

## I. FACTORS INFLUENCING SALES

**Introduction.**—Trade is mobile. The automobile and the paved road have only increased its mobility. Our country was laid out under a horse geography or under a combined railroad and horse geography. In addition to the large commercial centers, commonly located on navigable waterways, county seats were established every 20 or 30 miles. These towns served as trading centers. Most of the farmers could visit their county seats and return home the same day with horses, at least when the roads were "good."

The railroads facilitated visits to the county seats and some of these county seats developed into primary trading centers. Between the county seats, villages were established about every 4 or 6 miles. Some of these villages developed into secondary trading centers.

The villages served as supply stations for the farmers. Here they sold their farm products and bought convenience goods and what shopping goods they needed between their trips to the trading centers. The automobile and the paved road have increased the ease with which the rural population can visit the larger towns. A person not finding what he wants in one village can visit another village or a trading center in a relatively short time, provided the roads are good. It must be remembered that only a small percentage of the road is paved, and that much of the unpaved road is in poor condition during the winter months. The automobile also enables the people from the larger towns to visit the country. Quite a few village stores reported securing a considerable amount of business from people living in the larger towns. Such sales were reported in country produce due to quality or freshness and in shopping goods due to price. This is in addition to the sales to autoists by stores located on state highways.

For the purposes of this report, the villages are divided as follows: small villages, less than 400 population; medium-sized villages, from 400 to 799 population; and large villages, from 800 to 1,700 population, which are often *secondary* trading centers. Three classes of trading centers are recognized: *primary* trading centers, such as Peoria, Bloomington, Galesburg, Kankakee, Danville, Champaign-Urbana, Decatur, Springfield, Rockford, and Mount Vernon; *trading centers*, county seats and other similar towns of from 2,000 or 2,500 up to 10,000 population; and *secondary* trading centers, from 800 or 1,000 up to 2,000 or 2,500 population. These distinctions are not purely arbitrary. Villages of less than 400 are generally only local supply depots which handle primarily convenience goods or necessities. The medium-sized villages handle convenience goods but they generally