1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Frederick A. and Sophia Bagg Bonanza Farm

Other Name/Site Number: 32 RI 5

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: NA Not for publication:

City/Town: Mooreton Vicinity: X

State: North Dakota County: Richland Code: 077 Zip Code: 58061

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	X	Building(s):	___
Public-Local:	___	District:	X
Public-State:	___	Site:	___
Public-Federal:	___	Structure:	___
		Object:	___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
18	2 buildings
___	__ sites
10	2 structures
1	2 objects
29	6 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 23

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: Bonanza Farming in North Dakota

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain):

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Agriculture/Subsistence	Sub:	Storage Animal facility Agricultural outbuilding
	Domestic		Single dwelling Multiple dwelling Secondary structure
Current:	Recreation and Culture	Sub:	Museum

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Late Victorian

MATERIALS:

Foundation:	Stone; wood
Walls:	Wood
Roof:	Wood
Other:	

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The Bagg Farm headquarters complex is located approximately one mile south of the small town of Mooreton, in Richland County, North Dakota. Richland County is located in the southeast corner of the state, just north of the North Dakota – South Dakota state line, at the southern end of the Red River Valley of the North. The Red River Valley, a distinctive region within the Great Plains physiographic province, extends for roughly 315 miles from Lake Traverse (in the south) to Lake Winnipeg (in the north). The northward-flowing Red River meanders through an exceptionally level valley plain that varies in width between 30 and 60 miles.

The Red River Valley lies within a portion of the former floor of glacial Lake Agassiz, which formed at the end of the Pleistocene about 12,000 years ago. The melting of the continental glacier that covered this part of the country resulted in the creation of this large lake, which filled and emptied several times. The legacy of the lake is reflected in the area's level topography and in the character of its soils; the deep clay-rich sediments that typify the Red River Valley represent some of the richest in the world. These two natural characteristics of the Red River Valley, a level nearly treeless surface (easing the task of plowing the native prairie), and rich soil, make the area eminently suitable for agricultural production.

The property being considered consists of the 11.6-acre parcel of land that contains the headquarters complex of the Frederick A. and Sophia Bagg Bonanza Farm. Included within the complex are buildings and structures associated with the domestic living arrangements of the Bagg family and the farm employees, as well as agricultural outbuildings. During the period of significance, Bagg owned and farmed thousands of acres of land surrounding this building complex. From his headquarters, agricultural land extended to the horizon, broken only by the section line roads that divided the country into a checkerboard pattern, and by the buildings of scattered adjacent farms and of Mooreton. Although the variety of crops grown in the area has increased and changed since the period of significance, the land surrounding the building complex remains in agricultural production.

The Bagg Farm complex is located directly adjacent to the gravel road constructed along the north-south section line that divides Sections 17 and 18 of Mooreton Township (T132N/R49W of the 5th Principal Meridian). The pattern of building roads along section lines dominates the region, and the road was already in place prior to the beginning of Bagg's active use of the site as his headquarters in 1915. Historically, this section line road provided the primary access to and through the complex; improvements were located on both sides of the road. West of the section line road, an unnamed intermittent tributary of Antelope Creek, dammed in two places to form stock ponds, meandered through a barnyard at the west edge of the building complex. Slightly farther north from the ponds, a band of trees (mostly box elder trees) occupied an abandoned channel of this intermittent drainage. This stand of native vegetation would have restricted the view from the complex to the northwest; views from the building complex to the west, south and east would have been open, restricted only by the maturing crops during the summer growing season.

Description of the building complex

Historic Physical Appearance

The site Frederick Bagg selected for his bonanza farm headquarters contained three buildings. The buildings had been present since at least 1910, and included the Foreman's House and a north-south oriented cattle barn at

the west edge of the complex, both located on the west side of the section road that divided Section 18 from Section 17. A granary (now known as the mule barn) stood on the east side of the section road.[1] When Bagg moved to the site in 1915 he took with him several of the Downing Farm buildings, which composed a portion of his compensation package for years of service to his uncle. He placed the Downing Farm bunkhouse, originally built around 1882, on a foundation and began using it as the Main House of the Bagg Farm—living in it with his wife and six children and with maids and seasonal help. Hired cooks worked in the kitchen of the Main House and served all farm meals in the adjoining dining room. Other Downing Farm buildings moved to the Bagg Farm at this time included a barn, four machine sheds, a bunk house, and a small grain elevator.

After establishing his farm, Bagg gradually modified his operations and improved and expanded the farm infrastructure. Specific dates of construction or importation do not exist for most buildings, but most expansion occurred before 1930, though future archeological investigation may provide important clues to the construction, importation and use of these buildings. By 1930, the Bagg Bonanza Farm building complex consisted of 26 buildings on the west side of the section road. The granary that existed on the site in 1910 was probably the only building on the east side of the road at that time. West of the road, the complex included the Main House, the Foreman's House/Office, the bunk house, the out house, a storage shed, the laundry, the supply house, the cold storage house, the electrical/refrigeration plant (also used for storage), the mule barn, the cattle barn, four chicken houses, two hog houses, a feed storage building, a circular granary, a grain elevator, a combination machine shed/hog house, two machine sheds, a combination garage/machine shed, a combination tool shop/garage, and the blacksmith shop.[2] Besides the two that existed on the west side of the access road in 1910, only one of these buildings, a hog house, was built on site.[3] In 1932, Bagg moved the "buildings from [the] Lenzen Farm" onto his property. These buildings, which Bagg placed on the east side of the access road by the granary, included a one-and-one-half story frame house and probably also included the three other buildings that were present on the east side of the road by the mid-1930s (now known as two granaries and the sheep barn).[4] Around the same time, Bagg moved the laundry building to a new location west of the electrical/refrigeration plant, and purchased an oil storage shed which he put north of the feed storage building.[5] Bagg maintained several buildings within the town of Mooreton for farm use—he built a two-story seed house there and purchased an elevator for storage of grain.[6]

Present Physical Appearance

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[1] Claudia Beeson, *Early History of Mooreton Township* (Wahpeton, ND: Richland County Historical Society, 1974), 9; Midland Atlas Company, *Atlas of Richland County North Dakota*, 33; Marty Perry, "Bagg Bonanza Farm, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form" (Bismarck, ND: North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, 1985), map 2; Richard Arenstein, Map of Bagg Bonanza Farm in "The Bagg Bonanza Farm" (Bagg Bonanza Farm, Mooreton, North Dakota, [1990?], promotional brochure). The National Register of Historic Places nomination states that the dwelling that existed on the property in 1910 was removed in 1915, but maps indicate it became the Foreman's House.

[2] J. P. Reeder Insurance Agency, F. A. Bagg Farm Map, 17 Sept. 1930, Bagg Bonanza Farm District file, North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Bismarck.

[3] Perry "Bagg Bonanza Farm, National Register of Historic Places Nomination," Sec. 7, p. 5.

[4] Ella Bagg Egenes, handwritten notes, Bagg Bonanza Farm Collection; Perry, "Bagg Bonanza Farm, National Register of Historic Places Nomination," Section 7, p. 1; Arenstein, Map of Bagg Bonanza Farm.

[5] J. P. Reeder Insurance Agency, F. A. Bagg Farm Map; Aerial Photograph of Bagg Bonanza Farm [1935?] (Bagg Bonanza Farm, Mooreton, North Dakota).

[6] Egenes, handwritten notes.

Extant historic buildings and structures associated with the Bagg Farm include the main house; foreman's house; icehouse/butcher shed; bunkhouse; laundry; chicken house; blacksmith shop; feed storage; oil storage; garage/shop; machine sheds; sheep barn; mule barn; granaries; section line road; outhouse; and a concrete walk. Historic objects include a scale and a hoist. Foundations of the massive horse/mule barn, machine shed, hog barn, and cold storage house – all removed in the modern period - remain visible and are classified below as contributing sites. Although no archeological survey has been completed to date, in the future, archeological investigations of the property may yield important information about the construction and use of the buildings. In addition archeological information could tell us much more (and in greater detail) about the spatial organization and circulation of the property through time than by using just what is above ground, as well as identify small scale features, objects, vegetation, like wells privies and trash dumps that are no longer visible above ground.

Spatial Organization

The spatial organization of the building complex represents an orderly approach to site layout. The majority of the buildings are located west of the section line road with a few agricultural buildings located east of the road. On the west side of the road, Bagg used the front (east) edge of the foreman's dwelling (which was already on site in 1915) as a point of reference for aligning buildings that he subsequently moved onto the site. The result is that the east walls of the first row of buildings on the west side of the road are aligned north to south. Similarly, on the east side of the road, the west walls of the four remaining agricultural buildings are aligned north to south. This linear pattern of building placement is repeated at the south end of the complex, where machine sheds and other outbuildings were placed to form regular east - west oriented rows within the complex.

Historically, all of the residential buildings were located towards the north end of the complex. The most important of these was the former Downing farm bunkhouse, moved to the site in 1915. This building served a variety of purposes. The front (east) half of the first floor contained the private living quarters for the Bagg family, while permanent farm employees were housed in the dormer rooms in the half story. A large kitchen and a communal dining room for feeding hired hands were located at the rear of the building. A cold storage house and a building housing a refrigeration (ice-making) plant were located outside the rear door of the main house – conveniently close to the kitchen. Four chicken houses, presumably a source of eggs and poultry for use by the farm's cooks, were distributed in a rough arc northwest of the main house. A garden area, demarcated by a fence on the south and a row of lilacs on the north, was also located north of the main house. The foreman's house, with its attached office, was located south of the main house, and a laundry building lay roughly equidistant between these two buildings; a bunkhouse for hired hands slightly farther south. These buildings represented the domestic/residential hub of the building complex.

Buildings used for the care and maintenance of livestock as well as a blacksmith shop occupied the area adjacent to the west and south sides of the residential building cluster. These included horse and dairy cattle barns, hog houses and a silo. Fences (some post and board, some post and wire), enclosed most of the area between the western-most hog house, the cattle barn, the mule barn and the southern two hog houses – forming a barnyard to control livestock housed in each of these buildings.

Farther south were the machine sheds (for storing and repairing machinery) while a large granary marked the southwest corner of the built improvements within the headquarters complex. Beyond the machine sheds lay a "bone yard," an area used for storing and discarding materials and implements.[7] Additional grain storage and

[7] The bone yard has been removed.

stock buildings, as well as a residence, were found on the east side of the road.

Circulation

Circulation patterns within the district appear to have developed through use rather than through deliberate planning. The main access into the domestic area at the north end of the complex was from the section line road. An irregular loop road, beginning and ending at the section line road, encircled the foreman's house, providing access to both this building and the south side of the main house. Presumably, a pullout from this access road led to the scale south of the foreman's house. Another road led into the rear of the complex from the west. This road branched straight south from a section line road constructed along the north boundary of Section 18, and then turned east, leading past the north wall of the dairy cattle barn. Judging from aerial photographs, this was a constructed road built through the seasonal drainage; a substantial pond formed on its upstream side. Another short through-road provided access to the east side of the mule barn and the north row of machine sheds. A path led from this interior access road south into the bone yard where it split into several branches.

Access systems into the agricultural buildings and the residence located east of the section line road was also informal. The only definite path discernable from aerial photographs is a narrow track that led from the section line road at the south edge of the complex, northeast past the southeast corner of the sheep barn to the rear of that building. A short spur led from the section line road into the area just south of the residence.

There is little remaining evidence of the pedestrian paths that would have linked the various activity areas within the building complex. The exception is a 30-inch wide concrete walk that extends from the front of the main house to its north-side entrance. This walk connected the two entrances used by the Bagg family to access their private quarters.

Buildings and Structures

The buildings and structures remaining within the district represent the most important resource associated with the site. For the most part, the buildings located within the complex are folk-style buildings, with simple plans and little architectural detail. Although many are larger than the buildings typically found on small family farms, their exterior appearance and materials are typical of the vernacular architecture of the area, reflecting regional styles and material availability. All of the historical buildings are of wood-frame construction and are finished with prefabricated materials, including beveled clapboard and drop-lap siding on the walls and sawn cedar shingles on the roofs. Most have simple rectangular or L-shaped plans, and the roofs without exception have enclosed eaves. The restored residential buildings are painted white, while the restored outbuildings, including the barns and machine sheds, are painted "barn" red with white trim. (For purposes of description and resource counts, the foundations that remain from some of the removed buildings are classified as sites.)

Main house, 84' x 30' (restored, good condition, contributing building): The main house is one of the most important buildings on site. This large building, originally designed as a bunkhouse for the Downing farm, functioned as the Bagg residence when moved to its present location in 1915. Its size, particularly its length, distinguishes this building from the other residential buildings located in the complex. It is one and a half stories in height, but appears taller because it is constructed over a full basement of pressed concrete blocks. The exterior walls are covered with clapboard siding applied four inches to the weather, with vertical corner board trim. The front-gable roof is covered with sawn shingles. The roof has enclosed eaves with very little overhang, five dormers on both its north and south sides, and two interior brick chimneys. Each of the dormers corresponds to a separate room in the half story. For the most part, the windows in the building are double-

hung with wood sashes. Most are two-over-two light, excepting the windows in the front porch, which are one-over-one-light, with two-light hopper windows in the basement.

The facade has an open porch with a half-hipped roof supported by four square posts with simple decorative notching. The porch is enclosed on three sides with a railing that has a beveled top rail, plain bottom rail and square balusters. An opening in the railing between the two middle roof posts leads to the wide entry stair. Handrails extend along both sides of the stair, from the roof posts at the top to newel posts at the bottom. This porch shelters the entrance into the Bagg family quarters. This entrance is offset to the left of center; a single window opening is located on either side of the entrance.

The rear of the building has an enclosed porch – also with a half-hipped roof – which provides direct access to the kitchen from a door in its south wall. An open landing with steps on both the east and west sides provides access to this entry. A railing, similar in design to that found on the front steps, protects the landing and the steps on each side. Two additional enclosures extend from the west wall of the porch. The enclosure on the north half of the wall is a simple shed-roofed vestibule with a door in its west wall. The enclosure on the south half of the wall sits atop a basement entrance that extends from the main building foundation. It has a shallow gable roof and only a single small window on its north wall.

Small, enclosed porches are also found in the approximate middle of the north and south walls. The porch on the north wall shelters the entrance to the Bagg family's private kitchen. The porch on the south side shelters the farm hands' entrance to the dining room and also leads to an interior stairway to the half-story bedrooms in the east end of the building.

The character of the interior space of this building is important to understanding the historical use of the site. The building contains twenty rooms, and the interior space is clearly divided between the Bagg family's private quarters, which occupied about two-thirds of the first floor, and the space dedicated to the feeding and housing of farm employees. The Bagg quarters included a living room and dining room, four bedrooms, a small private family kitchen (remodeled in the 1940s). A door separates the Bagg family quarters from the farm kitchen, cook's quarters and men's dining room at the rear of the building. The long dining room accommodates board tables with bench seats; a small window in the wall separating the dining room from the kitchen, allowed the cook staff to keep track of what the men needed in the dining room. The kitchen is also distinctive for its size, with a large central table for food preparation and an oversized oven. In the half story, an interior wall in the central hallway divides the area roughly in half; women occupied the rooms in the west half of the floor, using a stairway at the north end of the hall, while male employees occupied rooms in the east half of the floor, which they accessed from a stairway in the middle of the building. In the east half of the floor, a wire is strung along the wall at about the level of the top of the doors. This wire allowed men to feel their way to the exit stair at night, as there were no light fixtures.

The main house contains a large collection of domestic objects that survive from the Baggs' occupation. Some were built by the Baggs' son Roy, including an oil-burning kitchen range fabricated of discarded sheet metal. The artifact collection in this house as well as in other restored buildings on site, contribute to the overall integrity of the complex and assists in clearly representing character-defining features of bonanza farms (see Integrity, below).

Foreman's House, 24' x 33' (restored, good condition, contributing building): Although the foreman's house was located at the site prior to the time that Bagg began to develop the complex, the materials used in the building are similar to those in the main house. The exterior walls of this wood-frame building are covered with clapboard siding placed four inches to weather, with narrow vertical board trim at the corners. It is

constructed on a low concrete foundation wall and has an L-shaped plan composed of a front-gabled one-and-one-half story component, with a one-story wing extending from its west wall. The gable roof of the wing intersects the west wall of the main component; the roofs of both components are covered with sawn wooden shingles. The building has one-over-one-light double-hung windows with wooden sashes, and plain board casings topped with decorative crown molding. The two doorways in the building are trimmed in a like manner.

The front (east) side has an open shed-roof porch supported by four square posts, which have the same notching detail as the porch posts in the main house. This porch shelters a central entrance that is flanked on either side by a single window. A second entrance is located in the rear wing at the west end of its south wall. This entrance is accessed from an open wooden stoop, with a simple board handrail.

Like the main house, the interior of this building is also important to understanding its function. The front (east) component contained the living quarters for the farm's foreman, while the rear wing contained the farm office. There is no internal connection between the living quarters and the office space; rather, each was accessed separately from its own entrance. It should also be noted that the entrance to the office is directly opposite the wagon scale, reflecting the direct connection between commodities produced and purchased and the business of farming. The connection is also reflected in the original artifacts that fill the office, from the original desk and wood filing cabinets, to ledgers, journals, and other office equipment. As with the domestic artifacts found in the main house, these resources contribute to the significance of the site.

Bunkhouse, 48' x 24' (restored 2002, contributing building): The employee bunkhouse is also similar in construction, style and materials to the other two residential buildings on site. Like the foreman's house, the bunkhouse has an L-shaped plan consisting of a one-and-one-half story component with a one-story wing. The exterior surface coverings include clapboard on the walls (four inches to weather) and wood shingles on the roof. The ridgeline of the wing intersects the roof of the other component just above the eave line. The top of an interior brick chimney and two wooden ventilators protrude from the ridgeline of the wing. Original windows appear to have been double-hung, but most of the glazing has been lost. The window openings had plain board casings. The only entrance into this building is in the west wall of the wing. This door led to a communal activity area; sleeping quarters were located in the adjacent component.

Ice House/Butcher Shed, 16' x 28' (exterior restored, interior adapted for reuse, good condition, contributing building): The ice house is located just outside the rear door of the main house. This is a one-and-one-half story rectangular building constructed on a concrete foundation wall with a gable roof. The building is insulated with sawdust, held in place by an interior wall made of narrow, tongue-and-groove boards similar to hardwood flooring. The exterior walls are finished with clapboard siding and narrow corner board trim, and the roof with wood shingles. Like the main house, this building has very shallow enclosed eaves; the single distinguishing roof feature is a wooden ventilator with a pyramidal roof. Window openings contain six-light fixed windows and have plain board casings, sills and moldings.

The east wall has an entrance at the south edge of the wall with a single window adjacent to the north side. In the north wall, the ground floor has a central entrance with a board-and-batten door and a single window east of the door. A small door accesses the half story. The west wall has three window openings, two of which have single sashes and one of which contains two sashes. The south wall contains a large entrance with a double, vertical-board door. An iron bar, attached to a post nailed to the exterior of the building, pivots outward from the wall. Ice tongs and meat hooks are attached to the bar.

The interior of this building consists of a single large room with a concrete floor. The compressor from the

refrigeration plant remains inside the building near the north wall.

When F. A. Bagg moved this building to the site in 1915, he used it for making and storing ice and for butchering. The latter function occurred in the south half of the building; the overhead bar outside the south entrance likely was used for hanging carcasses. Originally, the building contained few windows, however, in the 1940s or 1950s Roy Bagg cut the three openings in the west wall. During restoration and rehabilitation of the building in the 1990s, shutters were added to the interior of the west windows to partially disguise this modification: the shutters are made of the same tongue-and-groove hardwood as the original interior wall, and have hidden hinges. When they are shut, the west wall appears as it did prior to the modification made by Roy Bagg.

Laundry Building, 16' x 12' (restored, good condition, contributing building): The laundry building is a small, rectangular building supported by pre-cast concrete piers. The exterior walls are covered with drop-lap siding with vertical corner board trim and the gable roof is covered with wood shingles. The window openings contain two-over-two-light double-hung sashes, with board casings and sills.

The façade (north) has an entrance offset left of center, with a four-panel wooden door. The east and west (side) walls each have a central window, and the south (rear) wall has a window adjacent to the west edge of the wall.

Restoration of this building in recent years included relocating it to its original location, equidistant between the three residential buildings. It is currently used to house various generations of washing machines, for interpretive purposes. The machines are original to the Bagg Farm.

Privy, 8' x 8' (restored, good condition, contributing building): One of two outhouses remaining at the site, this building is located adjacent to the northwest corner of the main house. It is a small rectangular building with a gable roof. Exterior walls are finished with drop-lap siding with corner board trim and the roof is covered with wood shingles. The four-panel wood door is located on the south wall, and the east and west walls each have a single two-light fixed window. The door and windows have board casings.

Chicken House, 16' x 10' (un-restored, poor condition, contributing structure): This small structure is located northwest from the main house, at the edge of the abandoned drainage channel. It has a rectangular plan consisting of a gable roof component with a shed-roof addition on the west wall. The exterior walls are covered with clapboard siding with corner board trim and the roof is covered with wood shingles. A hole in the roof indicates the former location of a stovepipe. There are two entries into the building, one in the south wall and one in the east wall. Neither entry contains a door. Windows line the north and west elevations, a typical chicken house design that provides passive heat to the animals.

Interior walls are finished with lath and plaster, a deluxe finish that stands in contrast to most rough-frame poultry facilities yet conforms to agricultural extension service recommendations to prepare "comfortable quarters . . . for fowls. The old houses . . . should be lathed and plastered."[8] The small addition on the rear of the building contains an elevated shelf – probably for perches.

Blacksmith Shop, 32' x 20' (restored, good condition, contributing building): The blacksmith shop is located at

[8] Bryon D. Halsted, ed., *Barns, Sheds, and Outbuildings. Placement Design and Construction* (Chambersburg, PA: Alan C. Hood & Co., Inc., 1994. First published 1881 by the O. Judd Co.), 100.

the west edge of the residential cluster, just east of the unnamed intermittent tributary of Antelope Creek. It is a one-and-one-half-story building with a side-gable roof constructed on a concrete foundation wall. Like the majority of the outbuildings on site, its exterior walls are covered with drop-lap siding and have corner board trim. The steep gable roof is covered with wooden shingles, and the top of an interior brick chimney protrudes from the north end of the ridgeline. The windows in this building have six-over-six-light double-hung sashes, with board casings and sills. The east and west walls each have a large central entrance with a window on either side. These entrances contain double doors that slide along a top rail. The south wall also has a ground floor double entry and two windows in the half story. The doors in this side, however, are hinged at the sides. The north wall has two windows in both the ground floor and the half story.

The interior of the blacksmith shop consists of a single open room with unfinished walls, which still contains the forge, tools and materials for smithing. This material is original to the Bagg Farm.

Blacksmith Shop Privy, 8' x 8' (un-restored, poor condition, contributing building): The blacksmith shop privy lies behind the supply house, adjacent to the north edge of the blacksmith shop. This small wood-frame building is covered on the exterior with brick-pattern pressed metal siding. The gable roof is covered with wood shingles.

Supply House, 24' x 14' (un-restored, poor condition, contributing building): The supply house is located directly adjacent to the north side of the blacksmith shop. This frame building has a gable roof and is constructed on a concrete foundation wall. Exterior wall surfaces are covered with drop-lap siding and the roof with wood shingles; both materials are beginning to fail. The only openings in this building are in the east wall, which contains three pedestrian entries, two at the south end of the wall and one at the north end of the wall.

The 1981 National Register Nomination form lists this building as a post-1940 addition to the blacksmith shop. However, it matches the dimensions of the "supply house" shown on the 1930 J. P. Reeder Insurance Company map of the Bagg farm – a building used to store all of the tools and materials used in the blacksmith shop – and should be counted as a separate contributing resource.

Garage /Machine shed, 20' x 48' (restored, good condition, contributing building): The combination garage/machine shed is located east of the bunkhouse. This large rectangular building has a gable roof and is constructed on a concrete foundation wall. The exterior walls are covered with beveled clapboard siding with corner board trim, and the roof has wood shingles. Windows throughout the building are six-over-six-light double-hung, with plain board casings and sills. The north wall contains two garage bays at the west end of the wall, each of which contains a glazed and paneled overhead garage door. A single window is located adjacent to the east side of the garage bays. On the west wall, a pedestrian entry is offset left of center. The ground floor and the gabled end each have a central window. The south wall contains two windows evenly spaced within the west half of the wall and an entrance offset slightly right of center. This entrance leads to the part of the building used for a machine shed. On the east wall, a pair of sliding doors fills the ground floor, and there are two windows in the gable end. The south door slides beyond the south edge of the building on an overhead track.

The interior has two rooms – the west room is used as the garage, and the east room as the machine shed. Neither is finished on the interior. Built as a machine shop, the building was rehabilitated for use as a garage in the 1920s for the Bagg family cars.

Oil storage shed, 8' x 16' (restored, good condition, contributing structure): The oil storage shed is a small, rectangular, gable-roofed structure, covered on the exterior walls and roof with wood shingles. The walls have

corner board trim, and the windows and doors have plain board casings. The east (front) wall contains an entrance with a vertical board door offset slightly left of center. The south (side) wall has two windows, one at each end of the wall. The interior contains a single room with a board floor and unfinished walls.

Feed storage shed, 14' x 16' (restored, good condition, contributing structure): The feed storage shed is a one-story, rectangular structure with a gable roof, built on pre-cast concrete piers. The exterior walls are covered with drop-lap siding and vertical corner boards and the roof with sawn wood shingles. The east (front) wall has an entrance set at the south edge of the wall, with a board and batten door. The entrance, which does not extend to the bottom of the wall, is accessed via a wooden stoop. The north wall contains a shuttered window opening, centered high in the wall. The building has been mislabeled with an interpretive sign written 'Oil Shed.'

The 1981 National Register nomination lists this structure as an iron storage shed. However, it matches the dimensions (14' x 16') and placement of a building described as a "feed storage" shed on the 1930 insurance map. This historic designation is retained in this NHL nomination.

Machine Sheds, 30' x 45' and 39' x 45' (one previously restored, one restored in 2002, good condition, 2 contributing buildings): Two of the machine sheds moved from the Downing farm remain on site. These are large, one and one-half story, rectangular buildings with gable roofs constructed on concrete foundation walls. The exterior walls are covered with drop-lap siding and the roofs with cedar shingles. The east walls of both buildings contain a large vehicular opening filled with a pair of X-braced board and batten doors. The east walls of the buildings extend past the ends of the north and south walls, a design that accommodates the overhead rail, upon which the machine doors slide. The west walls contain slightly smaller vehicular entrances, with vertical board doors that slide along an overhead rail. The north and south walls each contain two six-over-six-light double-hung windows with board casings and sills. Both of the machine sheds contain a single open, unfinished room.

Sheep Barn, 56' x 52' (restored, good condition, contributing building): The sheep barn, located east of the section line road is a large rectangular building constructed on a concrete foundation wall. The exterior walls are covered with drop-lap siding with vertical corner board trim, and the roofs are covered with sawn shingles. It consists of a central gable roof component with lean-to wings on the north and south walls. Window openings in the clerestory contain six-light fixed sashes with board casings and sills; the north and south (side) walls each contain three evenly spaced openings and the east (rear) and west (front) walls each have a single, central opening. On the ground floor, the west (front) and east (rear) walls contain large central openings with double vertical-board doors that slide sideways along an overhead rail. On the west wall, each of the wings contain a small window opening with a four-light fixed sash. The interior of the sheep barn consists of a single open space with a dirt floor.

Mule Barn, 40' x 28' (restored, good condition, contributing building):[9] The mule barn is located adjacent to the north side of the sheep barn. It has a rectangular plan formed by a one and one-half story gable-roof component with a one-story shed-roof wing on its south side. It is constructed on a concrete foundation wall and, like the majority of the outbuildings at this site, is finished on the exterior with drop-lap siding with vertical corner board trim. Window openings contain four-light fixed sashes with plain board casings and sills on the exterior.

[9] First used as a granary, and identified as such on the National Register nomination it was converted to use as a mule barn during the period of significance.

The north wall contains a pedestrian entry with a vertical board door in the center of the wall. The west wall contains four windows, evenly spaced across the wall at the ground floor. In addition, there are two hay doors in the half-story (each with vertical board doors hinged at the side), and another window in the gable end just below the ridgeline. On the east wall, two, double stock doors fill the ground floor of the shed-roof wing; the gable roof component has three evenly spaced windows at the ground floor level and a hay door in the half story.

On the inside of this building, board partitions divide the east and west walls into three stalls – each of which has its own window. A central corridor leads to the rear of the building where the shed roof component contains a single open room. Horses were brought into the barn from the openings in the south end of the east wall. The half story provides space for hay storage.

Large Granary, 16' x 40' (restored, good condition, contributing structure):[10] The large granary, located north of the mule barn, is a one-story structure with a rectangular plan constructed on pre-cast concrete piers. The west, north and east walls are covered with drop-lap siding, while the south wall is covered with shingles. The walls are finished with vertical corner boards, and the roof is covered with sawn shingles. Fenestration is limited to a doorway and two shuttered window openings in the south wall. The entrance contains a vertical board door and the window shutters are made of shiplap boards.

Small Granary, 10' x 14' (restored, good condition, contributing structure):[11] This small structure is located north of the larger granary. It is built on a concrete foundation wall and has a rectangular plan with a gable roof. The exterior walls are covered with drop-lap siding with vertical corner board trim. Window openings contain four-light, fixed sashes; both the door and window openings have plain board casings on the exterior. The door is located on the west side.

Scale/Balance (restored, contributing structure): The balance, used for weighing wagons, is located opposite the door to the office at the rear of the foreman's house. The scale or dish of the balance consists of a plank platform, with hinged trap doors that lead to the portion of the mechanism below ground. The weights and measure are located at the edge of the scale.

Hoist (contributing structure): The hoist is located in front of the supply house. This structure consists of two upright steel I-beams planted in the ground, with a third, crossbeam across the top.

Cold Storage House Foundation, 14' x 17' (contributing site): The concrete slab floor of the old cold storage house is located adjacent to the northwest corner of the main house, between that building and the ice house.

Horse/Mule Barn Foundation, 128' x 36' (contributing site): The massive substructure was removed from this concrete foundation wall in the 1990s. The area inside the foundation wall has been cleared of debris and reseeded with grass.

Machine Shed/Hog House Foundation, 80' x 28' (contributing site): The concrete foundation wall for the combination machine shed/hog house measures roughly 80 feet by 28 feet. The area inside the foundation is used to store old machinery and materials, including the two wooden ventilators salvaged from the mule barn.

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[10] Identified as a shed on the National Register nomination.

[11] Identified as a shed on the National Register nomination.

Hog House/Barn Foundation, 20' x 60' (contributing site): This foundation measures about 20 feet by 60 feet. Like the machine shed/hog house foundation, the area inside the foundation is used to store old farm equipment and materials.

Dairy Barn Foundation, 40' x 34' (contributing structure): The dairy barn, in a state of collapse, was torn down in 1999. Approximately one-half of the foundation remains visible.

Roy Bagg Machine Shed (modern, noncontributing building): The machine shed (currently used to house concessions), is located between the laundry building and the bunkhouse. It is a prefabricated metal building, built by Roy Bagg in 1961. It is constructed on a concrete slab; the walls as well as the shallow gable roof are covered with standing seam metal siding. The east (front) wall contains a large garage door opening as well as a pedestrian entrance. A wood-frame addition on the rear of the building, built in 1991, houses the restrooms.

Ticket Booth (modern, noncontributing building): This small, wood-frame building is located near the west edge of the section line road, adjacent to the access road that leads to the Roy Bagg machine shed. The exterior walls are covered with plywood, and there is a door and a shuttered window opening in the north wall.

Pony Truss Bridge (noncontributing structure): A small pony truss bridge has been placed over the intermittent drainage on the northwest edge of the building complex. This structure is not original to the site, having been moved from the Danny Thompson Farm, Wyndmere Township, where it had been slated for demolition.

Vegetation

Other than the agricultural vegetation that surrounded the building complex, the character of site vegetation during the period of significance is difficult to determine. A few native trees (possibly box elder), appear to have been located near the intermittent drainage channel at the rear of the complex, however, the site lacked more formal vegetative plantings such as ornamental lawn trees and flower gardens. There are reports that the sheep were used to keep the grass trimmed in the vicinity of the main house, however, much of the remainder of the site – especially that area south of the bunkhouse – was incorporated into a series of corrals and barnyards and heavily impacted by livestock.

Overall, there appears to have been little ornamental vegetation on site during the period of significance. Historic photographs of the area in the vicinity of the main house show that the area was seeded with some type of grass, but that there were no flowerbeds adjacent to either the main house or the foreman's house. The one exception is the lilac hedge at the north end of the vegetable garden. Historically, the vegetable garden was fenced on the south and east sides, with the lilac hedge to the north. Although the hedge is decorative, it may also have served to protect the garden from the wind. This lack of vegetation was deliberately planned by Bagg, as a means of increasing wind flow through the site, thereby reducing the volume of flies and, to a lesser degree, mosquitoes that tormented the farm animals and human residents.

Today, the site contains more ornamental vegetation than during the period of significance. Perennials have been planted adjacent to the main house, the foreman's house, the laundry building and the icehouse. In addition, the majority of the building site, including the surface of the intermittent drainage, has been seeded in grass. Other modern additions include a perennial bed, located in the lawn east of the main house. This oval-shaped area has a decorative concrete brick edging and contains several birdhouses.

Small-scale Features and Objects

Historically, the building complex contained a variety of small-scale features, perhaps the most important of which were the fences that defined the internal organization of the buildings complex. Fences defined the barnyards and corrals, as well as the garden space and channeled movement through the building area. Fence types included post-and-wire, vertical board, and horizontal board. All of the original fencing has been removed from the site; the only extant fencing is a segment of chain link that extends along the west side of the section line road.

One important historical feature that does remain is the kitchen bell, rung to alert farm hands that meals were being served (*contributing object*). The bell is mounted atop a post outside the porch at the west end of the south wall of the main house. In addition, a few modern, noncontributing features have been added to the site, including a flagpole and modern sign (*2 noncontributing objects*).

Statement of Integrity[12]

Bonanza Farm Characteristics

- Located on western lands where soil conditions and consolidated land ownership (generally railroad-grant or reservation land) facilitated acquisition and cultivation of large tracts
- Large number of seasonal laborers, and associated housing facilities
- Large volume of animal and/or machine labor, and associated shelter facilities
- Increased diversification, post 1890, and associated diversity in crop and animal storage/shelter facilities
- Substantial operating capital, often from an outside venture
- Large acreage, and associated agricultural/rural setting
- Planned development, with focus on scientific agricultural principles and efficient production, and associated orderly spatial arrangements of farm buildings, structures, and sites.

The headquarters complex of the Frederick A. and Sophia Bagg Bonanza Farm retains the high degree of integrity required for NHL listing. Although the large land base has been dispersed in the modern period, the setting remains rural and agricultural, with cultivated fields extending to the horizon. Non agricultural and modern improvements visible from the building complex are generally consistent with those found during the historic period and include, most notably, the town of Mooreton, centered around the Northern Pacific tracks to the north, and the modern buildings marking the location of the historic Downing Farm headquarters two miles to the east. Interstate 29, running north to south seven miles east of the building complex, is only barely visible and does not disrupt the expanse of level, fertile, productive land. In addition, the building complex as a whole retains exceptional integrity of design. Sufficient buildings of diverse size and function remain to clearly convey a sense of historic land use – both type and scale - and the orderly development patterns typical of bonanza farming endeavors. Although it is unfortunate that some of the important agricultural buildings have been lost, overall, the critical organizational elements of the complex are still discernible in the remaining buildings, structures, and building foundations. The site therefore retains integrity of setting, feeling, design, and association.

[12] The integrity of this site was evaluated according to the "character-defining features" delineated for bonanza farms.

At a smaller scale, the buildings themselves retain excellent integrity of materials, workmanship, and design – the result of the successful restoration efforts undertaken by the Bagg Bonanza Farm Historic Preservation Society. Most buildings have been restored to their historical appearance according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation, and currently possess integrity of materials, workmanship and design. Provisions for accommodating character-defining features of bonanza farms – a large transient labor force, use of labor-saving machinery (both fossil-fuel and animal powered), and the need to effectively manage and account for large capital expenditures and receipts – are clearly represented in the interiors and exteriors of the extant buildings and in the artifact collection. The main house, retaining the historic-period floor plan/division of use and many original fixtures and furnishings, is particularly significant. It demonstrates both a classic characteristic of bonanza farms – a large labor force requiring room and board – and also the Bagg Farm's most notable deviation from this pattern – the absence of a grand, physically distinct owners' residence.

Spatial Organization Summary

The portion of the site devoted to residential and domestic functions has changed little since the historical period. All of the important residential buildings as well as many of those designed to support the farm kitchen and Bagg household remain standing. Removal of some of the agricultural buildings, however, such as the dairy barn (only the foundation of which remains), the silo, as well as all of the buildings associated with the keeping of hogs, limits one's understanding of the complexity of the farm operation. That said, several of the buildings dedicated to machinery maintenance as well as the livestock and grain storage buildings east of the section line road remain. Overall, the historical spatial organization of the site remains apparent and contributes to the eligibility of the resource.

Circulation – Summary

With the exception of the primary access road into the site, the historical circulation patterns within the district have been obscured by subsequent development. Today, most of the area surrounding the buildings is planted in grass, which obscures the old loop access road. A new road into the complex leads from the section line road almost straight west to the front of the concession building. One circulation feature that does remain is the concrete walk associated with the main house. This should be considered a contributing circulation feature.

Buildings and Structures – Summary

Although a few of the important agricultural buildings have been removed from the site, the buildings that remain are critical to understanding the scope of Bagg's farming operation. For purposes of this nomination, the configuration of interior space is as important as exterior appearance, in conveying building use and function. The remaining buildings retain integrity of materials, workmanship and design.

Vegetation – Summary

The lilac hedge appears to be the only ornamental vegetative landscape feature remaining from the period of significance. The single Russian olive tree that grows by the edge of the supply house is not known to date to the period of significance.

Summary of Contributing and Noncontributing Resources

Contributing Buildings

Main house
Foreman's house
Icehouse/butcher shed
Privy
Bunkhouse
Laundry
Blacksmith shop
Blacksmith supply house
Blacksmith shop privy
Garage/shop
North machine shed
South machine shed
Sheep barn
Mule barn
Large granary
Small granary
Feed storage building
Oil storage building

Contributing Structures

Chicken house
Section line road
Concrete walk associated with main house
Balance/scale
Hoist
Cold storage foundation
Dairy Barn foundation
Horse/mule barn foundation
Hog house foundation
Machine shed/ hog house foundation

Contributing Object

Kitchen bell

Noncontributing Buildings

Concession/Restroom
Ticket booth

Noncontributing Structures

Internal access road
Pony truss bridge

Noncontributing Objects

Flagpole
Interpretive Sign

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

NHL Criteria: 1

NHL Theme(s): V. Developing the American Economy
1. extraction and production
4. workers and work culture

VI. Expanding Science and Technology
2. technological applications

Areas of Significance: Agriculture

Period(s) of Significance: 1897-1935

Significant Dates: 1897, 1913, 1915, 1917, 1932, 1933, 1935

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Frederick Austin Bagg

Historic Contexts: X. Westward Expansion of the British Colonies and the United States, 1763-1898
F. The Farmers' Frontier
4. Settling and Farming in the Great Plains, 1862-1900

XI. Agriculture
E. Mechanical Agriculture as Business Enterprise Beyond Self-Sufficiency 1820-

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Statement of Significance

Summary

The F. A. and Sophia Bagg Bonanza Farm is an exceptional example of a bonanza farm. Bonanza farms, or "farm factories," are significant components of our national agricultural history, representative of the importance of federal land policies, and of technological and scientific advances to American agricultural production, and the impact of American urbanization – concentrated markets for farm products – and transportation development on national settlement patterns. In 1963, the National Park Service identified the phenomenon of Bonanza Farming on the central plains within the larger context of American agricultural history.[13] The Frederick A. and Sophia Bagg Bonanza Farm is representative of the full range of this theme, from its genesis in the late nineteenth century through its evolution in the twentieth. By virtue of its significant association with pivotal events in American agricultural history, and by its standing as the most intact property associated with the theme (see comparative analysis, below), the Bagg Farm is eligible for National Historic Landmark designation under the themes "Developing the American Economy," and "Expanding Science and Technology" (NHL Criterion 1).

Historian Elwyn B. Robinson of the University of North Dakota defines Bonanza Farms as farms with "immense acreages,[14] the capital for large-scale operations, quantities of the latest agricultural machines, and a large transient labor force. They concentrated on wheat and brought something of the methods of mass production to farming."[15] In 1926, a visitor to a bonanza farm described "a business farm, an industrialized farm, a factory for the manufacture of wheat from the raw materials of the soil."[16] The owner of this same farm provided a similar description: "this farm is a factory . . . . It is operated on exactly the same principles of mass production, cost accounting, specialized machinery and skilled mechanical labor as any great industrial organization in this country."[17]

These factory farms stand not as the beginning of the modern era of industrialization and corporate ownership of American agriculture (modern agri-business), but rather as heir to a long-standing tradition of corporate farming that began in the colonial Piedmont, and continued in Southern cotton, sugar, and tobacco plantations and in the massive wheat farms of California. On the central plains at the end of the nineteenth century -- as in the antebellum South, as in California's great Central Valley in the wake of the gold rush -- *transportation*, *capital*, and *market* converged to reveal the inherently pecuniary aspects of American agriculture and to expose

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[13] NPS, *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier, Theme XVIIa, The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings.* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, 1963), 72-75.

[14] Most scholars more specifically define minimum acreage as 3,000 acres.

[15] Introduction to Hiram M. Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza: A History of Bonanza Farming in the Red River Valley of the North* (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1964), vii.

[16] Malcolm C. Cutting, "A Manufacturer of Wheat," *County Gentleman*, August 1926, quoted in Chere Jiusto, "Camp Four National Register of Historic Places Nomination," 1991, Section 8. On file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, Montana.

[17] Thomas Campbell, quoted in Ibid.

what historian Richard Hofstadter has termed the "agrarian myth." [18]
The bonanza farming phenomenon reminds us that while the "noncommercial, self-sufficient aspect of American farm life" has long formed the model of the ideal American domain, in fact the American farmer was "inspired to make money." Such self-sufficiency as he actually had was usually forced upon him by a lack of transportation - or markets - or by the necessity to save cash to expand his operation." [19]

Regardless of its veracity, the sentimental ideal of the self-sufficient farmer who lived on a small farm worked by his family had enormous political, social, and economic ramifications. Of most impact to the trans-Allegheny region, the agrarian myth formed the basis of a "strategy of continental development." The Louisiana Purchase, the Homestead Act, and protection of this region from slavery were all part of a deliberate effort to "establish an internal empire of small farms."[20] This effort largely failed, in part because it was founded on unrealistic expectations of farmers, in part because it denied the reality of western farming where land was abundant and water was scarce, and in part because the federal land system – apart from the Homestead Act – "fostered monopolization rather than individual ownership, large scale commercial farming rather than small scale self-sufficiency." Examples abound: the Timber and Stone Act, the Preemption laws, large-scale grants to private speculators (including *125 million acres* granted to the railroads). "Perhaps," authors of *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier* conclude, "the goals of national land distribution were unrealistic from the beginning."[21] Bonanza farms reveal this significant dichotomy between popular perception of historic agricultural patterns, and the historic fact of intense regional variations, as defined by variations in market, transportation network, and land mass.

Period of Significance

By 1915, when Frederick A. Bagg established the Bagg Farm, the Red River Valley had already experienced the first full wave of what today remains its period of most intense settlement and intense wealth production. This wave was initiated by the dispersal of Northern Pacific railroad grant lands in the 1870s and 1880s and ebbed with the return of drought and locust, the collapse of the national economy in 1893, and slumping wheat prices and rising land values that encouraged land sale. By ca. 1890 bonanza-farming practices were increasingly adjusted and modified to incorporate diverse crop production and an increased tendency towards owner occupancy and land bases below 10,000 acres. This later phase of the industry is most clearly represented by the Bagg Farm. During its period of use, the farm was owner-occupied. Crop production was focused on wheat yet included corn and sweet clover. Sheep and hogs were also raised. Land volume peaked at 7,000 acres.

When they established the Bagg Farm, Fred and Sophia Bagg had seen 25 wheat crops to harvest on the adjacent Downing bonanza farm, where Fred had served as foreman and Sophia as cook. To their new venture they brought not only these years of experience but also a bunkhouse (converted to the main residence), a

[18] Designation of the most intact of the historic Bonanza Farms as a National Historic Landmarks conforms to National Park Service goals to recognize historic places that represent the "multiplicity" of the human experience; that demonstrate the degree to which the three historical building blocks of "people, time, and place" cut across and connect historic themes; and that therefore increase our ability to understand the past in integrated ways. National Park Service, "History in the National Park Service, Themes and Concept; The National Park Service's Revised Thematic Framework" (Washington, D.C.: United Stated Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Park History Program, 2000), 3-5.

[19] Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Random House, 1955), 23.

[20] Ibid., 29.

[21] National Park Service, *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier,* 28.

second bunkhouse, a barn, four machine sheds, and a small grain elevator. These buildings Fred Bagg erected on land he had acquired by at least 1897. From these buildings, he would ultimately manage 7,000 acres – 2,000 of which had once been incorporated within the Downing Farm land base and had been acquired through inheritance or as payment for his years of service at the Downing Farm. The period of significance for the Bagg Farm therefore extends from 1897, when Fred Bagg purchased Section 18 (the current land base) until 1935 when the land base was divested and large-scale farming ceased. Significant dates include 1897, when Bagg first appears as the owner of record of Section 18; 1913, when Downing died and Bagg inherited land and buildings associated with the Downing farm; 1915, when the Bagg Family moved some of the Downing buildings to Section 18 and established its own farm; 1917, when the Downing estate was probated and Bagg received title to several thousand additional acres and also when Bagg bought his first gas-powered tractor and began the transition to mechanized farming; 1932, when Bagg moved the last of the contributing buildings onto the farmsite; 1933, when Sophia Bagg died and F. A. Bagg entered partial retirement; and 1935, when Bagg parceled out the majority of his lands to his children to start their own farms.

The Bagg Farm is not being evaluated under NHL Criterion Exception 2, moved buildings. Those resources moved from the Downing to the Bagg Farm were moved during the period of national significance and the fact of their removal, as legacy of Bagg's personal and financial connection to the Downing Farm, is integral to the site's history and significance.

As mentioned in the description and discussion of the Bagg Bonanza Farm resources, no formal archeological survey has been done at the property. However, in the future, archeology could add important information about the property through a research agenda which focuses on themes such as the farm's unique labor force and even broader themes such as agricultural development and the expansion of markets. There may be tools and other artifacts buried here that show the development of such themes through time.

Historic Context

Until well into the twentieth century, agriculture was the predominant industry in the United States. The majority of the population lived on farms and worked in agriculture, and agriculture formed the basis of the national economy and the national ideology and, to a large extent, formed federal policy. Scholars of the subject divide the history of agriculture into several distinct phases. A period of adaptation that followed the arrival of European settlers gave way to an entrenched American agriculture characterized by a general, if incomplete, commercial orientation and marked regional differentiation. The Market Revolution of the early 1800s reinforced the commercial bent of American agriculture, expanding access to markets in new areas and encouraging increased specialized production. Southern planters who had from the start engaged in large-scale staple-crop production, expanded their operations and increased their dependence on large numbers of enslaved African and Afro-American workers. As railroads and settlement spread westward, so too did opportunities for large-scale commercial agriculture in theretofore uncultivated regions, especially the vast, flat and treeless Great Plains. There, transportation, markets, technological improvements, and cheap land converged to create an agricultural boom. At the forefront of this boom were bonanza farms. Shareholders in the Northern Pacific Railroad were left with valueless stocks after the line's bankruptcy, and exchanging those stocks for railroad lands offered a way for investors to recoup their investments. Like large-scale planters in the south, bonanza farm operators utilized large labor crews to produce vast quantities of a profitable staple crop—wheat. The frenzy that followed the first lucrative harvests increased land values in the Northern Plains, and many of the bonanza farms soon faced shrinking profit margins. Some farms subdivided their holdings and ceased operations. Others adapted to the changing conditions and continued operating into the 1920s. The 1920s and 1930s brought profound changes to all American farmers, and the policy and shifts and production changes that followed the Great Depression transformed rural America, establishing the conditions that continue to

characterize agricultural production in the modern era.

European Arrival, Adaptation and Entrenchment: American Agriculture Through the Colonial Period

Indian Agriculture and Early European Endeavors

Agriculture in the geographic area that now composes the United States began long before Europeans and their descendants tilled North American soils. Not all Native American tribes engaged in agriculture, but agricultural tribes could be found in all areas of the continent. Tribes that did cultivate some of their food varied greatly in the extent to which they depended on cultivated crops for sustenance. Some Indians grew most of what they ate, minimizing their reliance on hunting and gathering. Other tribes used agriculture only as a supplement to hunting and gathering, from which they derived the majority of their diet.[22]

The arrival of Spanish conquistadors in the southern portion of North America in the 1540s began a period of more formalized, systematic and extensive agriculture modeled on European practices and production philosophies.[23] In the fifty years after their arrival, Spaniards passed through much of the southern part of the continent, but they did not stay long in any region until the 1590s. In the last decade of the sixteenth century, the Spanish sent a vanguard of permanent settlers to existing Indian communities in New Mexico and Florida. These early Spanish settlement ventures were led by missionaries who "wanted to reorient them [Indians] into church-centered agricultural villages with a native leadership that bowed to missionary instructions."[24] Spanish priests and soldiers erected churches and organized and directed Indians to perform agricultural labor caring for fields of native staples as well as new crops like peaches, wheat, oats, olives, plums, grapes, and apricots.[25]

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[22] With the sole exception of tribes living north of the Kennebec River in Maine, northeastern Indians planted and tended crops of corn, beans, squash, and melon to supplement the land and sea animals they ate. In addition to food crops, New England tribes grew tobacco, which they interlaced with the other crops in low mounds that they worked with clamshell hoes. By integrating their crops and working the soil shallowly, Native American New Englanders kept erosion to a minimum and realized "very high yields per acre, discourag[ed] weed growth, and preserv[ed] soil moisture." New England tribes also manipulated forest resources to create "conditions favorable to strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, and other gatherable foods." Indian tribes in the northern plains cultivated maize and vegetables, and their southern neighbors on the central plains also paired horticulture with hunting. To the east, the mound-building cultures of the Mississippi and Missouri valleys depended more heavily on horticulture. West of the plains, aboriginal management of resources by Southern California tribes included clearing and burning fields and planting and tending crops. Tribes in what became New Mexico and Arizona began cultivating corn as early as 2,000 B.C., and later added beans, squash, and domesticated cotton that they raised by practicing "intensive agriculture using irrigation through simple stream diversion and floodwater control." When Spaniards settled in the southwest in the late 16th century, the Navajo were known to neighboring tribes as the "Strangers of the Cultivated Fields." See William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 38, 43-44, 50-51; James Davidson, Mark Lytle, Christine Heyrman, William Gienapp, and Michael Stoff, *Nation of Nations, A Narrative History of the American Republic, Volume One: to 1877* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 42; Harold Briggs, "The Development of Agriculture in Territorial North Dakota," *The Culver-Stockton Quarterly* 7, no. 1, (1931): 1; Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 2, 147-152, 212; Brian Fagan, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Archaeology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 519-520; Florence Shipek, *Pushed Into the Rocks: Southern California Indian Land Tenure, 1769-1986* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 12; Ramon Gutierrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), xx-xxi.

[23] Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations, Vol. I*, 20.

[24] Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own:" A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 9.

[25] White, *The Roots of Dependency*, 212-214; Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations, Vol. I*, 68-70; White, *"It's Your Misfortune and*

Footnote continued on next page…

Shortly after the arrival of English settlers on the lush eastern seaboard in the first decades of the seventeenth century, agriculture in American took on a new scale and importance. With the help of resident Indian tribes, settlers struggled to adapt European agricultural practices to the ecological conditions of the New World. Upon selecting a farmsite, settlers commenced clearing their fields. While clearing progressed, Euro-Americans imitated Native methods of planting crops in mounds. Once they had cleared sufficient acreage, European settlers imposed Old World open field organization on the North American landscape. On these fields they planted European crops like wheat, barley, and rye alongside Indian crops of corn, squash, and pumpkins.[26]

The Entrenchment of European Agriculture and the Advent of Regional Variation

From its tentative, fusionist beginnings, North American agriculture rapidly evolved into an established and extensive industry. Regional variation characterized Euro-American agricultural production from its inception. Southern and northern colonies created distinct agricultural sectors and agriculture in the two eastern regions soon differed radically in scale, degree of diversification, market orientation, and labor structure. Founded as a strictly commercial venture meant to return a profit to stockholders, Virginia's "orientation was almost wholly commercial from the beginning," while in the north the Pilgrims settled Plymouth, Massachusetts, with the primary intent of establishing a permanent religious community where they could be left to their own devices.[27] Despite the fervent financial hopes of the Virginia Company's managers, death rates in the first decade at Jamestown made the question of profit moot. Only 60 out of 500 settlers survived the starving winter of 1609-1610. In the wake of the disaster the Company instituted a land-distribution system called the "headright" system, under which new settlers received 50 acres for every person (including themselves) that they brought to the colony. It was a last-ditch attempt to make the colony pay: the Company desperately needed to attract colonists who could produce profitable commodities. Lured by the "headright" system, English migrants poured into Virginia and began planting their parcels of tobacco. Commercial production of tobacco soon became the backbone of Virginia's farming sector, and remained so until the depletion of Tidewater soils in the late 1700s forced farmers in the Chesapeake to cultivate other crops.[28]

Yet despite Virginia's early affinity for cash crops, the colony, like all other early settlements, still grew its own foodstuffs. Corn flourished in Tidewater soils, and became the most widely grown grain in the colony. Farmers also grew small amounts of wheat and barley for their own use. Settlers supplemented their cropping endeavors with stock raising and by 1630 Virginia boasted some 3,000-5,000 cattle and numerous swine.[29]

Farming in New England in the early period of settlement was less market oriented than that in the south, but the lack of emphasis on market crops was not for want of trying. Farmers often sold the lumber they cut when clearing fields, and when they removed trees by burning the potash that resulted "was a major New England export and in some regions furnished the sole cash crop during the initial year of settlement. . . . Destroying the

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None of My Own," 10.

[26] Cronon, *Changes In the Land*, 116, 118; National Park Service (NPS), *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier,* 3-4.

[27] Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 8; Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations, Vol. I*, 46-47, 80-82.

[28] NPS, *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier,* 4, 13-14; Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations, Vol. I*, 47-48.

[29] NPS, *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier,* 4-5.

forest thus became an end in itself, and clearing techniques designed to extract quick profits from forest resources encouraged movement onto new lands."[30] Once they had cleared their fields, northern farmers experimented with growing wheat, tobacco, rye, flax, corn, potatoes and grapes for market. But by and large, New England farmers provided for little more than home consumption. The first agricultural product of commercial significance in the region was not a crop, but cattle. By 1660 the northern colonies began exporting beef. The relative failure of commercial agricultural endeavors forced New England's settlers to explore other industries to a greater extent than their southern counterparts. Northerners soon embraced commercial lumbering and fishing, and the large coastal towns boasted weekly markets and a significant international trade sector by the 1640s.[31]

The physical form that farming in the New World took varied with the related attributes of level of diversification and degree of market orientation as well as with the policies governing land distribution in the different colonies. In Virginia, for instance, the headright system and the land requirements of tobacco cultivation resulted in relatively large farms and dispersed settlement around the countryside. The emphasis on tobacco resulted not only in large farms but in large farm labor forces. One worker could handle between two and three acres of labor-intensive tobacco, so a farmer's income depended heavily on how many workers he could put in the field. The constant need for farm labor in the Chesapeake led to an early reliance on unfree labor, first in the form of indentured servants and later in the form of slaves. In New England, the subsistence crops grown on farms did not require extensive acreages. Forty acres of land in the northern colonies was usually enough to support a family. Settlers clustered in towns and worked the surrounding fields, many of which were held in common. Land grants made by the different incorporated communities to so-called householders varied from town to town and from person to person within a given town: in Sudbury, Massachusetts grants ranged from 10 acres to over 100. But even the large grants in New England were relatively small compared to the Chesapeake colonies, where 100 acres "was sufficient to maintain only a small-scale tobacco farmer."[32]

Extending Agriculture to Uncultivated Areas and Sharpening Regional Difference, 1650-1800

After 50 years on America's eastern seaboard, Europeans were well schooled in the agricultural possibilities and limitations of their new home. From this time until the rapid territorial expansion and the market revolution of the early 1800s, American farmers gradually developed their operations along the lines laid during the first 50 years of settlement: the majority of farmers emphasized diversified, small-scale agriculture that provided for home and market consumption while large-scale operators based primarily in the southern region used free and unfree laborers on plantations to produce enormous harvests of several crops for market. The most drastic changes in American agriculture during this period of entrenchment were quantitative, not qualitative: cultivation spread westward along with the population, as new settlers found the best tracts near the coastal centers already occupied.[33]

By 1700, coastal lands were hard to come by and new farmers spread westward, a move that isolated those who broke the virgin soils. This isolation reinforced the subsistence character of American agriculture, for frontier farmers had access neither to markets nor to the implements and technology needed to refine their production

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[30] Cronon, *Changes In the Land*, 117-118.

[31] NPS, *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier,* 5-7.

[32] David Danbom, *Born in the Country: A History of Rural America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 56, 27-33.

[33] NPS, *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier,* 8.

methods. Technological limits encouraged farm-product diversity, for emphasis on any one crop or animal made operations vulnerable to the ravages of incurable blights and diseases. The absence of markets for surplus products and the resultant emphasis on production for home consumption meant that few backcountry settlers hired servants or owned slaves. For the most part, frontier farmers relied on family labor and cultivated only a small portion of their land.[34]

In the more settled sections of the colonies better access to markets and technology allowed farmers to supplement their home production with the proceeds from limited farm sales. Corn and livestock continued to be the two leading farm products in the north. Farmers in certain areas cultivated increasing acreages of wheat and rye. Producing livestock and associated commodities for market enjoyed modest expansion during this period. Other New England crops grown for commercial purposes, albeit on a small scale, included tobacco, onions, barley, potatoes, and flax, which was used in some places to produce oil for export. Much of this market production was limited to certain valleys, counties, or towns, as farmers in a given locale embraced a crop en masse, and in so doing began a process of specialization that would increasingly characterize American agriculture in the nineteenth century.[35]

As they had since the earliest years of European settlement, southern agriculturalists displayed a greater tendency toward large-scale, market oriented mono-cropping. Large landowners progressively concentrated holdings in the more settled sections along coastal waterways, and smaller subsistence farmers migrated west and south to the fringes of settlement. Coastal operations strengthened their commitment to market production, and in the process became painfully familiar with the tumult of the world market. Maryland and Virginia expanded tobacco production eightfold between 1685 and 1775, increasing their total annual exports from 13.5 million pounds to 112 million pounds, and gradually developed a more formalized legal and physical infrastructure in order to standardize the tobacco industry.[36] South Carolina developed an extensive grazing industry that rivaled that of Jamaica. The colony imported sugar products and black slaves from the Caribbean and sent beef, pork, corn, lumber, naval stores, and Native American slaves to Barbados, the Leeward Islands, and Jamaica.[37] All of these commodities proved reasonably profitable, but in the 1690s South Carolina planters began experimenting with a staple crop that would soon eclipse all others—rice. By the 1720s rice had become the colony's most valuable export.[38] Rice production expanded throughout the eighteenth century, and its profits made South Carolina the richest colony.[39]

Antebellum Expansion and the Market Revolution: American Agriculture 1800-1860

Federal Policy and the Disposal of Public Lands

In 1800 Thomas Jefferson won the presidential election, and became the first president to preside over the United States from the new capitol in Washington, D.C. Jefferson considered agriculture a morally superior way of life and he was firmly committed to rule by the masses. In order to maintain a virtuous populace and, therefore, a virtuous government, America had to remain an agricultural nation.[40] As Jefferson put it,

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[34] Ibid., 9; Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations, Vol. I*, 109-113.

[35] NPS, *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier,* 9-10.

[36] Ibid., 13.

[37] Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness*, 51.

[38] Ibid., 51, 144.

[39] Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations, Vol. I*, 64; NPS, *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier,* 13-14.

[40] Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations, Vol. I*, 270-272.

"cultivators of the earth are the most valuable of all citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and wedded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bonds."[41] But if the United States were to continue to provide farms for an ever-increasing American population, the country needed more land. Shortly after Jefferson took office, Spain ceded Louisiana, which encompassed the territory between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, to the French, who were embroiled in European affairs and had few resources to devote to Louisiana. France offered to sell the Louisiana territory to the United States in the spring of 1803. The U.S. accepted, and in doing so doubled the country's size by adding about 830,000 square miles of terrain.[42] The Louisiana Purchase set the stage for an era of unequaled expansion in American agriculture.

The desire to open opportunities for American agriculture may have driven federal land policy, but other considerations also influenced the United States' decisions. The rise in market production underscored the monetary value of land with agricultural potential. In 1785 the United States adopted the Land Ordinance that established a formal and standardized survey system for identifying tracts of land. By that time, most land within the country's boundaries belonged to the federal government and early administrations sought to dispose of federal holdings through sales: federal policy treated government lands as a source of revenue.[43] Indeed, proceeds from land sales composed almost all of the federal government's income until the later part of the nineteenth century.[44] Initial efforts to dispose of federal lands proved disappointing. High prices, large minimum tract sizes, and minimal credit offerings translated into slow sales, and by 1800 the United States had sold fewer than 50,000 acres of federal land. Policy changes in that year stimulated sales, but concurrent changes to credit arrangements encouraged speculation and discouraged cash purchases. Purchasers often defaulted on federal debts—by 1819 only half of all land sold by the United States had actually been paid for. And while it failed to produce dependable revenue, early land policy also failed to populate federal lands with productive farmers: the great boom in cotton during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, for example, caused widespread speculation on public lands in the cotton-producing southern states. By 1820, farmers in Alabama and Mississippi owed one-half of the total outstanding debt on federal lands.[45]

The War of 1812 and the Expansion of Markets and Market Transport

In the midst of wrangling with the pitfalls of early federal land policies, politicians in Washington found themselves caught in a war between France and Britain. Repeated violations of American neutrality by both belligerents finally prompted the U.S. to declare war on Britain in 1812.[46] The war effort found support among the agricultural American populace, which desired "to shake off British trade restrictions and to open up more markets for American farm produce."[47] Agriculture's support of the war effort proved well placed: a primary

[41] Quoted in NPS, *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier,* title page.

[42] Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations, Vol. I,* 275-277.

[43] John Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive: A History of American Farming, 1607-1972* (Ames: The University of Iowa Press, 1975), 57.

[44] Geoff Cunfer, Rural and Regional Studies Department at Southwest State University, Marshall, Minnesota, to Delia Hagen, Historical Research Associates, Inc., 1/20/02, 10. Correspondence on file at Historical Research Associates, Inc., Missoula, Montana.

[45] Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive,* 57-60.

[46] Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations, Vol. I,* 288-295.

[47] Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive,* 73.

result of the inconclusive two-year war was the expansion of the national market economy, an expansion so dramatic that later generations would label it the "market revolution."[48] War-time growth in domestic manufacturing combined with an inflow of European capital and newly-adopted federal economic policies to create the revolution in the American market, and the revolution reverberated throughout the nation's agricultural industry.[49]

The war with Britain and the related impediments to international shipping reduced the availability of imports. Consumer demands previously filled by products from other countries suddenly needed to be met by domestic production. The American manufacturing sector responded, offering both a greater volume and a greater assortment of manufactured goods.[50] Developments after the war encouraged further expansion. Napoleon had been waging war in Europe for several decades when the War of 1812 ended, and by the time the Napoleonic Wars subsided around 1815, Europe was in the midst of a farm production shortage. American allies in Europe relied on U.S. farm products during a brief period of reconstruction, and U.S. grain growers especially "experienced a delightful prosperity."[51] The growth of the American manufacturing sector stimulated the domestic market for agricultural commodities in several ways. Industry itself consumed farm products, and industrial expansion translated into an even greater growth of cities. By 1850 the urban population in the United States exceeded 3.5 million: more people lived in cities by the mid-nineteenth century than had lived in the entire country just 75 years earlier, and they had to eat.[52]

A transportation boom accompanied the rise of the manufacturing sector. As the eighteenth century drew to a close, private turnpike companies embarked on a road building frenzy. Expecting profits from tolls they hoped to charge when their projects were completed, road companies constructed dirt, plank, log, and macadamized roads that connected cities to other cities and rural areas to urban ones. Although traffic increased, turnpike companies were undone by their own enthusiasm—they soon found they had overbuilt. State governments bought out many of the turnpike companies and expanded the road system they acquired "until the depression of 1837-1842 ruined state finances." The national government, too, joined in the rush to build roads. Work crews began constructing the so-called National Road, the first road built entirely with federal funds, in 1811. The road ran from Maryland to Illinois and cut travel time over the route from eight days to three days.[53] Citizens of the young American republic understood the significance of transportation improvements and the market access they provided, and the question of who should fund such projects proved a hot political issue in the early national period. Many easterners already enjoyed relatively passable roads and navigable waterways, and thus opposed federal funding of so-called internal improvements. Those who hoped to make a living in the west, however, firmly supported federal funding of the transportation projects upon which their future commercial success depended.[54]

Other transportation improvements accompanied the spread of roads, helping to make American producers more connected than ever before with domestic and international markets. The American ocean shipping

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[48] Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations, Vol. I*, 308.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive,* 74, 77.

[51] Ibid., 72.

[52] Ibid., 82.

[53] Ibid., 88-89.

[54] White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* 127; Cunfer to Hagen, 1/20/02, 12.

industry expanded rapidly in the 1790s, and by 1800 American ships moved 92 percent of all goods freighted between Europe and the United States.[55] Shipping on inland waterways followed suit. Steam boats on the Mississippi became a significant factor in freighting after 1816, and the following year hundreds of laborers began digging the 363-mile Erie Canal in New York. The completed canal opened in 1825, and suddenly the trip between Buffalo (on Lake Erie) and Albany (on the Hudson River) took six days instead of twenty. New York built additional canals, and other states followed its example. A web of canals soon connected communities throughout the Great Lakes region, while towns along navigable natural waterways developed shipping industries around river transport. By the 1840s nearly 1,200 steam boats plied the nation's rivers. Railroads, too, contributed to the transportation transformation of the early 1800s. In 1830, Americans could claim only 23 miles of track. Five years later that figure had skyrocketed to 1,098 miles. Such totals would soon prove to be but a tiny fraction of the rail network that exploded across the country in ensuing decades, but the growth in rail lines in the 1830s supplemented the spread of canals and roads and helped to transform the transportation possibilities of the United States from 1800-1840.[56]

The Market Revolution Brings New Staple Crops and Increased Specialized Production

Land and water transportation improvements expanded the area that could profitably produce agricultural commodities for market. They also hastened regional specialization by changing the geography of profit margins. Completion of the National Road created a livestock feeding industry in the northeast, for animals trailed over the route had to be fattened after their overland journey. Canal transport allowed food grown in the "North and the Old Northwest" to reach the urban East and overseas markets. By lowering freight rates and opening outlets for western agricultural products, the canals also influenced what western farmers chose to produce: They shifted their operations from diversified subsistence farming emphasizing corn and hog raising, to grain growing. This competition in turn "progressively ruin[ed] the grain farmers of New England, New York, and Pennsylvania."[57] Wheat growers in New York and Pennsylvania produced 30 percent of the nation's wheat crop in 1839. Twenty years later these farmers grew only 13 percent of United States wheat.[58] During the same period the Old Northwest expanded its wheat production. By 1860, 42 percent of wheat grown in the country came from Ohio, Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin. Corn production underwent a parallel shift. The Old Northwest soon produced 45 percent of America's corn.[59] The South had long led the nation in corn production. Though it clung to this distinction, as western corn cultivation spread the South's relative share of national production fell from a high of 60 percent of the total to 52 percent by 1860.[60]

Farmers near the eastern urban markets who could no longer rely on grain production found some respite in the opportunities the transportation improvements offered them because of their proximity to the city. Railroads allowed dairy farmers to ship milk to cities before it spoiled. Urbanites responded by drastically increasing their consumption. Milk was cheaper, fresher, and posed fewer health hazards than it had previously. Mid-west regions, too, responded to the urban milk thirst: Wisconsin producers embraced dairying to supply Chicago's ever-increasing population. Growers of fresh fruits and vegetables enjoyed a similar surge in

[55] Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive,* 87.

[56] Ibid., 75, 89, 92.

[57] Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive,* 75, 86, 89-91.

[58] NPS, *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier,* 17.

[59] Ibid., 18.

[60] Ibid., 21.

demand. Rapid transportation not only opened new markets but increased consumption within those markets—city dwellers ate progressively more of their product when it arrived fresh and in appealing condition.[61]

The rapid growth of the American transportation network created new markets in addition to connecting farmers with markets that already existed. Chicago became an agricultural marketing center in the 1840s, after the completion of the Illinois and Michigan Canal (NHL, 1964) promised to make it a major shipping point. In 1848, industrialists in Chicago built the United State's first grain storage elevator. Other urban marketing terminals followed suit, and milling shifted from small, dispersed rural mills to the large city elevators. While at first glance such a shift might be expected to cause a geographic contraction of grain production, it in fact did the opposite: by opening new markets and minimizing transport and handling costs, urban milling translated into better grain grower returns, which in turn meant that farmers could (and did) profitably raise grain at ever greater distances from major markets. The concentration of grain milling in major urban centers facilitated more formal and systematic regulation of the industry. The same year that capitalists constructed Chicago's pioneering elevator, the industry established the Chicago Board of Trade for "the trading of grains in a formal central market."[62]

Mushrooming markets led farmers throughout the United States to engage in specialized commercial production at an unprecedented level. While most farmers still produced much of what they consumed at home, they actively sought outlets for cash crops. In New England, non-agricultural economic sectors took on greater importance, and remaining farmers shifted their products in response to urban demand. Beef and dairy cattle production increased, and fruits and vegetables replaced grains as the primary commercial crops. The middle colonies followed suit, increasing production of crops that could be sold quickly in nearby urban centers. Farmers in New York and Pennsylvania drastically curtailed their wheat production, and began planting their fields to potatoes, fruits, and vegetables. The dairy industry also took on a new importance, as farmers rushed to meet city-dwellers' demand for milk and butter.[63]

True to its earliest tendencies, the South most heartily embraced the new possibilities presented by the market revolution of the first half of the nineteenth century. A relatively new plantation crop—cotton—led the charge. For some time, planters had known that cotton grew readily in the lower South, but its sticky seeds made hand-processing of the plant unprofitably cumbersome. In 1793, Eli Whitney solved the planters' dilemma when he invented the cotton gin, a machine that removed the seeds from the lint. Ten years later cotton surpassed tobacco as the most valuable of all American exports. The growth of the cotton industry continued unabated: cotton production doubled each decade from 1800 to 1860 and the lower South soon supplied the world with 60 percent of all its cotton. By 1840, cotton receipts accounted for almost two-thirds of American exports.[64] Many southern planters who chose not to grow cotton embraced sugar, which was first introduced into the region in 1795. The introduction of a more rapidly maturing cane and the adoption of a protective tariff in the first two decades of the nineteenth century spurred rapid growth in the sugar sector, especially in Mississippi and Louisiana.[65]

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[61] Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive,* 95-96.

[62] Ibid., 83, 132-134, 137.

[63] NPS, *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier,* 16-17; Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive,* 122.

[64] Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive,* 72, 75; Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations, Vol. I,* 310; NPS, *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier,* 20.

[65] NPS, *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier,* 20.

Staple Production, Enslaved Labor, and the Application of "Capitalistic" and "Scientific" Methods

The surge in the production of labor-intensive market staples reinforced the South's dependence on enslaved African-American labor. While slavery faded or disappeared in the northern states, it was revitalized in the South. By the mid-1860s, four million slaves comprised one-eighth of the population of the republic. Most of these enslaved people lived on southern plantations, which typically covered about 800 to 1,000 acres. On such a plantation some twenty to fifty slaves "worked from dawn to dusk, with only a few breaks during the day, and at busy times, such as harvest . . . they worked well into the night as well."[66] Larger land owners owned 100 or more slaves and divided their land holdings into separate units. On each unit they employed an overseer to manage the work and the enslaved workers. Most slaves worked in the fields of the plantation, and on large plantations some slaves assisted the overseer in supervising and directing field work. Those bondspeople not put to work in the fields spent their days as skilled workers or as house servants. The heavy investment in labor and the nature of their particular crops led most planters to de-emphasize mechanization, but southern plantation owners nonetheless "pioneered the application of capitalistic methods, including specialization and division of labor, to agriculture."[67]

As the older farming areas deemphasized wheat, cultivation spread to the western settlements where virgin soils provided ample nutrients. Wheat did not perish as quickly as many market crops and could profitably be grown in the West despite the greater distance to market. As agriculture boomed in the Middle West, implement manufacturers began developing tools designed to work the new lands, which differed in both soil composition and vegetative cover from the coastal areas to which existing implements were tailored.[68]

Emphasis on improved farming methods accompanied the embrace of commercial agriculture. As historian Gerald Nash writes, "the diminishing supply of land, the scarcity of labor, and new markets created pressures for greater efficiency."[69] States and private organizations began to sponsor agricultural improvement societies that sought to develop and encourage the use of improved implements and practices. In 1822, ten years after the close of the war with Britain, the state of Maine began funding the first American school devoted exclusively to agricultural training. In doing so it inaugurated a practice that would soon spread across the nation in the form of state agricultural colleges. In keeping with the aim of improvement and education that enveloped the entire industry, new agricultural periodicals began to appear on newsstands—between 1812 and 1860 at least 30 such publications sought to disseminate the latest in farming and ranching news.[70] Substantive improvements in the first half of the nineteenth century included new planting and processing tools and machinery, wider embrace of crop rotation, increased use of fertilizers, better stock care and breeding, and the introduction of disease resistant crop strains.[71] Many of the implements commonly associated with mechanized agriculture—iron and then iron-steel plows, harrows, reapers, planters, mowers, threshers—first came into widespread use in the 1840s and 1850s. Mass production of these labor-saving farm implements meant that a single farmer could work more land than ever before. In 1830, one could be proud of having reaped and harvested two acres of wheat. By 1855, in a good day's work, a farmer could harvest six times that: average

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[66] Danbom, *Born in the Country*, 101-102; Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations, Vol. I*, 419-421.

[67] Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations, Vol. I*, 421-422. In the antebellum South about 10,000 families owned 50 to 100 slaves and some 2,000 white families owned 100 or more slaves.

[68] NPS, *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier,* 18-19.

[69] Ibid., 15.

[70] Ibid., 16-17.

[71] Ibid., 17-18; Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive,* 124.

farm size grew as a result.[72]

Civil War, Railroads and the Plowing of the West: American Agriculture 1860-1920

Expansion into the West and the California Wheat Boom

The 1860s ushered in an era of unprecedented spatial expansion of American agriculture. Over the next three decades, more land was brought under cultivation in the United States than had been in the 250 years since the founding of Jamestown.[73] This expansion is all the more remarkable when one considers agriculture's role in America before it occurred. Although the manufacturing sector underwent a veritable revolution in the first half of the nineteenth century, on the eve of the Civil War manufactured goods averaged only 12 percent of the total exports. "Farming was the basic industry of the Republic," and most Americans spent their lives on farms.[74]

In the decade before the outbreak of the Civil War, Americans began settling the western reaches of the continent in significant numbers. Miners descended on California in droves after the 1848 discovery of gold there, and by December of the following year, 100,000 Californians clamored for statehood.[75] Over the next twenty years mining camps arose overnight in countless mountain valleys around the Rocky Mountain west. In many places they constituted a beachhead of European settlement, and spawned local agricultural production that capitalized on the incredible prices paid for scarce commodities. The instant mining cities formed "an important market in places where none had been before," and they consumed agricultural commodities from established farming sections as well as from newly planted fields nearby.[76]

When the Forty-niners poured into California, cultivation there was in its infancy. Mining and stock raising constituted the state's principal economic activities.[77] The instant mining camp markets transformed California agriculture. Five years after the onset of the gold rush, "bountiful wheat fields stretched for eleven miles beyond the outskirts of Sacramento."[78] Another decade passed before California farmers embraced wheat with abandon and planted vast acreages of the grain for export. In 1866 wheat covered just under 90,000 acres in California's San Joaquin Valley. Three years later wheat cultivation there ballooned to over 380,000 acres. Acreage totals for the state as a whole mirrored trends in the San Joaquin: between 1866 and 1872, acreage planted to wheat in California more than tripled. By this time wheat farming in California was a big business, and wheat farms themselves were big businesses. Huge farms dominated California wheat growing by the end of the 1860s. They relied on deep pools of capital to succeed in an industry that was "almost from the beginning . . . highly mechanized."[79] As historian Donald Worster described it:

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[72] Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive,* 97-99, 103, 117, 120.

[73] NPS, *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier,* 24.

[74] Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive,* 75-76, 97.

[75] Ray Allen Billington, *Westward Expansion* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1967), 589-593.

[76] Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive,* 85.

[77] Donald J. Pisani, *From the Family Farm to Agribusiness: The Irrigation Crusade in California, 1850-1931* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 3.

[78] Pisani, *From the Family Farm to Agribusiness*, 5.

[79] Ibid., 6-8, 103.

> This was farming on a factory scale: using thousands of horse-drawn gang plows, monstrous steam and iron combines, and railroads that extended their lines southward from the Sacramento River over the Tehachapis into Los Angeles; raising wheat for a quick return; raising wheat across the land as far as the eye could see, year after year, exhausting the soil, but for a while making California the nation's leading producer. It was a society of vast estates, world markets, bare, makeshift, sun-bleached houses, and armies of tramps on the road looking for work between harvests. There was money galore, but not to embellish the land or raise the common standard of living—it went away to Nob Hill, leaving impoverishment behind.[80]

In the absence of affordable overland transportation to the eastern urban centers, California's farmers turned to the sea for moving their crop, a move that reinforced and encouraged the burgeoning emphasis on wheat. During the Civil War, the Confederate Navy succeeded in limiting California's maritime trade with the East Coast. San Francisco merchants turned to England to supply many of their needs. "Wheat, in effect, offered a medium of exchange," and the fleet of outgoing wheat-laden ships carried European manufactured goods and coal upon their return. The orientation toward British trade continued during the post-war period and the wheat boom, when over 98 percent of California's exported wheat went to Great Britain. So great was British involvement in the California wheat trade that one scholar described the state's rural areas as "almost a colonial appendage to Victorian Britain."[81] The Civil War and the resultant dependence on trade with Britain worked in combination with natural and industrial forces to create the California wheat boom. As they did elsewhere, transportation improvements played a pivotal role in transforming the state's agricultural geography. The 1860s brought a spurt of railroad building to California, and wheat culture followed the tracks. The Southern Pacific completed a line from San Francisco to San Jose in 1864 and the railroad reached Salinas by 1872. Farmers promptly planted the Santa Clara and Salinas valleys to wheat.[82] By 1890 California produced 40 million bushels of wheat annually, up from 6 million thirty years earlier. Wheat accounted for over fifty percent of the value of the state's exports.[83]

Federal Land Policy Evolves as the Nation Spreads Westward

Although the wheat boom in California occurred far from the population and administrative centers of the nation, developments in the state reflected a broader trend of spatial expansion and commercialization in American agriculture after the Civil War. The populating and plowing of the Great Plains and the far West progressed until the 1920s, when nature delivered a rude awakening to farmers in arid regions and demographic trends shifted accordingly.

More so perhaps than at any time in the past, federal economic policy played a leading role in determining the evolution of agriculture in the post-Civil War period. It did so directly, by legislating changes aimed at stimulating agriculture itself and, less directly, by legislating changes aimed at encouraging other industries that

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[80] Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity and the Growth of the American West* (New York: Pantheon, 1985), 99.

[81] Richard Steven Street, "Tattered Shirts and Ragged Pants: Accommodation, Protest, and the Coarse Culture of California Wheat Harvesters and Threshers, 1866-1900," *Pacific Historical Review* 67, no. 4 (Nov. 1998): 575; Pisani, *From the Family Farm to Agribusiness*, 6-9.

[82] Pisani, *From the Family Farm to Agribusiness*, 6-9.

[83] Street, "Tattered Shirts and Ragged Pants," 575.

in turn stimulated agriculture. And, of course, legislation was only one of several ways the United States enabled agricultural expansion. In the far West, as earlier in the East, widespread agricultural settlement depended on overcoming the resistance of resident Indian tribes. In region after region, extensive cultivation followed the cessation of large-scale, organized conflicts between Native Americans and the U.S. military. In the years during and after the Civil War, Congress passed a series of acts designed to hasten settlement and improve agricultural practice. Among the most important of these was the Homestead Act, passed in 1862. The Homestead Act was the latest in a long line of legislation aimed at disposing of the public domain, but it differed from previous policy in a fundamental way: under the act, a person could gain title to a tract of government land without having to purchase it. Whereas previous policies reflected the government's belief that land disposal benefited the nation by generating sales revenues, the Homestead Act was more purely predicated on the notion that the social and economic health of the nation depended on populating the public domain. President Andrew Johnson captured this conceptual shift in 1865, when he said that "the lands in the hands of industrious settlers, whose labor creates wealth and contributes to the public resources, are worth more to the United States than if they had been reserved as a solitude for future purchasers."[84] The Homestead Act stipulated that qualified persons could claim up to 160 acres of public domain for a nominal filing fee. The government granted clear title to the land after the claimant made improvements and lived on the tract for five years. Though critics alleged that weaknesses in the law precluded its effectiveness as a farm-making measure, statistics from the Minnesota-Dakota-Nebraska-Kansas region suggest that homesteading transformed the mid-west in the decades immediately following passage of the act. Between 1860 and 1880, when settlers swarmed onto the prairies, over fifty percent of the farms started in the region began as homesteads.[85]

In 1862 settlers could use both the Homestead Act and previous land legislation to obtain public domain. After the passage of the original Homestead Act, Congress passed a series of additional land laws that offered other ways to secure title to public land. The Timber Culture Act of 1873 awarded land to settlers who planted a specified acreage of trees on their claims. The Desert Land Act passed in 1877 provided land incentives to farmers who promised to irrigate.[86] Later land legislation, including the 1904 Kincaid Homestead Act, the 1909 Enlarged Homestead Act, and the 1916 Stock-Raising Homestead Act, sought to address perceived shortcomings of existing legislation and contained varying provisions for patenting federal lands. Settlers used the entire array of nineteenth and early twentieth century land acts separately and in combination to cobble together farms from the public domain.[87]

Other federal land policy encouraged agricultural settlement less directly but ultimately, perhaps, more effectively. Congress had long made grants of land to private companies for developing transportation networks, and by the eve of the Civil War it had begun bestowing public lands upon railroad companies. As railroads pushed westward, they encountered few customers and vast open spaces, and Congress sought to make these uninviting conditions more attractive by increasing its gifts of public domain. Between 1862 and 1872 the United States granted over 125 million acres to railroad companies.[88] Congress granted federal land not only to transportation companies but to states and other civic entities. Under the Morrill Act of 1862, state agricultural colleges received lands for both use and sale. Twenty-five years later representatives passed the Hatch Act,

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[84] Quoted in Gilbert Fite, *The Farmers' Frontier, 1865-1900* (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1966), 16.

[85] Ibid., 16-23.

[86] Ibid., 17-23.

[87] White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* 144; Fite, *The Farmers' Frontier,* 103.

[88] White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* 145.

which created state agricultural experiment stations. Both the agricultural colleges and the experiment stations worked to improve wheat varieties and cultivation practices—the grain garnered substantial scientific attention because of its extreme importance and value in the national diet and economy.[89]

Railroads and Early Settlement of the Northern Plains

Of the many forces driving westward agricultural expansion in the second half of the 19th century, "the most powerful factors . . . were land grant railroads."[90] Congress made the "first direct federal land grant to a railroad" in 1851. It, like all subsequent grants, depended on completion of the planned line. If the company failed to fulfill its promises and finish the railroad as proposed, the land reverted back to the federal government.[91] State governments also busied themselves encouraging railroad expansion. In the reconstruction-era south Republican administrations used a variety of fiscal means to encourage the growth of industrial infrastructure, and offered "lavish aid to railroad corporations."[92] Shortly after the Civil War, Americans could travel from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean by rail: in 1869, celebrants drove a golden spike in Utah to join the tracks of the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific and complete the first transcontinental railroad.[93]

Chief among the land grant railroads was the Northern Pacific Railroad, which in 1864 received the largest land grant ever awarded by Congress. The Northern Pacific grant—20 sections of land per mile of track laid through states and 40 sections of land per mile through territories—secured to the railroad nearly 40 million acres.[94] But while it granted the Northern Pacific lands, Congress refused to authorize construction loans for the railway, a move which "plunged the road into financial difficulties from the beginning."[95] The Northern Pacific began laying track west from Lake Superior in 1870, and rapidly progressed across Minnesota. It reached the Red River Valley in 1871.[96]

The northern part of Dakota Territory that the Northern Pacific encountered upon its arrival in the Red River Valley must have intimidated even the most ardent of dreamers. The territory itself had been formed only thirteen years before, and evidence of permanent Euro-American settlement in the region was minimal. Red River steamboats had connected northern Dakota Territory with the outside world for almost a decade but although "the amount of business that these boats accomplished was astonishing . . . they did but little, perceptibly, toward settling the country." Steamboating's immediate influence, in terms of permanent infrastructure, remained limited to three or four points on the river itself.[97] The sparse settlement bespoke not

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[89] Carleton Ball, "The History of American Wheat Improvement," (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Agricultural History Society, Washington, D.C., April 22, 1930), 58.

[90] NPS, *Agriculture and the Farmer's Frontier,* 74.

[91] Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive,* 66-67.

[92] James Davidson, Mark Lytle, Christine Heyrman, William Gienapp, and Michael Stoff, *Nation of Nations, A Narrative History of the American Republic, Volume II: Since 1865* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 576.

[93] White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* 250.

[94] Ibid., 146.

[95] Billington, *Westward Expansion*, 651.

[96] Billington, *Westward Expansion,* 651; Hiram Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza,* 14.

[97] Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 24; Hon. George N. Lamphere, "History of Wheat Raising in the Red River Valley," in *History of the Red River Valley, Past and Present: Including an Account of the Counties, Cities, Towns, and Villages of the Valley from the Time of Their First Settlement and Formation,* Various Writers (Grand Forks, North Dakota: Herald Printing Co.; Chicago:

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only climatic obstacles and social isolation, but also lingering conflict with the region's Indian people. The few outlying farms that existed in western Minnesota and eastern Dakota Territory in the early 1860s had been vacated in the wake of attacks on frontier settlements by the Sioux in 1862. Three years passed before many settlers returned to their homes and their abandoned fields.[98] By the time the Northern Pacific arrived, the Dakota Territory population totaled fewer than 15,000 people. Only about 2,400 of those people lived in the northern half of the territory.[99]

At the time of the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad, Euro-Americans were just beginning to explore the economic potential of the Great Plains. Although widespread cultivation of the region still seemed implausible, stockraisers were progressively embracing the notion that the open ranges of the Great Plains could support commercial cattle herds. Texas ranchers began trailing cattle to northern pastures in the 1860s. By the 1880 the area that would later comprise the states of Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Montana, Wyoming and the Dakotas held about 4 million head and herd numbers grew with each passing year. In the early 1880s ranchers profited from a combination of "relative prosperity, a nation hungry for beef, and an expanding railroad network on the plains [and] . . . . Eastern and European capital flooded into the West nearly as rapidly as did the cattle themselves." The profitability of the open-range ranching industry made cattle an attractive investment for businessmen, and the industry was soon dominated by large corporations financed primarily by Eastern investors. Drought and winter storms decimated northern herds in the mid-1880s, and outside investors withdrew as profits turned to losses.[100]

The Northern Pacific Railroad in the Red River Valley: Bankruptcy Leads to Bonanza Farms

The apparent desolation of the Plains did not deter the Northern Pacific Railroad. From the Red River Valley the track layers continued westward. The rail reached Bismarck in 1873.[101] But stock sales slowed as rumors of the road's precarious financial condition spread across the country, and in September of that year the Northern Pacific's financier, Jay Cooke and Company, closed its doors, creating a nationwide panic. Construction of the line screeched to a halt, and the tracks would not extend beyond Bismarck until the end of the decade.[102] In a desperate attempt to both reduce its bonded indebtedness and induce immigrants to settle the lands along its line, the Northern Pacific implemented a bond-land exchange program.[103] The railroad offered to convert bonds at 110% of face value if bond-holders exchanged them for land. The dismal market value of the bonds, which had plummeted to less than 20% of face value, made this offer all the more attractive: bonds could be sold for cash only at a tremendous loss.[104]

Northern Pacific officials realized "that it would take more than attractive financial arrangements and the homesteader's small fields to draw sufficient capital and settlers to open the land and create business for the

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C.R. Cooper & Co., 1909), 221.

[98] Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 18-19.

[99] Ibid., 24-25, 30.

[100] White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* 222-225, 262, 270.

[101] J. Leonard Jennewein and Jane Boorman, eds., *Dakota Panorama* (Freeman, South Dakota: Pine Hill Press, 1961), 205.

[102] Billington, *Westward Expansion,* 651-652; Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 14.

[103] Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 34.

[104] Ibid., 35, 42.

railroad."[105] James Power, the land commissioner for the Dakota division of the line, began pushing an idea to develop "a spectacularly large farm for dramatic advertising" of the agricultural potential of the Northern Pacific country" in Minnesota and Dakota Territory.[106] His proposal coincided with a homesteader's much-publicized bumper wheat crop on the banks of the Sheyenne River west of Fargo. Power offered the story of the homesteader's harvest as an example of the windfall one could expect from an investment in a North Dakota wheat farm, and in 1874 he persuaded the president of the Northern Pacific, General George W. Cass, to start a large farm. Cass and one other member of the board of directors, Benjamin Cheney, exchanged their bonds and pooled their resources to secure a total of 13,440 acres in the Red River Valley.[107]

Cass and Cheney immediately sought a way to make their vast acreage pay. They were not farmers and did not intend to become farmers, so they had to hire one. In 1875 their search for a farm manager led them to Oliver Dalrymple, who had run a successful large-scale wheat farming operation in Minnesota. In March of that year, Dalrymple examined the Cass-Cheney lands and, apparently satisfied with their productive potential, agreed to manage the farm. Under his contract, the owners promised to "furnish everything and pay all expenses" while leaving Dalrymple "in complete charge from breaking the land to selling the crop." In return for his services, Dalrymple received one-third share in the farm's profits and an option to purchase one-third interest in the property at its original cost.[108] Dalrymple embraced his charge with vigor, and spent the summer gathering employees and equipment and plowing two sections of land. The seeds planted in the spring of 1876 flourished in the Dakota soils, and upon harvest later that year, the crop yielded 32,000 bushels of wheat.[109]

In 1870 the Red River Valley counted a total population of just over 2,400 people. Settlement increased as the Northern Pacific railroad approached the following year. But the land remained unproven and, in many people's eyes, unworkable, and even after the arrival of the railroad the pace of settlement was unimpressive. By 1873, farms encompassed only 3,190 acres on the Dakota side of the Red River, and of that total only 304 acres were improved. Two years later, when Dalrymple arrived in the region, the population in the Red River Valley was about 5,000, just twice what it had been in 1870.[110] The publicity surrounding Dalrymple's efforts helped turn the trickle of immigrants into the Dakota Territory into a torrent.

Dalrymple's Wheat Bonanza and the Red River Boom

With the successful harvest on the Cass-Cheney farm, public opinion began to change. Frontier farmers and eastern capitalists alike turned their attention to the Red River country. As one early settler summed it up, "Mr. Dalrymple turned over the sod, sowed a crop of wheat on it, got a magnificent yield and then we all come."[111]

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[105] Ibid., 42.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid., 43.

[108] Ibid., 95-95; Charles Carleton Coffin, "Dakota Wheat Fields," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 60, no. 358 (March 1880): 530; Lamphere, "History of Wheat Raising in the Red River Valley," 232.

[109] Lewis Crawford, *History of North Dakota, Vol. I* (Chicago: American Historical Society, Inc., 1931), 471; Coffin, "Dakota Wheat Fields," 530; Theodore Blegen, *Minnesota, A History of the State* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963), 345.

[110] Crawford, *History of North Dakota*, 469; Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 24.

[111] J. H. Shepard, "History of Agriculture in the Red River Valley," in *History of the Red River Valley, Past and Present: Including an Account of the Counties, Cities, Towns, and Villages of the Valley from the Time of Their First Settlement and*

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When Dalrymple settled on his farm, the house he built for his family was reportedly "the first frame house between Fargo and Bismarck."[112] By 1879 wheat grew on over 145,000 acres in northern Dakota, and the following year 50,458 people lived in the Red River Valley.[113] The boom that followed Dalrymple's first harvest itself received much publicity in the national and international press. Journalists marveled at the reversal of the public's perception of, and the physical transformation in, the region previously known as the Great American Desert:

> Farmhouses dot the landscape; towns have sprung up; the traveler beholds piles of lumber, long lines of farm wagons, ploughs, seeders, harrows, reapers, threshers, and farm engines at every railroad station. Marvellous [sic] the change: in 1869 a furrowless plain; 1879, a harvest of eight million bushels of grain—ere long to be eighty million![114]

Looking back on the history of wheat raising in the valley, one scholar remarked that the world quickly "learned that the Dakota lands were not the barren wastes and howling desert of dry, drifting sand that our school books taught us, and that the Red River valley contained a mine of wealth greater than any discovered mine of silver and gold."[115]

The example set by Dalrymple on the Cass-Cheney farm inspired not only an influx of settlers but an enthusiastic response by stockholders to the Northern Pacific's bond-exchange offer. Between 1875 and 1878, bond exchanges accounted for over 70 percent of all Northern Pacific land sales.[116] By the end of the decade, the Northern Pacific had sold 'most land south of the main line for 100 miles west of the Red River."[117] But simply selling land was insufficient—lands had to be put into cultivation in order to create a lasting shipping market for the Northern Pacific. In order to encourage cultivation, the railroad offered substantial rebates and discounts for contractual agreements to cultivate and improve the property it sold.[118] It also sought to secure future freight through other means. It intensified both its North American and European advertising and recruitment campaigns, and moved its land office from New York to St. Paul to facilitate immigration to the Northern Plains. In 1882, the Northern Pacific promoted lands along its lines by distributing over 600,000 brochures, printed in English, Swedish, Dutch, Danish and Norwegian. By 1883, Northern Pacific immigration agencies employed "831 local agents in the British Isles alone, and 124 general agents, with many local agents under them, in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Switzerland, and Germany."[119]

Formation, Various Writers (Grand Forks, North Dakota: Herald Printing Co.; Chicago: C. R. Cooper & Co., 1909), 201.

[112] John Stewart Dalrymple, *Oliver Dalrymple: The Story of a Bonanza Farmer* (Minneapolis: privately printed, 1960), 23.

[113] Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 29; Crawford, *History of North Dakota*, 476.

[114] Coffin, "Dakota Wheat Fields," 530; Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity and the Growth of the American West* (New York: Pantheon, 1985), 69.

[115] Lamphere, "History of Wheat Raising in the Red River Valley," 219.

[116] Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 46.

[117] Ibid., 57.

[118] Horace B. Crandall, *A History of Richland County* (Colfax, North Dakota: published by the author, 1886), 87; Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 50-51.

[119] White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* 196; Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 43.

Dakota's Bonanza Farms

Some investors held Northern Pacific lands for speculative purposes or quickly subdivided and sold them. Others followed Dalrymple's lead and plunged into farming on an industrial scale. By 1878, North Dakota bonanza farms cultivated over 244,000 acres and seeded over 185,000 of those acres to wheat.[120] The organizational structures of bonanza farms "were as numerous and varied as the bonanzas themselves," but scholars of the subject have identified certain key features that most such farms seemed to share.[121] Some owners managed their own farms: Oliver Dalrymple accumulated property while managing the Cass-Cheney and other farms, and tended to his own bonanza farm as well as those of his employers. Unlike the families of absentee owners and investors, the Dalrymple family lived on their farm and performed farm chores on a daily basis.[122] Other bonanzas were owned by one or more absentee owners who hired managers to oversee their operations and visited the bonanza infrequently if at all.

The total number of bonanza farms in the Dakotas during the historical period is a matter of debate among historians. Some scholars of late nineteenth century agriculture apply the bonanza label to farms over 1,000 acres. Other historians believe that 3,000 acres is the minimum land base needed to qualify as a bonanza farm. Regardless of which standard one adopts, bonanza farms were relatively rare. In 1890, 323 farms in North Dakota encompassed 1,000 or more acres. Of those large farms, only 91 contained over 3,000 acres. The large farms varied widely in size. The Spiritwood farm near Jamestown consisted of about 20,000 acres originally, and subsequent land purchases increased the total Spiritwood holdings to over 200,000 acres. At his busiest, Oliver Dalrymple oversaw farming operations on some 100,000 acres, but this total represents the holdings of several distinct bonanzas. The Grandin Brothers established a bonanza farm near Maryville in 1876 that eventually grew to over 75,000 acres divided into four operating units. Other operators maintained farms that were smaller than these exceptional examples, but nonetheless, covered tens of thousands of acres of North Dakota prairie. The nature of bonanza operations varied with their scale. Many bonanza farms owned track-side as well as farmsite elevators, and farm stores offered retail goods to employees on many of the farms. Some of the larger bonanzas extended their business into shipping and other economic sectors: the Steele farm in Kidder County operated a stage line, and the Grandin Brothers ran their own steamship service on the Red River. The Amenia and Sharon Land Company, which gained national fame in 1898 by virtue of its appearance on a two-cent harvest-scene postage stamp, "came to own [with] over thirty subsidiary farming, elevator, livestock, and finance enterprises," in addition to the company towns of Amenia and Chaffee.[123]

As in the antebellum South, the vast scale of bonanza operations required a standardized and hierarchical labor organization. Those owners who did not oversee operations themselves hired a farm manager on the basis of managerial, not farming, skills. The manager broke the lands into divisions and subdivisions and oversaw the entire enterprise. He communicated daily with division superintendents and subdivision foremen, relaying work orders and receiving progress reports and supply requests. It was the superintendents and foremen who most often possessed the requisite experience in agriculture. They supervised the actual day-to-day operations in the field, assigning tasks to gangs of laborers, fixing machines, generally assessing and responding to all

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[120] Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 132.

[121] Ibid., 97; See "Bonanza Farm Characteristics," p. 13-14.

[122] Dalrymple, *Oliver Dalrymple*, 30-31.

[123] Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 72-74, 123; Crawford, *History of North Dakota*, 479; Thea Burner and Merilla Brasel, *Pillars of Time: A History of Pioneering on the Goose River Area of North Dakota from 1860 to the 1920s* (Visalia, California: Jostens/American Yearbook Co., 1980), 15.

variety of needs in order to keep the field hands working. The direction of field operations on bonanzas often evoked comparisons to military command structures. One contemporary observer described the harvest scene in which "a superintendent upon a superb horse, like a brigadier directing his forces, rides along the line, accompanied by his staff of two on horseback. They are fully armed and equipped, not with swords, but the implements of peace — wrenches, hammers, chisels. They are surgeons in waiting, with nuts and screws, or whatever may be needed."[124]

Through hierarchical organization and standardization, bonanza operators marshaled a variety of resources to complete enormous harvests in a short time. As historian Charles Lesher evocatively described it, a typical bonanza harvesting scene included the following:

> . . . men, animals, and machines converging in an empty field. The parade of horse and mule drawn binders circle a half section, overlooked by a binder boss in a buggy. Occasionally a driver pulls his binder out of the procession for repair or to rest his team. The binders which are spewing out sheaves of grain are followed by a gang of men that set the sheaves into shocks. At the thresher a workman is rhythmically forking bundles of grain to the man who cuts the bands and feeds the machine which lets out groans and howls. At the side of the machine, men are bagging the grain; and at its rear others work in a cloud of dust, stacking the ejected straw. A moving belt runs from the thresher to the spinning fly wheel of the large steam tractor. The engine accelerates and decelerates, as it chugs away. Water and fuel wagons are alongside the boiler. The engineer fires and fusses with the tractor amid hissing steam. Smoke belches from the stack. Shadows from smoke sweep across the ground and spook skittish horses. After hours of labor the men are summoned by the whistle to gather for the lunch the cooks have set out.[125]

The foot-soldiers of the bonanza farms, the men who shuddered in the spring winds during seeding season and sweated in harvest's heat, came and went with the seasons. Labor requirements fluctuated with each phase of annual operations, peaking during harvest before plummeting during the relative inactivity of winter. As a result, managers hired most workers by the month, and workers cobbled a livelihood out of a variety of seasonal work. Many came to the bonanzas from the South, where crops ripened for harvest earlier. After moving north with the harvest, workers often headed to the forests of Minnesota and Wisconsin to spend the winter working as lumberjacks. In exchange for their toil in the bonanza fields, the men received room, board, washing, and wages. Many laborers also traveled to and from farm fields for free. The railroads recognized that successful harvests translated into freight and profits for their lines, and often recruited and transported field hands free of charge.[126]

A core group of bonanza employees remained on the farm all year. Year-round employees enjoyed not only better job-security but higher wages. Some of them were field hands or field supervisors who performed indoor chores—caring for livestock and equipment—in the winter. Others worked year-round in indoor support positions as cooks, housekeepers, the blacksmith and, perhaps most importantly, as the bookkeeper.[127]

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[124] Coffin, "Dakota Wheat Fields," 534; Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 91, 96-97.

[125] Charles Lesher, "The Dwights and their Big Dakota Farm" (North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Bismarck, Bonanza Farms file, photocopy), 13-14.

[126] Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 109-113.

[127] Ibid., 109-110.

Ultimately, bonanza farms were just a form of big business. They existed to return a profit to their owners. Bonanza bookkeepers kept and analyzed detailed records about operations so that owners and investors could easily assess the profitability of their enterprise. As Hiram Drache puts it, "it was income that determined how long a bonanza could remain in existence."[128] The records and analyses of bookkeepers offered not only a means of assessing overall profitability, but of determining whether or not particular practices on the farm undermined or contributed to that profitability. This strict accounting "caused bonanzas to change their methods of operation more readily than the average farmer because the balance sheet told them what was profitable and what was not."[129]

Conclusions drawn from the bookkeeper's records influenced every aspect of bonanza operations, from such basic choices as crop allocations to less obvious decisions about the treatment of employees and care for machinery. In the earliest years of bonanzas:

> before the system of farming had been reduced to a business problem, no sleeping quarters were provided, and the men slept in tents and upon the straw. The cooking for the crews was done in the open. But this plan brought sickness to the farms in the harvest season, and the farmers found that it was more expensive than housing and caring for the men in the best possible manner. Therefore, in the business of wheat growing, the food and shelter for the workmen play leading parts. . . . by maintaining a good table the farmer has his choice of workmen, and the operators say that no money brings such sure returns as that put upon tables, and in the bedrooms.[130]

The bottom line dictated not only the way bonanzas cared for employees, but also the way they kept machinery. While many bonanzas maintained implement sheds, few, if any, had sufficient indoor storage for the dozens of implements used on the farm. Implement sheds held only the most valuable equipment. The majority of machinery stood out in the weather. Bonanzas rapidly wore out their implements, a fact which made weather damage a moot point—machines needed replacing long before weathering impaired their performance. Even if farm implements weren't entirely worn out, many bonanzas calculated that, given the cost of labor, replacing them cost less than repairing them.[131] Bookkeeping divisions tracked not only costs but revenues. Bonanza farms attended closely to developments in the domestic and international markets in order to both secure the best possible price and keep abreast of changes in the industry. As Oliver Dalrymple said, "little leaks sink the ship:" American wheat farmers had to micro-manage their operations in order to "successfully compete in the great markets of the world with the virgin soil and pauper labor of Russia, India, Argentina, Canada and Australia."[132]

Many bonanzas regarded mono-cropping as the most profitable use of their farmland. But, as with other aspects of bonanza farming, operators observed no hard and fast rule regarding crop mixes—some farms produced a variety of crops while others sowed only wheat. No less an authority than Oliver Dalrymple himself exposed the inaccuracies of the popular perception of bonanza farming as wheat-only endeavors. Dalrymple's affection

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[128] Ibid., 131.

[129] Ibid., 98.

[130] William Allen White, "The Business of a Wheat Farm," *Scribner's Magazine* 22, no. 5 (Nov. 1897): 544-545.

[131] Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 122; White, "The Business of a Wheat Farm," 545.

[132] Dalrymple, *Oliver Dalrymple*, 39.

for mixed production arose not from sentiment but from attention to the bottom line: in his view, mixed farming meant profits. According to Dalrymple's "Programme for Handling a Division of a Bonanza Farm:"

> Crops should be diversified, rotated and sown early so as to be harvested earlier with cheaper labor, less expense, and in the long days. About half a section [out of five sections] should be sown in oats near buildings and threshed in the barn yard and out on green side for winter hay and forage. One section, or more, should be sown in barley early on best land to be harvested with $1 labor or thereabouts, in July and summer plowed. Corn to the amount of 80 acres should be put near buildings and harvested by hogs and horses, beginning August 15th.[133]

Agricultural Developments in the Bonanza Period

The success of bonanza farms depended not only upon their organization and management, but on the convergence of several broader developments in United States history. Like the availability of vast tracts of cheap virgin land, transportation and marketing changes facilitated the spread of the large-scale commercial wheat-farming ventures. So, too, did improvements in agricultural technology which had been evolving throughout the nineteenth century as farmers adapted tools to new ecologies while at the same time seeking to make their work more efficient and less arduous. Improved wheat varieties and milling practices also fueled bonanza farming's success, as did abundant demand for American wheat and an equally abundant labor supply resulting from increased immigration and the westward flow of agricultural settlers.[134]

The Northern Pacific tracks formed but a fraction of the extensive rail network that spread over all parts of the continent in the decades after the Civil War. In 1860, the nation's total track system totaled 30,626 miles, over six times what it had been just 15 years earlier. If its growth had been rapid before the Civil War, the railroad industry exploded after the defeat of the Confederacy. In the five years between 1867 and 1873, construction crews laid 33,000 miles of track—more than had existed in the entire nation before the war began. By 1880 American railroads operated over 93,000 miles of track and by 1890 over 167,000 miles. That total would continue to grow until World War One, when the United States contained more than one-third of the world's rail mileage.[135]

Like the transformation of domestic transportation that resulted from the railroad boom, technological improvements undergirded the success of bonanza farms. Self-raking reapers replaced hand-rakers by the mid-1860s, a change that "probably saved the labor of five men."[136] In 1871 manufacturers introduced the Hyde steam plow, which plowed, sowed, and harrowed a sixteen-foot wide strip all in one operation. By the late 1880s refinements to the steam plow enabled farmers to turn 160 acres in 24 hours—a plowing rate almost seven times that attainable 25 years before.[137] Two years after the introduction of Hyde's steam plow, inventors perfected self-binding reapers. Farmers immediately embraced this "machine that would reap and bind grain without the intervention of human hands . . . In 1873 fifty tons of wire were used by the self-binding reapers; in

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[133] Ibid., 37.

[134] Briggs, "The Development of Agriculture in Territorial North Dakota," 20.

[135] Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive,* 93, 165-66.

[136] Ibid., 116-117.

[137] Pisani, *From the Family Farm to Agribusiness,* 8.

1878, *fourteen thousand tons!*"[138]

Those engaged in American agriculture strove not only to improve wheat-farming implements but the product itself. In the 1860s, milling difficulties hampered the commercial production of spring wheat.[139] Under existing milling practices, the outside covering of the spring wheat kernel, called the bran, broke into fine pieces. These small yellowish pieces colored the flour. Yellow spring wheat flour sold for less than that milled from winter wheat. In 1870 two Minnesota millers discovered that by grinding spring wheat more slowly on looser rollers they could separate the bran and produce flour more appealing to the consumer. This new milling technique eliminated the primary obstacle to profitable production of spring wheat and paved the way for the wheat boom on the Northern Plains. Thereafter flour from spring wheat sold for as much, if not more than, winter wheat flour.[140] The advent of a new spring wheat milling process paved the way for Minneapolis to become the nation's milling center and central wheat market when the railroads extended across the Northern Plains in the 1870s and 1880s.[141] Improvements in spring-wheat strains accompanied milling innovations. Around 1870 farmers began "the production of commercial varieties [of wheat] from the progeny of artificial crosses."[142] Newly available wheat strains included hard red spring and durum wheats, both of which would soon be widely sown on the North Dakota plains.[143]

The storied success of the bonanza farms and the immediate settlement boom they inspired garnered national and international media attention, and the initial rush of immigrants gave way to a sustained inflow of farmers and townspeople. By 1885 over 140,000 people made their home in the Red River Valley—the population had almost tripled since 1880.[144] The farms these newcomers established included both small, family-sized operations and larger ventures. After the Northern Pacific's trailblazing rail line entered the state in the early 1870s, other railroads followed suit. James J. Hill's Manitoba Railroad crossed the Red River at Grand Forks in 1880, and over the next four years Hill built four branch lines into the east end of northern Dakota Territory. After resuming construction in 1879, the Northern Pacific set about extending branch lines off of its main line: by 1884 the company owned almost 650 miles of track in the northern section of Dakota Territory.[145] Both roads threw themselves into the task of recruiting farmers to settle the lands along their lines and grow crops to fill freight cars. They used lavish promotional brochures to beckon settlers to the Red River Valley, which they enthusiastically described as a "land of fine horses, fine cattle, fine sheep, good health, good people and the best bread in the world."[146] With the spread of railroads and the continuing high price of wheat in the first half of

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[138] Coffin, "Dakota Wheat Fields," 533. Emphasis in original.

[139] Winter wheat, typical of the southern and central plains, is planted in the fall and sits dormant through relatively mild winters. It is already germinated when spring arrives and rapidly matures for harvest. Winters on the Northern Plains are too cold for dependable production of winter wheat, which dies with prolonged harsh winter weather. Conditions in the northern Great Plains dictate that farmers wait until spring thaw for planting. Cunfer to Hagen, 1/20/02, 28.

[140] *Buffalo, Our Town on the Prairie: Update, State Centennial Edition* (Buffalo, North Dakota: Buffalo Historical Society, 1989), 26.

[141] Blegen, *Minnesota: A History of the State,* 343.

[142] Ball, "The History of American Wheat Improvement," 60.

[143] Ibid., 63.

[144] Crawford, *History of North Dakota*, 476.

[145] Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 29.

[146] [St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway?], *Red River Valley, The Eden of the Northwest* (St. Paul, MN: [St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway?], [1887?], promotional brochure), cover page.

the 1880s "the opening of large farms continued unabated."[147] By 1884 Dakota farmers tended a million acres of wheat. When North Dakota became a state in 1889, wheat grew on over two-and-a-half million acres. The fields filled with farmers and the towns swelled with businesses, and businesspeople to serve them, and the first census of statehood counted almost 200,000 inhabitants.[148]

Bonanza Farming in Richland County

Many of these newcomers to Dakota Territory settled at the south end of the Red River Valley. In 1872, one year after the Northern Pacific Railway reached Fargo, the St. Paul and Pacific Railway (which later became the Great Northern) completed a line to Breckenridge, Minnesota, on the east bank of the Red River. Across the river from Breckenridge stood a small town called Wahpeton. The following year Wahpeton became the county seat of the newly-formed Richland County. At the time, Richland County contained fewer than 500 people, most of whom had been there only a year or two.[149] Another seven years passed before the railroad crossed the Red River. In the summer of 1880 construction crews finished a bridge over the river and began laying tracks northwesterly through Richland County. As it had done in countless other frontier farming communities, the arrival of the railroad transformed local possibilities for profitable commercial agriculture. Investors and farmers set their sights on Richland County's unplowed expanses. In April of 1880, several months before the railroad's maiden voyage in the region, J. W. Dwight, a United States Congressman from New York, bought 25,000 acres in Richland and adjoining counties. Dwight organized the Dwight Land and Farm Company and appointed a governing board of thirteen directors.[150] The company immediately broke 5,000 acres and began erecting the buildings needed on a bonanza farm. By 1886, the Dwight Land and Farm Company cultivated 8,500 acres of wheat, oats, and barley and stored the harvest from its lands in "two steam elevators and several large granaries."[151]

The Dwight farm was but one of many farms established in Richland County in the 1880s. The years after the arrival of the St. Paul and Pacific brought spectacular growth. In the decade following the first rail service, the county's population grew from about 3,500 to almost 11,000 people. Between 1882 and 1887, five more railroads laid track through the county. The second line to serve the Richland region, the Northern Pacific, Fergus and Black Hills Railway (later a branch line of the Northern Pacific), spawned several new shipping towns as it progressed westward from Wahpeton, among them was Mooreton, founded in 1882.[152] The town soon served the farmers and farm laborers who filled the surrounding countryside. By 1883 Mooreton had a gristmill, and two years later the railroad shipped almost 90,000 bushels of grain from the town's siding.[153] Much of this grain came from three of the bonanza farms operating in the immediate vicinity—the Antelope Farm, founded in 1878, and the Adams (or Fairview) Farm and the Downing Farm, both established in the early

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[147] Briggs, "The Development of Agriculture in Territorial North Dakota," 22.

[148] Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 29-30.

[149] F. G. Callan, *A History of Richland County and the City of Wahpeton, North Dakota* (Wahpeton, North Dakota: Globe Gazette, [1938?]), 15-17.

[150] "New Yorkers Secure 25,000 Acres of Dakota's Domain," *The Bismarck Tribune*, 16 April 1880; Callan, *A History of Richland County*, 19.

[151] Crandall, *A History of Richland County*, 68.

[152] Callan, *A History of Richland County*, 18, 20-21.

[153] Ibid., 19; Crandall, *A History of Richland County*, 87.

1880s.[154]

The large farms around Mooreton resembled bonanzas elsewhere in the Red River Valley and beyond. They encompassed vast fields tended by droves of hired hands and produced huge volumes of wheat. Hugh Moore, a native New Yorker and the namesake of Mooreton, owned and operated the oldest of the three, Antelope Farm. He managed his 17,300-acre farming operation closely and extended his interest in the Richland County wheat industry into processing as well, constructing the flour mill that served Mooreton shortly after the town's establishment.[155] William Adams, originally of Chicago, managed the Fairview Farm, which he owned in partnership with his father John Quincy. The farm's 9,000 acres produced wheat, oats, barley and flax. Adams also raised sheep on the Fairview Farm. He fed his flock by grazing them on harvested fields and by raising hay.[156] Like those of the Antelope and Fairview Farms, the owner of the Downing Farm, Jerome F. Downing, was a man of means from the eastern United States. But unlike his fellow Mooreton township bonanza owners, Downing did not move west to manage his farming venture. He chose instead to hire a superintendent to oversee the operations of the Downing Farm while he remained in Erie, Pennsylvania. When his superintendent quit in 1887, he turned to his nephew, Frederick Bagg, for help. Bagg was living in South Hadley, Massachusetts at the time but had spent the summer of 1886 on the North Dakota farm. His work there apparently impressed his uncle, for Downing offered him the position of superintendent when it became vacant that fall. Bagg accepted his uncle's offer—$500 per year plus one-fourth of the net farm income—and at the age of 29 moved to Richland County to run the Downing Farm. At the time the property consisted of 1,280 acres of land.[157]

Frederick Austin Bagg and the Downing Farm

When Frederick Austin Bagg arrived in the Red River Valley in 1887, the brief but intense heyday of bonanza farming in the region was already coming to a close. But although some of the bonanzas had begun to subdivide and sell off their holdings by the 1880s, others maintained or expanded their holdings in the late nineteenth century and operated well into the twentieth century. The onset of a nationwide depression in 1882 slowed outside investment while at the same time driving down prices for wheat and other agricultural commodities. By 1884 the price paid for a bushel of wheat at Red River Valley shipping points had dropped from over a dollar to about 60 cents. At that price, for many bonanza farms, "there was little or no profit in its production and in many cases a considerable loss."[158] While wheat prices plummeted, land values and associated taxes increased rapidly as a result of the surge in immigration. The influx of settlers put "a price upon the acres of the big farms which . . . tempted many a bonanza farmer to reduce his acreage."[159] Weather

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[154] Centennial History Book Committee, *A History of Mooreton, 1884-1984* (Gwinner, ND: J. & M. Printing Co., 1984), 100; Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 76; Crandall, *A History of Richland County*, 92; Florence Bagg and Ella Bagg Egenes, *Bonanza Farming: The Downing Farm and the Bagg Farm* (Wahpeton, ND: Richland County Historical Society, 1974), 1.

[155] Crandall, *A History of Richland County*, 92-93; Centennial History Book Committee, *A History of Mooreton,* 1.

[156] Centennial History Book Committee, *A History of Mooreton,* 100-101.

[157] Centennial History Book Committee, *A History of Mooreton,* 105; John Wall, "Ramshackle to Restored: The Rebirth of a Bonanza Farm," (Bagg Bonanza Farm, Mooreton, North Dakota, n.d. [ca. 1992?], photocopy), 2; Bagg and Egenes, *Bonanza Farming: The Downing Farm and the Bagg Farm*, 1; Claudia Beeson, *Early History of Mooreton Township* (Wahpeton, ND: Richland County Historical Society, 1974), 6; Ella Bagg Egenes, handwritten notes, (Bagg Bonanza Farm, Mooreton, North Dakota, photocopy).

[158] Lamphere, "History of Wheat Raising in the Red River Valley," 237; Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations, Vol. II,* 621.

[159] White, "The Business of A Wheat Farm," 534; Briggs, "The Development of Agriculture in Territorial North Dakota," 34.

compounded problems created by land and commodity markets: in 1887 and 1888 Dakota Territory was subject to localized drought, and in 1889 drought conditions spread over the central plains, and "hit Dakota exceptionally hard."[160] A rebound in wheat prices in the later part of the 1880s and a bumper crop in 1891, offered North Dakota's wheat farmers a brief respite, but in 1893 depression again descended on the nation.[161] The bad times hurt large and small farmers alike, but family farms proved more flexible under harsh conditions. Family farmers could work longer hours and cut expenses more easily than could bonanzas. And family farmers were not only more able but more willing to weather the rough periods—their farms were not only their businesses, but their homes. Most bonanzas, after all, were but another form of big business and their owners "like the owners of most businesses, decided it was time to quit when they could no longer make a profit."[162] As a result, during the late 1880s and early 1890s, many small farms failed but a far greater percentage of bonanza farms closed down.[163]

The demise of bonanza farms during the late 1880s and 1890s, however, was by no means universal. Some farms adapted to the new economic climate in creative ways. The Amenia and Sharon Land Company, for instance, subdivided its operation into tenant farms in 1892 but continued to run the property "under the general supervision of the management," thereby alleviating the burden of wages and transferring the risk inherent in farming to its tenants.[164] Other bonanza farms took advantage of the depression conditions by buying out their neighbors and augmenting their holdings. The Dwight Farm and Land Company more than doubled its acreage by purchasing 33,000 acres between 1880 and 1908.[165] William Adams, proprietor of the Fairview Farm, also added to his holdings during this period. He not only bought up the claims of local homesteaders, but moved many of the buildings they had constructed to his headquarters for use on his bonanza farm.[166]

The rapid changes brought on by depression, drought, and population increases created opportunity for those with the resources and determination to capitalize on the instability in the countryside. Frederick Austin Bagg had both, and arrived in Richland County with orders to "buy up whatever land he could" and with the financial backing to do so. By 1888, the Downing Farm encompassed 2,200 acres, and by the early 1890s it encompassed over 5,000 acres of land. In 1897, ten years after his arrival in North Dakota, Bagg himself owned at least one-and-a-half sections in Richland County, including the southwest quarter of Section 18, Township 132 North, near which he would later erect the headquarters of his own bonanza farm. By that time, between Bagg's purchases for the Downing Farm and Adams' purchases for the Fairview Farm, Mooreton's two biggest bonanzas had acquired almost half of the entire 36-mile township.[167]

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[160] Briggs, "The Development of Agriculture in Territorial North Dakota," 33; White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* 230.

[161] Herbert Fish and R. M. Black, *A Brief History of North Dakota* (New York: American Book Company, n.d. [ca. 1925]), 27.

[162] *Buffalo, Our Town on the Prairie: Update, State Centennial Edition* (Buffalo, ND: Buffalo Historical Society, 1989), 26.

[163] White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* 272; Pisani, *From the Family Farm to Agribusiness*, 9-10.

[164] Crawford, *History of North Dakota*, 479.

[165] Lillian Knudson Quamme, *The Centennial Review of Dwight, North Dakota, 1974* (Self Published, 1974), 4. Document on file at the North Dakota State Historical Society.

[166] Centennial History Book Committee, *A History of Mooreton,* 105.

[167] W. M. House, *1897 Atlas* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1897), Township 132 North, Ranges 49 and 50 West; Beeson, *Early History of Mooreton Township,* 6; Centennial History Book Committee, *A History of Mooreton,* 105; Richland County Historical Society, *A History of Richland County: Richland County, North Dakota* (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing Co., 1977), 398.

After Bagg had managed the Downing Farm for two years, his uncle proposed a longer term contract. Downing offered Bagg one-fourth of all farm property, in addition to his salary and yearly profit share, if he would agree to manage the farm for 20 years.[168] Bagg accepted his uncle's offer and settled into his position for the duration of the contract. During his tenure as superintendent, the Downing Farm grew to over 10,000 acres in Richland and La Moure counties.[169] Despite the depression that plagued the nation in the 1890s, Bagg, as his land purchases indicate, kept his operation running smoothly and profitably. The year 1895 brought North Dakota "one of the greatest crops" in the history of the region, and wheat acreage in the young state continued to grow despite the demise of many of the bonanza farms and the relatively low prices the crop brought at market. By the turn of the century, wheat grew on about 2 million acres on the North Dakota side of the Red River Valley, and in the state as a whole farmers planted over four million acres to wheat.[170] In the tumultuous times that the late 1880s and 1890s brought to North Dakota, Bagg not only augmented his own and his uncle's land holdings, but expanded operations of the Downing Farm apace. He raised not only wheat but crops and livestock to feed farm employees and "each year required the hiring of more help and buying more equipment in the line of machinery." Bagg soon oversaw a workforce of 100 men during harvest season and employees tended to grain crops, vegetable plots, chickens, and beef and dairy cattle.[171]

Managing the labor of such a vast farm workforce demanded much of Bagg's time. This management entailed not only overseeing the performance of the myriad duties the laborers performed, but also balancing the expense of labor and its upkeep with associated returns. In order to do this Bagg, like most Bonanza operators, maintained a strict hierarchy and division of labor on the farm. Men worked in the fields under the direction of a series of supervisors, while women performed the cooking and serving duties indoors. Among the cooks at the Downing Farm was Sophia Larson, who after marrying F. A. Bagg took over supervision of the female employees. During peak labor times in the spring and fall, Sophia Larson Bagg oversaw the daily preparation of about a quarter of beef, 2 bushels of potatoes, 40 loaves of bread, 18 pies, and 20 dozen eggs. These the women served to the farm crews in the dining room and, at noon, in the fields. The Baggs kept food expenses to a minimum by producing what they could on the farm, including vegetables, milk, eggs, and chicken. Other items, such as pork, beans, rice, fruit, sugar, and coffee were ordered in bulk from regional suppliers.[172]

The immense daily support requirements of the bonanza farms workforce underscored the difference between bonanza operations and smaller family farms. Bonanzas were large scale, capital intensive business operations, and the farms' continued existence depended on maintaining an often precarious profit margin. Wages and food constituted the two biggest annual expenses, and managers worked to ensure that the labor secured by these expenses produced as efficiently as possible. Bagg organized his threshing crews according to nationality to facilitate smooth operation of the threshing machines, employing one crew each of exclusively Scandinavian, Polish, and Finnish origin. In order to prevent costly mishaps at the hands of the largely unskilled field labor crews, supervisors oversaw all field work and specialized employees performed the skilled duties involved in adjusting and repairing expensive machinery, blacksmithing, and elevator operation. Bagg met with his

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[168] Egenes, handwritten notes.

[169] Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 76.

[170] Fish, *A Brief History of North Dakota*, 161; Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 29; Lamphere, "History of Wheat Raising in the Red River Valley," 242. Farmers on the Minnesota side of the valley planted about 1.2 million acres to wheat during the same period.

[171] Richland County Historical Society, *A History of Richland County*, 400; Egenes, handwritten notes; Wall, "Ramshackle to Restored," 4.

[172] Bagg Bonanza Historic Preservation Society, "The Red River Valley Agricultural Interpretive Center," (Bagg Bonanza Farm, Mooreton, North Dakota, [1989?], centennial brochure); Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 114-116.

foremen on a daily basis to review progress and plan work schedules.[173]

The labor demands of the Downing Farm and other bonanza operations required a vast pool of seasonal employees. The wheat workers who composed this pool flocked to the Northern Plains fields from all walks of life. Upon observing the annual influx to the bonanzas, a North Dakota contemporary commented "I never saw such a mixture of laborers. A man who has outrun the sheriff of his county is pretty sure to be safe while the harvest lasts. The lumbermen from the camps of Minnesota and Wisconsin are enticed by the prospects for fair wages, and prospectors who failed to make their 'stake' in the mines of the far west stop to earn enough to carry them back home. Hundreds come from the cities, others from colleges, and perhaps most important of all, hundreds of small farmers and homesteaders and others who hire out for the season in order to get a small amount of cash to start farming for themselves a little further out, but within range of a market."[174]

Under Bagg's able direction, the Downing Farm ran smoothly through the first decade of the twentieth century. Good years, like 1907 and 1908, offset bad years like 1904, when Red Rust caused a complete loss of the wheat crop, and 1909, when severe drought diminished yields.[175] Similar ups and downs marked Bagg's personal life during this period, as joy at the birth of four more children gave way to sorrow when two of those children died before their second birthday.[176] By the end of the decade, Bagg had purchased for himself another section of land in Mooreton Township, including the east half of Section 18. He had fulfilled his 20 year contract with his uncle and could lay claim to one-quarter of Downing Farm property as well as the land he had purchased for himself over the years. Downing died in 1913, and as his heirs pondered the fate of the farm, Bagg prepared to establish his own operation. He selected Section 18 as the headquarters site for his bonanza farm, and in 1915 he began farming for himself.[177]

The Bagg Bonanza Farm

The site Frederick Bagg selected for his bonanza farm headquarters contained three buildings. The buildings had been present since at least 1910, and included the Foreman's House and a north-south oriented cattle barn at the west edge of the complex, both located on the west side of the section road that divided Section 18 from Section 17. A granary (now known as the mule barn) stood on the east side of the section road.[178] When Bagg moved to the site in 1915 he took with him several of the Downing Farm buildings, which composed a portion of his compensation package for years of service to his uncle. He placed the Downing Farm bunkhouse, originally built around 1882, on a foundation and began using it as the Main House of the Bagg Farm—living in it with his wife and six children and with maids and seasonal help. Hired cooks worked in the kitchen of the Main House and served all farm meals in the adjoining dining room. Other Downing Farm buildings moved to the Bagg Farm at this time included "one barn 128 feet long and 40 feet wide . . . four machine sheds, a bunk

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[173] Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 91, 114-116; Briggs, "The Development of Agriculture in Territorial North Dakota," 25; White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* 271; Bagg Bonanza Farm Historical Preservation Society, *Bagg Bonanza Farm Heirloom Cookbook* (Gwinner, ND: J & M Printing, 1992), 4-5.

[174] Briggs, "The Development of Agriculture in Territorial North Dakota," 27.

[175] Centennial History Book Committee, *A History of Mooreton,* 105; Egenes, handwritten notes.

[176] Egenes, handwritten notes.

[177] Wall, "Ramshackle to Restored," 5; Midland Atlas Company, Inc., *Atlas of Richland County North Dakota*, 33.

[178] Beeson, *Early History of Mooreton Township,* 9; Midland Atlas Company, *Atlas of Richland County North Dakota*, 33; Perry, "Bagg Bonanza Farm, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," map 2; Arenstein, Map of Bagg Bonanza Farm.

house, and a small elevator."[179] Two years later, in 1917, the Bagg Farm holdings expanded dramatically with the probation of the Downing estate: Bagg received title to one-fourth of Downing's 6,000 acres.[180] Over the ensuing years, he amassed a total of 7,000 acres.[181]

After establishing his farm, Bagg gradually modified his operations and improved and expanded farm infrastructure. Specific dates of construction or importation do not exist for many buildings, but most expansion occurred before 1930. By then, the Bagg Bonanza Farm building complex consisted of 26 buildings on the west side of the access road. The granary that existed on the site in 1910 was probably the only building on the east side of the road at that time. West of the road, the complex included the Main House, the Foreman's House/Office, the bunk house, the outhouse, a storage shed, the laundry, the supply house, the cold storage house, the electrical/refrigeration plant (also used for storage), the mule barn, the cattle barn, four chicken houses, two hog houses, a feed storage building, a circular granary, a grain elevator, a combination machine shed/hog house, two machine sheds, a combination garage/machine shed, a combination tool shop/garage, and the blacksmith shop.[182] Besides the two that existed on the west side of the access road in 1910, only one of these buildings, a hog house, was built on site.[183] In 1932, Bagg moved the "buildings from [the] Lenzen Farm" onto his property. These buildings, which Bagg placed on the east side of the access road by the granary, included a one-and-one-half story frame house and probably also included the three other buildings that were present on the east side of the road by the mid-1930s (now known as two granaries and the sheep barn).[184] Around the same time, Bagg moved the laundry building to a new location west of the electrical/refrigeration plant, and purchased an oil storage shed which he put north of the feed storage building.[185] Bagg also maintained several buildings within the town of Mooreton for farm use—he built a two-story seed house there and purchased an elevator for storage of grain.[186] These buildings are no longer extant.

While he was expanding his farm infrastructure, Bagg also modified his operations. When he began his farm, Bagg depended primarily on animal power for producing his crops. In 1917, Bagg bought a 60 horse-power Altman Taylor gasoline tractor that marked the beginning of a gradual change to machinery powered by fossil fuels. By 1928, farm operations relied on "big machinery and tractors."[187] Bagg also diversified his production over the years. In 1918 he planted a half-section to rye and in 1920 he added oats to his crop mix. In the 1920s

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[179] Bagg Bonanza Farm Historic Preservation Society, "What We Will Do," (Bagg Bonanza Farm, Mooreton, North Dakota, [1988?], photocopy); Bagg Bonanza Farm Historical Preservation Society, *Bagg Bonanza Farm Heirloom Cookbook*, 3-4, 10. The barn that Bagg moved from the Downing Farm was built in 1911, after a fire destroyed the original Downing mule barn and all the animals inside. See John Wall, "The Bagg Farm," *Horizons* (1986), 7.

[180] Bagg Bonanza Historic Preservation Society, "The Red River Valley Agricultural Interpretive Center."

[181] Egenes, handwritten notes.

[182] J. P. Reeder Insurance Agency, F. A. Bagg Farm Map, 17 Sept. 1930, Bagg Bonanza Farm District file, North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Bismarck.

[183] Perry, "Bagg Bonanza Farm, National Register of Historic Places Nomination," Sec. 7, p. 5. The hog house that was built on site is called bldg #17 on the 1930 site map.

[184] Egenes, handwritten notes; Perry, "Bagg Bonanza Farm, National Register of Historic Places Nomination," Sec. 7, p. 1; Arenstein, Map of Bagg Bonanza Farm.

[185] J. P. Reeder Insurance Agency, F. A. Bagg Farm Map; Aerial Photograph of Bagg Bonanza Farm [1935?] (Bagg Bonanza Farm, Mooreton, North Dakota).

[186] Egenes, handwritten notes.

[187] Ibid.

he grew and sold sweet clover, cultivated 800-1,000 acres of corn, and raised some 300 sheep and 1,500 hogs.[188]

In the 1930s, as the Great Depression wore on and he reached retirement age, Bagg began parceling out his estate to his children and select long-term employees. After his wife Sophia died in March of 1933, Bagg retired and turned over operation of the farm to his son, Roy. In 1935-36 he gave each of his five living children "a farmstead and seven quarters of land to make their own way in life."[189] That same year Bagg rewarded Bennie Larson, farm foreman for 30 years, and Helen Kloeppel, who had worked at the farm 23 years, with a quarter-section of land each. Eight years later, in 1941, Bagg gave each of his children another half-section.[190] Bagg died in the Main House in 1950.[191]

Agriculture's Golden Age and the Evolution of Bonanza Farming

Frederick Bagg arrived in Dakota in the midst of drought and depression, and he retired under similar circumstances. But his productive life on the Northern Plains spanned decades of prosperity that characterized the endeavors of the nation's farmers. Bagg established his own farm at perhaps the apex of farm prosperity in the United States. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, weather, markets, and implement improvements combined to create the so-called Golden Age of American agriculture. North Dakota farmers continued to expand their wheat acreage during this period and by 1910, wheat covered over eight million acres in the state.[192] Wheat farmers "achieved the height of their prosperity during World War I," with the wartime boom in prices.[193] Wartime demand for wheat coincided with a shortage of farm labor, as the nation's workforce went to the frontlines or flocked to booming factories. These two factors combined to create a boom in mechanization on farms. Between 1900 and 1920 the value of farm implements on the Northern Plains rose 240%, though an even bigger increase in agriculture's reliance on tractors was yet to come.[194] By 1920, despite increasing urbanization, farming was still America's biggest business, with "an investment value greater than manufacturing, all utilities, and all railroads combined."[195]

The bonanza farms that continued to operate into the twentieth century adapted to the changing times in a variety of ways. Some owners, like the Amenia and Sharon Land Co. and Bagg's neighbor William Adams, took advantage of the increasing land prices that accompanied agricultural prosperity during World War I and sold off their holdings to individual farmers.[196] Other bonanzas, including the Belle Prairie Farm in Trail County, and the Dwight Farm and Land Company, in Richland County, continued farming on a grand scale

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[188] Ibid.; Sebens interview with Sackett (Fargo: North Dakota Institute of Regional Studies, 5/11/55, photocopy).

[189] Bagg Bonanza Farm Historical Preservation Society, *Bagg Bonanza Farm Heirloom Cookbook,* 21; Cathy Mauk, "Bonanza Farm," *The Forum*, 30 Sept. 1990; Richland County Historical Society, *A History of Richland County*, 401.

[190] Egenes, handwritten notes.

[191] Mauk, "Bonanza Farm."

[192] Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza*, 29.

[193] White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* 230.

[194] Thomas Isern, *Bullthreshers and Bindlestiffs* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990), 175-176; White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* 230.

[195] Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations, Vol. II*, 861.

[196] Centennial History Book Committee, *A History of Mooreton,* 101; Crawford, *History of North Dakota*, 479-480.

through the 1920s and the 1930s when they were subdivided. Both of those farms remained largely intact in 1940.[197] Like Frederick Bagg, some owners established their bonanza farms during agriculture's Golden Age rather than during the boom period of the 1870s and 1880s. James J. Hill, owner of the Great Northern Railroad, founded Northcote Bonanza Farm, a 50,000 acre bonanza in Warren, Minnesota, after the turn of the century when the St. Paul and Pacific completed a spur line to the region. Despite the infusion of some $750,000 into farm infrastructure, no more than 4,000 acres were ever cropped and heirs liquidated the farm after Hill's death in 1916.[198] Other late entrants into the bonanza farming game proved more successful than Hill. Tom Campbell, who had been raised in the Red River Valley, established a bonanza farm in Montana during World War I to grow wheat for the war effort. Campbell leased some 95,000 acres of Indian land in the state and ran "the world's largest and most thoroughly mechanized" farm. Campbell reduced his acreage in later years but continued to operate on a large scale through the 1940s.[199]

Depression, Drought, and the Foundations of Modern Agricultural Production

The boom times that inspired the establishment of several bonanzas in the late 'teens gave way to an agricultural depression in the 1920s and a national depression and drought in the 1930s. During the 1920s, wartime price supports disappeared, European farms resumed normal production, and new synthetic fibers began to replace wool and cotton. As a result of these changes as well as drought conditions in much of the Great Plains, farmers' portion of the national income shrank by almost half between 1920 and 1930. Congressional representatives from agricultural regions tried a variety of political means to ameliorate conditions in farm country, but the reforms and new regulations proved insufficient.[200] As the agricultural depression of the 1920s turned into a general depression in the 1930s, 3.5 million farmers fled the Great Plains for greener pastures. Those who remained worked larger farms, but increasingly did so as tenants instead of owners.[201]

The onset of World War II helped pull rural America out of the devastation of the previous two decades. Farmers enjoyed high prices for many of their products as "the importance of agriculture for the war effort combined with the political power of organized farmers to create a highly favorable government pricing policy. Production controls were suspended, but income supports were kept in place." Staple commodity production increased with favorable market conditions: wheat producers increased their output by about 50 percent between 1939 and 1945.[202] The prosperity that resulted from wartime conditions gave way to a more sustained revolution in agricultural productivity spurred by increased mechanization, the embrace of chemicals, and new crop strains and animal breeding methods. This productivity revolution in turn transformed rural America:

> As farmers became more productive their business changed. Farmers had to be more

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[197] Burner and Brasel, *Pillars of Time*, 21; Quamme, 8; Clifford Centennial Committee, *Prairie Portraits: A History of Clifford, North Dakota* (Grand Forks, ND: Washburn Printing Center, 1981), 149. The Belle Prairie farm, consisting of the original building complex and adjacent acreage of the Bonanza Farm, continues in agricultural use, under the third generation management of the Hilstad family. Only two buildings from the period of significance are extant. See Comparative Analysis.

[198] "A Hill 'Empire' That Failed," *St. Paul Sunday Pioneer Press*, 19 February 1967.

[199] Montana Historical Society, "Campbell Farming Corporation Records, 1918-1975, History" (Montana Historical Society, Helena, photocopy of introduction to archive manuscript collection); Joseph Kinsey Howard, "Tom Campbell: Farmer of Two Continents," *Harper's Magazine* 198, no. 1186 (March 1949): 56, 61-62.

[200] Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations, Vol. II*, 861.

[201] Ibid., 885.

[202] Danbom, *Born in the Country*, 230-231.

> sophisticated, better educated, more technologically literate, more willing to use complex business strategies, and more highly capitalized. As farming became more demanding, fewer people were able to succeed at it, and as farmers became more productive, fewer of them were needed. The result was an exodus from the countryside beside which earlier rural-to-urban migrations paled in significance.[203]

Comparative Analysis: Establishing the National Significance of the Frederick A. and Sophia Bagg Bonanza Farm

Although promotional literature most often describes the Bagg Farm as "America's only remaining bonanza farm,"[204] the following historic properties associated with bonanza farming have been identified through review of the Multiple Property Submission "Bonanza Farming in North Dakota," National Register file searches and correspondence with Historic Preservation Officers and National Park Service officials.[205] Each of the following farms represent one or more distinct phases of bonanza farming, from the initial, brief, focus on a single cash crop, through increased diversification and reduction or stabilization of acreage totals. Each shared the classic components of bonanza farming – large acreage developed with large amounts of capital, on a model of American industry, worked by large numbers of seasonal, itinerant laborers. None retain the degree of integrity found at the Bagg Farm where a large number of buildings and structures of diverse use convey an accurate understanding of historic development patterns.[206] This paucity of intact resources is consistent with general trends in Red River farming patterns, whereby large plots of land were subdivided and crop structure diversified. It is also consistent with the findings of the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office that in 1990 determined that "because of the collapse of Bonanza farming after the first decades of the century and the subsequent division of these holdings into smaller plots, few farms if any retain their original proveniences [and]. . . most of the original large scale buildings for field workers and animals were probably demolished."[207]

Red River Valley of the North (North Dakota and Minnesota)

Bonanza wheat farming is most often associated with the Red River Valley of the North, although its possibilities were first demonstrated in California's San Joaquin Valley a decade earlier although large-scale mono-culture corporate farming had been practiced in the American South since the colonial period. The Northern Pacific land grant ran across the Red River Valley and vast tracts of undeveloped land were offered in

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[203] Ibid., 234.

[204] See for example, North Dakota Motor Coach Itineraries, at http://www.ndmotorcoach.com/itineraries.html.

[205] In 1999 and 2000, NPS personnel in the Midwest Regional Office contacted the SHPOs of California, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, and Wyoming. Additional contact was made with National Park Service personnel in the regional offices and with the Keeper of the National Register. The results of this search are on file at the NPS Midwest Regional Office. Large-scale farms not meeting the basic characteristics of Bonanza Farms are not included in this comparative analysis. These include the smaller wheat farms of the Palouse region of Washington; the orchards of Washington, Oregon, and California; and modern corporate farms as allowed by modern, federal, irrigation development (particularly in California's Central Valley). These significant resources are associated with distinct agricultural themes.

[206] The Spiritwood, Antelope, Belle Prairie, Amenia and Sharon Land Company, and Steele farms – all identified in the secondary literature as significant Bonanza operations – were not identified in the file search. No historic resources from these properties are known to survive.

[207] Lauren McCroskey, "National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form – Bonanza Farming in North Dakota," September 25, 1990, p. G-1. On file at the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Bismarck.

exchange for Northern Pacific securities (and subsequently for sale) when the railroad declared bankruptcy in 1873. The Red River Valley was flat – and easily plowed - and the soil was fertile – producing record amounts of wheat when the rain came and the locust did not. Construction of the railroad left a ready pool of itinerant laborers and Minneapolis soon developed as a milling center, easily accessible by river and by rail and boasting the latest developments in milling technology. The valley was also, however, prone to regional drought, plague and to fluctuations in the national economy. It was ultimately therefore, also the site of large-scale diversified farming defined by the introduction of additional cash crops and of registered stock. The best examples of the national phenomenon of bonanza farming, both as it existed during the short boom period of the late 1870s and 1880s, and as it evolved into the twentieth century are found in the Red River Valley.

Adams-Fairview Bonanza Farm, Richland County, North Dakota (1881-1927), Smithsonian No. 32 RI 719

John Quincy Adams and William P. Adams purchased "several quarters" of land in Mooreton Township, Richland County, in 1881 and eventually accumulated over 9,000 acres. Of the Adams Farm, historian Lauren McCroskey writes:

> Wheat cultivation defined the Adams-Fairview operation, but the original presence of massive sheep barns . . . . suggests an early willingness to explore commodities other then wheat. . . . . The emphasis on sheep raising at the Adams-Fairview Farm marks the experimental epoch between 1890 and 1897 during which farms were urged away from the single crop strategy toward diversification and the raising of livestock. [208]

The property was sold to multiple owners in 1927. In 1990, extant *contributing* resources were limited to the residence, a carriage house/stable, a barn, a granary, a well house, and an outhouse all located in a secondary building cluster across the section line road from the original farm headquarters. Noncontributing resources included a modern Quonset hut, two newer corrugated metal grain bins, and three non-original metal fuel tanks. The complex was listed in the National Register of Historic Places, at the State level of significance, in 1991. The site of the farm headquarters was located across the Section line road, and many of the structures present today are modern; a few appear to be original and several may have been modified beyond recognition. A circular wood-frame/shingle clad structure – that first housed sheep silage, then served as a dairy barn, then an ice house, and currently as a granary – and a small shop, currently covered in tin siding, are the only two buildings known to date to the Adams-Fairview Bonanza Farm.[209] The National Register nomination establishes that the farm headquarters site did not possess sufficient integrity of association with the nominated complex across the Section road for listing, and the headquarters buildings were excluded from the district boundary. Although the Adams-Fairview farm is significantly associated with Bonanza farming, and retains buildings central to the historic farm's operation, it retains fewer buildings – and features substantially more modern construction – than the Bagg Bonanza Farm.

Belle Prairie Farm, Traill County, North Dakota (1880-ca. 1942) Site No. 32TRx101

In 1878 young Datus C. Smith of Michigan traveled to Dakota Territory where he found work on the Grandin's

[208] Lauren McCroskey, "Adams-Fairview Farm National Register Nomination," October 5, 1990. On file at the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Bismarck.

[209] Ibid; Tuula and John Kube to Dena Sanford, National Park Service, April 17, 2002. Correspondence on file at the NPS Midwest Regional Office, Cultural Resources Division, Omaha, Nebraska.

head farm. Enamored of the place, he convinced family friend Marshall Smith of Minneapolis to finance four sections of Northern Pacific land, land that Smith would manage and ultimately own. At the height of development (ca. 1900), the Belle Prairie Farm contained four and a half sections of land, house, large barn (58' x 100'), machine sheds, hog house, granaries, blacksmith shop, chicken coop, smoke house, milk house, ice house, root cellar and wood shed. Farming was done with 72 head of horses and mules, plows, harrows, drills, cultivators, binders, hay machinery, a steam engine threshing outfit, 14 bundle wagons, and six grain trucks. Crew included a blacksmith, two barn men, a water boy, a superintendent, a cook, a foreman, and a harvest and planting crew of approximately 42 men. In 1942 George Hilstad Sr., whose father Carl had served as Mr. Smith's foreman, purchased the "home section" in partnership with his son, George Jr. Steven Hilstad today owns Belle Prairie Farm and reports that extant buildings from the bonanza farming era are limited to the original farmhouse, built in 1880 and added to through 1916, and a crib granary. The farm remains in agricultural use, with numerous modern buildings.[210]

Cass-Cheney/Dalrymple Farm, Cass County, North Dakota (1875-ca. 1942), No Site Number

The Cass-Cheney/Dalrymple Farm was the first of the Red River Valley's bonanza farms and the resource most directly and significantly associated both with massive-scale, single-commodity agricultural production made possible by the Northern Pacific land-for-bonds program and also with the flood of immigration that followed the first spectacular harvests. In 1960, known extant resources associated with the farm headquarters, however, were limited to the Oliver Dalrymple home.[211]

Dwight Farm, Richland County, North Dakota (1882-ca. 1942), ND Site No. 32RIx363

In 1880, Jeremiah Dwight purchased 17,000 acres of Northern Pacific Land in Richland County on behalf of the Dwight Farm and Land Company. The massive purchase prompted the *Fargo Times* to report development of "A Big Farm by New Yorkers:"

> Charles Cady is superintendent. The immediate management at least for the present has been committed to Mr. John Miller. He has material for erection of substantial and permanent buildings, granaries, etc. near Wahpeton and work on the buildings will be commenced as soon as the materials arrive on the grounds, it has been forwarded. The intention is to break several thousand acres this spring and next spring begin seeding.[212]

Eight thousand additional acres were added the next spring, for a total of 25,000. By 1883, following the purchase of railroad land in Steele County, the farm totaled over 60,000 acres. (This number was soon greatly reduced, with massive speculative land sales through the 1880s.) By the late 1880s, the farm had diversified to include registered livestock (horses, sheep, cattle, hogs) - a pattern of diversification witnessed throughout the Red River Valley. The farm, historian Hiram Drache reports, survived drought and poor market years by virtue of ample storage capacity to hold grain until it reached market highs; purchase of labor-saving equipment as it

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[210] Burner and Brasel, *Pillars of Time*, 15-21; Steve Hilstad, telephone interview with Ann Emmons, Historical Research Associates, September 4, 2002.

[211] Dalrymple, *Oliver Dalrymple: The Story of a Bonanza Farmer*, 23; McCroskey, "National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form – Bonanza Farming in North Dakota," p. F-9.

[212] *Fargo Times*, April 8, 1880, quoted in Charles Lesher, "The Dwights and Their Big Dakota Farm," August 1, 1990. Unpublished draft manuscript on file at NPS Omaha, 10.

came on the market; sale of livestock; and production of alternative cash crops, including sweet clover and alfalfa weed.

The Dwight Farm, then totaling only 5,000 acres, was sold in 1936 following the death of the last surviving heir. Extant historical buildings are limited to a barn, granary, and the stone-lined pit of the root cellar. The complex is not listed in the National Register of Historic Places.[213]

Samuel Glover Farm, Dickey County, North Dakota (ca. 1880-1915), No Site Number

Resources associated with the Glover Farm, founded in 1887 and which had at one point totaled 30,000 acres, are currently limited to the historic residence and a small outbuilding. The Dickey County Historical Society owns a photograph of the residence, which shows an imposing two-story building with a pyramid roof, in poor condition.[214]

Grandins' Mayville Farm, Traill County, North Dakota (1875-1915), Smithsonian No. 32TR636

In 1875, on the heels of the Northern Pacific's bankruptcy, Pennsylvania bankers E. B. and J. L. Grandin exchanged nearly worthless Northern Pacific securities for just under 100 sections of North Dakota land contiguous to the Northern Pacific line. They thus "realized an opportunity to make full recovery and more" on their original investment. This massive acreage, the largest private holding in the state at the time, was divided between three farms, including the 36-section farm at Mayville. The town of Mayville developed in the wake of the railroad, on Grandin land.

The Grandins' Mayville farm was run by salaried managers, which the Grandins described as "at best only occasional residents of Mayville." Infrastructures associated with the Grandin operation included a 70,000 bushel grain elevator, river steamers to transport grain and supplies along the Red River to Fargo, and the massive barns, equipment sheds, bunkhouses, and foremans' residences associated with a bonanza farm. Of the original farm complex, only the farm office and residence, the manager's residence, a bunk house, and a barn are extant.

In 1985 this building complex was listed in the National Register of Historic Places, at the State level of significance, for its association with "an important bonanza agricultural and economic operation."[215]

Helendale Farm, Richland County, North Dakota (1878-1937)

In 1878, Northern Pacific surveyor James B. Power, best known as the man who encouraged development of the Cass-Cheney bonanza farm experiment of 1875, selected a 6,000 acre tract on the Sheyenne River, southwest of Fargo and north of Mooreton, in Richland County. His biographer Stanley Murray writes that while Power "helped to originate large-scale wheat raising in the Upper Midwest, he was also quick to realize

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[213] Charles Lesher, "The Dwights and their Big Dakota Farm," August 1, 1990. Unpublished draft manuscript on file at NPS Omaha, 23-25.

[214] Mary Ann Kunrath, Dickey County Historical Society President, correspondence with Ann Emmons, Historic Research Associates, September 26, 2002.

[215] James R. Schimmer and Daniel Cornejo, "Grandins' Mayville Farm District National Register Nomination," 1985. On file at the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Bismarck, North Dakota.

the disadvantages of a one-crop economy. . . . He worked vigorously to promote diversified farming in the Red River region and . . . [at Helendale Farm] combined grain farming with livestock raising."[216] Typical of bonanza farming during the early period of development, Power hired a resident farm manager, yet moved to the farm permanently in 1887. From this base, Power established a reputation as a "book farmer," participating in farm institutes throughout the Upper Midwest and serving as director of the North Dakota Board of Agriculture, as special agent of the State Board of Lands, and as trustee and president of the North Dakota Agricultural College. In this public capacity, Power prophesied the evolution of bonanza farming from farms owned by absentee owners and devoted to a single commodity – to owner operated diverse operations.[217]

In 1886, at the height of its development, Helendale Farm incorporated 6,120 acres, only 500 of which were cultivated. The remainder served as pasture for Power's extensive herds of high-grade cattle, draft horses, sheep, and hogs. Buildings were "ample for the accommodation of his stock." An admiring contemporary wrote that these buildings were "erected for use, not show, yet are well modeled, neatly painted, grouped for convenience in dividing the different kind of stock, also with an eye to safety in case of fire, and are nicely arranged for the uses intended."[218] In addition to the stock barns and sheds, outbuildings included a granary, carpentry shop, blacksmith shop, ice house, office, bunkhouse, and primary dwelling. Helendale was sold to multiple buyers in 1937, ending three generations of ownership and management by the Power family. Descendent George Power of St. Paul reports that one of the historic Helendale buildings, possibly an employee's residence, is currently in use as a restaurant but that few if any of the other buildings remain.[219] The residence is not listed on the National Register.

Amenia and Sharon Land Company/H. F. Chaffee Co., Amenia, Cass County, North Dakota (1875 – 1925), ND Site No. CXx144

As it is a company town rather than a Bonanza farm, the Amenia and Sharon Land Company townsite cannot serve as a comparative property for the Bagg Bonanza Farm. It does, however, represent a distinct sub-theme of the Bonanza Farming context and would complement the interpretive potential of the Bagg Bonanza Farm. In 1925, the H. F. Chaffee Company (formerly the Amenia and Sharon Land Company) was dissolved and land distributed among the shareholders. Although no known concentration of resources survive from the company's numerous Bonanza farms, approximately 80 people continue to reside in the company town of Amenia that historically served as headquarters and distribution point for the various farms. A 1976 Cass County history lists the Amenia Seed and Grain Elevator (at one time the world's largest); a gas station; the Amenia Co-op; the telephone office; a store; and an ice house as surviving from the historic (pre-1925) period.[220] In 1991, the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office reported that "much of the original town site owned by the Company remains intact; there are few intrusive or non-contributing resources," and recommended that the town be nominated to the National Register as a Bonanza Farm Site District.[221] The

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[216] Stanley Murray, quoted in Warren and Warren, *Helendale Farm and the James B. Power Family*, 16.

[217] Stanley Murray, quoted in James W. Warren and Paula Stuart Warren, *Helendale Farm and the James B. Power Family* (St. Paul: Self Published by George C. Power III, 1998), 16. On file at Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

[218] Ibid.

[219] George Power, telephone interview with Ann Emmons, Historical Research Associates, February 3, 2002.

[220] Information provided by John Hallberg, Archives Associate North Dakota State University Institute for Regional Studies, August 28, 2002.

[221] Lauren McCroskey, "National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form – Bonanza Farming in North Dakota," p. F-9.

property has not yet been formally surveyed.

Gilfillan Farm Multiple Resource Area, Redwood County, Minnesota (1882-ca. 1962), National Register No. 800002143

In 1882, Charles D. Gilfillan and Joshua H. Sanders, both of St. Paul, purchased 8,000 acres of Indian land (Dakota Reservation) adjacent to the Chicago and Northwest Railroad. Gilfillan, managing partner, used Gilfillan Farm as a stage for the promotion of "scientific mixed farming" and advocated a family rather than corporate orientation. Gilfillan was divided into 24 farming units and sold during the course of Gilfillan's influence, to the tenant farmers. The operation stands, therefore, as counterpoint to, rather than representative of, bonanza farming. Two of the tenant farms and the main farmstead are extant, though in reduced and modified form.[222]

James J. Hill Northcote Farm, Kittson County, Minnesota (1880-1943)

In 1912, James J. Hill, President of the Great Northern Railway, carved Northcote Farm from his massive 45,000 acre Humboldt Farm[223] thereby providing his son Walter with a meaningful occupation (far from the "distractions" of St. Paul) and providing a model farm by which to demonstrate the merits of diversified agriculture and the value of scientific animal breeding. The National Register nomination for the property establishes that the farm represents Hill's efforts "to utilize the concept of large scale farming to develop and promote agricultural diversification in a region reliant on the large scale production of a single cash crop;" to represent, therefore, the evolution of bonanza farming. During Walter Hill's tenure, Northcote included 3,000 acres of land, a grand 24-room brick residence (inhabited by Walter and his family), a tile and brick feeding barn, two grain elevators, 18 workers' cottages, a foreman's residence, large state-of-the-art stock barns, hay barns, a dam and power house, a water tower, and numerous miscellaneous out-buildings. In 1917, the farm was subdivided into 160 and 320 acre tracts. Of the original Northcote operation, only a barn and attached silo, the dam and powerhouse, and the Walter J. Hill home remain. Although determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, at the State level of significance, it remains unlisted due to owner opposition.[224]

Montana

Campbell Farming Corporation Camp Four, Crow Reservation, Big Horn County, (1917-ca. 1960), Smithsonian No. 24BH2566 (removed from listing)

In 1917, as the war in Europe increased the value of and need for American wheat, Thomas Campbell – raised in the Red River Valley – devised a program whereby "unused" western Indian lands would be leased from the

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[222] Extant resources at the primary farmstead include a garage, machine shop, seed storage building, cattle shed, barn, well house, and milk house, all of which retain integrity. The two extant tenant farms are not described. Dennis A. Gimmestad, Minnesota State Historic Property Form, RW-PAX-004, T112 R35 NESW Sec. 26, 1978. Copy on file at NPS Midwest Regional Office, Cultural Resources Division, Omaha, Nebraska.

[223] No longer extant.

[224] Centennial Book Committee, *Hallock: A History of Our First 100 Years* (Grafton, ND: Associated Printers, for the Hallock Centennial Book Committee, 1983), 260-267. On file at James J. Hill Research Library Archives, St. Paul, Minnesota; Susan Roth, "James J. Hill Northcote Farm National Register Nomination," 1983. [Not Listed – Owner Opposition.] Nomination on file at the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, St. Paul.

tribes and plowed to wheat. This lease plan opened large land tracts to farming in a manner reminiscent of the dispersal of Northern Pacific lands – a process that initiated the bonanza farming boom. By 1929, Campbell leased over 120,000 acres on the Crow Reservation. An estimated 93,000 of these acres were plowed and planted to wheat.[225]

In 1991 Montana's "Camp Four" was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as the sole remaining permanent workers'-housing compound associated with the historic Campbell Farming Corporation. During its period of use Camp Four housed 20 year-round employees, 50 more 8-month employees, and an additional 200 hands at harvest time. Extant infrastructure, in 1991, included a cook's cottage, manager's cottage, two commissaries, an office, five bunkhouses, a cookhouse, a shower building, a water-storage tank, a power plant, and miscellaneous storage buildings. This complex represented the vast majority of buildings constructed at the site during the period of significance.[226] The historic district was listed in the National Register of Historic Places, at a national level of significance, on January 21, 1992. Subsequently (ca. 1998) all Camp Four buildings were removed by the private owner and the site was removed from the National Register.[227]

California

Bidwell Ranch, Butte County (ca. 1850-ca. 1900) No Site Number

Of the massive wheat ranches that defined California's Central Valley in the 1850s-1880s (see Section 8), extant resources known to the California State Historic Preservation Office are limited to the John Bidwell Ranch, founded by pioneer California explorer and settler John Bidwell and once totaling 25,000 acres. Though acreage varied, the land base was kept in active agricultural use until Bidwell's death in 1900. Extant resources are limited to the Bidwell Mansion and five acres of landscaped grounds. The site has been managed as a state historic park since 1964.

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[225] Chere Jiusto, "Camp Four National Register of Historic Places Nomination," 1991, Section 7. On file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, Montana.

[226] Ibid.

[227] Kate Hampton, National Register coordinator, Montana State Historic Preservation Office, to Rebecca Kumar, National Park Service Midwest Region, December 4, 2000; Lon Johnson, National Register Coordinator, Montana SHPO, to Diana Scheidt, Big Horn County Historical Society, January 14, 1998. Correspondence on file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

_ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
X Previously Listed in the National Register.
_ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
_ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
_ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
_ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

X State Historic Preservation Office (North Dakota)
_ Other State Agency
_ Federal Agency
_ Local Government
X University: North Dakota University, Fargo
X Other (Specify Repository): Bagg Bonanza Farm Historic Preservation Society, Mooreton

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 11.6 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	14	664370	5124260
B	14	664520	5124210
C	14	664520	5124210
D	14	664600	5124210
E	14	664610	5124010
F	14	664380	5124000

Verbal Boundary Description:

NW ¼ Section 17 and NE ¼ Section 18, Township 132N Range 49W. Commencing at a point 382 feet south of the northwest corner of Section 17, Township 132 North, Range 49 West, proceed 206 feet due east, 588 feet south, 700 feet west crossing the section line, 770 feet north, 500 feet east to the section line, and 182 feet south to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification:

This boundary incorporates the full extent of land owned by the Bagg Bonanza Farm Historic Preservation Society, and incorporates all extant buildings associated with the historic Bagg Farm that retain historic integrity. This boundary is identical to that identified in the National Register of Historic Places nomination. The boundary does not incorporate the land surrounding the building complex, which remains in agricultural production, because the variety of crops grown in the area has increased and changed since the period of significance. However, the sense of place remains quite strong.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
April 05, 2005