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FOLK HOUSING IN THREE
PIKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS TOWNSHIPS

An Abstract of a Thesis
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by
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ABSTRACT

The distribution of nineteenth century rural houses in three Pike County, Illinois townships is the subject of this study. Folk houses, defined as those whose rules of construction are communicated through oral tradition rather than written plans, are given special attention.

Research carried out in the Atlantic seaboard over areas greater than the township or the county has confirmed patterns in the types of folk housing erected by builders in each of several cultural core areas. This study sought to determine whether the remnants of nineteenth century folk housing in a Middle Western county could be used as a marker of settlement strength at this small areal scale.

The three Pike County townships were selected on the basis of high percentages of landowners from New England, the Middle Atlantic, and the South, respectively, as recorded in the 1850 Census. All nineteenth century houses in the rural townships were photographed and compared with pictured examples in the literature.

There are not enough folk houses left standing to establish a relationship between house types and the patterns of 1850 ownership. Many examples are in fact vernacular houses, and not true folk forms. Many have had floor plans altered. Some may be hidden by modern detail. It is clear

that New Englanders built substantial structures, and it seems from the few remaining examples that Southerners tended to build single-story houses of wood.