

An Abstract of
RESIDENTIAL PATTERNS OF SWEDES, IRISH,
AND GERMANS IN GALESBURG, ILLINOIS,
1860 - 1900

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by
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This study analyzes residential patterns of Swedes, Irish, and Germans in Galesburg between 1860 and 1900. Areal patterns and variations in concentrations of residences are identified and explained. Although residential concentrations of Swedes and Irish have been generally recognized by Galesburg residents and historians, this study is the first attempt to precisely determine their existence.

Primarily utilizing city directories, the investigation for this study was conducted according to the following steps: (1) determination of the nationality origin of Galesburg residents, (2) mapping of the residential location of members of Swede, Irish, and German nationalities, (3) identification of areas of residential concentration of nationality groups, and (4) analysis of any changes in residential patterns over the time period.

To identify nationality origin of Galesburg residents, lists of surnames were assembled from church records, cemetery headstones, census worksheets, newspaper obituaries, biographies, and county death records.

City directories were primarily relied on to identify the place of residence of heads of families with Swedish, Irish, and German surnames. Dot maps, showing place of residence at ten year intervals from 1860 through 1900, were then constructed. An analysis of these maps attempts to determine where residential concentrations of individual nationalities existed, the degree of concentration, and the changes in patterns of concentrations over the time period.

The following conclusions were drawn from the study: (1) Early ethnic residential concentrations did in fact exist in Galesburg. Generally speaking, Swedes concentrated in the eastern section of town and Irish in the south while the Germans tended toward the central area. (2) The railroad played an important role in the immigration of the groups to Galesburg. The area became more accessible and employment plentiful. Of the three groups, the Irish introduction and location of residential concentrations was most affected by the railroad. (3) All three groups resided in the central business district. With the growth of the town and increased land values near the district, they moved

out into new subdivisions. This occurred on the 1890 map in all three cases. (4) The Swedes and Irish showed the strongest tendency toward forming neighborhood concentrations. This was aided by church, strong family ties, prejudices, and different social habits. (5) Finally, it is suggested that ethnic group concentrations relate to the scale at which new immigrants enter a community.