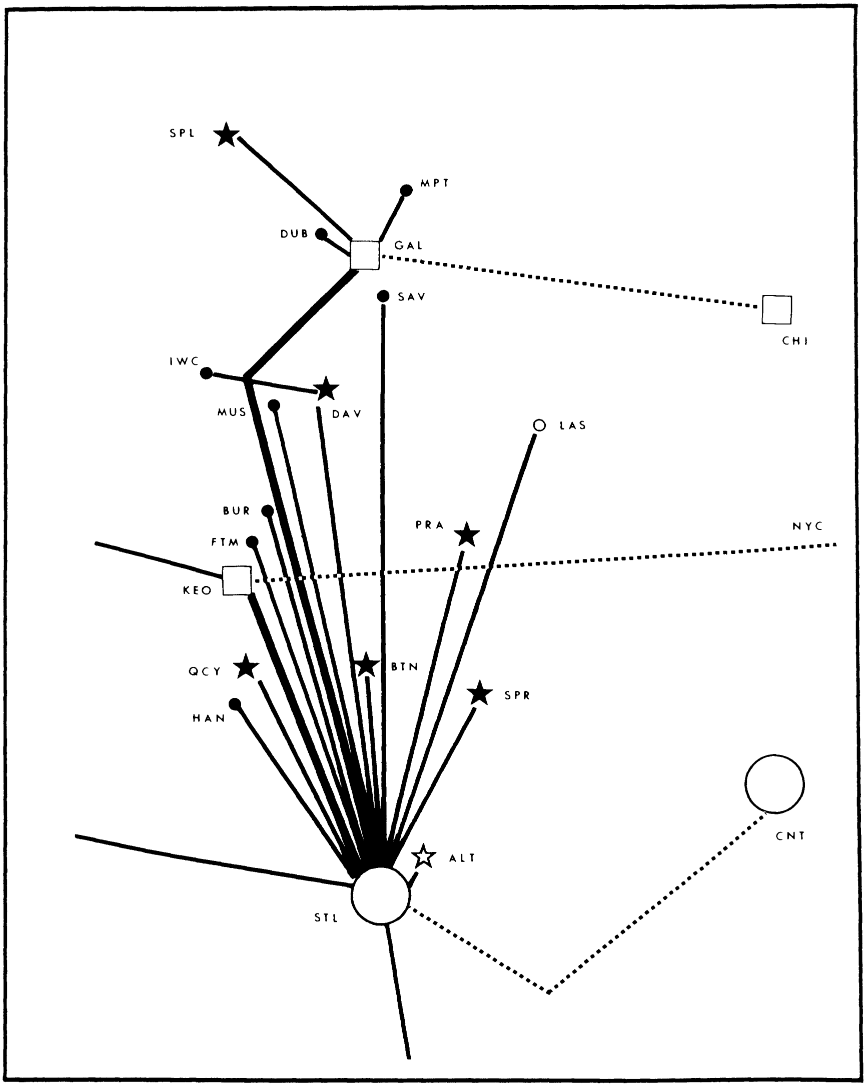

SOURCES: J. M. Peck, *A Gazetteer of Illinois* (Philadelphia, 1837), 147–49, 208; Lewis E. Atherton, *The Pioneer Merchant in Mid-America* (Columbia, Mo., 1939), 67–69, 80–85; *The History of Jo Daviess County, Illinois* (Chicago, 1878), 241–42, 305; *The History of Dubuque County, Iowa* (Chicago, 1880), 347; Elmer A. Riley, "The Development of Chicago and Vicinity as a Manufacturing Center prior to 1880" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1911), 28; G. M. Davis Letter Book, Alton, Ill., 1837 (Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis); Thomas Ford, *A History of Illinois, from Its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1847* (Chicago, 1854), 176–77.

FIGURE 4
Structure of Mercantile System, St. Louis's Northern Hinterland, 1840–1845



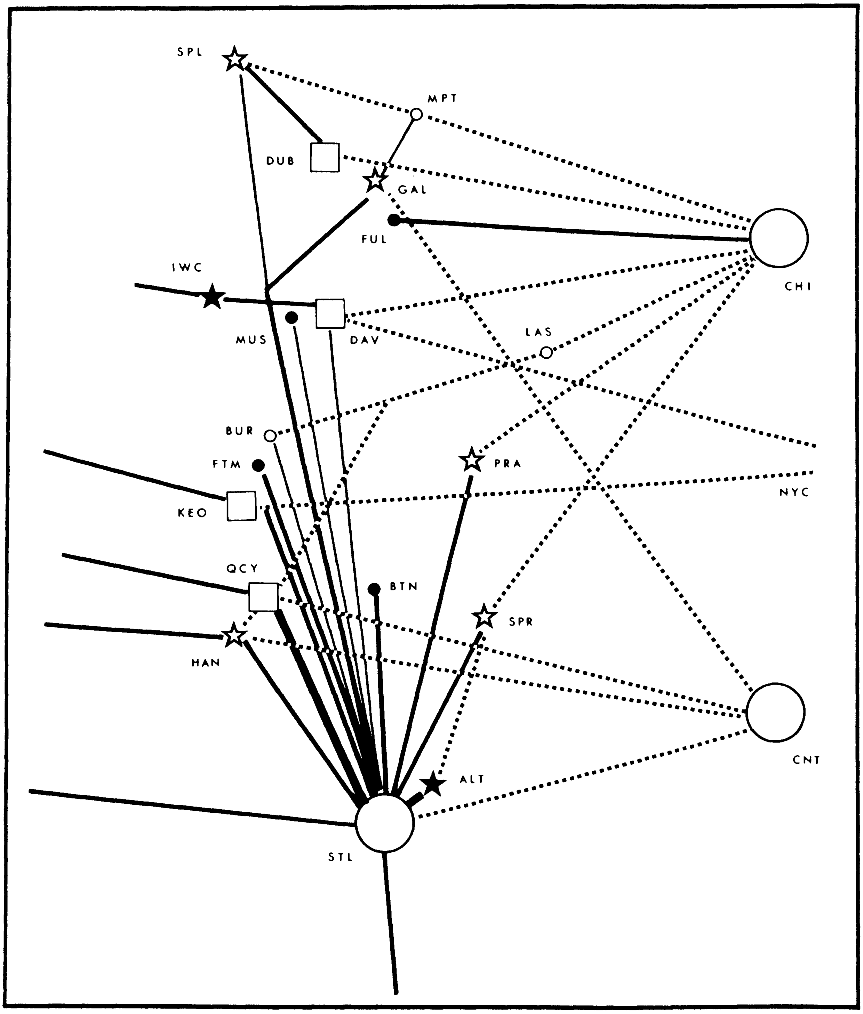

SOURCES: [John Hogan], *Thoughts about the City of St. Louis, Her Commerce and Manufactures, Railroads, &c.* (St. Louis, 1854), 1; Lewis E. Atherton, *The Pioneer Merchant in Mid-America* (Columbia, Mo., 1939), 84–85, 95–98; St. Louis Chamber of Commerce, *Proceedings of the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce, in Relation to the Improvement of the Navigation of the Mississippi River, and Its Principal Tributaries and the St. Louis Harbor* (St. Louis, 1842), 29, 40; J. M. D. Burrows, *Fifty Years in Iowa: Being the Personal Reminiscences of J. M. D. Burrows*, in *The Early Day of Rock Island and Davenport: The Narratives of J. W. Spencer and J. M. D. Burrows*, ed. Milo Milton Quaife (Chicago, 1942), 70–71, 136–37, 141–44, 152; Charles Cleaver, *History of Chicago, 1833 to 1892. Describing the Difficulties of the Route from New York to Chicago, and Hardships of the First Winter* (Chicago, 1892), 72–73; *Galena Directory, and Miners' Annual Register, for 1847–48* (Chicago, 1847); Illinois credit report ledgers XCVIII, CXXXIX, CLXXIII, R. G. Dun and Company Collection (Baker Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Business Adminstration, Boston, Mass.); Iowa credit report ledgers XVI, XXXI, XLVII, *ibid.*; Missouri credit report ledgers XXXVI, XXXVII, *ibid.*

FIGURE 5
Structure of Mercantile System, St. Louis's Northern Hinterland, 1850–1854



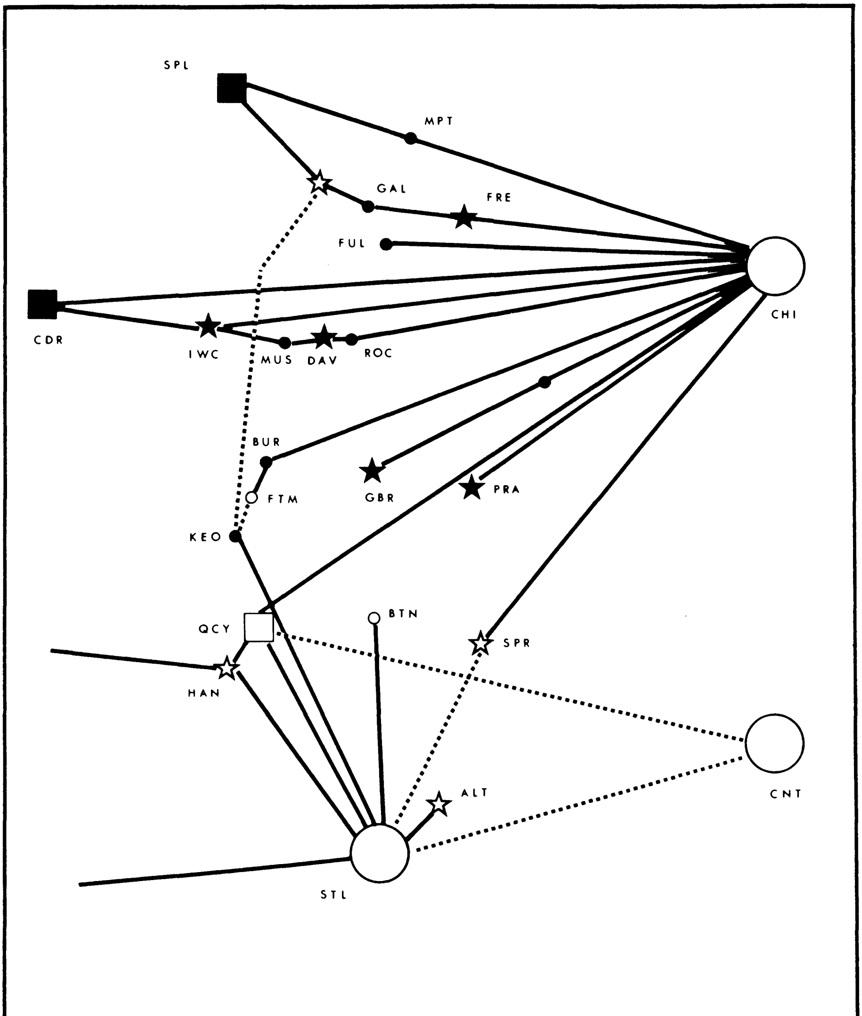

SOURCES: St. Louis Chamber of Commerce, *Report of the Committee Appointed by the Chamber of Commerce upon the Trade, Commerce and Manufactures of St. Louis, Embracing a Period of Several Years* (St. Louis, 1852), 22, 26–29; Daniel S. Curtiss, *Western Portraiture, and Emigrants' Guide: A Description of Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa; with Remarks on Minnesota, and Other Territories* (New York, 1852), 330; *The History of Lee County, Iowa* (Chicago, 1879), 625; Allan Pred, *City-Systems in Advanced Economies: Past Growth, Present Processes and Future Development Options* (New York, 1977), 162–63; *Montague's Illinois and Missouri State Directory for 1854/5 . . . to Which Is Appended, a New and Complete Business Directory of the City of St. Louis* (St. Louis, 1854); William Rees, *Description of the City of Keokuk, Lee County, Iowa . . . to Which is Appended a Complete Keokuk Business Directory* (Keokuk, 1854); *The Galena City Directory Containing Also Advertisements of the Principal Merchants* (Galena, 1854); *Galena Daily Advertiser*, Nov. 14, 1849, May 20, June 19, 1852; *Keokuk Gate City*, May 17, 1855; Illinois credit report ledgers XCVIII, CXXXIX, CLXXIII, R. G. Dun and Company Collection (Baker Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration, Boston, Mass.); Iowa credit report ledgers XVI, XXXI, XLVII, *ibid.*; Missouri credit report ledgers XXXVI, XXXVII, *ibid.*

FIGURE 6
Structure of Mercantile System, St. Louis's Northern Hinterland, 1855–1858




SOURCES: *The Galena City Directory Containing Also Advertisements of the Principal Merchants* (Galena, 1855); *ibid.* (Galena, 1858); *Dubuque City Directory and Annual Advertiser, 1856–57* (Dubuque, 1856); *Business Directory and Review of the Trade, Commerce, and Manufactures of the City of Burlington, Iowa, for the Year Ending May 1, 1856* (Burlington, 1856); Orion Clemens, *Keokuk City Directory for 1856–7; Containing a General Directory of the Citizens* (Keokuk, 1856); *Hoffman's Quincy Commercial Directory* (Quincy, 1855); *ibid.* (Quincy, 1858); *Commercial Advertiser and Directory for the City of Dubuque to Which Is Added a Business Directory, 1858–59* (Dubuque, 1858); *Quincy City Directory and Business Mirror for 1857–58* (Quincy, 1857); George W. Hawes, comp., *Illinois State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1858 and 1859* (Chicago, 1858); *St. Louis Business Directory for 1859* (St. Louis, 1858); Pat H. Redmond, *A History of Quincy, and Its Men of Mark* (Quincy, 1869), 111, 167, 171; Joseph T. Holmes, *Quincy in 1857; or, Facts and Figures Exhibiting Its Advantages, Resources, Manufactures and Commerce* (Quincy, 1857), 20, 28; *Edwards' Descriptive Gazetteer and Commercial Directory of the Mississippi River, from St. Cloud to New Orleans* (St. Louis, 1866), 342; *Keokuk Gate City,* June 21, 1855, May 22, 1856; Illinois credit report ledgers XCVIII, CXXXIX, CLXXIII, R. G. Dun and Company Collection (Baker Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration, Boston, Mass.); Iowa credit report ledgers XVI, XXXI, XLVII, *ibid.*; Missouri credit report ledgers XXXVI, XXXVII, *ibid.*

FIGURE 7
Structure of Mercantile System, St. Louis's Northern Hinterland, 1864–1868




SOURCES: *Illinois State Gazetteer and Business Directory, for the Years 1864–5* (Chicago, 1864), 127–31, 376, 528–29; *Edwards' Descriptive Gazetteer and Commercial Directory of the Mississippi River, from St. Cloud to New Orleans* (St. Louis, 1866); *Davenport City Directory for 1866 to Which Is Added a Business Directory of Davenport* (Davenport, 1866); James T. Hair, comp. and ed., *Iowa State Gazetteer, Embracing Descriptive and Historical Sketches of Counties, Cities, Towns, and Villages, to Which Is Added a Shippers' Guide and a Classified Business Directory* (Chicago, 1865), esp. 172, 183, 188, 253, 256, 474–616; *H. C. Chandler & Co.'s Railway Business Directory and Shippers' Guide for the State of Illinois* (Indianapolis, 1868), esp. 7–12, 183–87, 414–25, 754–77, 793–99; *Chandler & Co.'s Shipping Guide for Illinois*, in *ibid.*, esp. 3, 65, 143, 149, 155, 177; Chicago Board of Trade, *Annual Statement of the Trade and Commerce of Chicago* (Chicago, 1856–1870); *Edwards' Annual Director to the Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Businesses, Business Firms, Etc., Etc., in the City of St. Louis for 1865* (St. Louis, 1865); Pat H. Redmond, *A History of Quincy, and Its Men of Mark* (Quincy, 1869), esp. 20–21, 27, 33–35, 41, 60–61, 72, 80, 118, 252; Illinois credit report ledgers XCVIII, CXXXIX, CLXXIII, R. G. Dun and Company Collection (Baker Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration, Boston, Mass.); Iowa credit report ledgers XVI, XXXI, XLVII, *ibid.*; Missouri credit report ledgers XXXVI, XXXVII, *ibid.*

also sought entrepôt status, but its failure to break into the lead trade doomed the attempt. Meanwhile, Cincinnati itself remained active in the upriver trade, establishing outposts at Davenport, Iowa, and Quincy, Illinois, and across the Military Tract at both Peoria and Pekin, Illinois, and sending boats periodically to Galena, Illinois, without stopping at St. Louis.[8] Those Cincinnati contacts, along with direct ties between both Galena and Alton and New York City, were characteristic of a system not yet fully integrated around a regional entrepôt. (See figures 1, 2, 3, and 4.)

It was only in the early 1850s that St. Louis gained locational and cost advantages sufficient to neutralize the external attraction to interior wholesalers of trading directly with Cincinnati, New Orleans, or the East. Reflecting the intensifying lines of credit established in the produce trades, upriver merchants reciprocated by buying increasingly on account in St. Louis. North of the rapids several major river towns became fully integrated into the St. Louis regional economy. Still further north, the expansion of the frontier to the northwest transformed Galena from an outpost to a secondary entrepôt where, at a break in the steamboat lines, goods were transshipped to Minnesota, Wisconsin, and north central Iowa. (See figure 5.)[9]

But that fully integrated regional configuration was eventually undermined by spatial inequities. The disadvantages of distance from the entrepôt, which work against the fringe areas in any regional economy and thus encourage infiltration from the outside, were exacerbated on the upper river by the existence of rapids above Keokuk, Iowa, that lowered the value of produce heading south while raising the cost of incoming goods. Many upriver merchants thought that in order to neutralize the burdens of cost, the rapids ought to be eliminated and steamboat service increased. Such a project required more capital than they had, however, and St. Louis merchants, already tied up in the southern trade to New Orleans, had neither the available capital nor the decisiveness to respond to the entreaties of interior merchants. In response, merchants from Davenport, Dubuque, Iowa, and other aggrieved towns to the

[8] St. Louis Chamber of Commerce, *Proceedings of the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce, in Relation to the Improvement of the Navigation of the Mississippi River, and Its Principal Tributaries and the St. Louis Harbor* (St. Louis, 1842), 26–28; U.S. Department of State, Census Office, *Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and Statistics of the United States, as Obtained at the Department of State, from the Returns of the Sixth Census* (Washington, 1841), 298-301, 311–13, 348–49; U.S. Census Office, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington, 1853), 675–82, 728–35, 956–59; *Alton General City Directory and Business Mirror, for 1858* (Alton, 1858), 20; J. M. Peck, *A Gazetteer of Illinois* (Philadelphia, 1837), 149; Thomas Ford, *A History of Illinois, from Its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1847* (Chicago, 1854), 176–77; J. M. D. Burrows, *Fifty Years in Iowa: Being the Personal Reminiscences of J. M. D. Burrows*, in *The Early Day of Rock Island and Davenport: The Narratives of J. W. Spencer and J. M. D. Burrows*, ed. Milo Milton Quaife (Chicago, 1942), 141–44; Harry E. Downer, *History of Davenport and Scott County, Iowa* (Chicago, 1910), 152; Pred, *Urban Growth and City-Systems in the United States*, 103–109.

[9] St. Louis Chamber of Commerce, *Report of the Committee Appointed by the Chamber of Commerce upon the Trade, Commerce and Manufactures of St. Louis, Embracing a Period of Several Years* (St. Louis, 1852), 26–29; Robert C. Toole, "Competition and Consolidation: The Galena Packet Co., 1847–63," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 57 (Autumn 1964), 229–48.

north supported the construction of railroads to the river by eastern investors in 1854, 1855, and 1856 that, not unexpectedly, diverted a large share of the river trade to Chicago.[10]

The impact of the railroads on the structure of the urban system along the upper river is shown in figures 6 and 7. Those towns at, or across from, railheads quickly became the focal points of the wholesaling and forwarding trade between Chicago and both the West and the Northwest. Thus Davenport, Dubuque, Quincy, and even Hannibal found themselves transformed into secondary entrepôts during that period of systemic intersection. The transitory nature of that status, however, had been foreshadowed by Keokuk's experience vis-à-vis St. Louis a few years earlier. In 1854, thanks to efficient packet lines from St. Louis founded in 1845 and extending up the Des Moines River, forwarding and commission merchants swarmed into Keokuk and began transshipping goods from St. Louis or the East into the interior of Iowa. But much of that trade was lost within a year or two when the railroads from Chicago outflanked Keokuk's developing wholesale chain to the north and south. As a result, numerous merchants went out of business or withdrew, and the town quickly fell to its former status as a local market town. Davenport, Dubuque, and, to a lesser extent, Quincy thrived for a somewhat longer period, encouraging local merchants, who interpreted their new found prosperity as an indicator of greater regional hegemony, to bypass Chicago and to establish direct contacts with New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. Meanwhile, as St. Louis's hold on the trading network above Alton weakened, Cincinnati, largely absent from the upper river for a decade, reentered the region and established trading contacts with several towns.[11] Thus the intersection of

[10] Wyatt Winton Belcher, *The Economic Rivalry between St. Louis and Chicago, 1850–1880* (New York, 1947), 114–24; Delegates to the Chicago River and Harbor Convention, *The Commerce and Navigation of the Valley of the Mississippi; and Also That Appertaining to the City of St. Louis: Considered with Reference to the Improvement, by the General Government, of the Mississippi River and Its Principal Tributaries* (St. Louis, 1847), 16–20; Paul Wallace Gates, *The Illinois Central Railroad and Its Colonization Work* (Cambridge, Mass., 1934), 85–87; Chicago Board of Trade, *Annual Statement of the Trade and Commerce of Chicago* (Chicago, 1856–1870); Galena and Chicago Union Railroad, *Annual Report* [title varies] (Chicago, 1851–1858); *Report and Accompanying Documents of the Illinois Central Rail-Road Company, Made by Order of the Stockholders at Their Annual Meeting* (New York, 1856), 9; Elmer A. Riley, "The Development of Chicago and Vicinity as a Manufacturing Center prior to 1880" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1911), 25–30, 92; Willard Barrows, "History of Scott County, Iowa," *Annals of Iowa*, 1 (July 1863), 115–20.

[11] *The History of Lee County, Iowa* (Chicago, 1879), 625; William Rees, *Rees' Description of Keokuk, the "Gate City," Lee County, Iowa* (Keokuk, 1855), 13–15; Orion Clxs, *RY OF Keokuk in 1856* (Keokuk, 1856), 5; Orion Clemens, *Keokuk Directory and Business Mirror for 1857* (Keokuk, 1857), 155–58; Pred, *Urban Growth and City-Systems in the United States*, 49–59, 103–109; Daniel S. Curtiss, *Western Portraiture, and Emigrants' Guide: A Description of Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa; with Remarks on Minnesota, and Other Territories* (New York, 1852), 330; *Galena Daily Advertiser*, May 20, 1852, p. 3; Iowa credit report ledger XXXI, R. G. Dun and Company Collection (Baker Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration, Boston, Mass.); *Business Directory and Review of the Trade, Commerce, and Manufactures of the City of Burlington, Iowa, for the Year Ending May 1, 1856* (Burlington, 1856), 6, 9, 11; Pat H. Redmond, *A History of Quincy, and Its Men of Mark* (Quincy 1869), 111; Joseph T. Holmes, *Quincy in 1857; or, Facts and Figures Exhibiting Its Advantages, Resources, Manufactures and Commerce* (Quincy, 1857), 20.

TABLE 1

Types of Business Found in Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri River Towns, 1850–1868 (as Estimated from City Directories)

| | Express Agents | Freight Agents | Auction Merchants | Banks | Books and Stationery | Boot and Shoe Dealers | China, Glass, and Jewelry Dealers | Clothing Merchants | Forwarding and Commission Merchants | Dry Goods Merchants Wholesale and Retail | Furniture Dealers and Manufacturers | Groceries | Hardware, etc. | Hotels | Printers | Produce Dealers | Tobacco Dealers | Druggists | TOTALS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Galena, 1847 | 1 | -- | 2 | -- | 1 | 9 | 4 | 14 | 10 | 20 | 2 | 34 | 6 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 122 |
| Galena, 1854 | 1 | -- | 2 | 3 | 2 | 16 | -- | 15 | 9 | 23 | 5 | 46 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 2 | -- | 145 |
| Quincy, 1854 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 19 | -- | 7 | 3 | 39 | 11 | 57 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 4 | -- | 180 |
| Rock Island, 1854 | 1 | -- | -- | 2 | 1 | 2 | -- | 4 | 2 | 11 | 3 | 17 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 2 | -- | -- | 56 |
| Chicago, 1854 | 1 | 4 | 15 | 17 | 8 | 22 | 3 | 42 | 48 | 36 | 37 | 22 | 26 | 38 | 15 | 26 | 29 | -- | 389 |
| Keokuk, 1854 | 2 | -- | 4 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 21 | 2 | 12 | 2 | 4 | -- | -- | 1 | 3 | 66 |
| Hannibal, 1854 | -- | -- | -- | 1 | 2 | 12 | -- | 5 | 3 | -- | -- | 10 | -- | 5 | -- | -- | 4 | -- | 42 |
| St. Louis, 1854 | 3 | 15 | 91 | 17 | 25 | 120 | 14 | 122 | -- | 108 | 50 | 345 | 19 | 15 | 10 | -- | 108 | -- | 1,062 |
| Galena, 1856 | -- | -- | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 15 | 6 | 16 | 2 | 12 | 6 | 4 | -- | 4 | 1 | 7 | 89 |
| Rock Island, 1856 | 2 | -- | 4 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 13 | 3 | 12 | 2 | 31 | 4 | -- | 3 | -- | 2 | -- | 102 |
| Dubuque, 1856 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 11 | 12 | 24 | 10 | 20 | 12 | 16 | 8 | 12 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 10 | 178 |
| Davenport, 1856 | -- | 17 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 35 | 7 | 14 | 5 | 52 | 7 | 15 | -- | 4 | -- | 7 | 193 |
| Keokuk, 1856 | -- | -- | 6 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 23 | 7 | 29 | 6 | 47 | 4 | -- | 1 | -- | 8 | 8 | 157 |
| Burlington, 1856 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 13 | 8 | 16 | 1 | 24 | 7 | -- | -- | 4 | 6 | 2 | 103 |
| Galena, 1858 | 5 | -- | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 11 | 13 | 1 | 17 | 8 | 25 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 111 |
| Quincy, 1859 | 2 | -- | 4 | 6 | 8 | 35 | 10 | 19 | 7 | 45 | 12 | 72 | 4 | 18 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 266 |
| Rock Island, 1859 | 7 | -- | 1 | 3 | 6 | 15 | 2 | 10 | 1 | 8 | -- | 35 | 8 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 118 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chicago, 1858 | 6 | 18 | 16 | 37 | 37 | 243 | 14 | 61 | 185 | 63 | 42 | 492 | 53 | 73 | 32 | 200 | 93 | 69 | 1,734 |
| Dubuque, 1858 | 3 | 12 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 16 | 11 | 31 | 18 | 27 | 7 | 76 | 8 | 26 | 7 | -- | 12 | 10 | 278 |
| Davenport, 1858 | 15 | -- | 2 | 20 | 8 | 15 | 13 | 24 | 12 | 20 | 11 | 76 | 9 | 18 | 5 | 15 | 10 | 7 | 280 |
| Burlington, 1859 | -- | -- | 2 | -- | 3 | 19 | 8 | 18 | 2 | 13 | 7 | 43 | 5 | 9 | -- | 3 | 6 | 6 | 144 |
| Davenport, 1859 | 15 | 3 | 3 | 13 | 8 | 25 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 20 | 5 | 51 | 9 | 11 | 10 | 15 | 9 | 9 | 225 |
| Galena, 1861 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 6 | 13 | -- | 22 | 3 | 45 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 145 |
| Dubuque, 1861 | 8 | -- | 2 | 5 | 3 | 31 | 13 | 18 | 14 | 14 | 6 | 70 | 16 | 19 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 11 | 245 |
| Dubuque, 1865 | -- | -- | 2 | 3 | 4 | 22 | 8 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 7 | 53 | 6 | 12 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 170 |
| Davenport, 1865 | -- | -- | -- | 2 | 2 | 19 | 1 | 15 | 2 | 10 | 6 | 39 | 6 | 12 | -- | 7 | 9 | 6 | 136 |
| Keokuk, 1865 | -- | -- | 1 | 2 | 4 | 17 | 2 | 12 | 4 | 13 | 2 | 30 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 122 |
| Burlington, 1865 | 1 | -- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 19 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 10 | 4 | 52 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 127 |
| Galena, 1868 | 1 | -- | 1 | 2 | 5 | 24 | 22 | 17 | 2 | 13 | 3 | 45 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 18 | 5 | 180 |
| Quincy, 1868 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 36 | 6 | 34 | 6 | 47 | 6 | 81 | 6 | 16 | 7 | -- | 15 | 12 | 293 |

SOURCES: James E. Vance, Jr., *The Merchant's World: The Geography of Wholesaling* (Englewood Cliffs, 1970), 84; *Galena Directory and Miners' Annual Register, for 1847–48* (Chicago, 1847); *Montague's Illinois and Missouri State Directory for 1854/5 . . . to Which Is Appended, a New and Complete Business Directory of the City of St. Louis* (St. Louis, 1854); *The Galena City Directory Containing Also Advertisements of the Principal Merchants* (Galena, 1854); *ibid.* (Galena, 1855); *ibid.* (Galena, 1858); William Rees, *Description of the City of Keokuk, Lee County, Iowa . . . to Which Is Appended a Complete Keokuk Business Directory* (Keokuk, 1854); *Dubuque City Directory and Annual Advertiser, 1856–57 (Dubuque, 1856), 169–81; Directory for the City of Davenport for 1856, '57* (Davenport, 1856); *Business Directory and Review of the Trade, Commerce, and Manufactures of the City of Burlington, Iowa, for the Year Ending May 1, 1856* (Burlington, 1856); Orion Clemens, *Keokuk City Directory for 1856–7, Containing a General Directory of the Citizens* (Keokuk, 1856); *Commercial Advertiser and Directory for the City of Dubuque to Which Is Added a Business Directory: 1858–59* (Dubuque, 1858), 137–55; *Davenport City Directory for 1858 and 1859* (Davenport, 1858); *Quincy City Directory and Business Mirror for 1857–58* (Quincy, 1857); George W. Hawes, comp., *Illinois State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1858 and 1859* (Chicago, 1858), 492–867; Watson Bowron, comp., *The First Annual Directory, of the City of Burlington for 1859* (Burlington, 1859), 103–108; *Williams' Quincy Directory, City Guide, and Business Mirror, 1859-60* (Quincy, 1859), 144–55; *Twin Cities Directory and Business Mirror for the Year 1860 Including the Cities of Davenport, Rock Island, and Moline* (Davenport, 1859); James Sutherland, comp., *Umberhine and Justin's Galena and Dubuque Classified Directory and Business Mirror* (Indianapolis, 1861); James T. Hair, comp. and ed., *Iowa State Gazetteer, Embracing Descriptive and Historical Sketches of Counties, Cities, Towns, and Villages, to Which Is Added a Shippers' Guide and a Classified Business Directory* (Chicago, 1865), 474-616; *H. C. Chandler & Co.'s Railway Business Directory and Shippers' Guide for the State of Illinois* (Indianapolis, 1868).

the Chicago railroad and the St. Louis steamboat networks did not immediately replace one integrated system with another. Instead, it caused the hemorrhaging of traditional contacts and an increase in the complexity of interregional urban interactions. Only a decade later, when the railroads swept west and took with them the railhead-associated functions, thus depriving both Davenport and Dubuque of secondary entrepôt status, did Chicago gain full control of the upper valley. By that time Cincinnati had decided to concentrate its business farther south on lines through Peoria and Quincy, and St. Louis had retreated south of Keokuk, save for a few lingering contacts along the upper river that survived as functional remnants of the steamboat era. (See figures 6 and 7.)[12]

The impact of those regional forces on local social and economic activity was felt in the response of each town's elite merchants to the shifting forces of the regional economy. The frequency with which such external directives changed local functions, causing a skip in local processes of development, is evident in the histories of six important river towns (Galena, Dubuque, Davenport, Quincy, Keokuk, and Alton) on the upper Mississippi. Of the six, all but Dubuque experienced at least three major changes in their economic functions between 1840 and 1865. Of those changes, more than one-half occurred in response to systemic or external factors (that is, they were not determined by local hinterland competition). In each town the strategies chosen to meet the regional forces varied with the previous economic history of the town. (See table 1.)[13]

In Galena, for example, most of the seventy or so men who belonged to the town's elite in the mid-1850s had arrived more than twenty years before with the first wave of miners and settlers who had moved north with the opening of the lead trade. Initially those men were themselves lead miners, but they soon

[12] Chicago Board of Trade, *Annual Statement of the Trade and Commerce of Chicago* [1856–1870]. Whether these complex interactions develop naturally with the development of the system or are the symptoms of more intensive competition within the system remains unclear. See Pred, *City-Systems in Advanced Economies*, 162–63; and Braudel, *Wheels of Commerce*, 184–90.

[13] The data assembled in table 1 indicate a total of 17 changes in the functions of the 6 major river towns. Ten of those changes were determined by external directives. In about 1849 Galena advanced from an outpost depot to a secondary entrepôt, but by 1858 it had slipped back to a central marketplace and after 1865 served only a local market function (3 changes). Dubuque, meanwhile, remained a local marketplace until the mid-1850s and then briefly performed a secondary entrepôt role between 1858 and 1860 in the development of the upper Mississippi River before settling into the role of a central marketplace (2 changes). Davenport became a local market town as early as 1841 and advanced to a central marketplace function about ten years later. Then, with the arrival of the railroad it, too, briefly played the role of secondary regional entrepôt between about 1856 and 1868, after which it reverted to its former status (3 changes). Keokuk advanced from a local market town to the status of secondary regional entrepôt and then fell back to its former status all between 1852 and 1858 (3 changes). Quincy, on the other hand, was established as an outpost depot perhaps as early as 1840 but then settled into a central marketplace role through the 1840s and early 1850s despite its flirting briefly with secondary entrepôt status for a few years after the arrival of the railroad (3 changes). Alton, meanwhile, sought secondary or even regional entrepôt status early on but had only achieved the latter by 1835. By 1842, however, the shift of market activity to the north, combined with St. Louis's growth, constricted its function to that of a central place, a role it continued to play well into the 1860s before settling into a long dormancy as a local market town (3 changes).

saw economic opportunity in supplying the miners and diversified into land sales, merchandising, and the providing of services. As the mines yielded increasing amounts of lead, most of which was shipped to St. Louis, the town grew rapidly, and the relative power of the early settlers' cohort grew with it. In 1854, 75 percent of the top wealth decile, eight of the top ten, and the four richest men in town all belonged to the cohort whose fortunes were established in the mid-1830s. The fact that most of the capital of that cohort went into transport and financial services during the 1840s, however, allowed newcomers to break into both the expanding wholesaling trade to Minnesota and the local trade within the Lead Region. As a result, a second, less powerful and less wealthy elite evolved alongside the cohort of early settlers. Together, the two groups formed a large, porous ruling class that controlled most of the town's economy by the mid-1850s.[14]

Through 1848 Galena's elite had evolved according to a linear process of wealth and functional differentiation during a period of steady growth and development. Between 1849 and 1851, however, the steady growth of the town's economy came to an end. In part, the slowdown was caused by the very presence of the entrenched elite group who, by controlling a large share of the economy, discouraged later newcomers and limited opportunity as its policies became more conservative. But outside forces also played a role. In 1849 the exodus of miners during the California Gold Rush caused a dramatic drop in lead production. Observing that trend, the old elite and a few more recent residents began transferring their capital from the lead trade into steamboats to provide the transshipping services just then being demanded by the opening of the Minnesota frontier. In doing so, they transformed the town's economic function to that of a secondary entrepôt, a function based on its ability to predominate in competition with other transshipping lines being extended to the north and west. That competition intensified in 1851–1854 when leading Galena businessmen were approached by the Chicago and Galena Union and the Illinois Central railroads for funds and a right of way to establish entrepôt facilities in town, thus connecting Chicago with the Minnesota line. The majority of the town's elites, however, were both unable, given the size of their investments in steamboats, and unwilling, given their expectations of success, to accommodate the railroads. In making their decisions they apparently misunderstood that what was at stake was not simply the steamboat versus the railroad but also which entrepôt, St. Louis or Chicago, would be better able to provide the functional basis of the transshipping line. On the latter question, a railroad line from Chicago to either Dubuque or Galena would easily have been more efficient than any steamboat connection to St. Louis. The well-known consequences of their misjudgment, the diversion of both steam-

[14] Jo Daviess County Tax List, 1845 (Jo Daviess County Courthouse, Galena, Ill.); City of Galena Tax List, 1852 (Galena Public Library, Galena, Ill.); City of Galena Tax List, 1854, *ibid.*; City of Galena Tax List, 1856, *ibid.*; Illinois credit report ledger XCVIII, R. G. Dun and Company Collection; Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Manuscript Population Schedule, Jo Daviess County, Illinois; Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Manuscript Population Schedule, Jo Daviess County, Illinois. See also Carl Abbott, *Boosters and Businessmen: Popular Economic Thought and Urban Growth in the Antebellum Middle West* (Westport, 1981), 186–97.

boat and railroad transshipping from Galena to Dubuque and the withdrawal of St. Louis from the upper river, occurred with alarming rapidity, leaving the town stripped of its regional function in a matter of two or three seasons. Subsequently, most of the richer and more enterprising businessmen relocated in Dubuque or Chicago, while the smaller merchants and manufacturers were forced to consolidate their local trade.[15]

In Galena's case, first settlers were able to stave off a challenge from newcomers. In other cases, newcomers, performing new functions on a regional level, rose to power; in still other cases, old elites were able to adapt themselves to the new circumstances and thus share power with newcomers by taking over new roles and using them to enhance their local power. In most cases, local individuals had to respond to regional forces, rather than to depend on internal growth, in order to move forward.[16] It is worth asking to what extent individual perceptions and the relative ability of different individuals to anticipate regional changes affected their abilities to react to outside forces. Were some men simply more prescient or talented than others? Did previous investment patterns, the age of the elite cohort, or the town's previous role affect its ability to interact to new forces of change? Or were actions of an elite irrelevant as impersonal economic forces shifted the locational patterns of regional production and exchange and thus forced the elite to respond? Such questions may be answered by focusing more directly on how the urban structure reflected the patterns of production, often determined by regional market forces or environmental factors, and then by investigating the means by which cities interacted in a regional context. Only by weighing local decisions against the forces of regional change can one determine the range of possibilities open to any group of businessmen and decide whether or not individuals directed change or were affected by forces beyond their power to control.

In general, the evidence indicates that merchants or manufacturers in a town economy could respond to regional economic forces in one of three ways. First, they could beat another town at its own game by performing its chief functions more efficiently. That, obviously, is head-to-head competition, the difficult path Alton merchants chose against St. Louis. Second, businessmen could react to intensified market competition by concentrating on some activ-

[15] St. Louis Chamber of Commerce, *Report of the Committee Appointed by the Chamber of Commerce upon the Trade, Commerce and Manufactures of St. Louis*, 21; *The History of Jo Daviess County, Illinois* (Chicago, 1878), 274; Bernard H. Schockel, "Settlement and Development of Jo Daviess County," in Arthur C. Trowbridge and Eugene Wesley Shaw, *The Geology and Geography of the Galena and Elizabeth Quadrangle* (Urbana, 1916), 190–92; Kenneth N. Owens, *Galena, Grant, and the Fortunes of War: A History of Galena, Illinois, during the Civil War* (DeKalb, 1963), 14–17.

[16] See, for example, Belcher, *Economic Rivalry between St. Louis and Chicago*, 124–38; Frederic Cople Jaher, *The Urban Establishment: Upper Strata in Boston, New York, Charleston, Chicago, and Los Angeles* (Urbana, 1982), 456–63, 482–86, 491; Abbott, *Boosters and Businessmen*, 126–71; Thomas J. Brown, "The Age of Ambition in Quincy, Illinois," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 75 (Winter 1982), 242–62; William A. White, "Tradition and Urban Development: A Contrast of Chicago and Toronto in the Nineteenth Century," *Old Northwest*, 8 (Fall 1982), 245–71; Ford, *History of Illinois*, 176–77.

ity that, given local conditions, they could perform more efficiently than their less specialized neighbors. In short, the town elite could differentiate its activities from those of other towns in the system. Galena, by virtue of its lead mines, used that strategy to develop. Third, a town could integrate its actions into the workings of a regional agglomeration and perform some particular step in the whole process, a step usually taken only after the other two had failed.[17] What complicates the analysis is that when a region was growing and when production areas were shifting farther from the entrepôt as market specialization intensified, any number of middle-sized towns could be pursuing the same or similar strategies. Consequently, growth and development accelerated interaction, raised the competitive stakes, and thus increasingly isolated more specific variables that gave some towns advantages over others.

Such analysis is further complicated by the fact that such decisions had to be made and shifting strategies and patterns of interaction had to be worked out in the course of intercity competition in each sector of the economy at any time. While some individuals made one set of decisions in trade and merchandising, some, often the very same men, also had to maintain their competitive advantages and functional roles in agricultural processing, manufacturing and industry, and professional and financial services. Therefore, the mix of variables necessary to sustain local growth was continually changing, balancing previous performances against current economic conditions.[18] For instance, the merchandising pattern already observed on the upper Mississippi shifted as certain critical variables of location, capital access, transport, fertility of the soil, climate, and population increased or decreased in importance in determining which towns grew and which declined. When transport was poor, location was a critical requirement. But as transportation improved and became widespread, soil and climate, and thus the yield and quality of the crop and the demand that its sale supported, gave natural advantages to some towns over others. In time, heavier produce trade generated lines of credit, more efficient transport systems, and specialization based on economies of scale that improved profit margins at those centers and reinforced competitive advantages. Nor was the outcome of competition in one sector directly relevant to the development of another. The evidence from a similar analysis of the development of manufacturing on the upper Mississippi indicates that the location of manufacturing was rearranged as the critical variable shifted from location to transportation access, to resource-base availability, to access to capital and labor, and finally to the ability to generate economies of scale and agglomeration advantages. The effect of that process was the gradual centralization of large-scale manufacturing at the entrepôt from a once dispersed system of local craftshop economies.[19]

[17] Conzen, "American Urban System in the Nineteenth Century," in *Geography and the Urban Environment*, ed. Herbert and Johnston, IV, 318–19; Ford, *History of Illinois*, 176–77.

[18] P. J. Waller, *Town, City, and Nation; England 1850–1914* (Oxford, 1983), 15–16.

[19] Chicago Board of Trade, *Annual Statement of the Trade and Commerce of Chicago* [1860], 16; "Lead Trade in the West," *De Bow's Review*, 24 (March 1858), 211–12; Riley, "Development of Chicago and Vicinity as a Manufacturing Center prior to 1880," 92–94; *The History of Dubuque County, Iowa* (Chicago, 1880), 649–50. On variables that rearranged the spatial pattern of regional

How the locational decisions of the different sectors interacted and how such decisions, sometimes complementary, at other times counteractive, bent and stretched the structure of the regional urban system and transformed the relationships among towns and cities within that system can be summarized most precisely by employing the third method noted above: analysis of the functional histories of particular towns with an eye toward examing the pattern of their interactions with other towns and cities. For example, given its location equidistant from two different regional entrepôts, Davenport became the focal point of the competition between the St. Louis river-based system and the developing Chicago railroad-based system and experienced dramatic changes in its economic function over the course of a single decade. As early as 1832 two traders involved in the trading system among the upper river, the lead mines at the Fever River, and St. Louis settled near the upper rapids. In 1840 the town's first permanent merchant, James M. D. Burrows, purchased goods in Cincinnati and brought them to Davenport overland across the Illinois River valley and the Military Tract. For several years thereafter Davenport seems to have been a Cincinnati outpost, even though it became a regular stopping place along the developing steamboat routes between St. Louis and the Lead Region. As the backcountry filled with settlers, however, the conveniences of St. Louis contacts became apparent, and Davenport began to assume its role as a central market town where settlers in eastern Iowa could acquire goods from St. Louis.[20]

In 1843 that connection became reciprocal when Burrows sent a load of wheat and produce south to the regional market at St. Louis. Because there was little currency in circulation, he gave credit to interior farmers and received it from St. Louis merchants, thus regularizing the trading arrangements between St. Louis wholesalers and hinterland retailers. Similar developments occurred in a number of other Iowa settlements, and by the mid-1840s Davenport, Muscatine, Fort Madison, Burlington, and, to a lesser extent, LeClaire each controlled small local hinterlands. The relative independence of each of those towns' markets was reinforced by high transport costs, both from the backcountry to the river and from the local wharf to St. Louis, which lowered local prices and prohibited extensive movement of the crop. As produce from other areas along the upper river began to pour into St. Louis, however, the

manufacturing between 1820 and 1860, see Julius Rubin, "Urban Growth and Regional Development," in *The Growth of Seaport Cities*, ed. David T. Gilchrist (Charlottesville, 1967), 9–12; Margaret Walsh, *The Rise of the Midwestern Meat Packing Industry* (Lexington, Ky., 1982), 15–54; Lindstrom, *Economic Development in the Philadelphia Region*, 145; Carville Earle and Ronald Hoffman, "The Foundation of the Modern Economy: Agriculture and the Costs of Labor in the United States and England, 1800–60," *American Historical Review*, 85 (Dec. 1980), 1068–73; David R. Meyer, "Emergence of the American Manufacturing Belt: An Interpretation," *Journal of Historical Geography*, 9 (April 1983), 145–74; and Edward K. Muller, "Regional Urbanization and the Selective Growth of Towns in North American Regions," *ibid.*, 3 (Jan. 1977), 21–39.

[20] *History of Scott County, Iowa* (Chicago, 1882), 606–10; Franc B. Wilkie, *Davenport, Past and Present; Including the Early History, and Personal and Anecdotal Riscencesf Davenport* (Davenport, 1858), 167–69, 221–23, 233; Burrows, *Fifty Years in Iowa*, in *Early Day of Rock Island and Davenport*, ed. Quaife, 137, 141–44; Downer, *History of Davenport and Scott County, Iowa*, 182.

geographical evolution of differentiated producing areas began to change the subregional configuration of urban interaction. By the early 1850s the heaviest areas of wheat production, forming what could be called a "wheat belt," moved north into eastern Iowa, while hog and corn production concentrated in the area adjacent to St. Louis. Simultaneously, high prices in regional markets during the boom years of 1845–1846 and again in 1853–1855 extended hinterlands and brought the once exclusive markets into competition for the role of subregional marketplace. Given its ferry location just below the upper rapids and its distance from Quincy's formidable competition, Davenport quickly became dominant. In turn, increasing wheat receipts and reexports to St. Louis encouraged local entrepreneurs to build one of the earliest steam flour mills on the upper river in 1848. After 1850, in response to the increasing produce shipment from Davenport to St. Louis, the arrival in Davenport of more merchants reinforced the connection.[21] All that was lacking in the eyes of town merchants was a more efficient steamboat line to the south. Despite the increase in trade, Davenport still had to rely on the overburdened St. Louis–Galena boats, receiving only seasonal help, after 1852, from a competing packet on the same line and from another between Keokuk and Rock Island.[22]

The inefficiency of its transport links to St. Louis, and the limitations it implied, became apparent as goods heading into central Iowa began to move through Keokuk in 1853–1854. That town, as noted above, possessed the advantages of being located at the head of the lower rapids and having efficient packet service to St. Louis. As more goods were transshipped through the Key City and up the Des Moines River toward the Iowa frontier, it became increasingly apparent to Davenport merchants that the cost of transshipping around the lower rapids would preclude Davenport's development as an entrepôt for central Iowa. Those two factors drew their attention away from St. Louis toward Chicago, where they found higher prices for their produce and lower costs for their purchased eastern goods. Thus Davenport merchants needed

[21] Burrows, *Fifty Years in Iowa*, in *Early Day of Rock Island and Davenport*, ed. Quaife, 176, 187–89, 200–201, 264–68; Jacob A. Swisher, *Iowa, Land of Many Mills* (Iowa City, 1940), 172–73; *Dubuque Miners' Express*, July 25, 1850, p. 3; Census Office, *Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and Statistics of the United States, as Obtained at the Department of State, from the Returns of the Sixth Census*, 298–301, 311–13, 348–49; Census Office, *Seventh Census of the United States*, 675–82, 728–35, 956–59; U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census* (Washington, 1864), 30–37, 46–53, 88–95; Thomas Senior Berry, *Western Prices before 1861: A Study of the Cincinnati Market* (Cambridge, Mass., 1943), 61–62, 551–57; Allan G. Bogue, *From Prairie to Corn Belt: Farming on the Illinois and Iowa Prairies in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, 1963), 217–20; Downer, *History of Davenport and Scott County, Iowa*, 174, 182, 193; S ouis Chamber of Commerce, *Report of the Committee Appointed by the Chamber of Commerce upon the Trade, Commerce and Manufactures of St. Louis*, 12; Delegates to the Chicago River and Harbor Convention, *Commerce and Navigation of the Valley of the Mississippi; and Also That Appertaining to the City of St. Louis*, 18–22.

[22] *Galena Daily Advertiser*, May 22, 1852, p. 3; J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Saint Louis City and County, from the Earliest Periods to the Present Day* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1883), II, 1116; Wm. J. Petersen, *Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi: The Water Way to Iowa* (Iowa City, 1937), 237.

relatively little encouragement to support railroad construction between their town and Chicago. By 1854 the Rock Island Railroad had been built to the opposite shore of the Mississippi, and by the next year it had bridged the river, establishing Davenport as the railhead entrepôt on the new western line. Dramatically, the flow of goods and services and the functional interactions of the river-based system were diverted to the east. Within eighteen months two-thirds of the produce once sent from Davenport to St. Louis was put on railroad cars to Chicago. In return, Davenport was flooded with capitalists from Chicago and the East who were interested both in opening wholesaling houses and in founding processing plants and manufacturing establishments to supply the new markets. Within two years over 150 of those new men had arrived in town to challenge and eventually overwhelm the old elite power structure.[23]

What is interesting about this period of intensive functional development is that local merchants did not interpret the arrival of outside capital as the colonization of their town for the purpose of making it a secondary entrepôt dependent on Chicago's market. Instead, they saw it as evidence that Chicago's central functions were inevitably shifting west toward the frontier. Indeed, much was said of the possibility of overcoming Chicago in the course of a decade or two. In anticipation, Davenport merchants established direct links to New York. What caused that misreading of the regional system's development is difficult to say. It is interesting to note, however, that in the years just preceding the intersection of the river trade by the railroads, rapid population growth (due to massive migration into central Iowa) actually outstripped the expansive wheat market. The primary effect was that between 1852 and 1855 exports of both wheat and flour declined, while the amount of wheat and flour grown locally and then resold in central Iowa soared. From this, it seems possible that Davenport merchants, observing the increasing local basis of their trading activities, interpreted it as evidence of an evolving central role, rather than as a phase of adjustment not uncommon in the early development of recent frontier areas. In consequence, when local produce surpluses again surged ahead of population in 1856 and 1857, Davenport merchants believed that the power lay with those who controlled the wheat, when in fact it lay with those who controlled the railroads and extended the credit in the reciprocal wholesaling business. Because of that perception the town became the largest collection point on the line west of Chicago, the wholesaling entrepôt for points west, and a gathering place for traffic moving east, but not a major milling center. In later years, however, even those functions were

[23] William J. Petersen, "The Keokuk Packet Company," *Iowa Journal of History*, 50 (July 1952), 193–208; Clemens, *Keokuk Directory and Business Mirror for 1857*, 157–58; Barrows, "History of Scott County, Iowa," 188–21; *Davenport City Directory and Advertiser* (Davenport, 1855); Downer, *History of Davenport and Scott County, Iowa*, 276; *Directory for the City of Davenport for 1856, '57* (Davenport, 1856); *The Twin Cities Directory; Including Davenport, Iowa, East Davenport, Iowa, Rock Island, Ill., Moline, Ill. and Camden, Ill.* (Davenport, 1856); *Davenport City Directory for 1858 and 1859* (Davenport, 1858); *Twin Cities Directory and Business Mirror for the Year 1860 Including the Cities of Davenport, Rock Island, and Moline* (Davenport, 1859); Iowa credit report ledger XLVII, R. G. Dun and Company Collection. See also Abbott, *Boosters and Businessmen*, 222–25.

lost as the rails extended west, taking the transshipping, mercantile, and hotel businesses with them. Consequently, by the late 1860s Davenport settled into the role of a subregional center of specialized manufacturing and trade, where it languished for a generation before the resurgence of manufacturing on the secondary level revived the town economy.[24]

Case studies written from such a regional perspective serve as detailed cross sections of systemic forces interacting with local reality at a particular place and enable historians to differentiate more clearly between regional and local forces, while tracing the former through the system. They also establish the basis of a "truly local history" by allowing local and urban historians to understand the full range of forces that intersected with the local course of development to create a particular local reality.[25] Such analysis would provide a basis for understanding a regional society as a spatially organized system of urban and nonurban units interacting with each other according to a particular pattern of development. In any given place, the previous events and experiences that are the building blocks of distinctive local values, social milieus, and culture affected the responses of contemporaries to systemic change. Examining the continual interaction of regional and local change is the basis of an urban history able to view reality in all its complexity.

[24] Census Office, *Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and Statistics of the United States, as Obtained at the Department of State, from the Returns of the Sixth Census*, 348–49; Census Office, *Seventh Census of the United States*, 956–59; Census Office, *Agriculture of the United States in 1860*, 46–53; Downer, *History of Davenport and Scott County, Iowa*, 190, 194–96, 198, 208, 276; Barrows, "History of Scott County, Iowa," 122, 129; *Directory for the City of Davenport for 1856, '57*, 133; Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Manuscript Manufacturing Schedule, Scott and Dubuque counties, Iowa; Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Manuscript Manufacturing Schedule, Scott and Dubuque counties, Iowa; Walsh, *Rise of the Midwestern Meat Packing Industry*, 46, 61, 69, 76–77, 94, 96–97; Agnes M. Larson, *History of the White Pine Industry in Minnesota* (Minneapolis, 1949), 105, 107, 122, 125; Walter A. Blair, *A Raft Pilot's Log: A History of the Great Rafting Industry on the Upper Mississippi, 1840–1915* (Cleveland, 1930), 256–65; Vance, *Merchant's World*, 88–92.

[25] Conzen, "Community Studies, Urban History, and Amerian Local History," in *Past before Us*, ed. Kammen, 290.