

**Town Meeting: Illinois**  
comprehensive report 1974-78  
**MAY 1978**

# HISTORICAL VANTAGE POINT

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## Heritage

GREAT MOVING RIVERS have carved out what is now Illinois -- and for thousands of years provided rich homeland for civilizations. Since before 5000 B. C. cultures have been emerging and scattering in the prairies fed by the five great rivers of Illinois.

THE FIRST EUROPEAN EXPLORERS were brought to Illinois by the rivers. Louis Joliet and Father Jacques Marquette pioneered the Mississippi looking for a fast route to China. They returned by a different river -- one that forked to the east. On this river they encountered a remarkably gracious Indian nation, whose name they gave to the river and to the territory: The Illini.

THE LAND OF THE ILLINI was rich and sought after. The Iroquois Nation drove off the Illini for the trapping resources and the English overpowered the French, acquiring a chain of forts along the rivers. But soon after a group of bold pioneers from George Washington's Army lead by George Rogers Clark (of the Lewis & Clark expedition) ambushed the British claiming the territory of the Illini for the new nation.

TWO VISIONARY SETTLEMENTS brought great excitement to the new territory. The Jansenist Movement from Sweden settled the village of Bishop Hill near Rock Island. The congregation of the Latter Day Saints settled the village of Nauvoo on the Mississippi. These settlements prospered for several years practicing their unique lifestyles, but collapsed when each of their leaders was assassinated in the fury which surrounded them. Today they are experiencing a rebirth of the skilled craftsmanship and productivity which are outcomes of their adventurous heritage.

ILLINOIS LEADERSHIP DURING THE CIVIL WAR signifies the role of this state in the excitement of the 19th Century. Both the President, Abe Lincoln, and his final choice for the Chief General of the Army, U.S. Grant, rose from Illinois to take the reins in that time of turmoil.

A GREAT TIME OF INNOVATION followed the Civil War, with Illinois again at the hub. Even before the war, John Deere had invented the steel plow and Cyrus McCormick had invented the reaper. Two great agricultural companies grew from this start: John Deere & Company and the International Harvester Company. With other innovators like Phillip Armour, Gustavus Swift, Montgomery Ward and George Pullman, Chicago emerged as the midwest area commercial center -- even above other older and more likely cities.

# HISTORICAL VANTAGE POINT

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## Challenge

GROWTH HAS CONTINUED throughout the 20th Century. Illinois prospers as never before. Yet, major questions of certainty pose a new challenge for Illinoisians -- along with all Americans.

Economic hard times for the small businessman and the farmer are unrelenting. Thus, productive creativity is being severely limited.

Economic booms which have left some communities prospering, have left many others as skeletons.

Community leaders seldom speak with confidence about the structures and the leadership of government.

School consolidations have displaced the task of education from many small communities, which fragments the community cohesiveness.

Growing prosperity and mobility pull folks away from a former "close-knitted-ness" within their communities.

The family itself is being questioned and experimented with, and families are no longer the basic element in communities.

THOSE WHO CARE about their communities are asking this question in many ways: "WHAT IS THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS TO BE?" Many of those who care have moved through Town Meeting toward developing ideas and answers to this question.

## Intent

TOWN MEETING IS A ONE - DAY COMMUNITY FORUM with a workshop design. It enables a significant group to envision the future of its community.

At these meetings, participants clarify the contradictions preventing local creativity from accomplishing their vision, and write proposals which can set the spark to begin new local creative approaches toward dissolving those contradictions.

These meetings bring diverse groups together and get everyone involved in creatively thinking and planning for the future. Whatever complaints folks bring to the meetings either turn into constructive ideas or get forgotten in the process.

## PROGRAM CAPSULE

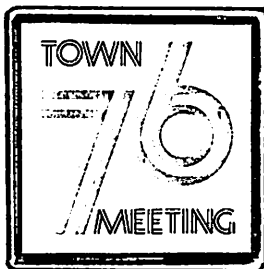
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Town Meeting: Illinois has grown from a national Bicentennial program called Town Meeting '76. Town Meeting '76 was created for the Bicentennial Celebration and certified by the American Revolutionary Bicentennial Administration. The Illinois State Bicentennial Commission later indicated its support by providing matching funds for communities involved in Town Meeting '76.

Numerous Illinois groups took part in launching Town Meeting '76, including the Illinois Jaycees, the Illinois Department of Local Government Affairs, the Illinois Law Enforcement Commission and the Illinois State Chamber of Commerce.

The design for Town Meeting '76 was created by the Institute of Cultural Affairs. The ICA is an intra-global research, training and demonstration group concerned with the "human element" in world development. The ICA has offices in 48 American communities and is geared to be available to all the communities of the country.

Town Meeting '76 and Town Meeting: Illinois have been funded by a few public sources, but primarily through private sources. A representative listing of these supporters can be found in this report.



During the Bicentennial Celebration over 1000 communities held Town Meetings in this program. 41 of these were in Illinois. The majority of these were larger communities (over 10,000 population) and nearer the urban areas. In mid-1977 the focus was shifted toward smaller communities in the rural areas, with the intent of holding one Town Meeting in every county. Since then, 3000 more Town Meetings were held with 85 of those in Illinois.

A total of 126 communities in Illinois have held Town Meetings in this national program, spanning four years.

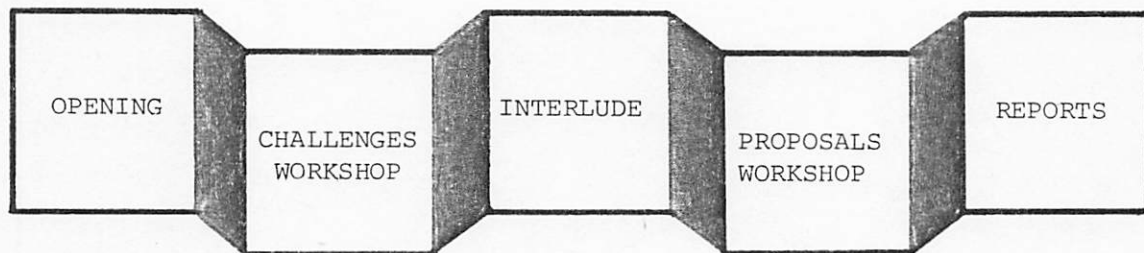


TOWN MEETING: ILLINOIS

## PROGRAM CAPSULE

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A DYNAMIC: Groups have been able, in these Town Meetings, to spell out and agree upon some basic challenges and proposals because the Town Meeting is a flexible format with continuous steps. The workshops begin with "brainstorming" where everyone has a chance to speak in listing his future hopes and present concerns.



TWO WORKSHOPS: Two workshops are held in every Town Meeting, separated by an interlude of lunch or a snack. Workshop #1 determines and writes the contradictions in the community which block local creativity from accomplishing their future hopes. These are the "Present Challenges". Workshop # 2 decides and writes initial actions which will spark new creative approaches toward dissolving the contradictions. These are the "Practical Proposals".

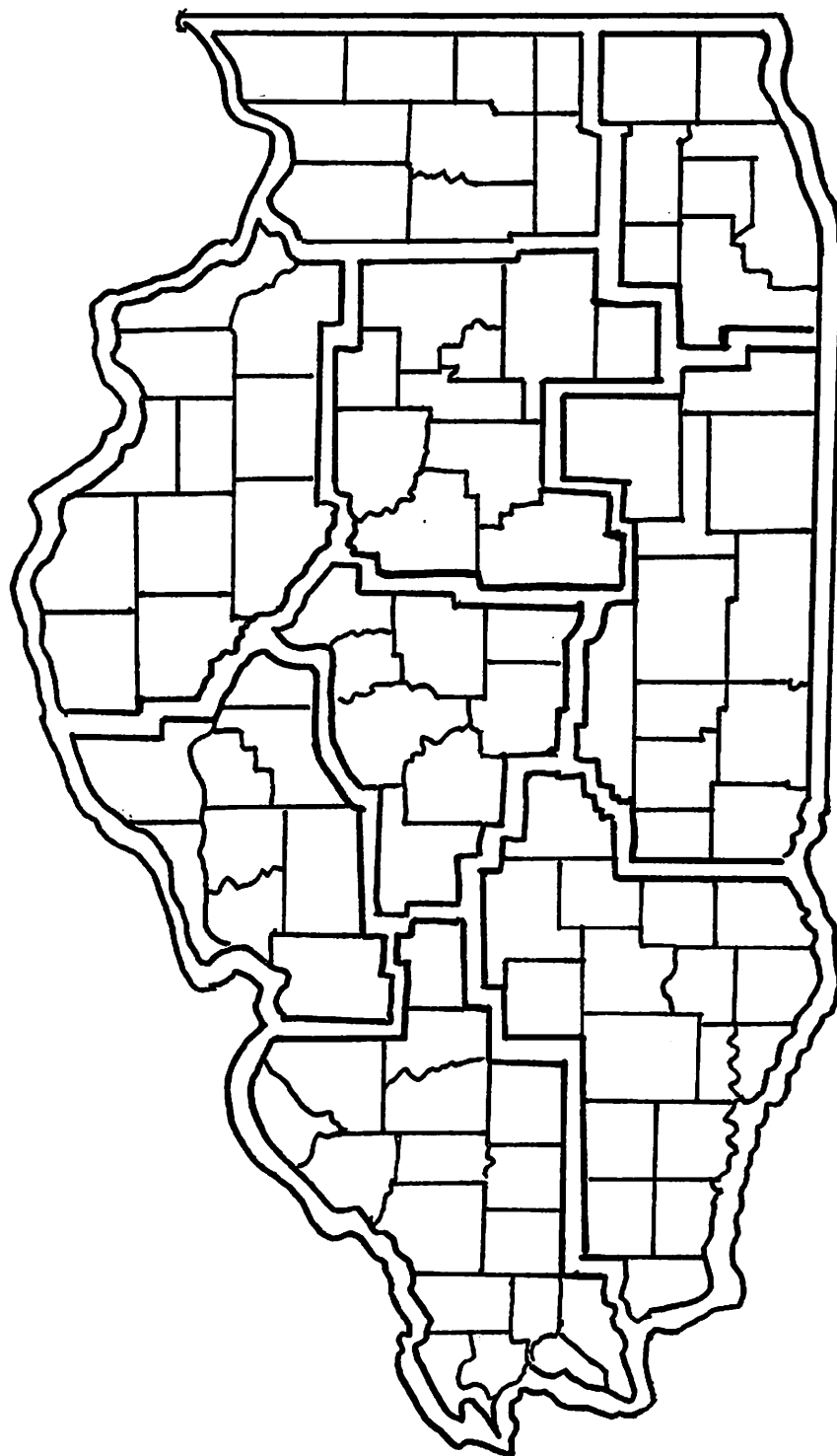
PICTORAL DESIGNS: Large pictorial designs are used for the brainstorming and clustering of local ideas. These add spice to the meeting, everyone can participate easily and folks begin thinking in new ways. Their greatest purpose is to allow everyone to see the inter-relatedness of all the concerns and ideas.

SMALL GROUPS: Town Meetings break into small groups in order to get down to "hard nails" discussion. It is in the small groups that the real deciding and writing gets done. Small groups always report back to the total group, which allows many ideas to converge and create new sense.

WHOLISTIC APPROACH: Everyone's input and creativity is encouraged, and by viewing it all together, the many facets and complexities of the community can be dealt with. The proposals are worked out together, in order that the positive actions can be done together. When folks see a proposal as a combined effort, rather than something a few people must do year after year, new motivity is realized.

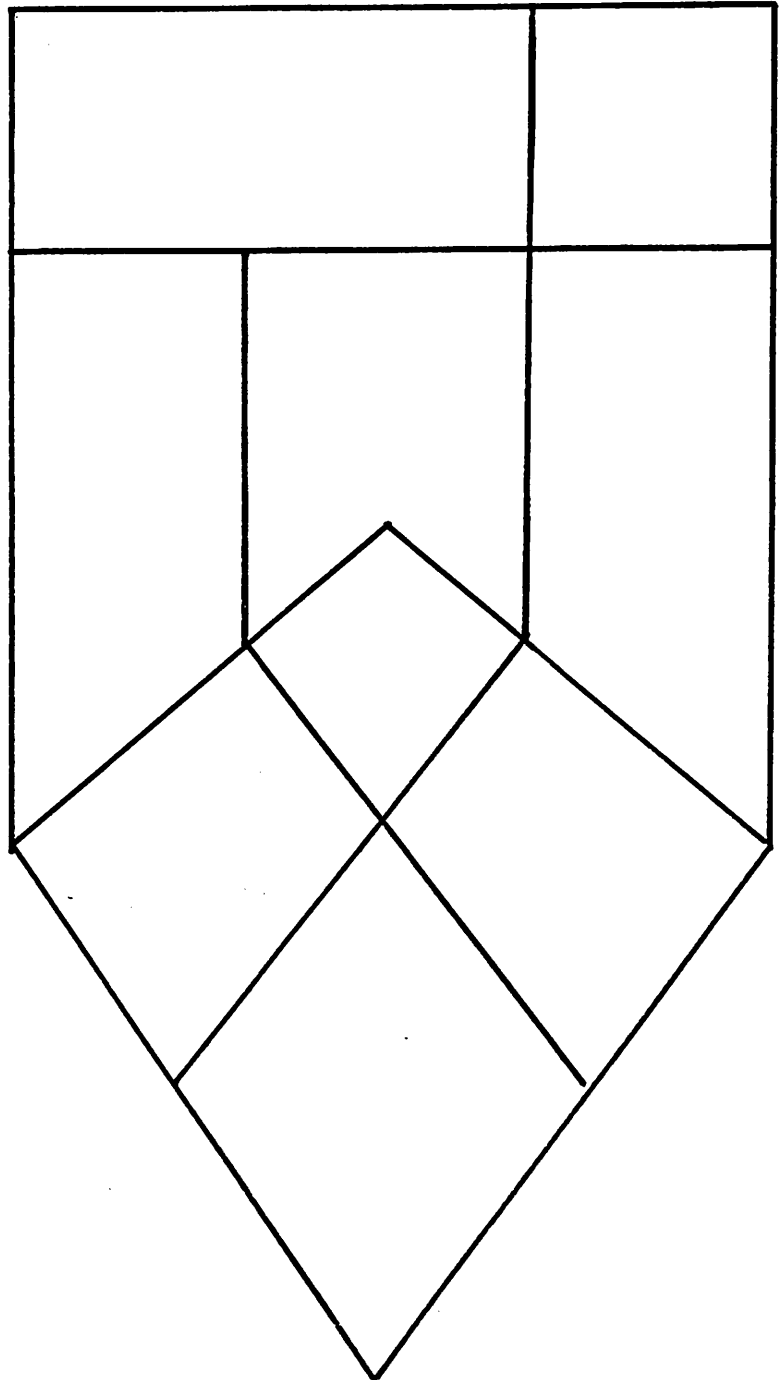
# TERRITORIAL SCHEME

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## TERRITORIAL SCHEME

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This "grid" was created as a way to distinguish the many small regions -- or territories -- that compose the State of Illinois. It is an abstract image which may be helpful in grasping the state's geo-social complexity.

## TERRITORIAL SCHEME

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We were married and lived together for seventy years,  
Enjoying working, raising the twelve children,  
Eight of whom we lost  
Ere I had reached the age of sixty.  
I spun, I wove, I kept the house, I nursed the sick,  
I made the garden, and for holiday  
Rambled over the fields where sang the larks,  
And by Spoon River gathering many a shell,  
And many a flower and medicinal weed  
Shouting at the wooded hills, singing to the green valleys.

At ninety six I had lived enough, that's all,  
And passed to a sweet repose.  
What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness,  
Anger, discontent, and drooping hopes?  
Degenerate sons and daughters,  
Life is too strong for you -  
It takes life to love Life.

-- from the poem "Lucinda Matlock", by Edgar Lee Masters, Petersburg, IL.

Hog-butcher for the world,  
Tool-maker, Stacker of Wheat,  
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight-handler;  
Stormy, husky, brawling, City of the Big Shoulders:  
They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen  
your painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.  
And they tell me you are crooked, and I answer: Yes, it is true  
I have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again.  
And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces  
of the women and children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.  
And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at  
this my city, and I give them back the sneer and say to them:  
Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud  
to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.

-- from the poem "Chicago", by Carl Sandburg, Galesburg, IL.

. . . Oh Radio, Oh Saxophone, Oh Slide Trombone, Oh Horns that moan:  
The lion, the lion, goes roaring from his cage,  
Ten thousand years before your jazz he roared a deeper rage.  
And Jumbo, great Jumbo, goes swaying left and right,  
Ten thousand years before your jazz his trumpet shook the night.

That silvery bridge of dawn across the cold,  
In the rigging of their ships the prophets old  
Sing with her their songs across the cold.  
So, come let us forget our ivory-towers, brothers,  
Come let us be bold with our songs.

-- from the poem "Pontoon Bridge Miracle", by Vachel Lindsay, Springfield, IL.

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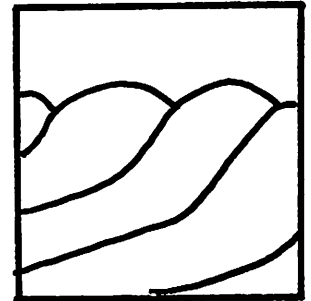


# TERRITORIAL SCHEME

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The Blackhawk Hills Territory



The Blackhawk Hills are rolling hills cut sharply into bluffs along the Rock River, which is fed by thousands of creeks and streams. This land projects orderliness that is reflected by its towns and farms. Built on a base of quality farmland and good farm management, the Blackhawk Hills are now the site for great industrial growth. A significant part of this is the nuclear power facilities providing energy to all of Northern Illinois.

The richness of the legend of Chief Blackhawk, a Sauk Indian Chief, pervades the territory. Blackhawk fought fiercely to hold this rich land for his people, and did not lose until 1833. Standing, yet today, are the Standing Rock Bluffs in the east, and a 40 foot statue of Blackhawk in the west. With growth and prosperity as their gift, the people of the Blackhawk Hills are challenged to create the ways to grow in a controlled fashion -- to sustain the strength of their villages and neighborhoods.

Population: 577,311\*

Median annual family income: \$8007.5\*

County	Participating community(s)	Population		Date
1. Boone	Poplar Grove	607	village	10-27-77
2. Carroll	Savanna	4942	town	11-12-77
3. DeKalb	Sandwich	5056	town	11-16-77
4. Lee	Franklin Grove	968	village	11-14-77
5. Jo Daviess	Galena	3930	town	11-03-77
6. Ogla	Leaf River	633	village	4-28-78
7. Stephenson	Freeport (county)	27,736	city	2-14-76
8. Whiteside	Morrison	4387	town	11-28-77
9. Winnebago	Pecatonica	1781	town	4-25-78

\*These figures were compiled from 1970 census data.

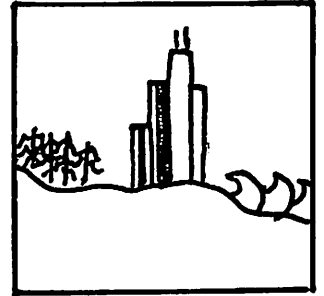
\*They are included for the sake of comparison.

# TERRITORIAL SCHEME

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The Metro Chicago Territory



Metro Chicago is a complex land stretching only 50 miles from east to west, yet spanning cornfields, forest reserves and the world's tallest buildings. Firey growth has characterized this territory during the last 100 years, leaving its communities dis-focused.

As America's Midwest Commercial Center for 100 years, Chicago has welcomed immigrants from the corners of the world to come and do the work of a growing nation. Metro Chicago is a crossroads. The diversity which typifies this territory works against a common vision for the territory, yet is its greatest gift when it comes to producing the ideas and leadership for strengthening its communities.

Population: 7,003,985

Median annual family income: \$10,811.6

County	Participating community(s)	Population	Date
10. Cook	Morgan Park (Chicago)	21,250 n'borhood	6-06-75
	Chicago Heights	40,900 suburb	10-18-75
	Hazelcrest	11,657 suburb	11-15-75
	Irving Park (Chicago)	15,400 n'borhood	11-15-75
	Maywood	29,019 suburb	1-17-76
	Palatine	31,447 suburb	2-28-76
	Elk Grove Village	20,346 suburb	3-06-76
	East Chicago Heights	6405 suburb	3-13-76
	Harvey	34,636 suburb	3-13-76
	Uptown (Chicago)	32,000 n'borhood	3-13-76
	East Side (Chicago)	28,000 n'borhood	3-20-76
	Schaumburg-Hoffman Estates	69,200 suburbs	3-20-76

# TERRITORIAL SCHEME

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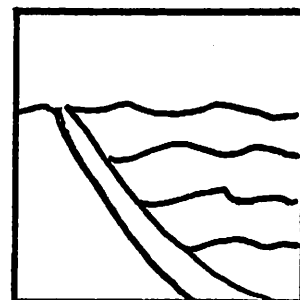
	County	Participating community(s)	Population	Date
10.	Cook (cont.)	South Holland	25,220 suburb	3-20-76
		Oak Park	62,511 suburb	3-27-76
		Park Ridge	43,311 suburb	4-24-76
		Arlington Heights	69,204 suburb	5-22-76
		Fifth City (Chicago)	17,000 n'borhood	7-24-76
		Evanston	80,113 suburb	11-20-76
		Streamwood	20,000 suburb	3-12-77
		Robbins	9600 suburb	9-10-77
11.	DuPage	Elmhurst	48,887 suburb	5-01-76
		Itaska	4638 suburb	5-01-76
		Addison	25,645 suburb	5-22-76
12.	Kane	Maple Park	660 village	11-17-77
13.	Kendall	Yorkville	2049 town	5-01-76
14.	Lake	Mundelein	17,152 suburb	11-15-75
15.	McHenry	Crystal Lake	16,797 suburb	2-12-77
16.	Will	Joliet	78,887 city	3-27-76
		Steger	9285 town	4-03-76
		Bolingbrook	34,143 suburb	4-24-76

# TERRITORIAL SCHEME

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The Prairie Hills Territory



The Prairie Hills erupt on the landscape forged by the valleys of two great rivers; the Mississippi and the Illinois. Its soil is some of the richest around. Scattered commerce has been long-standing in the Prairie Hills; it has been know to be the hog processing capitol of the world. Because of non-direct routes to Chicago and St. Louis by roadway, its means of economic support have remained agricultural and husbandry related.

This is the home of the celebrated Spoon River Valley, of which Edgar Lee Masters wrote the Spoon River Anthology. Rebirth of this heritage is flanked by the rebirth of two visionary settlements of the 19th Century, Nauvoo and Bishop Hill. These communities are beaming with new hopes and ingenuity.

Population: 515,029

Median annual family income: \$6665.0

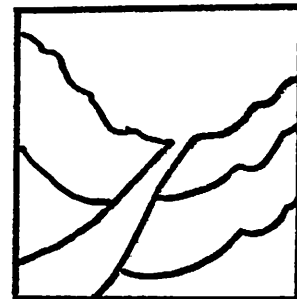
County	Participating community(s)	Population	Date
17. Adams	Quincy	45,000 city	9-15-76
18. Brown	Timewell (Mound Station)	213 village	3-13-78
19. Fulton	Table Grove	469 village	3-16-78
20. Hancock	Nauvoo	1047 town	3-14-78
21. Henderson	Stronghurst	836 village	4-25-78
22. Henry	Bishop Hill	195 village	11-29-77
23. Knox	St. Augustine	204 village	4-28-78
24. Mercer	Alexis	946 village	3-14-78
25. McDonough	Industry	558 village	3-16-78
26. Rock Island	Reynolds	610 village	3-15-78
27. Schuyler	Littleton	208 village	3-20-78
28. Warren	Kirkwood	817 village	3-28-78

# TERRITORIAL SCHEME

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The Illinois Valley Territory



The Illinois Valley is the watershed for the powerful Illinois River, marked by rocky bluffs on both sides. Below the bluffs are soft, wet lowlands lined by dikes to hold out the bulging river. Above them are plush plateau contours embedded with coal lodes. River towns have long flourished on the Illinois River, which boomed significantly in the 1930's with coal production. The coal has run very thin, leaving many small communities to only provide laborers for distant, centralized industry. These communities are in search of a way to be small communities by inventing new means of dispersed economy.

The valley lives in the unity of the river, with Metro Peoria as its center. This territory lives in the heritage of the explorers Marquette and Joliet, and the Illini Indian Nation, whose name they gave this territory.

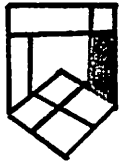
Population: 648,672

Median annual family income: \$8315.2

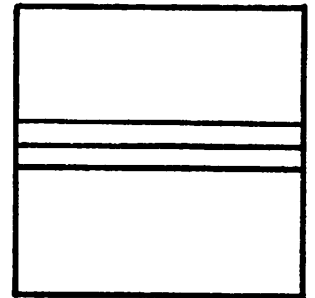
County	Participating community(s)	Population	Date
29. Bureau	La Moille	669 village	1-10-78
30. Grundy	Braceville	668 village	2-27-78
31. La Salle	Rutland	437 village	4-02-78
32. Marshall	La Rose	165 village	5-02-78
33. McLean	Bloomington-Normal	74,300 city	3-27-76
34. Peoria	West Bluff (Peoria)	4500 neighborhood	6-05-74
35. Putnam	Mark	379 village	2-23-78
36. Stark	La Fayette	250 village	3-02-78
37. Tazewell	Morton	12,217 town	5-01-76
	Pekin	31,375 city	6-12-76
38. Woodford	Eureka	3028 town	3-29-78

# TERRITORIAL SCHEME

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The Eastern Plains Territory



The endless, flat plains in the east of Illinois are interrupted only occasionally by broken hills. The vast openness of this territory is encircled by four cities, and covered by hundreds of farm villages. These villages were built for one purpose: to service the small family farmers. This function is diminishing as the small farmers become fewer and fewer. Away from the river economy, this land is still occupied by many strong family farms which flourish annually. Decreasing small farming is giving way to increased industry in the few large towns.

The University of Illinois towers near the center of the Eastern Plains. Strong German Lutheran and Amish communities remain together here, and the Amish folk continue to maintain their highly regarded 19th Century customs in Moultrie County. With this community fabric holding strong, these villages are discovering a way to remain vital in the future economic trends.

Population: 591,345

Median annual family income: \$7241.9

County	Participating community(s)	Population		Date
39. Champaign	Sidney	915	village	2-21-78
40. Clark	Westfield	678	village	1-20-78
41. Coles	Lerna	288	village	4-05-78
42. Cumberland	Toledo	1068	town	1-23-78
43. Douglas	Newman	1018	town	2-07-78
44. Edgar	Brocton	349	village	2-11-78
45. Ford	Melvin	492	village	3-06-78
46. Iroquois	Cissna Park	773	village	2-21-78
47. Kankakee	Kankakeeland	30,944	city	5-14-77
48. Livingston	Emington	95	village	2-16-78
49. Moultrie	Arthur	2214	town	2-28-76
50. Platt	White Heath	400	village	4-07-78
51. Vermillion	Danville	42,520	city	6-0576

# TERRITORIAL SCHEME

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The Two Rivers Territory



The Two Rivers Territory stretches from the central plains to the Metro St. Louis Valley to the craggy bluffs overlooking the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. The most obvious landmark of this territory is Calhoun County which is a peninsula wedged between two rivers approximately 8 miles wide and 40 miles long. Most parts of this territory experience being cut-off from the broader regional economy, due to shortage of roads and bridges. Commerce is accumulated in a few towns with scattered farming and a great deal of commuting to jobs far away.

This territory is the location of the discovery of pre-historic cultures who made this their home over 7000 years ago. The Koster Site, where most of the digging is going on, and a museum for the findings give great strength to the heritage of this land. A new excitement is already present in many communities, and hope for a new visibility and a new involvement in the region are long-standing.

Population: 412,395

Median annual family income: \$6513.3

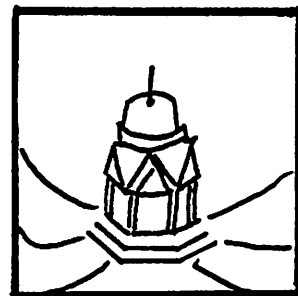
	County	Participating community(s)	Population		Date
52.	Calhoun	Brussels	191	village	5-02-78
53.	Cass	Arenzville	403	village	3-28-78
54.	Green	Eldred	292	village	5-05-78
55.	Jersey	Fidelity	130	village	3-20-78
56.	Macoupin	Chesterfield	262	village	4-24-78
57.	Madison	Marine	882	village	11-16-77
58.	Morgan	Chapin	552	village	4-18-78
59.	Pike	Pearl	323	village	4-22-78
60.	Scott	Glasgow	213	village	4-13-78

# TERRITORIAL SCHEME

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## The Sangamon Valley Territory



The golden Sangamon Valley farmlands are surrounded by lake lands, but remain distinct from the nearby river territories. Old Highway 66 has been a passage through the Sangamon Valley for several decades, creating the Illinois Axis from Chicago to St. Louis. Its productive farming, occasional mining and accessibility on the "Axis" have made it the prime choice for the state's capitol. Springfield, at its heart, remains a statewide industrial and financial center.

This territory is abundant with "Lincoln heritage". From his early boyhood days, to his young lawyer days, to his national leadership days - all are documented throughout the Sangamon Valley. Lincoln heritage gives a richness to this land which intensifies with age. Future leaders are beckoned from this territory to follow in these footsteps, as communities across the state look for guidance.

Population: 428,931

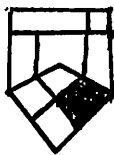
Median annual family income: \$7493.9

	County	Participating community(s)	Population		Date
61.	Christian	Bulpitt	275	village	4-10-78
62.	De Witt	Kenney	367	village	3-17-78
63.	Logan	Mt. Pulaski	1677	town	5-02-78
64.	Macon	Warrensburg	1165	town	4-29-78
65.	Mason	Forest City	301	village	3-23-78
66.	Menard	Oakford	272	village	3-20-78
67.	Montgomery	Farmersville	495	village	3-13-78
68.	Sangamon	Springfield	92,000	city	4-23-77

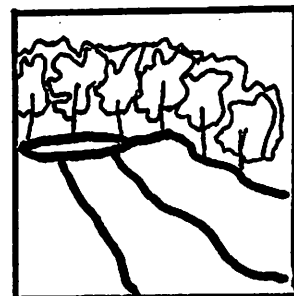


# TERRITORIAL SCHEME

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The Wabash Meadows Territory



The Wabash Meadows are scattered among broken hills bordered by wet basin land in the west and Wabash River bottomlands in the east. These hills give the impression of seclusion for many of the villages and towns that reside there. This is the most sparsely populated territory in Illinois. There is a history of powerful, but transitory economic resources here: coal, gas, oil, lumber, farming. Booms of productivity have been followed by depletion of resources and community strength. Numerous ghost towns stand as relics of this heritage.

These meadows stand also in the heritage of the oldest European settlements in Illinois. It was the "doorway" into Illinois from the East. Museums, forts and old homes remind us of this greatness, while the annual chowders remind the villagers of their local reliability. The people of this land are challenged to recast this reliability in anticipation of future economic booms.

Population: 287,551

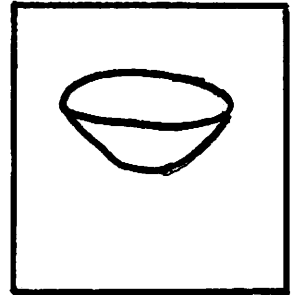
Median annual family income: \$5844.6

County	Participating community(s)	Population		Date
69. Clay	Sailor Springs	150	village	4-17-78
70. Crawford	Flat Rock	504	village	4-11-78
71. Edwards	Bone Gap	308	village	4-20-78
72. Effingham	Mason	415	village	4-18-78
73. Fayette	Ramsey	830	village	3-29-78
74. Gallitin	Old Shawneetown	342	village	3-31-78
75. Hamilton	Dahlgren	487	village	3-29-78
76. Hardin	Cave-in-Rock	503	village	3-17-78
77. Jasper	Wheeler	152	village	3-16-78
78. Lawrence	St. Francisville	997	village	4-28-78
79. Marion	Patoka	562	village	4-14-78
80. Richland	Noble	719	village	4-11-78
81. Saline	Harrisburg	9595	town	2-14-78
82. Shelby	Stewardson	729	village	3-30-78
83. Wabash	Bellmont	292	village	3-14-78
84. Wayne	Cisne	615	village	3-23-78
85. White	Mill Shoals	292	village	4-04-78

# TERRITORIAL SCHEME



## The Mississippi Basin Territory



The wet Mississippi Basin Territory, abundant with swams, is surrounded by three of America's great rivers: the Ohio, the Wabash and the Mississippi. High plateaus in the basin are the location for early settlements in Illinois' history. Farmland economy is hindered by constant flooding, yet with road-way access in many parts of the basin, industrial growth continues. At the same time, many communities in the far southern counties have sustained the highest poverty conditions in the nation. This territory is challenged by changing economic trends to forge community life which withstands them.

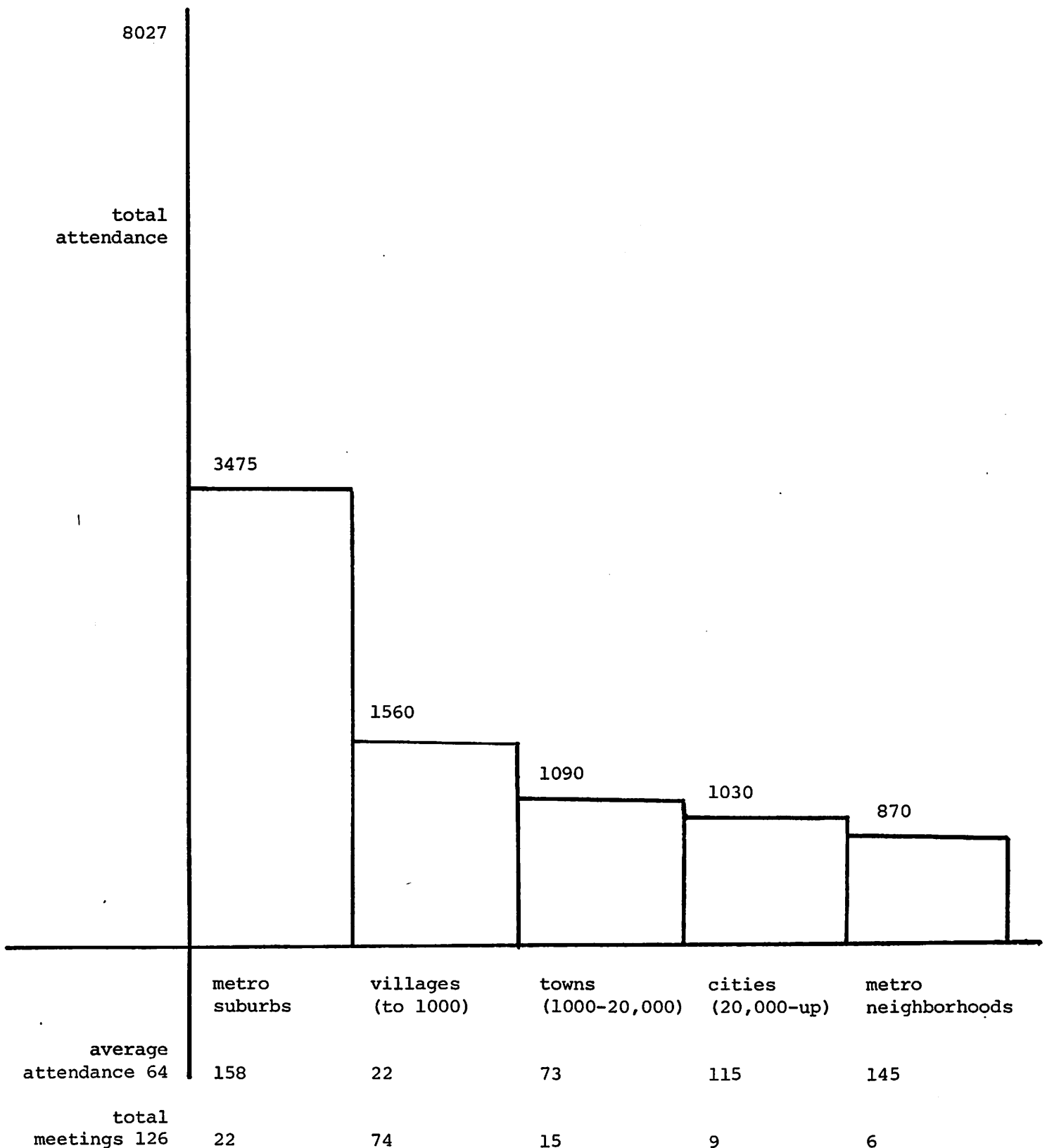
The Shawnee National Forest is in the south of the Mississippi Basin. This land shares strong reminders of early Indian cultures with the mounds found along the Mississippi River. It also houses the sites of the first two state capitols: in Kaskaskia and in Vandalia.

Population: 647,994

Median annual family income: \$5693.8

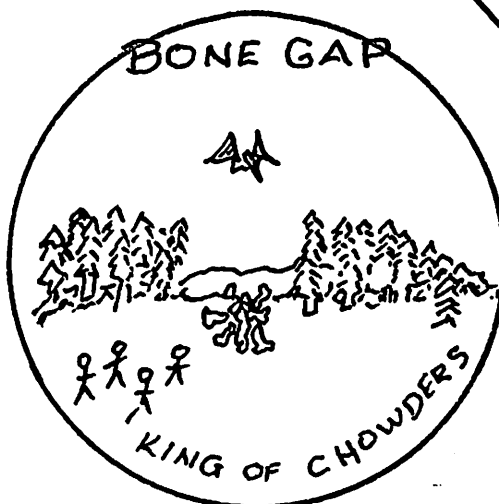
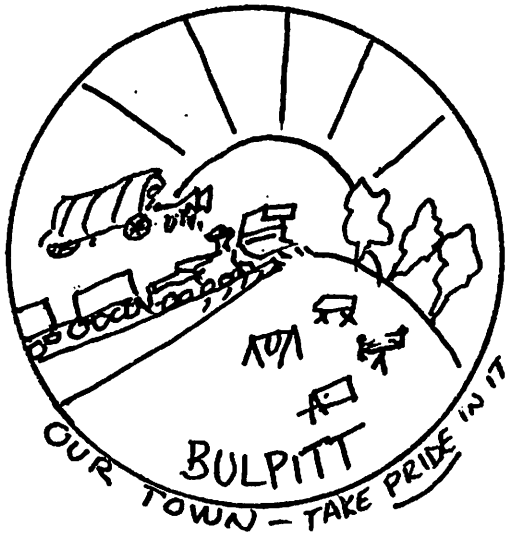
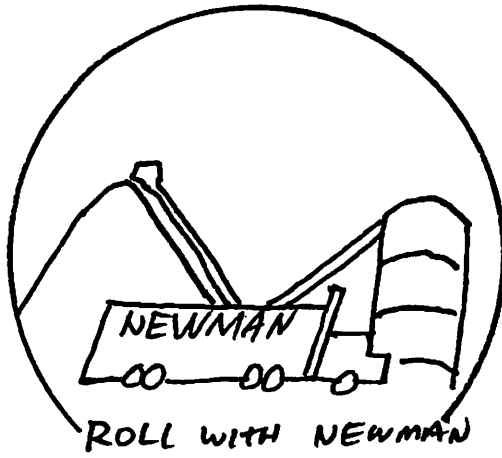
County	Participating community(s)	Population	Date
86. Alexander	Tamms	645 village	3-16-78
87. Bond	Pacahontas	764 village	12-05-77
88. Clinton	Beckmeyer	1069 town	11-29-77
89. Franklin	Ewing	324 village	12-01-77
90. Jackson	Carbondale	26,857 city	3-27-76
91. Jefferson	Waltonville	381 village	11-15-77
92. Johnson	New Burnside	249 village	11-18-77
93. Massac	Joppa	531 village	3-28-78
94. Monroe	Hecker	480 village	11-18-77
95. Perry	Tamaroa	799 village	11-16-77
96. Pope	Eddyville	127 village	11-16-77
97. Pulaski	Pulaski	471 village	3-14-78
98. Randolph	Baldwin	467 village	11-17-77
99. St. Clair	East St. Louis	70,000 suburb	10-23-76
100. Union	Dongola	825 village	4-25-78
101. Washington	Hoyleton	457 village	11-17-77
102. Williamson	Crab Orchard	200 village	11-17-77

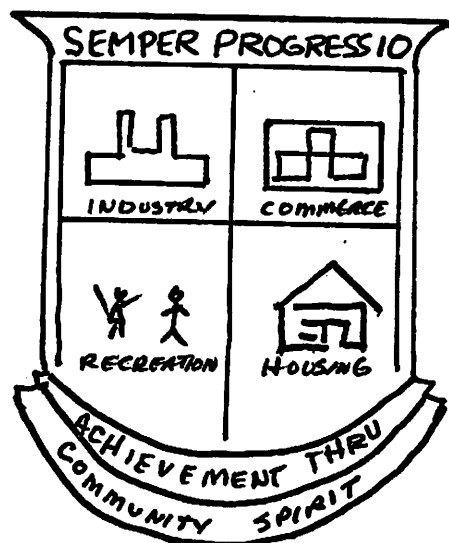
# TERRITORIAL SCHEME



# LOCAL VISION

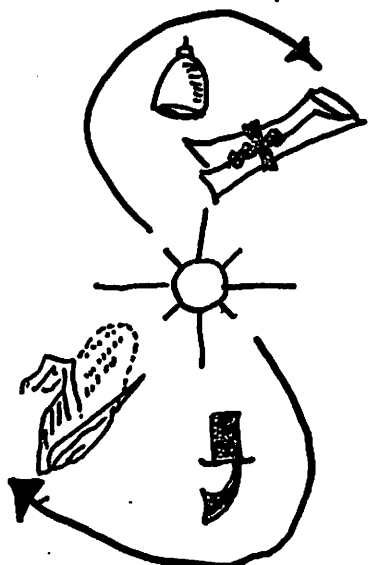
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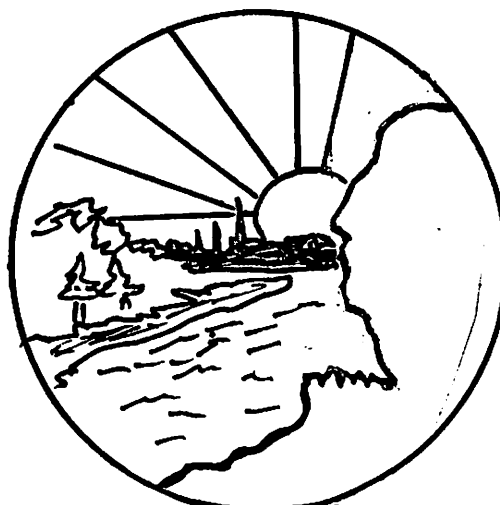


ROBBINS

SPRINGFIELD



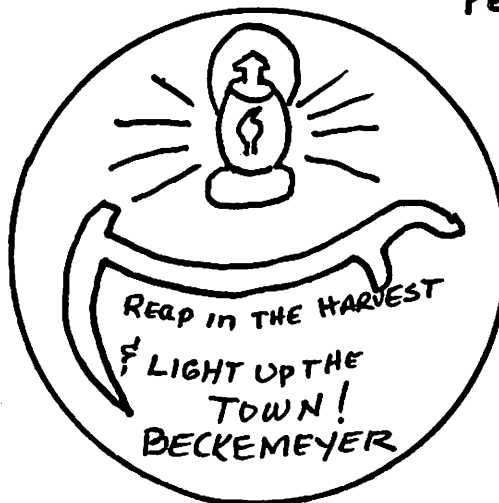
"Pioneering a brighter future  
in the spirit of our illustrious  
past"



SAVANNA  
PLAYGROUND OF THE MIDDLEWEST

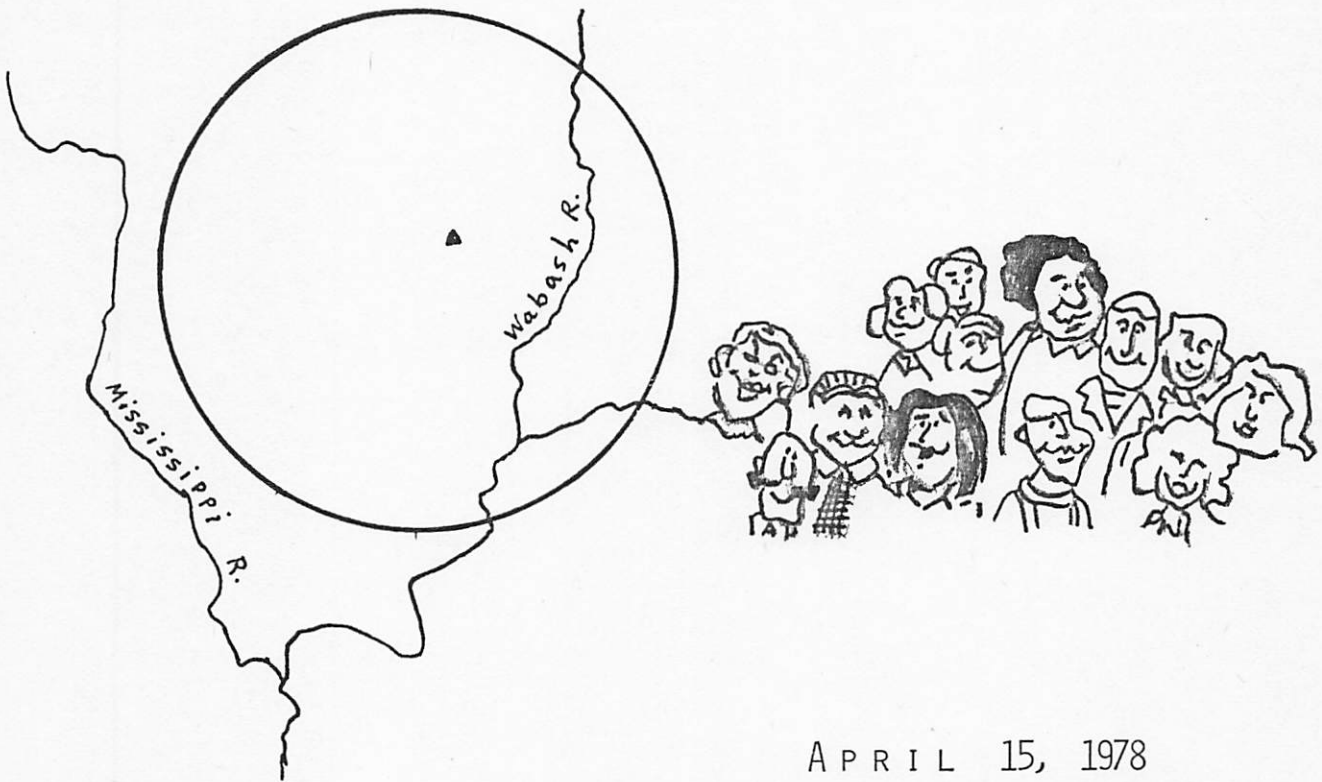


PEARL



# ASSEMBLY OF VILLAGES

## WABASH RIVER BASIN



APRIL 15, 1978

OLNEY CENTRAL COLLEGE

OLNEY, ILLINOIS

cooperative thinking  
toward a significant future  
for the villages of illinois

# ASSEMBLY OF VILLAGES

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This Assembly was held in order to gather and clarify the results of several Town Meetings in a delimited geographic area. It is envisioned as one step further toward interpreting the crippling conditions facing villages--how these conditions can be changed--and what steps are needed to change them.

Target communities were villages (population under 1,000) and the Assembly was designed for "who-so-ever would attend" from those villages. Results of Town Meetings in one village per 21 counties held before April 15, 1978 near the Wabash River Basin were included in the gathering and clarifying.

The Wabash River Basin area was chosen for this trial for two reasons: 1) the high rate of "skeleton" communities there due to recently faded oil and coal booms, 2) its proximity to three other states: Indiana, Missouri and Kentucky. This effort will serve as a model for many other regions and communities in the four-state area.

The Assembly of Villages was set up by the Institute of Cultural Affairs in conjunction with the Olney Central College, the Embarras River Basin Agency for Opportunity and the Greater Wabash Area Agency for Development.

Many thanks to the Olney Central College for opening its doors for this work.

These are the 21 communities whose Town Meeting "challenges" and "proposals" were the basis for the gathering.

Wheeler	Jasper County	Eddyville	Pope County
Mill Shoals	White County	Beckemeyer	Clinton County
Bellmont	Wabash County	Toledo	Cumberland County
Farmersville	Montgomery County	White Heath	Platt County
Cisne	Wayne County	Westfield	Clark County
Dahlgren	Hamilton County	Ramsey	Fayette County
Lerna	Coles County	Bulpitt	Christian County
Stewardson	Shelby County	Flat Rock	Crawford County
Old Shawneetown	Gallitin County	Patoka	Marion County
Cave-in-Rock	Hardin County	Noble	Richland County
Ewing	Franklin County		

The people are the only competent judges of their own welfare.

Josiah Quincy, 1774

# ASSEMBLY OF VILLAGES

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## Contradictions

There was time taken in each of the Town Meetings to illuminate the community's Operating Vision. This was done by first asking what the community is currently proud of and what had happened to make the community strong and unique. Secondly, participants were asked what they envisioned their community would be like in 10 years, if their dream came true. These lists painted a background for determining the contradictions to the community's vision.

The term "contradiction" is used not to refer to obvious problems which came readily to mind, but to coagulations of problems which block positive actions in the community.

The column of boxes on the following page are titles of the contradictions arrived at in the 21 Town Meetings. Each contradiction from each Town Meeting was written on a piece of paper, and the pieces were placed on a blank wall. They were arranged according to which ones point to similar conditions in the villages. Nine clusters were formed pointing to nine basic contradictions.

This was done prior to the Assembly. At the Assembly, the columns were given names as titles.

If there is any period one would desire to be born in, is it not the age of revolution; when the old and the new stand side by side, and admit to being compared; when the energies of all men are searched by fear and by hope; when the historic glories of the old, can be compensated by the rich possibilities of the new era? This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1837

What appears to be a breaking down of civilization may well be simply the breaking up of old forms by life itself.

Joyce Carol Oates



THE UNDERLYING CONTRADICTIONS CHART

Wabash Basin Assembly of Villages

April 15, 1978

Blocked Knowhow in Planning Methods in the villages	Withdrawn Support of Leadership Initiative in the villages	Scattered Focus of Local Commitment in the villages	Internal Fragmentation of Community Groups in the villages	Local Isolation from Regional Consensus in the villages	Resigned Attitude toward Community Improvements in the villages	Drained Structures of Local Economy in the villages	Resistant Attitude toward Economic Growth in the villages	Broken Patterns of Family Cohesiveness in the villages
communication gap on project completion	initiative lag among citizens & officials	family over-emphasis excludes comm. concern	community cooperation stagnated	insufficient financing for pol. candidates	local folks blocked on improvements	fixed incomes limit revenue	trading in other towns	no youth center or entertainment
no future planning	communication gap between local & officials	unclear priorities wound comm. pride	uncooperative community involvement	lack political power	lack community pride	no business stifles econ. competition	land owners blocking new building sites	no local cooperation for recreation
need area development and planning	opposition to leadership	comm. interest & communications lacking	fear of offending others blocks involvm't	poor control of tax and utility rates	local community control lacking	funds for new business needed	fear of change due to industry	nothing for kids to do
lack community concern & knowhow	need more cooperation with leadership	people want things but won't work for them	community factions uncooperative	water & sewage systems unavailable	"we can't" attitude blocks pride	low population and scarce money	large businesses unsupportive	no law enforcement for youth
grants difficult to obtain	leadership skirts initiative	commuter participation low	tax payers & low income lack agreement	competition with large towns depleting	uncontrolled shift to outside focus	limited revenue limits improvements		
financial plans uncommunicated	citizen depression discourages leadership	survival struggle dampens community spirit	opportunities blocked by non-communication	political clout weak				
disunity blocks state and federal funding	leadership initiative gets shot down	folks willing to work but lack time						
federal and state red tape								

# ASSEMBLY OF VILLAGES

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## Proposals

At the 21 Town Meetings, proposals were written to indirectly offset or dislodge the contradictions. The term "proposal" refers to a strategic plan of action formulated to respond to the set of contradictions. It is grounded in the actual situation of the village, because of this, and not superimposed ideal from outside. Proposals are similar to goals, yet are not goals. Although they indicate an intended outcome, they also indicate the direction the village will follow to get there. More can be read from a proposal than just the outcome which is mentioned.

Proposals from the 21 Town Meetings were each written on a separate piece of paper and clustered on a blank wall, according to which activities pointed in a similar direction. Nine clusters were formed, and were found to fall into three groupings of three clusters each. (It is not planned but completely incidental that there were nine groups of each.)

This was done prior to the Assembly. At the Assembly, titles were given to the columns as names.

To pursue the change now begun it becomes necessary to picture in realistic terms that society which has been the subject of dreams.

Henry Clark

Our future happiness or misery as a people depends entirely on ourselves  
Jonathan Elmer, 1776

THE PRACTICAL PROPOSALS CHART								
Wabash Basin Assembly of Villages						April 15, 1978		
Toward Economic Health			Toward Visible Town Action			Toward Public Decision Making		
Raising Community Funds	Building Prosperous Economy	Exercising Political Perogative	Planning Community Recreation	Donning New Appearance	Holding Community Celebrations	Developing Citizen Identity	Enlivening Public Participation	Creating Community Projects
Community Rummage Sale	Buyer for Grocery Store	Write Letters to Congress	Campaign for Community Recreation	Trash Clean-Up & Tree Planting	Fund Raising Festival	Form Citizen's Committee	Increase School Board Meetings Attendance	Organizations' Planning Meeting
				Town Clean-Up Campaign				
Community Fund-Raising Campaign	Build Public Marina	Small Town Data Exchange	Parent-Child Involvement	Community Work-Day Planning	Hold First Annual Summer Festival	Form Chamber of Commerce	Increase Attendance at Public Meetings	Create Project's Series--i.e. "Survival Formula"
				Block Party Clean-Up				
Hold Improvements Referendum	Build Bowling Alley	Writing Campaign to Government Officials	Community Event to Enlarge School Playground	Mount Bulletin Board	New Community Center Ground Breaking Celebration	Focus Organizations on Community Improvements	Liven up Invitations to Board Meetings	Hold Second Meeting to Organize Project Leaders
Apply for Grants & Raise Local Taxes	Create Youth Job Opportunities	Contact Senators for Resources	Research Park District Formation	Transform Gym Into Community Center	Community "Get Acquainted Night"	Form Community Activity Organization	Hold Special Topic Board Meetings	Organize First Summer Festival
				Donate Time & Materials to Work Day				
		Create Business Brochure		Repair the Square	Show Education Films to Excite Interest	Establish Community Club	Public Meeting on Job Opportunities	Select Committee of 6 for Goal Setting & Funding Search
		Vote for Representatives Opposing Centralized Government		Store Owners' "Repairing Fronts" Visits	Community Meetings to Excite Interest	Organize Community Club	Publish Info Inserts in Local Paper	Community Meeting for Planning Projects
		Encourage Local Candidates					Public Question & Answer Sessions	

# ASSEMBLY OF VILLAGES

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## Tactics

The term "tactic" refers to a concrete step which will move toward implementing a proposal. A "system" of tactics will comprehensively implement a series of proposals.

This entire workshop was done at the Assembly. Here our concern is with the basic areas of action needed to implement the proposals made in the Town Meetings. There is a special concern with those areas of action that require assistance from the outside of the community (both of expertise and of funding).

The chart shows a fresh organization of these tactics which demonstrate the type of work required by anyone who would intend to assist the villages in accomplishing their proposals.

For each of the proposal columns from the previous workshop, all tactics were listed which would be needed to accomplish the proposal. They were clustered according to which actions were similar. They were then arranged on a chart according to how immediate or how long-range the actions were. The more immediate and visible tactics were held in the center of the chart while the more long-range and major tactics were held toward the outside.

The data which comprised the 11 clusters was held along side the 11 titles on the chart.

The world is my country; all mankind are my brethren.  
Thomas Paine, 1776

Man must humbly but with courage accept responsibility for the  
destiny of mankind.  
Clyde Kluckhohn

# THE TACTICAL SYSTEMS CHART

Wabash Basin Assembly of Villages

April 15, 1978

## MOBILIZING TOTAL RESOURCES BASE

### DEVELOPING FUNCTIONING LOCAL SUPPORT

#### CREATING COMMUNITY VITALITY SIGNS

Technical Resources		Public Systems		Engagement Events		Private Systems		Human Resources	
Regional Web	outside speakers	Government Engagement	cooperate clean up	Community Celebra'n	community festivals	Fund Raising Efforts	contrib'n marathons	Youth Response	youth beautif'n event
	circuit rider trainers		advisory group's goals		town picnics		annual days		
	previous helps		project referend.		eyesores removed		rummage sales		attention to the citizenry
	resource agencies		citizens' plan		welcome signs	Service Groups	initiate service clubs		younger school board
Business Enterprises	agric. manufur.	Communic. Nets	village newspaper	New-look Projects	redesign signs		obtain sponsoring org's	Parental Leadership	
	new business		community billboard	Beautif-cation Workdays	community workdays		sponsor events		PTA projects
					churches plant flowers				

ASSEMBLY OF VILLAGES



# ASSEMBLY OF VILLAGES

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## I. CREATING THE NEW LOOK

The Intent: to create a sign of new community vitality.

The Sign: beautify the Central Business District.

The Plan:

- 1) during early summer, youth out of school and service organization volunteers can paint directory signs and attractive trash can containers.
- 2) businessmen can join together a coordinate purchase of comparable signs from one supplier at a reduced cost.
- 3) business fronts can be put into attractive, complementary condition by enlisting businessmen to decide a new look and use cooperative buying to purchase materials.
- 4) condemnable buildings can be torn down either with the cooperation of the owners or by the Village buying the space through delinquent taxes. The vacant space can be turned into mini-parks on work days.

## II. ENGAGING THE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

The Intent: to demonstrate small towns can deal effectively with governmental requirements.

The Sign: hold public meeting with elected representatives to decide ways a small town can deal with requirements.

The Plan:

- 1) insure at least 30 people from the community attend by: drafting a letter of invitation by the Mayor and concerned citizens - contacting the representatives personally and setting the date (that is advantageous to his re-election) - publicizing the meeting several ways, including personal contact.
- 2) have dinner with a committee from the town and the representatives to plan the next steps for following up on the meeting.

## III. DOING THE HARD-NOSED PLANNING

The Intent: tapping regional resources to strengthen businesses.

The Sign: create a local planning commission.

The Plan:

- 1) the Town Board appoints a committee of three or more persons including elected and non-elected leaders to meet with regional and state representatives to develop long-range plans for phased economic growth.
- 2) the committee will then create a budget, produce a community brochure and grid which point out the advantages of their community.
- 3) a facility will be created, on Main Street and accessible to all, meetings will be held regularly and openly.
- 4) members will attend county, regional and state meetings to exert influence on behalf of the community.

# ASSEMBLY OF VILLAGES

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## Visibility Signs

The term "visibility sign" refers to a specific activity which has the nature of a campaign. A visibility sign has a beginning and an endig, and starts something greater. A visibility sign can be called a "miracle" which is simple enough to be accomplished quickly in order to motivate a community by early accomplishment to take on greater tasks.

These visibility signs represent the key types of action required by the villages in order to deal with the contradictions facing them as a group. These visibility signs are strengthened in their authority in that they reflect the ideas of people in 21 different villages in the Wabash River Basin area. This means they respond to the contradictions the villages have in common.

These visibility signs also introduce ways the various agencies can direct their efforts to assist the villages in meeting their underlying needs.

... the proceedings of our citizens have been united,  
spirited and firm. The flame is kindled and like lightning  
it catches from soul to soul.

Abigail Adams, 1773

In whatever direction popular weight leans, the current of power will flow.

Alexander Hamilton, 1788

## COMMUNITIES ON THE MOVE

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### NEWMAN (CRAWFORD COUNTY)      TAKING THE BULL BY THE HORNS

"We started the Business Club we proposed at the Town Meeting. One new business, a grocery store, has been started, and another, a woodburning stove store, will be opening soon. We're advertizing on the radio once a week for Newman. We're determined to build the business district back up.

The main thing the Town Meeting does is to arouse interest in the town, to make everyone aware of the real things that have to be done...then people can just take the bull by the horns..."

-Verna Shireman, drug store owner

### YORKVILL (KENDALL COUNTY)      FRESH, NEW IDEAS TO SOLVE OLD, STALE PROBLEMS

"In the five months since our Town Meeting a Human Resources Bank has been established. This is a bank of willing citizens who have talents and resources they are willing to share with other people who are in need of them. Also, the first city newsletter went out with public interest information in it.

The Town Meeting was a tremendous experience. So many fresh, new ideas to solve old, stale problems...the cooperation of so many people has lifted the morale of the entire community."

-LeRoy E. Thanepohn, mayor

### KIRKWOOD (WARREN COUNTY)      REALLY DOING THE THINGS PEOPLE TALK ABOUT

"A lot is going on because of the Town Meeting. This was the third time we tried to have a cleanup week and the first time it has ever really worked. We started the new business we said we needed, a TV repair shop, plus a welcome wagon. A citizens advisory board, headed by town men, is concerned right now with safety and getting a community center. They have pledged to have weekly attendance at the Town Board meeting, and have been there too.

The Town Meeting was well-conducted, keeping the people on a positive track. Sometimes its easier for an outsider to be objective. A number of people who came to gripe and then realized it was not going to be a gripe session began to feel like they're a part of something, like they have a say, like they're being listened to. My concern is that what comes out of Town Meeting needs to be continued here, in the doing of the things people talked about needing."

-Josephine Paris, board member

### MILL SHOALS (WHITE COUNTY)      THE TOWN AS IT MIGHT BE

"Since the Town Meeting we have put in for our sewage grant for the fourth time, with letters from families in town. We decided to meet every Tuesday night as a community in the cafe to draw attention to the fact that something is going on here.

Now, if all our groups can just figure out their shoulderload, our ideas are gonna start happening. At the Town Meeting people saw the town as it might be. Now we see what we're working toward."

-Paul Hopson, mayor



# COMMUNITIES ON THE MOVE

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## FIDELITY (JERSEY COUNTY)

### A LITTLE SPICE

"Since the Town Meeting the kids did a park cleanup, and we are putting two new picnic tables in and planting trees there.

This was an idea people already had and the Town Meeting brought it to the point of being done. I believe the way you run it puts a little spice in the meeting, it gets people enthused about what's going on."

-Virgil Wallace, mayor

## BULPITT (CHRISTIAN COUNTY)

### GETTING THE WORK AROUND

"The most important thing going on is that we're building a big bulletin board down by the Post Office, like the kind used in the National Forest, with a street map on one side and public announcements on the other. We also will build a park bench beside it so that the older people can rest before they start walking back home from the Post Office. Two carpenters in town are building it. The Board bought the wood for under \$20.

The Town Meeting was a tremendous event. First time I've seen people show up for anything like that, and I think they will show up again... We've started getting the word around. You guys got people to say something and to listen to themselves...not trying to instill ideas, but to get people to bring forth their own ideas. It's like Knute Rockne-inspiring people to inspire themselves, start thinking themselves, start waking up."

-Rudy Bratt, newspaper editor

## NAUVOO (HANCOCK COUNTY)

### WAKING UP THE CITIZENS

"I had a lot of good feedback. Old and young came. I wish we had these all the time. Two girls from the Girl's School are still working on the song, publicizing it for the town. The Council is putting out a monthly paper.

The meeting was outstanding. I'd tell someone who was interested in having one to make sure they got the people out for it. Phone calling beforehand is important. What it does is to just begin to wake up the citizens."

-Walter H. Pierce, mayor

## FIFTH CITY - CHICAGO (COOK COUNTY)

### SHOWING HOW FAR WE'VE COME

"The Town Meeting got set up by a few men who were trying to set up what is now called the Fifth City Safe Streets Patrol, an all-volunteer group who patrol the streets every night now. The Town Meeting gave them a chance to get their idea around, as well as other people's ideas, and others picked up on it and joined them. The other result was that they proposed urban gardens in the block clubs, and that has turned into a big cleanup campaign every Spring.

We've come a long way here in Fifth City. I believe the things going on in Fifth City right now really draw attention to how far we've come as a community. They let people know."

-Verdell Trice, businessman

# PROGRAM SUPPORT

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## A REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS TO TOWN MEETING: ILLINOIS

Ace Paper Company	Chicago
Alroy Printing Company	Chicago
American Hospital Supply	Evanston
Ballantine Automotive Company	Robbins
Ben's TV Repair	Westfield
Boney's All Repair	Reynolds
Central Offset Printing Company	Chicago
Century 21 - Bud McMahan Realty	Streamwood
Clark Oil (local)	Blue Island
Delta Materials	Old Shawneetown
Elgin-Honeyhill Company	Chicago
Frank's Tire and Appliance	Kewanee
General Mills (local)	Kankakee
Interstate Power Company	Savanna
Jewel Food Stores	Melrose Park
Kankakee Industrial Supply	Kankakee
Martin Impliment Company	La Fayette
Mennie Machine Shop	Mark
Murnane Paper Company	North Lake
National Lock (local)	Savanna
Northern Illinois Gas	Aurora
Philips Petroleum (local)	Streamwood
Trunkline Gas Company	Joppa
WCCI Radio Station	Savanna
Weber Lithographers	Chicago
Wyman-Gordon Company	Harvey
Bank of Chicago	Chicago
Bank of Stronghurst	Stronghurst
First National Bank of Blue Island	Blue Island
Gateway National Bank	St. Louis
National Bank of Savanna	Savanna
Ramsey National Bank	Ramsey
Savanna State Bank	Savanna
Sidney Community Bank	Sidney
Rower Grove Bank	St. Louis
Westfield State Bank	Westfield
Eastside Chicago Chamber of Commerce	Chicago
Elmhurst Chamber of Commerce	Elmhurst
Hoffman Estates Chamber of Commerce	Hoffman Estates
Oak Park/River Forest Chamber of Commerce	Oak Park
Pekin Chamber of Commerce	Pekin
Savanna Chamber of Commerce	Savanna
Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce	Springfield
Yorkville Chamber of Commerce	Yorkville

# PROGRAM SUPPORT

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A & W Root Beer	Effingham
Best Western Motel	Effingham
Day's Inn	Effingham
Drury Inn	Mt. Vernon
Gaslight Motel	Lawrenceville
Holiday Inn	Marion
Holiday Inn	Muddy
Holiday Inn	Mt. Vernon
Holiday Inn	St. Louis
Lakewood Hotel	Salem
McDonald's	Salem
McDonald's	Olney
Pizza Hut	Springfield
Sud's Place	Shawneetown
Taco Bell	Springfield

Illinois State Bicentennial Commission  
Illinois Law Enforcement Commission  
Illinois Department of Local Government Affairs  
Adams County Bicentennial Commission  
Carbondale Bicentennial Commission  
Elmhurst Bicentennial Commission  
Kirkwood Bicentennial Commission  
Mundelein Bicentennial Commission  
Oak Park Bicentennial Commission  
Schaumburg Bicentennial Commission  
Stephenson County Bicentennial Commission  
Vermillion County Bicentennial Commission

THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MANY CONTRIBUTORS  
TO THE NATIONAL TOWN MEETING PROGRAM

Addressograph-Multigraph	Cleveland
Adolph Coors Foundation	Denver
Abelson-Frankel Inc.	Chicago
American Standard Inc.	New York
Bank of America	San Francisco
Cleveland Foundation	Cleveland
Chilton Company, Inc.	Chicago
Exxon Corporation, U.S.A.	Houston
Famous Barr	St. Louis
Freelance Photographers Guild	New York
Green Giant Company	Minneapolis
W. A. Krueger	Brookfield, WI
McDonald's Corporation	Oak Brook, IL
Nashua Corporation	Chicago
Wisconsin Cuneo Press, Inc.	Milwaukee

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The people will live on.  
The learning and blundering people will live on.  
They will be tricked and sold and again sold  
And go back to the nourishing earth for rootholds,  
The people so peculiar in renewal and comeback,  
You can't laugh off their capacity to take it.  
The mammoth rests between his cyclonic dramas.

The people so often sleepy, weary, enigmatic,  
is a vast huddle with many units saying:  
"I earn my living.  
I make enough to get by and it takes all my time.  
If I had more time I could do more for myself and maybe for others.  
I could read, study and talk things over and find out about things.  
It takes time. I wish I had the time."

Once having marched  
Over the margins of animal necessity,  
Over the grim line of sheer subsistence  
Then man came to the deeper ritual of his bones,  
To the lights lighter than any bones.  
To the time for thinking things over,  
To the dance, the song, the story,  
Of the hours given over to dreaming,  
Once having so marched.

Between the finite limitations of the five senses  
and the endless yearnings of man for the beyond  
the people hold to the humdrum bidding of work and food  
while reaching out when it comes their way  
for lights beyond the prison of the five senses,  
for keepsakes lasting beyond any hunger or death.  
This reaching is alive.  
The panderers and liars have violated and smutted it.  
Yet this reaching is alive for lights and keepsakes.

The steel-mill sky is alive.  
The fire breaks white and zigzag sht on a gun-metal gloaming.  
Man is a long time coming. Man will yet win.  
Another way yet line up with brother:  
This old anvil laughs at many broken hammers.  
There are men who can't be bought. The Fireborn are at home in fire.  
The stars make no noise. You can't hinder the wind from blowing.  
Time is a great teacher. Who can live without hope?

In the darkness with a great bundle of grief the people march.  
In the night, and overhead a shovel of stars for keeps, the people march:  
"Where to? What next?"

--from the poem "The People, Yes", 1936, by Carl Sandburg, Galesburg, IL.