

WARWICKSHIRE AND THE PARLIAMENTARY ENCLOSURE MOVEMENT

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WARWICKSHIRE AND THE PARLIAMENTARY ENCLOSURE MOVEMENT

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS WORK

Dug. Soc. Occ. Pap.	Dugdale Society Occasional Papers
Trans. B'ham. Arch.Soc.	Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society
Univ. B'ham.Hist. J.	University of Birmingham Historical Journal
Pop. Studies	Population Studies
Econ. H. R.	Economic History Review
Agric. Hist. Rev.	Agricultural History Review
Eng. Hist. Rev.	English Historical Review
Hist. Assoc. Pamph.	Historical Association Pamphlet
V. C. H. Warks.	Victoria County History of Warwickshire
V. C. H. Staffs.	" " " " Staffordshire
War. C. R. O.	Warwickshire County Record Office
Staffs. C. R. O.	Staffordshire " " "
Worc. C. R. O.	Worcestershire " " "
B'ham Ref. Lib.	Birmingham Central Reference Library
P.R.O.	Public Record Office
M.S.	Manuscript
Op. Cit.	Work already quoted
Loc. Cit.	Reference to origin already quoted
Ibid.	The same
Et. Seq.	And the following

SYNOPSIS OF THESIS

WARWICKSHIRE AND THE PARLIAMENTARY ENCLOSURE MOVEMENT

In this study we attempt to examine the parliamentary enclosure movement within the economic and social context of one Midland county. Emphasis is given to the diversity of its aims, character, and impact, both in point of time, and geographically within the different parts of the county. We describe the evolutionary processes at work in the countryside, affecting both rural economy and society, before the era of the Parliamentary Act and Award. We try to describe all aspects of the movement itself; the men who launched the movement, and those who carried it out; the cost of the whole process, and above all the social and economic consequences. A large part of the work is naturally devoted to the latter topics. We conclude that the men behind the movement were not usually great nobles or small freeholders, but the leading gentry and sometimes substantial yeomen. The carrying into effect of this great revolution, however, was in the hands of freeholders and tenant-farmers. The cost of the process was enormous and bore more heavily on the small men. The social consequences varied from period to period, and from district to district and sometimes parish to parish. But in at least one locality the disappearance of the small freeholder seems to have been fairly striking, and the apparent recovery of owner-occupiers in Warwickshire in the period 1790-1815 was probably a reflection of prosperity for capital-owning tenant-farmers. The lowest levels of rural society received almost no attention from parliamentary commissioners and always suffered. The landless and poor increased, though other factors, such as a striking rise in population by natural increase, were involved here. Poor expenditure per head of population was rising throughout the eighteenth century, and rose most sharply in a part of the county undergoing heavy enclosure. The economic consequences of enclosure were, over a long period of time, enormous, but the immediate consequences were better land use,

and above all, dramatic rent increases. We examine the connection between enclosure and population rise in some detail and find a definite link in one locality with striking migration, though its impact on the natural increase of population is less conclusive.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

WARWICKSHIRE AND THE PARLIAMENTARY ENCLOSURE MOVEMENT

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In many countries of the world, even today, in the middle twentieth century, a major problem is how to escape from the vicious circle which characterises a subsistence level agricultural economy. The escape from such a situation, is no small achievement, as one historian reminded us recently with the reflection that:

"such tremendous human achievements as the cathedrals of the middle ages, the books that fill our great libraries, our orchestras and operas, the multitude of motor cars..... all depend on the degree to which the men who till the soil and tend the livestock are able to produce food, over and above what they require for their own maintenance".¹

In England, though the roots of change can be traced far back into the sixteenth century, the so-called agrarian revolution occurred, at least in its crucial phase, between 1660 and 1830. The re-organization of the land in much of lowland England is one major aspect of this revolution. It took place to a varying degree through the agency of the Parliamentary enclosure movement. This movement cannot, however, be understood without taking account of other aspects of the agrarian revolution, and the changes in rural society which both fostered enclosure, and was itself, in no small measure, affected by it.

Since the 1930's, and 1945 in particular, there has been a move away from the writing of general works² on a national scale and concentration on local studies. Such historians as W. G. Hoskins³ and A. H. John⁴ have emphasized the necessity of

1. "Agrarian History, Some Vistas and Pitfalls" by R. Lennard. Agric. Hist. Rev., Vol. XII, 1964, pt. II.
2. A whole spate of works of this kind appeared in the years before the First World War. They became the standard text-book on their subjects, laying the foundation and formulating the generalizations; for a more detailed study of agrarian history by a later generation of historian see "The Content and Sources of English Agrarian History after 1500" by Joan Thirsk, Agric. Hist. Rev., Vol. III, part I, 1955, p. 66-67.
3. See "Regional Farming in England" by W. G. Hoskins, in Agric. Hist. Rev., Vol. II, 1954, pages 3 and 11. W. G. Hoskins remarks that "The History of farming must be studied on a regional basis. England may be a small country, but no country in the world has such a diversity of soils, climates, artificial resources and topography in such a small space."
4. See "The Course of Agricultural Change 1660-1760" by A. H. John in "Studies in the Industrial Revolution", Ed. L.S. Pressnell, pp. 125-155.

studying farming on a regional basis. However, at the same time, there has been a move away from the study of single aspects of the economy such as field systems, or rents, or even social classes, towards a study of the local community in all its aspects.¹ If there is a general theme running through this account of the parliamentary enclosure movement, it is that it can be understood only in terms of the rural needs, social ambitions and general economic trends within the diverse geographical localities found in the English counties. Even within Warwickshire, enclosure, in terms both of farming and the rural community, meant many different things, depending on the district looked at. From this fact stems much of the controversy which surrounds the parliamentary enclosure movement.

Much has been written on the subject of enclosure in its various phases,² but few writers have tried to look at the movement within its economic and social setting.³ Few have even analysed the enclosure awards of a whole county in any detail. Most scholars have concerned themselves either with one aspect of the movement only, for example, the cost, or the personnel responsible for putting the private act into effect; or alternatively they have examined the changes in land ownership resulting from the enclosure of a single parish (often without taking much account of other economic and social factors involved). Occasionally a large-scale investigation of enclosure awards, and other documents has been made, but the value of the study reduced because the awards were chosen at random from the country at large⁴ and not really linked up with a detailed investigation of other sources from the various localities.

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1. An early study of this kind was J. D. Chambers "Nottinghamshire in the Eighteenth Century", 1932. An admirable study of the evolution of a rural community is that of Wigston Magna by W. G. Hoskins. See "The Midland Peasant", 1957.
 2. For a bibliography of writings dealing with enclosure after 1930 and prior to 1955 see "Bibliography of Recent Work on Enclosure, the Open Fields and related topics" by W. H. Chaloner in Agric. Hist. Rev., Vol. II, 1954, pp. 48-52.
 3. The exception is J. D. Chambers, who in addition to the above work has published his masterly "The Vale of Trent 1670-1800 - A regional study of economic change", Supplement 3, 1957 Econ. Hist. Rev.
 4. For example, "Expropriation of the English Peasantry in the Eighteenth Century" by V. M. Lavrovsky, Econ. H.R. 2nd series, Vol. X, 1956-57, pp. 271-282, a study based on 50 awards and 75 maps drawn from 25 counties.

Nevertheless a beginning has been made by one or two scholars in a more systematic investigation of parliamentary enclosure within a given locality.¹

As a choice for such a regional study, Warwickshire is not inappropriate. It contained within its bounds an example of a pastoral, forest economy (the Arden), and also two quite distinct arable farming districts (Avon Valley and East Felden). It is possible to examine the significance and character of parliamentary enclosure within each of these areas.

Secondly, Warwickshire exhibited economic tendencies which were of wide relevance in the England of the eighteenth century. Rapid industrialization was taking place in the north of the county. For long it was rural industrial in character; consisting of Arden Forest parishes partly dependent on Coventry and smaller urban centres, and partly on coal-mining. But still, in Warwickshire, as in so many focal points of the industrial revolution, industrial and purely agricultural communities lay in close proximity to one another. Even today the southern half of Warwickshire is almost entirely agricultural.

In this present study an attempt is made to look at the parliamentary enclosure movement in terms of diverse and changing rural economies, and communities. Though the eighteenth century was the period of the disintegration of the old economies,² the roots of this change lay well back in the seventeenth century; nor did the break-up take place at the same pace in all localities. For these reasons we begin our study by devoting much attention to an account of the character and developments in the several farming areas, and rural society, before the parliamentary enclosure era began. According to one historian the growth in agricultural production was based partly on innovation in the period 1700-60³. Thus in this first section we are, in

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1. See for example J.H.Swailes "The Parliamentary Enclosures of Lindsey" Pt. I, Reports and Papers of the Architectural and Archaeological Societies of Lincs. and Northants, XLII, 1937, pp.233-74; Part II, ibid. New Series II, 1938, pp.85-120. This has the merit of investigating a very large number of awards drawn from one locality. Also more recently, H.G.Hunt has analysed 44 Leicestershire Awards. See "Landownership and Enclosure, 1750-1830" in Econ. H.R. 2nd series, Vol. XI, No.3, 1939
 2. See "Regional Farming in England" by W.G.Hoskins, loc.cit., p.9.
 3. A.H. John, "Aspects of Economic Growth in the Eighteenth Century" in Essays in Economic History, Vol. II, Ed. E.M.Carns-Wilson, p.364-65, (London, 1962).

particular, on the look-out for any changes in farming practices or organization, in addition to that represented by enclosure itself. In particular we aim to trace the evolutionary character of open-field farming, in which enclosure appears only as one innovation among a number,¹ which were making for more rational and specialized use of the land.

We next set out to trace the course of enclosure history in Warwickshire. This was a long one stretching back to the later Middle Ages. Nevertheless, the parliamentary enclosure movement began early in this county and Warwickshire is classified by G. Slater in the highest of 5 categories, that is amongst 14 counties in which 50-25% of the total area was enclosed by parliamentary act.² In view of some discrepancies between acreage estimates in Enclosure Acts and that actually dealt with under Awards, and also the discovery of one or two sets of open fields enclosed after 1730 privately, this is probably an underestimate of open-field land enclosed after 1730, as we shall see later.

In all, Slater estimates that 4,464,189 acres of common field and waste were enclosed in England by parliamentary act in the eighteenth and nineteenth century; this represents 13.4% of the total acreage, but a larger proportion of the total land area under cultivation.

This change did not take place haphazardly, and we try to describe the chronology of enclosure in Warwickshire as a response to economic trends, farming needs and social ambition. In particular we draw attention to the correlation which exists between enclosure on the one hand, and rising land values and grain prices on the other, themselves reflecting the pressure of the food market and population growth.

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1. It is now some years since F.G. Emmison drew our attention to the elasticity of open-field farming in the Midlands with its "open-field closes", neither open-field or old enclosure. For example, the "mow" within the open-field. See "Types of Open Field Parishes in the Midlands", Hist. Assoc. Pamphlet No.108, pp.3-15.
 2. G.Slater, "The English Peasantry and the Enclosure of the Common Fields", (London 1907), p.140.

The enclosure awards are used, along with other sources such as hearth and land tax assessments, estate records, poll lists and so on, to build up a picture of rural society and land-ownership in eighteenth century Warwickshire, emphasizing once again its geographical diversity. We examine the people who were most concerned in pushing forward the process of parliamentary enclosure and the men who had the job of carrying out this task. We trace the changes in the fortune of the various social groups during the course of the eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, observing the influence of enclosure, population growth and declining rural industry on the landowning strength and prosperity of these classes. We note the rise of new social groups drawn from the ranks of both the professions and the landowning classes. We try to find answers to some of the questions which have been exercising historians' minds for a long time: for example, the problem of whether the small landowner and owner-occupier put up opposition to the change and declined as a consequence of parliamentary enclosure, or whether he had disappeared long before this period; also we try to estimate the effect of parliamentary enclosure on rural poverty and the poor. Above all, we are concerned to examine the differential rate of population growth in Warwickshire, and to find out whether enclosure affected this growth in any way. If not, we want to know what factors did induce the "take-off" of sustained population growth in the later eighteenth century.

We look at the methods used to carry out enclosure, and in particular we concern ourselves with the cost of the process. Only one article so far has dealt with the latter problem,¹ and this was unable to make any detailed assessment because of a dearth of source material. In particular, it was unable to break down the total cost under its various heads, nor to make an estimate of the cost of physically carrying out the enclosures. Owing to a more abundant documentation, we are able to go a

1. See W. E. Tate "The Cost of Parliamentary Enclosure in England" (with special reference to the county of Oxford), Econ. H.R. 2nd series V, No. 2, 1952.

substantial way in remedying these shortcomings. We also note the contribution made by this movement to the development of communications.

Finally, we examine some of the economic consequences of enclosure; its effect on the rentals of the great landowners, and the value of land in the open parishes of Warwickshire. How it influenced the re-organization of landed estates, farming practice and land use.

In more general terms, however, we are concerned to determine how far the blame and praise which has been heaped upon the enclosure movement for some aspects of eighteenth century economic and social history should more accurately be directed at a whole complex of factors like the more long-standing development of a food-market, and population growth beyond the capacity of rural districts to absorb into its labour force.

In a study which aims at describing many aspects of the economic and social life of a locality, the sources used must be correspondingly varied. The main sources used here were as follows. In the first place, all the enclosure awards relating to Warwickshire. Where they cover most of the parish area, they offer a picture of rural landownership at some date in the eighteenth century. It is possible to assess how far the inequalities of landownership had progressed by the time of the enclosure and by linking up with the land tax assessments available for the period 1780-1825, the social consequence of enclosure can be gauged. The cost of tithe exemption in terms of land, and its social consequence can likewise be calculated from the awards. The cost of the enclosure operation to individual proprietors, and the various items in the cost schedule, can, also, in many cases, be noted from the awards. The names, status and origin of the enclosure commissioners and other officials are usually found in the preamble to the award. The land tax assessments are complete for most Warwickshire parishes from 1780 to 1830 and give a complete list of owners and occupiers each year, in this period. The returns present some difficulties in interpretation which will be discussed shortly. Another valuable source for the eighteenth century are local newspapers,

particularly the advertisements of landed property. They can be made to yield information about estate rental values, and trends, the dissemination of farming innovations, new ideas and land use. Also they offer a picture of the revolution in rural building in the eighteenth century.¹ Finally, Aris' Birmingham Gazette and Berrow's Worcester Journal were found to quote Birmingham and other Midland crop and animal stock prices for long stretches of years in the eighteenth century. Other sources of value for assessing the character of rural society were the 1663 Hearth Tax Returns, The Heralds Visitation of Warwickshire 1682-83, Jury Lists, Gamekeeper Deputations and the Forty shilling Freeholders List used for the Coventry Election of 1774. Occasionally, for a short period of years, parish registers include the status and occupation of people buried in their parish. Though of less value in Warwickshire, in counties where tithe commutation did not take place at the time of enclosure, the tithe commissioners surveys of 1848 serve as a useful link-up with the land tax assessments, and the investigation of landownership changes can be taken further by a comparison of the state of landownership as recorded in the Parliamentary Return of Landowners in 1873.

For a study of the agrarian economy, glebe terriers and inventories attached to wills are the most valuable source for the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, after which the story is taken up by Crop Returns and collections of farming and estate documents, surveys, accounts, stock-books, cropping-books, rentals and leases. The latter are useful also to assess the importance of enclosure to the landowner, and to measure changes in the value and organization of estates. There are a number of private estate collections in the Warwick County Record Office and the Birthplace Trust, Stratford-on-Avon.

1. See my unpublished M. Com. thesis "Social and Economic Trends in the Rural West Midlands 1785-1825" in Birmingham University Library. Ref. Diss. Cl. B60, Ch. III.

In making a study of population change and demographic trends it was found that it was best to use two separate sets of evidence. Hearth Tax assessments permit an estimate of population based on families in 1663, and can be linked up with other local estimates (for example Bishops Visitation figures). In Warwickshire, Dr. Thomas, Dugdale's successor, included in his description of Warwickshire, parish by parish, a statement about the number of households in each parish in 1730. These two estimates can be linked with the figures given in the first census returns. One is then able to make an estimate of actual population change in each locality. This can be compared with statistics about the natural growth of the population drawn from the baptism, burial and marriage series contained in the parish registers. In the Warwickshire parishes looked at, these registers seemed to yield a very complete record of the series described above, and the impression was that there were few omissions due to dissent or any other reason. By comparison of the two estimates of actual growth and natural increase, the migration out of, or immigration into each parish and whole districts can be calculated.

For an estimate of poverty in 1660 the hearth tax is useful once again and can be linked up with evidence from the parish registers. Enclosure awards not infrequently include a schedule of cottage-owners not exempted from tithe payments, because they owned no land in the common fields; from this a useful estimate of the proportion of landless at the time of enclosure can be made. The growth of poverty can be most effectively studied from the overseers of the poor accounts over a period of years. The evidence drawn from these can be correlated with that about population growth and with the evidence of the local Poor Law Commissioners before the committee of investigation which was preparing the ground for the legislation of 1834.

Before leaving this discussion of sources, it is appropriate to say a few words about the use of Land Tax returns in this study. These have for long formed a major source for a study of the

character of landownership, and changes which occurred in its structure within the period 1780-1825. They have been used extensively by such historians as A. H. Johnson,¹ E. Davies,² and J. D. Chambers³ in important studies of landownership, with particular reference to the owner-occupiers, the original yeomenry of sixteenth and seventeenth century England. Though students of the land tax have always been aware of difficulties in their interpretation, these have not been insurmountable, provided that users were aware of the pitfalls, and had a thorough knowledge of the agrarian history of the area under investigation. Recently however, their use as a source has come in for new criticism. D. B. Grigg has pointed out⁴ that not only did the amount of tax per acre vary from county to county, but also from parish to parish, and even within the area of a single parish where considerable variation in the quality of land occurred. He then pointed out the need for students wishing to calculate estate sizes from tax payments, to work out an acreage equivalent for each individual parish.

Where use is made of the land tax in this present study, such a precaution has been taken and calculations are based on parish acreage equivalents. In a more recent article G. E. Mingay⁵ has levelled further criticism at the land tax. Though most of the problems mentioned are well-known to users and do not prohibit their use, he introduces some new criticism which might. Mingay claims that after about 1798 the list of landowners is incomplete because of the large-scale purchase of exoneration from the tax.⁶ Also that some owner-occupiers avoided payment. Finally, he claimed that there was little relation between tax

1. A. H. Johnson, "Disappearance of the Small Landowner" Ford Lecture 1909. New edition with Introduction by Joan Thirsk. Oxford 1963.
2. E. Davies, "The Small Landowner 1780-1832, in the light of the Land Tax Assessments", Econ. H. R. I, No. 1, Jan. 1927, pp. 87-113.
3. J. D. Chambers, "Enclosure and the Small landowner", Econ. H. R. X, Nov. 1940, pp. 118-127.
4. D. B. Grigg, "The Land Tax Returns", Agric. Hist. Rev. Vol. XI, No. 2, 1963, pp. 83-8.
5. G. E. Mingay, "The Land Tax Assessments and the Small Landowner", Econ. H. R. Vol. XVII, No. 2, December 1964, pp. 381-388.
6. Ibid. p. 383.

payment and acreage by 1780 because of re-assessment, which was the rule after enclosure.¹

Acquaintanceship with the Warwickshire assessments do not altogether bear out Mr. Mingay's remarks, however. In this county redemption of the tax offered no problem since all owners and occupiers continued to be recorded, in two lists instead of one, headed "redeemed" and "unredeemed". Nor is there evidence of any avoidance. Finally, evidence suggests that in Warwickshire no re-assessments were made in the eighteenth century at all, and in particular no change occurred after enclosure. A Land Tax Return dated 1747² survives for the parish of Avon Dassett and we find the assessment of the land here remained the same in 1825³, despite the enclosure of the whole parish in 1780. Nor did individual assessments change as a consequence of enclosure, as we see from the following table.

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Enclosure date</u>	<u>Landowner</u>	<u>Payment 1780</u>	<u>Payment 1825</u>
Bindingbury	1804	Sir T. Biddulph	£28.11. 9d.	£29. 9. 2d.
Shuttington	1804	Thomas Burditt	£100. 0. 0d.	£102. 8. 0d.
		Earl of Essex	£42. 0. 0d.	£41.12. 0d.
Wolvey	1794	Mr. Miller	£26. 0. 0d.	£25.12. 6d.
Burton Dassett	1792	J. Blencorn Esq.	£34.19. 8d.	£35. 1. 3d.
		R. Ladbroke	£21.17. 3d.	£21.17. 3d.

However, in view of these criticisms it was decided to make an investigation of the reliability of the land tax returns for calculating estate acreages.⁴ This is possible where enclosure awards dealing with the whole parish area were made around 1780-85. Five such parishes were examined. These included 63 estates covering 6,738 acres. The results obtained by comparing estate acreages in the awards, with those calculated

1. G. E. Mingay, "The Land Tax Assessments and the Small Landowner" Econ. H.R. Vol. XVII, No. 2, Dec. 1964, p. 385, 387.
"Reassessments of the tax to allow for changes.....appear to have become established practice where parishes were enclosed by Act of Parliament".
2. Found in Parish Register 1772-79 in War. C.R.O., D.R.O., 66, Vol. 2.
3. The land tax returns for the period 1779-1830 are in Warwick Shire Hall. Microfilm copy of the collection is housed in Bodleian Library, Western M.S.S.
4. See Appendix I.

from the land tax were as follows:

Table I. ESTIMATE OF THE RELIABILITY OF THE LAND TAX RETURNS

In 33 out of 63 estates the error was negligible

In a further 18 out of 63 estates the error was less than 20%

In 12 out of 63 estates (mostly very) the error in calculation
(small estates) was more than 20%

44 Small Estates under 100 Acres

Actual Acreage - 1,902 (Awards)	Calculated Acreage - 2,007 (Land Tax)	Error - 105 or 5.5%
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19 Estates of over 100 Acres

Actual Acreage - 4,836 (Awards)	Calculated Acreage - 4,927 (Land Tax)	Error - 91 or 1.9%
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Total of 63 Estates, Covering 5 Parishes

Actual Acreage - 6,738	Calculated Acreage - 6,934	Error - 196 or 3%
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The parishes were representative of different localities in Warwickshire. In addition there is a survey of the old enclosed Manor of Clavendon made in 1792¹ which shows that in an old-enclosed parish north of the Avon the error would have been small. The acreage represented by 4/- tax on the eight estates covering the parish varied only between 2.5 and 3.7 acres.

In conclusion we can say that, while it was never imagined that land tax assessment can do more than give an approximate acreage, it seems untrue that their use leads to error of any magnitude if acreage equivalents are calculated for each individual parish and the usual precautions are observed.²

1. Survey of Manor of Clavendon 1792 (covering whole parish area) in War. C.R.O. Ref. H.R./93.
2. Though a difficulty arises in accurately assessing the size of holdings where land was owned in more than one parish. This did occasionally occur as we see in Chapter IV. Here was an important likely source of error not brought up by Mingay.

CHAPTER I

RURAL SOCIETY AND THE LAND 1660-1700

CHAPTER I

RURAL SOCIETY AND THE LAND 1660-1700

(1) BACKGROUND

In order to understand the nature of rural society in the eighteenth century, it is necessary, first of all, to take account of the geographical and topographical layout of the area being studied. This is particularly true of rural Warwickshire. Even before Domesday times, the broad two-fold division of the county had crystallized into the Forest of Arden in the north, and the cleared Felden in the south.¹ In addition, within this broad division, we have the fertile river valleys of the Avon, and lesser streams. Underlying these topographical features was a wide variety of soils which linked Warwickshire with Leicestershire and Northamptonshire in the east, and Worcestershire in the west. Most prominent were the strong clay loams of south Warwickshire, and the lighter soils and red clays of north Warwickshire.

It is not surprising that these differences of soil and topography produced contrasts in the communities which peopled the different areas, to be further modified later on, by the accident of manorial history, and changes in the ownership of the land. These differences can be viewed from many angles: social structure; agrarian organization and methods; and land use. These are, perhaps, the most significant differences. Certainly they are the best known.²

In an area mainly south of the River Avon,³ and stretching in a fertile crescent around the eastern boundary of the county,

1. See "The Printed Maps of Warwickshire, 1576-1900" by P.B.A. Harvey and H. Thorpe, Introduction p.3.
2. There are probably other points of difference: for example systems of inheritance; the impact of rural industry, and population trends. It is hoped to explore some of these differences in this study.
3. As the students of Warwickshire Glebe Terriers observed, there is a band of nucleated open-field villages in the fertile area immediately north of the Avon. See "Ecclesiastical Terriers of Warwickshire Parishes", Vol. I, 1955, by D. M. Barratt in Dudgale Society Publications. Introd. Lelands' often quoted remark about the Avon marking the division between the nucleated and non-nucleated villages is inaccurate except at Warwick itself (where the observation was made).

there arose, before the Norman Conquest, a dense pattern of nucleated villages associated with the classic open-field system of the Midlands. Apart from the enclosure for pasture which occurred between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, these open fields survived until the era of the parliamentary enclosure movement.

To the north of the Avon Valley, rural communities grew up in scattered hamlets in forest clearings. There is a later copy of a sixteenth century map of the Worcestershire Manor of Feckenham, situated in country similar to that of the Arden, which illustrates the nature of rural organization in such a forest community. There were a few common open fields in the immediate vicinity of the settlement area, encircled by a considerable number of small arable fields in severality, of only a few acres in area. These last named were the consequence of assarting from the surrounding forest. The whole was surrounded by vast stretches of upopulated waste and woodland.¹

These then, were the two profoundly different types of rural community which emerged during the course of the Middle Ages in Warwickshire,² in the two contrasting regions. We must turn now to consider modifications and developments which occurred during the Tudor and Stuart periods. These developments, above all, were highly relevant to the course of social and economic change in eighteenth and early nineteenth century rural Warwickshire from every aspect. From the economic point of view, the period witnessed the enclosure and conversion to pasture of considerable acreages in the south-east Warwickshire open field

1. For this and other descriptions of the agrarian organization of Arden Forest Settlements see "The Stoneleigh Leger Book" by R.H.Hilton in Dugdale Society Occasional Papers. Intro. I, XLIV. Also by the same author, "Social Structure of Rural Warwickshire in the Middle Ages", Dugdale Society Occasional Papers, No.9, 1950, Appendix pp.22-25
2. There was, of course, a difference in timing. The Forest-type settlement becoming of increasing importance with the growth of population in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

area, with consequent depopulation of many villages.¹ At the same time the seventeenth century, in particular, saw considerable modification of the open field system, particularly in the villages situated in the fertile Avon Valley; changes which are clearly revealed by the Warwickshire Glebe Terriers from the 1590's onwards.² The effect was to permit more cultivation by the introduction of extended rotations embracing the use of new crops. Also the extension of ley farming³ and 'wandering' cow pastures⁴ within the open fields, made possible the build-up of flocks and herds in the heavy clay lands of south-east Warwickshire, intractible soils more suited to pasture than arable farming.⁵ Underlying both these economic developments was the growth of population in both Felden and Arden Warwickshire, and the rising level of prosperity during the sixteenth, and perhaps, the seventeenth centuries.

Socially, the Tudor and Stuart period saw the consolidation of patterns which were to extend into the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and which both determined to a considerable degree the character of landownership in the county, and had a considerable influence on the nature and chronology of the parliamentary enclosure movement. In the Felden 'open' parishes the period saw the consolidation of a predominantly freehold society, interspersed by enclosed and depopulated pasture parishes in the hands, mainly, of great landlords. In the Arden forest area enclosure of the relatively less important open fields sometimes took place without the commotion which

1. For a summary of the very detailed information about this movement in Warwickshire, see I.S. Leadam, "Domesday of Inclosures" (1897) ii p. 390-1, and W.E. Tate, "Enclosure Acts and Awards relating to Warwickshire" in Birmingham Trans. Arch. Soc. LXV 1949, pp. 45-104.
2. See Barratt op. cit. p. I iii of the Introduction.
3. Ibid p. I iii et. seq.
4. See below the evidence of the eighteenth century Enclosure Awards. A number exhibited clear evidence of cow pastures introduced into the common fields as part of an extended rotation, while no mention was made of cow commons of the more usual kind being enclosed under the awards.
5. For direct evidence of the orientation of these open field parishes towards an animal economy in the seventeenth century see "A true statement of the case for enclosure of Flecknoe fields in 1730", War. C.R.O. Photostat Ref. Z,12, Original in Cartwright M.S.S. at Aynho, Northants. An important document drawn up by the freeholders of Wolfhamcote in which they claimed that though their fields were in an open state, their reliance had long lain on their flocks and herds.

surrounded that of the Felden, but socially it seems to have been an area of smaller, less prosperous, freehold farmers, dwelling in hamlets, free, mainly, of the manorial control and organization known to the south. The other important social trend of the forest communities, which quickened at this time, was the appearance of large numbers of landless migrants from the over-populated south who settled on the vast stretches of common waste which surrounded the Arden communities. These, in brief outline, were the main social and economic trends in Warwickshire up to the middle seventeenth century; from this point we must look in more detail at the rural scene in the county.

(2) LANDOWNERSHIP AND RURAL SOCIETY, 1660-1700

Although the first parliamentary enclosure in Warwickshire did not take place until 1720, nevertheless the natural starting point for a study of eighteenth century economic movements, and society, is at the Restoration. Most of the agrarian and social trends revealed by a study of sources prior to 1780, were already beginning, or crystallized in 1660. Another advantage is that sources exist at this date, which yield a fairly clear picture of the different kinds of rural community and land use in Warwickshire during the later seventeenth century.

In the Felden country to the south and south-east of the county, rural society, consisted mainly of small squires and yeoman farmers.¹ Within this locality, however, a distinction must be made between the freeholders who farmed the heavy clays towards the Northampton border, and those who worked the more fertile and prosperous Avon Valley, with its smaller, timber-built farmhouses. Manorial control was frequently retained in these parishes and used for example to preserve the integrity of the

1. See "The Social Structure of Kineton Hundred in the Reign of Charles II" by P. Styles. Trans. Birmingham Arch. Soc. Vol. 78, 1962, p. 96. Also "A Census of a Warwickshire Village in 1698", Univ. Birmingham Hist. J. Vol. III, No.1, 1951.

common lands and prevent overcrowding.¹ Also, with the growth of population, to put a stop to any encroachments on the waste by the landless.²

In considerable contrast to these parishes were the islands of old enclosed and depopulated land which dotted Kineton Hundred in the open-field south-east, as well as other parts of the county. With the growth of population, and, from the eighteenth century, the rise in poor rate expenditure, such villages came to be increasingly prized by the great landowners. The character of landownership structure here greatly enhanced their value on the land market of the eighteenth century.³ Almost entirely in the hands of one landowner, their inhabitants would consist, by the eighteenth century, of two or three big tenant-farmers and a few labourers. Not uncommonly the boundaries of such parishes would be contiguous to vast overcrowded freehold parishes like "Hungry" Harbury in south-east Warwickshire. Here, in contrast, there was great poverty throughout the eighteenth century, and such parishes served as convenient pools of agricultural labour for the 'closed' parishes.⁴ Villiers, one of the Assistant Commissioners of the 1834 Poor Law Commission, in his report on Warwickshire distinguished between 'closed' and 'open' parishes, but their distinctive features were apparent from the later seventeenth century at least.⁵

1. With the growth of population and the increasing scarcity of land in the Felden country there is much evidence that the stinting of commons was rigorously enforced, and that the stints were often reduced: see for example, the evidence of the Glebe Terriers, Barratt, op.cit. p.I viii et. seq. The situation became even more critical from the 1740's, of course. See document relating to meeting called for stinting of Fenny Compton Common of middle eighteenth century in War.R.O.; P.R.O.
2. See document signed by freeholders of Studley for a meeting to enter on the encroachments on the waste lands and to preserve their privileges, War. R.O., C.R.549. Though of a later date it illustrated the type of struggle which had been going on since the seventeenth century.¹⁶¹
3. For example the parish of Billesley. Rous in the late fifteenth century declared that all the inhabitants had been driven out (Tate, Handlist, op.cit.p.59). An advertisement of 1756 of an estate of 264 acres for sale here, boasted that "there are only two houses in the parish and the taxes are trifling". Aris Birmingham Gazette, 24.5.1756.
4. Harbury served, for example, the labour needs of the adjoining 'closed' parishes of Chesterton and Kington, and Ladbroke. Chesterton and Kington were included in Rous' list of depopulated villages of the fifteenth century (Tate op.cit.p.59). Ladbroke was enclosed in the late sixteenth century (statement to this effect in back cover of late eighteenth century Parish Register).
5. For this see below the evidence of varying standards of wealth drawn from the Hearth Tax Return of 1663.

The 'open' parishes like Harbury, Napton, Tysoe and Brailes form a distinctive type of rural community in Felden Warwickshire from the seventeenth century onwards (if not before). These were rather different from freehold dominated parishes in general: holdings were small, often fractions of a yardland, and widely dispersed; the general standard of wealth was low; poverty was rife throughout the period from 1660 at least; the population was large and growth considerable before the 1780's. It seems likely that the features of the 'open' parishes were created as a result of the dissipation and disintegration of manorial authority at an early date.¹

By 1660 the distinctive features of the Arden Forest communities in the eighteenth century were also present. One of these was migration from the overcrowded, land-hungry Felden, into the more looseley-organized forest villages. There is no question but that large numbers of people were on the move within the ~~xxx~~ county from the Restoration onwards. It is from the late seventeenth century that the quickening growth of Birmingham is traced.² Along with this inflow of persons from outside, went a considerable rise in the local Arden population prior to the later seventeenth century, making for a rural community which was, on average, considerably larger than that in the south. Furthermore, the general level of prosperity was lower, a fact, as we shall see shortly, reflected both in the 1663 Hearth Tax Returns, and other sources. The soil was less fertile, and the general level of rents here very low, as is witnessed by the assessment to the Land Tax,³ detailed for a group of Arden

1. The large parish of Tysoe had in the Middle Ages five manorial organizations within its bounds, four of them quite independent judicially, as well as economically. See R.H.Hilton "Social Structure of Rural Warwickshire in the Middle Ages", Dugdale Society Occasional Papers, No. 9 1960, p.20-21.
2. Both in respect of new industries and the growth of houses and population. See W.H.B. Court, "Rise of Midland Industries" 1938, p. 41. Professor Court found that of 695 certificates made for the local overseers of the poor of Birmingham 1686-1726 the largest number came from Warwickshire.
3. The land tax assessments were made in the later seventeenth century and remained unaltered throughout the eighteenth century. Most of the forest parishes were assessed at 0.8/- per acre compared with an average for the county of 1.3/-. The assessments were based on the rental value of the land.

Forest parishes in Appendix XIII. Landownership in the forest areas was in many cases very widely dispersed among a large number of smallish owners. This and related problems, will be discussed more fully when dealing with the evidence offered by the eighteenth century enclosure awards, and the land tax assessments. It seems probable that a system of partible inheritance was a central factor here, and this would also exert considerable influence over the rate of population growth.¹

Socially the forest parishes seem to have consisted in the late seventeenth century of communities of poor freehold farmers. Also by the later seventeenth century there is some evidence that there had developed a body of landless labourers. This would once again, illustrate the effect, probably, of migration into the forests, and the rapid growth of the forest population.

Another aspect of the forest economy we need to consider is the growth of rural industry. The fundamental necessity of industry to many forest communities where partible inheritance sometimes occurred is described by a seventeenth century inhabitant of the West Yorkshire Dales with beautiful simplicity, "if a customary tenant died seized of a tenement without having devised or disposed of it by will, then it descended to all his sons equally.....by reason of such division of tenements the tenants are much increased in number more than they were, and the tenements become so small in quantity that many of them are not above 3 or 4 acres a piece and generally not above 8 or 9 acres, so that they could not maintain their families were it not by their industry in knitting coarse stockings".² Dr.Thirsk comes to the conclusion that "there is enough positive evidence to support the proposition that the location of handicraft industries is not altogether haphazard, but is associated with certain kinds of farming community and certain kinds of social organization".³

1.Little is known about forest communities at the moment-one of the few studies being P.A.Pettit's,"The Economy of the Northampton Royal Forests 1558-1714", Oxford PH.D.,1959.(Unpublished). Borough English has been found to survive in several forest areas in the 18th Century.

2.P.R.O.E. 134, 10-11 Chas. I. Hil 22; quoted in an essay entitled "Industries in the Countryside" by Joan Thirsk, p.20, see "Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England", edited by F.J.Fisher (in honour of R.H. Tawney),1961.

3.Ibid p. 88.

There is evidence to show that forest communities in Warwickshire were partly farming and partly industrial in occupational structure. Professor Court concluded that "this combination of agricultural with industrial pursuits was probably common among the Midlanders of Tudor and Stuart England,¹ as elsewhere. Before the advance of the eighteenth century, and the thickening out of the industrial population in specialised areas, the local demand for woollen and linen clothing in rural areas was still largely met within each neighbourhood. The clothing industry, supplying one of the two basic needs, remained still, the most important English industry in the seventeenth century, and the most widespread in rural localities. This was certainly so in Warwickshire. Traditionally a wool producing area, enclosure of common fields, and depopulation of villages for conversion to sheep pastures was, as we have noted, most marked in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is likely that Warwickshire's diffuse rural woollen and linen industry was stimulated by the upsurge of population during a large part of the sixteenth century, and several decades of the seventeenth century, to which the parish registers bear witness. This was in addition to the growth in population, particularly from 1660, of Birmingham and Coventry. It is likely that later on in the eighteenth century, rural poverty and distress, extensive in some large open parishes like Brailes, towards the Gloucestershire and Northamptonshire borders,² was aggravated by the decline of the Cotswold woollen industry, with which it was associated.

Inventories attached to the wills of yeomen and farmers dwelling in the Arden during the later seventeenth century, show the continued importance of the textile industry in serving local needs in rural Warwickshire. As elsewhere, it was closely allied to farming.

1. W.H.B. Court, "Rise of Midland Industries" 1938, p.42.

2. These parishes are discussed in more detail in due course. See below Chapter X.

Thus on the death, in 1701 of Richard Everard,¹ yeoman, originating from the large Arden parish of Tanworth, he left out of total property amounting to the sum of £215, yarn dressed and undressed valued at £79. In addition he possessed 4 cows and calves, 7 sheep, and 2 horses, valued, in all, at £17, and wheat, oats and hay at £79. Another Arden man, Edward Taylor of Yardley, described as a weaver,² left behind him "best weaving looms" worth £1.13. 4d. and "others" at 17/6d. In addition, though his total property was valued at only £89, he had 10 cows and 14 sheep and other stock, valued at £31, and crops worth £22. When Robert Barnes, gent of Clarendon,³ died in 1689 he left "flax, watered and unwatered" valued at £278, out of a total of £590. His horses, cows and sheep were worth a further £140. Similarly John Cox, yeoman,⁴ of the same parish, left, on his death in 1699, flax valued at £32, the rest of his crops being worth only £47. The nailing industry is described as one of the part-time occupations which thrived in the rural counties south of Birmingham. It extended from Worcestershire into the western part of Warwickshire, around Studley; the same locality which became the centre of the needle industry, and saw an extension of the Worcester glove-making industry. W. H. B. Court makes the point that "it was probably out of the tendency of a farming community to make nails that the earliest industrial communities of the neighbourhood arose".⁵ The introduction of the slitting mill in the early seventeenth century had seen the extension of the industry into parts of the rural west Midlands not previously known. Further east, Arden communities engaged in mining and later ribbon-weaving.

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1. The inventories and wills of many Warwickshire parishes forming part of the collection belonging to the Diocese of Worcester are kept in that part of the Worcester County Record Office housed in St. Helen's Church, Worcester, where those described here were examined. Will of R. Everard, Tanworth, Jan. 1701.
 2. Edward Taylor's; Will of Parish of Yardley, Weaver, dated
 3. Robert Barnes; Will of Clarendon, Gent, (June 1701.
December, 1689.
 4. John Cox, Yeoman; Will dated March 1699.
 5. W.H.B. Court, Op. cit. p. 101.

Here then, at the Restoration, we have, in Warwickshire, a number of rural communities quite different in kind, and it is essential that any account of rural development at a later date, should take these fundamental differences of economic character and social structure into consideration: the hilly, stony, fairly poor, freehold strongholds on the heavy clays towards the Northampton border; the more prosperous, smaller parishes of the Avon valley; the 'open' parishes where wide division of landownership, over-population, and great poverty, went hand in hand from the later seventeenth century at least: the neighbouring 'closed' parishes, enclosed and depopulated in the fifteenth or sixteenth century; then leaving the Felden country, the forest communities of the Arden, vast poor parishes, consisting of scattered hamlets, and large areas of waste land.

What evidence is there in Warwickshire to demonstrate the variety of character in these rural communities? The main source must be the Hearth Tax Returns and farming inventories of the later seventeenth century. The value for our purpose of the former is that they provide a measure of the relative size of different places, and of the approximate distribution of wealth.¹ Inventories show up variations in land use and a detailed picture of farming, at the time they were made.

We have attempted to use the Hearth Tax Returns for the purpose above and the results are given in extended form in Appendix II. The Returns have been divided up into three main categories: open-field Felden parishes; 'closed' parishes, and forest-type parishes. Differences in the size of Felden and Arden Parishes in 1660 can be clearly detected from the Returns.

1. For a discussion of their use to the historians see Warwickshire Hearth Tax Returns Vol. 1., Hemlingford Hundred Tanworth and Atherstone Division Warwick County Records, Ed. M. Walker. Introduction by P. Styles, p. IXXXIV. This is the only volume to appear so far for this county, and since this relates to an area in the industrial north-east most of the Returns used in this study have been looked at in manuscript form. The Returns for 1663 used appear to be complete. Ref. War. C.R.O. Q.S. 11/5.

Average number of households in 18 Forest type parishes
was 120.4
(in 5 parishes over 190)

Average number of households in 64 open-field Felden
parishes was 54.2

Average number of households in 18 old enclosed parishes
was 46.4

Thus by 1660 we can say that the population of Arden parishes was on average more than twice as large as Felden parishes. The reasons for this have already been suggested.¹

By noting the proportion of households assessed at only 1 hearth, or exempted from taxation altogether we can assess the general standard of prosperity in different types of rural community.

TABLE I. ASSESSMENT OF HOUSEHOLDS UNDER THE HEARTH TAX

<u>Type of Parish</u>	<u>Av. No. Non-Liable Households</u>	<u>Av. No. Ass. at 1 hearth</u>	<u>No. of Parishes Ass. at 1.5 hearths or under, on Av.</u>	<u>No. of Parishes Ass. at 1.6-1.9 hearths on Average</u>	<u>No. of Parishes over 2 hearths</u>
Old-Enclosed (23)	15.1	11.0	3 (13%)	8 (36%)	12 (51%)
Open-Field Felden (63)	17.5	20.3	24 (38%)	30 (48%)	9 (14%)
Forest-Type Parishes (17)	48	50	5 (30%)	10 (60%)	2 (10%)

When we consider the general standard of wealth exhibited in the various areas we find that in many Felden parishes where property often remained undivided amongst larger landowners, the level was as low as in the forest communities. Where, however, the open Felden parishes did have some wealthy villages, in which property was being consolidated in the hands of bigger landowners, and therefore the general level of wealth was higher, this was rarely so in the Arden country. In the old enclosed parishes we find a very unequally distributed standard of wealth.

1. Dr. Thirsk has remarked that "in the seventeenth and eighteenth century people were perambulating the Midlands in search of a somewhat rare commodity, land". See "Industries in the Countryside" by J. Thirsk, p. 83 loc. cit.

While the average number of non-liaible households was almost as large as in the open-field parishes, the general standard of wealth was high, in over half the parishes the average assessment being at over two hearths.

Within the open-field Felden country we can discern different levels of prosperity. Thus along the Avon Valley, parishes such as Bidford, Exhall, Temple Grafton, Alveston, Avon Dassett and Binton had few or no exempted households and often a moderately high level of wealth. "Open" parishes like Brailes, however, situated on the heavy clays, where 76 of the 161 households were exempted from paying the tax, on the grounds of poverty, had a low level of wealth in 1663.

A study of occupational structure serves further to amplify and support the account we have given of rural Warwickshire at this period. The parish registers can sometimes be made to throw light on this problem.¹ The first thing which may be observed from these occupational figures is the high proportion of landless labourers found in the forest parishes in the later seventeenth century, probably as a consequence of migration from the Felden. In Priors Marston, an open-field parish, labourers are a relatively small proportion of those engaged in agriculture even in the hard years of the early eighteenth century. In the Arden parishes we see that the next most significant class engaged in agriculture after the labourer was the poor husbandman. In Priors Marston, however, the most significant social class were the prosperous freeholders; one third of all adult males were described as "yeomen", while they represented half of those whose calling was connected with the land.

A very significant aspect of these occupational figures is the prominence in the forest parishes of rural crafts. It should be borne in mind that these figures would represent a considerable underestimate of the actual number who engaged in rural handicrafts as means of eking out a meagre income gained from the land. Only those men whose primary calling was in some craft were recorded as such in the registers.

1. See Appendix III. Very occasionally the registers record the occupation of all persons buried for a period of years.

In the large Arden parish of Berkswell and in the parish of Coughton at the southern edge of the Arden country these full-time craftsmen represented over half the total callings in their parishes in the later seventeenth century. At Berkswell those engaged in handicrafts considerably outnumbered all those concerned with agriculture. At Knowle, Hampton-in-Arden and Kenilworth full-time craftsmen were also a significant body; though in these parishes agriculture was still the most significant occupation. A further interesting point is the importance of specific crafts. In Knowle, Berkswell and Hampton-in-Arden there were large numbers of weavers, while at Coughton 24 of 68 craftsmen were described as "metal workers"; presumably this is a reference to an off-shoot of Studley nail and needle industry.

Sufficient evidence has I think, come to light to make clear the importance of rural industry in many forest communities of rural Warwickshire, as elsewhere, during the later seventeenth century. In contrast, there were no craftsmen in Felden Priors Marston unconnected with serving the needs of agriculture. These craftsmen were not numerous. The total proportion of this community working on the land was two-thirds. The remaining third included gentlemen, members of the professions and tradesmen, as well as craftsmen.¹

As a corollary to this examination of some of the conditions making for the growth of rural industry in the forest areas of Warwickshire during the last quarter of the seventeenth century, we might say a word about developments here a hundred years later. A description of apprentices in the large Arden parish of Astley included sixteen to frame-work knitting and four to ribbon weaving, out of a total of twenty-six so placed in the years 1803-1810.² The Astley overseers of the poor apprenticed

1. Many small farmers must have been village traders and craftsmen as well. R.H. Tawney found that in the predominantly agricultural county of Gloucestershire over half the rural population had some other occupation whether whole or part-time besides agriculture in 1608. See A.J. and R.H. Tawney "An occupational census of the seventeenth century" in Economic History Review V. p. 28-64.

2. In War. R.O. Parish of Astley Overseers Accounts, D.R.19/599.

a large number of children to industries in the surrounding villages in these years. A number went into ribbon weaving in the neighbouring parishes of Foleshill, Bedworth, Exhall and Chilvers Coton, a reflection of the growth of rural industry dependent on Coventry. Nine were apprenticed in the same calling at Nuneaton. Thirty were placed in framework knitting at Burbidge and Hinkley over the nearby Leicestershire border. Only one was apprenticed in Birmingham.¹ By the later eighteenth century all these parishes towards Coventry and Nuneaton were dependent on ribbon-weaving and mining,² and it is a commentary on the size of this industrial growth in Arden parishes that most apprentices were absorbed into the industry of the neighbouring rural areas and small towns.

(3) LAND UTILISATION IN WARWICKSHIRE ABOUT 1700

The social organization traced in the different localities within Warwickshire was itself, of course, a reflection of the husbandry carried on in the various parts of the county. An examination of the varied land use confirms the view formed about the different levels of prosperity.

The best source for a study of land cultivation around the end of the seventeenth century, are the inventories attached to wills. Since they give the value (and sometimes the number) of different animals and the value (and acreage) of crops on the ground and in the barn we can build up tables which demonstrate the rural economy followed by each locality at a certain date.

Groups of inventories³ drawn from the Avon Valley Felden, the eastern (pasture) Felden and the Arden Forest of the north have been looked at, and are tabulated in Appendix IV.

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1. In War. R.O. Parish of Astley Overseers Accounts, D.R.19/599
 2. See "The Conditions of the Poor in Warwickshire" by K. V. Bligh. Dissertation for B.A. degree 1963 in Univ. of Birmingham Library, Book No. 544, 458, Ref. Diss. A.4, B63, p. 30, et. seq.
 3. These inventories are partly taken from the collection which were formerly deposited with the Lichfield Diocesan Records. Now this collection is deposited at the War. C.R.O. The rest were from the Worcester Diocesan Collection, now in St. Helens Church, Worcester.
Though the sample of inventories was small, it was as considerable as that used by W. Hoskins in his analysis of Leicestershire inventories. See "Essays in Leicestershire History" 1950, p.170.

The first thing we notice is that the inventories confirm our impression, drawn from the Hearth Tax assessments and elsewhere, and recorded above, that the Avon Valley was the wealthiest and most prosperous agricultural area. The average value of the farming stock in the sample inventories drawn from the Avon parishes, was very considerably greater than that of the other two localities: the eastern Felden and the forest of Arden. As we might expect, the farmers of the forest lands were the poorest off. The situation is summarised in the table below.

Table II

ANALYSIS OF FARMING INVENTORIES

Locality	Avon Valley Felden	Eastern Pasture Felden	Arden Forest
Number of Inventories looked at	14	28	27
Average Value of Total Farming stock	£151. 4.	£107. 0.	£93. 6.

Such distinctions of wealth and also of husbandry practice between one locality and another go a long way in explaining the differential impact of enclosure within the county. However, we shall be returning to this topic later on when we are dealing with eighteenth century developments.

Turning to the husbandry practiced in the different localities, we observe in the first place, that almost every cultivator, large or small, kept at least a few sheep, and one or two cattle, regardless of the topography and soil conditions. Despite differences of emphasis we should remember that sheep and corn farming, that is a mixed agriculture based on the sheep-fold was traditionally the most widespread and general system of husbandry in lowland England. Sheep were considered an essential pre-requisite of good arable husbandry as Bishop Latimer reminds us.¹ Furthermore, as late as the end of the eighteenth century a Board of Agriculture reporter expressed the opinion that the first purpose in keeping sheep was to obtain the dung, and the second was for their wool.² They may not have been, as late as 1. "A ploughland must have sheep; yea they must have sheep to dung their ground for bearing of corn, for if they have no sheep to help fat the ground, they shall have but bare corn and thin". Latimer Sermons (Everyman Edition, p.215).

2. T. Davis, General View of the Agriculture of Wiltshire (1794), pp. 20 and 27.

this, generally fattened for meat, though this became common practice in Warwickshire from the eighteenth century, particularly during the period of the French Wars.¹ Thus we find that even in the fertile grain-producing area of the Warwickshire Avon, the animal stock was still very significant, and sheep were kept here in quite large numbers. Nevertheless we can detect differences of emphasis in the husbandry practices of the different localities. The value of the crops in the heavy clay pastures of the East Felden was, on average, only half that of the Avon Valley farms. In the forest area to the north the value of the crops was still less.

Table III

CROP VALUES IN INVENTORIES

Locality	Avon Valley Felden	South East Felden Pasture	Arden Forest
Number of Inventories looked at	14	28	27
Total Value of Crops (on average)	£83. 6.	£43. 1.	£37. 8.

In both the Avon Valley and the pasture lands to the east, wheat was the principal crop grown, followed by barley and vetches. Only in the Forest of Arden to the north were oats as significant as vetches. Even here wheat and barley were the most important crops.

The value of the animal stock was about the same in both parts of the Felden, though somewhat smaller in the Arden. There was more emphasis on sheep in the east Felden, while in the Avon Valley the herds of cattle, and the horses were of more value.

1. For an account of this see "Social and Economic Changes in the Rural West Midlands Region, 1785-1830", M. Com. thesis by J. M. Martin in Birmingham University Library. Chapter IV, pp. 103-145.

Table IV. ANIMAL VALUES IN INVENTORIES

Locality	Avon Valley Felden	East Felden Pasture	Arden Forest
Total Value of Animals	£66. 0.	£62. 2.	£33. 8.
Av. Value of Sheep) Av. Number of Sheep)	£11. 9. 49. 6.	£19. 4. 50. 7.	£ 8. 4. 20. 0.
Av. Value of Cattle) Av. Number of Cattle)	£28. 6. 12. 0.	£23. 0. 11. 5.	£30. 0. 11. 3.
Av. Value of Horses) Av. Number of Horses)	£19. 3. 5. 4.	£16. 3. 4. 5.	£17. 0. 3. 8.
Av. Value of Pigs) Av. Number of Pigs)	£ 3. 0. 3. 7.	£ 2. 6. 1. 3.	£ 2. 2. 2. 5.

In the Arden cattle and horses were together by far the most significant part of the farmers stock. This is not surprising, as the forests, while not such fertile agricultural land, offered vast areas of waste woodland suitable for grazing herds. The importance of horses is no more surprising. North Warwickshire was an area of rapidly growing rural and urban industry, and of population. The provision of carrying services was an important source of livelihood to the Arden villages. This is a fact which receives emphasis from the freeholders and cottagers of the North Warwickshire village of Atherstone when they put up a fight to preserve their common lands in 1730.¹

If these inventories can be taken as representative it would seem that in none of the localities, at the turn of the seventeenth century, was dairying of much significance. Thus the character of farming at this date was in sharp contrast to that a hundred years later, when production of dairy commodities for the nearby urban markets had become a major factor in the rural economy of many parts of Warwickshire, as we have described elsewhere.² This change, like many others, was in no small way facilitated by the re-organization of estates into vast dairy farms as a consequence of parliamentary enclosure.

1. For full discussion of this, and sources see below "The Poor and the Parliamentary Enclosure Movement". Chapter VII, p.151.

2. See M. Com. thesis, J. M. Martin, Birmingham University Library. Op. Cit. Chapter III & IV, pp. 77-145.

Table V. DAIRY VALUES IN INVENTORIES

Locality	Arden Forest	Avon Valley	South-East Felden
Number of Inventories looked at	27	14	28
Average Value of Dairy Stock	£2. 0.	£1. 8.	£1. 7.

This does not, of course, preclude the possibility that dairying was already becoming important in the ~~seventeenth~~ 17th Century on the larger estates in Warwickshire. This is a point which deserves investigation.

(4) THE EVOLUTION OF OPEN FIELD FARMING SYSTEMS BEFORE 1730

It is now generally recognized that the classic three-fold system of open-field farming evolved only in a limited area of central England. Even within this area there were vast stretches of woodland, and secondary hill formation like the Cotswolds which never knew this system. Nor was the geographical limitation to the open-field system the only one. It is becoming abundantly clear, from evidence more closely connected with farming practice than that used by an earlier generation of agrarian historians, that time brought important modifications even where the system predominated.

As we have already hinted, the two underlying influences which wrought these modifications was the increase of population, and the growing incentive which this brought to use the land more productively. Furthermore, this incentive was probably sharpened by the opportunity for marketing the produce of the land. Not only did urban markets in Birmingham and other Midland towns become important from 1660 onwards, but this period also saw the beginning of improved communication between these towns and the rural counties to the south.

Under the pressure of these factors both the east Felden clay parishes and the arable parishes of the Avon, saw the introduction of new farming practices. In the heavy clay lands where reliance was chiefly on sheep and cattle, the 18th century enclosure awards bear witness to the continued existence of extensive

commons which remained to be partitioned under a private act. For example in the parishes of Long Itchington 1776, Avon Dasset 1780, Brailes 1787, Wolvey 1794, Little Compton 1795, Tysoe 1795, and Whichford 1807.¹ Convertible leys appeared on a large scale in the open fields of some parishes and give the impression of increased specialization in pastoral farming.²

The continued importance of the commons to this type of rural economy is witnessed by the evidence of careful stinting and protection from encroachment under the pressure of population growth. Examples of this happening are found in the East Felden parishes of Whichford³ and Fenny Compton.⁴ Complaints of encroachment on the cow common appeared in the overcrowded parish of Napton as early as 1656.⁵ Moreover, this emphasis on flocks and herds was taken further, with the growing need for more efficient land use, by the introduction as we have already mentioned, of temporary leys and 'wandering' cow pastures into the open fields which increased the ratio of pasture to arable.⁶ An illustration of this was found in the pasture parish of Oxhill, where the rector was in possession of $1\frac{1}{2}$ yardlands in the form of 'meadow leys' or 'greensward' in the common fields. Similarly, a survey of the glebe lying in the common fields of Brailes shows 'lays' or 'fitches' are meadow grounds, supplementary to the common meadows.⁷ The same arrangements are noted at Stretton-on-the-Fosse⁸ and probably Wolfhamcote.⁹ A number of

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1. At Little Compton, near the Gloucestershire border, the common was described as about two miles in length and in some places about half a mile broad. See Rudder "New History of Gloucestershire"..
 2. The development of specialized production brought with it changes in method of farming which made themselves apparent long before the open-field system passed away.
 3. Barratt. Introduction, p. lviii.
 4. Meeting called with this aim in middle 18th Century because of evidence of shortage of commons. See War. C.R.O. Ref.D.R.O.
 5. See Warwickshire V.C.H., Vol. VI, p. 182. 161.
 6. Barratt. Introduction, p. lvii.
 7. Ibid " p. lvii.
 8. " " p. lvii.
 9. See "A True Statement of the Case....." Photostat copy of original in War. C.R.O. Z.12.

enclosure awards relating to East Felton parishes bear witness to the extension on a large scale of temporary grass leys into the common fields. For example, in that of Brailes dated 1787 a small owner, Wm. Haynes received 27 perches in lieu of the 'mow' or first crop of 1 ley of greensward in the common fields.¹ At the enclosure of the village of Winderton, a hamlet in the parish of Brailes with its own set of common fields, the enclosure map confirms that here also there was no pasture land allotted, because it was situated in the midst of the common fields as a wandering cow pasture and part of the open field rotation. The map shows four named fields in four quarters, and a cow pasture situated in the common fields.

Turning to the more fertile arable parishes of the Avon and Stour valleys, we find that by the time of the parliamentary enclosure there was, in some parishes, a relatively small quantity of common waste left. In such a fertile district of more mixed farming with emphasis on grain, the common was potential arable, and gradual encroachments had brought much of it into cultivation. The glebe terriers in particular, demonstrate the extension of the field system to secure a more elaborate rotation of crops in the Avon Valley. This also brought a reduction in the amount of fallow in any given year, under the pressure of population growth and increased food demand. The fertility of the soil here, allowed the farmer to fallow only every fourth year, or perhaps less often.

In the highly fertile parish of Wootton Wawen, where the arable, and in particular, the wheat, acreage was one of the highest in the county at the time of the 1801 Crop Return, the open fields remained until the award of 1776. In a pre-enclosure map of the parish dated 1736, there is evidence of ten fields, six of which were known by the name of field. However, there was here an organized field 'system'.² In the equally fertile Avon valley parish of Snitterfield, examination of the enclosure

1. See Enclosure Award of Parish of Brailes 1787 War. C.R.O. Similarly at Tysoe in 1798 the church wardens received compensation for the "first crop of two leys in the common field".
2. See "Social Structure of Warwickshire in the Middle-Ages", R. H. Hilton, loc. cit. Appendix, p. 23.

award of 1766¹ reveals at least eight open fields in addition to three or more common meadows, at that time.

There is some evidence of a reduction in the amount of common pasture attached to the open fields of the highly fertile arable parishes of the Felden, as land was brought into more economical use as arable. In the parish of Temple Grafton a comparison of two surveys of 1540 and 1740 indicate that between these dates the cow common had been partitioned amongst various proprietors, some 10% going to the poor,² though the open fields remained intact till 1815. Similarly, the commons stint was reduced in the arable parishes of Lighthome³ (before 1585) and Exhall⁴ (between 1585-1714) doubtlessly as a consequence of the limitation of the common land. The stint was reduced in the parish of St. Nicholas, Warwick, at the time of the enclosure⁵ which left the cow common intact.

This study of the modification of open-field systems of ~~planning~~ farming can be taken further when we look at the parish of Alveston. Not only do we know that by 1585 the stint had been reduced as a consequence of enclosure of the commons here,⁶ but also that by 1699 the heath was being ploughed, and fenced in for corn. In 1704 it was ordered to be laid down with grass seeds. These and other experiments were financed by a general levy per yardland supplemented by rents, drawn from part of the common fields enclosed and leased out for this purpose.⁷ The freeholders of the parish of Barford engaged in similar pre-enclosure experiments. P. Styles recounts that the final stage was to abolish the field system, and furlongs could then be grouped and sown in any combination, and the combinations changed as seemed convenient. This parish was seen to be near to this stage in 1684: the lands are listed by various named parts

1. Snitterfield enclosure award housed in War. C.R.O. Here also in the 1801 Return the arable acreage was one of the highest in the county, and 394 acres were under wheat.
2. See V.C.H. Warwickshire, Vol. III, p. 96. Also survey of 1740 in Birmingham Ref. Library Ref. 249148. Some 840 acres of open field here were unenclosed until the award of 1815.
3. Barratt Introduction P. xvii.
4. Ibid p. lvii.
5. See the enclosure award of the parish of St. Nicholas, Warwick,
6. Barratt. Introduction, p. lvii. dated 1772.
7. V.C.H. Warwickshire, Vol. III, p. 285.

of the parish - some called field, some not as in 1 crop, 2 do, 3 do.¹ Such a flexible arrangement would make possible the introduction of new crops without upsetting the open field system. Evidence of similar names appearing in the enclosure awards illustrate that these experiments had wider relevance in the fertile Avon valley. The growth in population made it necessary to increase the amount of land under cultivation. New markets also sharpened the incentive to increase production. Thus in highly fertile arable farming parishes like Alveston and Barton this meant the bringing into cultivation of the whole parish area and the disappearance of commons and wastes long before a general enclosure was introduced.

With the taking in of the common and waste into arable cultivation 'wandering' cow pastures made their appearance as part of an extended rotation in the common fields. The evidence of the enclosure awards is illuminating. At the enclosure of Norton Lindsey in 1809 there is no mention of common pasture or waste, but there is a notably irregular field pattern and a large number of fields, including an example of a wandering cow-pasture. Similarly, at the enclosure of Sherbourne in 1800 there is reference to only a small piece of common, west of the village, though there are seven open fields and another example of a wandering cow-pasture. The enclosure award of the arable parish of Morton Morrell dated 1758 similarly reveals a most interesting system of farming in which the common pasture was at least partly under cultivation as at Alveston above. Henry Wise received $25\frac{1}{2}$ acres in lieu of 19 leys in the cow pasture, while Henry Greville received 227 acres in compensation for $17\frac{1}{2}$ yardlands and 2 cottage lands in the cow common.² A clear distinction is made elsewhere in the award between a 'land' under arable cultivation, and a 'cow common'. Thus for example, J. Frankton, Weaver, received $5\frac{1}{2}$ acres compensation for "6 lands and 2 commons". A close reading of the enclosure awards reveals that many experiments

1. V.C.H. Warwickshire, Vol. V, p.110.

2. Similarly Thos. Ward received compensation for 14 cottage 'lands'

were going on with arrangements of the cultivation more nearly suited to the appropriate husbandry of the district, than could be secured by a rigid adherence to the classic concept of the three-field system. The latest view about the origin of the common fields is that the system evolved slowly over a period of time, the pace of this development determined by the needs of farming in a particular locality and the abundance or otherwise of land.¹ The principal difference between the communal farming practices of forest and highland pastoral areas on the one hand, and the arable areas on the other, was that in the latter, the common-field system reached a more mature stage of development. In forest areas, common arable fields were small in comparison with the acreage of pastures. Grassland was the mainstay of the economy, and arable crops were grown for subsistence only. Hence the smallness of the area of the arable fields lessened the problems of ensuring access to all tenants allotments, and the stubble did not have to be economically grazed owing to the abundance of other pasture. Nor did the arable fields, because of their secondary importance, have to be cropped with the utmost economy. For these reasons there was no urgent necessity to control the cultivation of the ploughland so stringently, and no attempt was made to organize farming on a village basis.

In Warwickshire north of the Avon lay the Forest of Arden, and the system of farming and rural economy was as described above. We have already mentioned the lay out of one such community in the neighbouring forest of Feckenham. A very large number of Arden Forest parishes retained their open fields until the 18th or 19th century; a number were enclosed privately without recourse to Parliament. But many more, mainly in the period after 1780, were enclosed by private act. They hung on until the latter part of the 18th and 19th centuries because of the absence of urgency surrounding this type of enclosure.

The pre-enclosure map of the forest parish of Nether Whitacre

1. See J. Thirsk. "The Common Fields" in Past and Present No. 29 Dec. 1964, pp. 1-25.

shows a number of small open fields spaced over a wide area, divided by a vast number of small old-enclosed fields and allotments. Named on the map are five open fields (in addition to others unnamed), three open meadows, four greens and one heath. Its economy was described in 1730 as consisting of "no full teams, it lies mostly on grazing".¹ The settlement was spread over the village in a number of small or scattered settlements and there was no nucleated village around the Church.

A tendency towards conformity with the more conventional field patterns over a long period of time has been detected in a recent study of the fields of the forest parish of Church Bickenhill, Warwickshire.² In the 14th century the authors found a bewildering complexity of many small open fields, or of furlongs. But a deed of 1612 and survey of 1677 show that the ploughland here by the 17th century, consisted of three common arable fields - in other words a simplification of field lay-out had recurred.³ However, 1633 acres of open field land were enclosed in three hamlets within the parish of Bickenhill in 1824. Most of this open-field land lay in the hamlet of Little Tackington, and the accompanying pre-enclosure map names no less than five large open fields on one side of the river Bligh, and nineteen small fields on the other side of the river.

The explanation of the forest-type field pattern is that it was the product of a number of influences. As mentioned, a non-arable economy meant that farming did not have to be organized on a village basis. It also explains why the open fields were relatively small, and surrounded by pasture land in small enclosed fields. Next, fields multiplied whenever new land was taken into cultivation from the abundant waste and the land belonging to each cultivator became increasingly scattered. This helps to explain the scattered nature of the settlement area in these parishes. The plentiful supply of waste land in the Arden is indicated by the vast amount which remained to be enclosed by Parliamentary Act in the 19th century. For example 400 acres in Rowington in

1. Dr. Thomas 1730 Edition of Dugdale's "Antiquities of Warwickshire"
2. "Discovering Bickenhill" by Victor Skipp and Paul Hastings (Dept. of Extra-Mural studies, Birmingham University, 1963) pp.15-18 Ibid
3. A Similar example noted by the present writer was the forest parish of Stivichall where there were four large open fields and one common meadow at the enclosure of 1742. The process may have been speeded up by close proximity to Coventry.

in 1824, and over 500 acres in the parish of Stoneleigh in 1816, despite the fact that private reclamation of large acreages had been pursued by the Lords Leigh throughout the 18th century.¹ Finally there was the effect of the partible system of inheritance which probably prevailed among the lower rural classes wherever there was an abundance of land, and in weakly manorialized areas where the Lord's authority was frail.² Evidence for the persistence of these customs in Arden, Warwickshire, and the influence of the characteristic system of farming here, on the structure of landownership in the forest lands are discussed in detail in a later chapter,³ dealing with the evidence of enclosure awards and land tax returns.

We have looked in some detail, at the development of Warwickshire open field farming systems up to the era of the Parliamentary enclosure movement, because such an investigation is highly relevant to the proper understanding of this enclosure process. And we might add that such modifications of, and experiments within, open field systems of farming were not, of course, confined to this county.⁴ The organization of farming affected the timing of enclosure. Arable parishes with little waste land remaining, tended to be enclosed early when grain prices rose.⁵ Small and comparatively unimportant Arden fields often remained till the 19th century.

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1. See below "The Economic Consequences of Enclosure", Ch.VIII, p. 170, et. seq.
 2. See "The Common Fields" by Joan Thirsk loc. cit. p.13
 3. See below. Chapter devoted to the Small Landowner in 18th Century Warwickshire. Ch. III, p. etc. seq.
 4. One of the best known innovations in the 17th century, was the floating of meadows in Wiltshire (see V.C.H. Wilts. section on agrarian history). Widespread evidence of extended rotations exist. Finally the present writer found open-field farmers in Worcestershire may have engaged in cropping experiments which foreshadowed the development of market gardening here. See "Social and Economic Trends in the West Midlands 1770-1830". M. Com. thesis loc. cit. Section on Farming, particularly parishes of Burlingham and Eckington. See Ch. II, pp. 18-72.
 5. See below Ch. VIII, p.162 and Appendix XXXXI.

In the first place as we have said, if obstacles to the development of farming methods could be overcome without resort to a general enclosure of the open fields then this could postpone the application for a private act until well into the 18th century.

The character of enclosure, when it came, was also affected by the evolution of open-field farming systems. Thus, by the 18th century, a private enclosure act might be dealing with two or three large open fields and a large carefully regulated cow common, as in the East Felden. On the other hand the act might be concerned with the enclosure of four, six or more open fields and appendant meadows as in the Avon valley. Here there might well be little common land left to enclose. Alternatively, the enclosure might be concerned with the reallocation of a few fairly small open fields of comparatively little importance in relation to the large areas of enclosed pasture and wasteland which surrounded them. Thus we can get the parliamentary enclosure movement in perspective. It did not mark an entirely revolutionary break with the past in husbandry methods, but represented from the point of view of farming, a culmination in a long process of evolution of new organizations. Because of changes in farming which had preceded enclosure, it meant quite different things in different farming areas.

Furthermore, enclosure in Warwickshire affected rural communities which were quite different in social and land ownership structure. This was so not merely as between the Felden and the Arden, but even within the Felden where neighbouring parishes had often experienced quite different social and economic developments within the formative period from the 16th century. The social organization of rural communities in 18th century Warwickshire had been subjected to many formative influences. The history of the manor(s), the growth of population and not least, the use to which the land was put.

Land utilization in Warwickshire if not so varied as social organization by 1700, certainly showed differences of emphasis

between the various localities. Specialization to meet the demands of new and growing markets was already under way. New crops were being introduced and more land, at least in the most fertile parts of the county, brought into cultivation. We would expect that production of dairy produce for the Birmingham market had already begun, though the sample of inventories used was too small to bring this out.

In short, parliamentary enclosure was an experience common to many different rural communities, and was resorted to by villages working under quite different farming systems, to deal with quite different situations, in the different parts of the county.

CHAPTER II

THE ENCLOSURE MOVEMENT AND RURAL SOCIETY AFTER 1660

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(i) Chronology of Enclosure

Enclosure went on in Warwickshire from the 15th century to the 19th century. We have already mentioned the enclosure of many townships in the 15th and 16th centuries, with the aim of conversion to sheep-pasture. Much depopulation occurred as a consequence.¹ In the 17th century it continued unabated, and a large number of such enclosures by private agreement were known to have taken place.² These relate not only to open-field Felden villages, but also to Forest type parishes.³ It seems highly likely that the number of Arden forest villages which retained their open fields until the 17th century, and in a large number of cases, the 18th century, has been considerably underestimated.⁴ Since the open-fields here were relatively less significant to the structure of the rural economy, they were enclosed, often quite late, without having recourse to Parliament, and without commotion. Thus it was discovered, quite by accident, that open fields still existed in the 18th century in two parishes of Stoneleigh and Over Whitacre.⁵ Doubtlessly, there were others.

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1. See Rous' list of depopulated townships, and those reported as enclosed and depopulated under various government returns in the 16th century from Wolsey's 1517 commission onwards. "A Handlist of Enclosures Acts & Awards Relating to Warwickshire" by W.E.Tate, Trans Birmingham Arch. Soc. LXV, 1949, p.58.
 2. See Tate's list of enclosures by Private Agreement in Handlist above. Many others not recorded.
 3. For example the Forest-type parishes of Allesley was enclosed under a private agreement of 1652.
 4. Sometimes the Act has referred only to common and waste and the enclosure was not therefore included by W.E.Tate in his list of enclosures including open field; as for example Milverton (award) (1807) and Knowle (1819) where the awards contained allotments of some hundreds of acres of open field.
 5. No record of the enclosure of either sets of common fields is known, but Stoneleigh common fields can be seen recorded on the plans attached to the surveys of the Leigh estates of 1767-74 at Stoneleigh Abbey, photostats Leigh collections Ref. C.R.O. Reference to Over Whitacre common fields is made in the survey and valuation of the glebe, circa 1756 in Vol.1 of Parish Register, p. 77.

Enclosure in the earlier 17th century, at least, continued to be for the purpose mainly of conversion of heavy intractable clays, to pasture, for which it was highly suited. A good example of enclosure in this period was that of the Astley family in the large south-east Felden parish of Hillmorton. In 1633 Mary Astley, widow, was said to be responsible for the decay of 15 houses and 250 acres of arable.¹ The remainder of the parish was enclosed by Private Act of Parliament in 1754. It was the opinion of Gonner, confirmed by later researches, that the amount of enclosure taking place in the 17th century was as significant as that in the earlier period.² Less, however, is known about it in this period because opposition, vocal in Warwickshire in the 15th and 16th centuries, was probably weaker in the 17th.

The method of enclosure by private agreement was commonly resorted to in the 17th century. According to Beresford this procedure was made easier by a more favourable government attitude, though it is questionable how far this could, in any case, influence agrarian trends.³ As far as governmental attitude is concerned, it had conceded the principle of specializations as early as the Tillage Debates of 1597 when the Member for Shropshire had successfully agreed that the statute ought not to embrace Shropshire, "since that county's soils made Salop to be grass and the Dayrie House to the Whole Realme" in the same way that Herefordshire was "the Barn".⁴ The old machinery of government opposition to enclosure became discredited in the course of the 17th century. Towards the later 17th century in place of the negative opposition represented by the 17th century legislation against enclosure, the government was considering the more positive possibility of Corn Bounties and Corn Laws.⁵ Though fears of depopulation as a consequence

1. See V.C.H. Warwickshire, Vol. V. Enclosure had also taken place here in 15th century. It was included in Rous' list.

2. "Common Land and Enclosure" 1912 by E.C.K. Gonner Chapter III,

3. "Habitation Versus Improvement" in (p.187. Essays in the Social and Economic History of Tudor and Stuart England, In Honour of R.H. Tawney", Ed. F.J. Fisher, Cambridge

4. "Hayward Townshends Journals" by A.F. Pollard (1961, p.64. and M. Latcher in Bull Inst. Hist. Res. XII 1935, p.16 quoted M. Beresford op. cit. p. 45.

5. Beresford "Habitation Versus Improvement" loc. cit. p.64 Mentions the "Dialogue" of 1677 p. 55.

of enclosure were not entirely eradicated in the 17th century, the new stress in official attitude came gradually to rest on 'improvement' in which enclosure was a central feature, rather than 'habitation'. How far, however, this changed official attitude further boosted a trend which was going forward anyway, is as we said, open to doubt.

There was a considerable measure of continuity between the earliest Private Acts and the enclosures by private agreement of the 17th and early 18th centuries. In the first place a number of private agreements were made within the period of parliamentary enclosure by Private Act, in Warwickshire.¹

Gonner noted this overlapping in time as a fashionable means of enclosing.² Furthermore, the early enclosures by Private Act were closely modelled on the well-established procedure of Decrees in Chancery by which private agreements were given legal recognition. Many of the early private acts were in character merely, marks of recognition of an agreement already carried out commonly between the lord of the manor and the rector of the parish.³ Both the 17th century private agreements, and the 18th century parliamentary acts are different in character from the type of piecemeal enclosure carried out in the 15th, 16th and early 17th centuries, illustrated above in the parish of Hillmorton. These later enclosures were usually of all land remaining in an open condition within the hamlet or parish.

The total county acreage is 618,000 acres of which it was estimated by W. E. Tate that 25% was enclosed by Private Act, i.e. 154,000 acres gross. His estimate was based on those made in the private acts, which was no more than an approximation; comparison with the exact survey made for the enclosure award, and incorporated therein, reveals that the estimate made in the act was often inaccurate. As a consequence it seems likely

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1. For example the agreements made for the enclosure of the parishes of Thurlaston 1782, Preston Bagot 1742, Stretton-under-Fosse 1742.
 2. "Common Land & Enclosure" 1912 by E.C.K. Gonner, pp. 187-8.
 3. For example the parishes of Lighthorne (award 1720), Bishops Tackbrook, (award 1731) & Alderminster (award 1736).

that Tate may have underestimated the amount of land involved.¹

Appendix V records the state of landownership in 120 awards dealing with open field land. 45 of these awards covered the whole parish area approximately, and are examined separately in Appendix VI. In the larger category of 120 awards, 146,036 acres were dealt with, and in the groups of awards covering the whole parish area 56,652 acres.

For various reasons the awards of eight private act enclosures are not included in the tables of land ownership. Those of Newton Regis² and Kinwarton are missing; that for Bishops Tackbrook is incomplete; Bubbenhalls' award was in a very poor condition and illegible in parts. The awards of Foleshill, Erdington with Witton, Studley, and Sutton Coldfield have been examined, but were not suitable for inclusion in the tables of landownership. However, the Foleshill, Studley and the Sutton Coldfield awards are described in more detail elsewhere in this study.³ All three enclosures consisted very largely of common and waste land, and, with the exception of Foleshill, very small amounts of common field land. In all four cases the land was allotted mainly in the form of tiny holdings (often less than 1 acre in extent) to owners of cottages with more than twenty years uninterrupted residence.

We can distinguish different phases of the enclosure movement through the course of the 18th century and early 19th century. A graph to show the chronology of enclosure acts, and the correlation between these, and the price of wheat in the Birmingham market, is included in Appendix XXXI. This is discussed

1. In Appendix V which includes an analysis of all but 8 of the Warwickshire awards which dealt with open-field land the total net average of land allotted to various types of owner is 146,036 acres. While it is true that the tables in Appendix V include 12 enclosure awards under the General Acts of 1836 & 1845 this does not sufficiently explain the discrepancy. Tate further underestimated the amount of land in open-field state enclosed, by not including the following parishes; Long Marston 1774 (formerly Glos;) Milverton 1807; Knowle (1819) Great & Little Woolford (1845) Winderton (1854) & Newbold on Stour (1850)
2. A copy of the Newton Regis award has been discovered since this was written by Mr. D. Pannett in the Stafford R.O. Ref. Chetwynd 124.
3. An examination of these awards is made in "The Poor & the Parliamentary Enclosure Movement" and "The Small Landowner & Freeholder in the Forest of Arden". Below Chapters VII & VIII.

more fully in a later chapter dealing with the economic consequences of enclosure. The land involved in open-field enclosure at different dates was as follows.

Table I. THE ENCLOSURE OF LAND BY PRIVATE ACT

Total Net acreage allotted to landowners in the period 1720-49	was 15,421 acres.
" " " " " " " "	period 1750-69
" " " " " " " "	was 40,418 acres.
" " " " " " " "	period 1770-89
" " " " " " " "	was 44,709 acres.
" " " " " " " "	period 1790-1815
" " " " " " " "	was 28,060 acres.
" " " " " " " "	period after 1815
" " " " " " " "	was 13,428 acres.

Enclosures by parliamentary act started very early in Warwickshire, and this county had the second highest total average enclosed by this method, prior to 1780, in the country. We can see from the above figures that the most important period of parliamentary enclosure was 1750-1790. Between these dates the flood of enclosure awards ebbed and flowed with the fluctuations in prices, and agricultural prosperity. High levels were reached in the late 1750's, the 1760's and 1770's in Warwickshire. The flow slowed down in the period 1744-54 and in the years around 1785-89 as elsewhere in the country. Another big rise, the last in Warwickshire took place in the middle 1790's under the influence of the wartime inflation of prices; this was not as considerable as in the earlier decades for the simple reason that most open fields in the county were, by 1790 already enclosed.

(ii) The Aims of Enclosure

When we consider aims, the people behind enclosure, and the various consequences, social and economic, we find considerable differences between one phase of the movement and another, from which has arisen most of the confusion and conflict of opinion over the effects of enclosure.

In many of the earliest enclosures, the private act, as we have already stressed, was merely an alternative to the Chancery Decree giving recognition to a private agreement. In this type of award the enclosure was carried through by a landowner, usually the lord of the manor, who had bought out most, or all, of the other proprietors in the parish and aimed to consolidate his estate.¹ The character of the body of commissioners who carried out the award was also quite distinctive, in this early phase: it was very large and composed of local gentry. It was really a meeting together of the local landowning gentry to carry out a reorganization of the land in a particular parish, which would greatly benefit one of themselves.

A few enclosures took place in the 1740's,² and in very much larger numbers in the 1750's and 1760's,³ which were of a very different kind. In the first place the type of community affected by these enclosures was entirely different: in large measure the ancient freehold society still survived, more or less intact. Furthermore, the people behind these enclosures were the freeholders themselves. This we know because of an illuminating document drawn up by the freeholders of Wolfhamcote,⁴ a parish where freeholders were numerous lying in the south-east Felden heavy clay region. The document written in 1730, set out the reason why an enclosure of the hamlet of Flecknoe in Wolfhamcote was desired by 26 of the 32 freeholders of the place. What this treatise tells us could have stood for many other parishes which were to accomplish a general enclosure in the ensuing thirty years or so.

1. Examples of this type of early award under a Private Act of Parliament were Lighthorne (1720), Millington (1730) and Alderminster (1736). For land holding analysis of these awards see Appendix V.
2. Notably Brinklow (1742), Aston Cantlow (1743) Wolfhamcote (1744).
3. See the land-holding analysis of the enclosure awards contained in Appendix VI. Parishes which were predominantly composed of small freeholders were Hillmorton (1754), Churchover (1756), Kenilworth (1756), Newton in Clifton (1757), Radway (1757), Priors Hardwick, Priors Marston and Wolfhamcote (1757-58), Willoughby (1760), Exhall (1761), Southam (1761), Pailton in Monks Kirby (1762), Haselor (1767), Ryton in Bulkington (1767), Wixford (1767), Cubbington (1768), Willey (1769).
4. "Landownership and Enclosure", H.G. Hunt in Econ. H.R. 1957-59
2nd Series Vol. XI, No. 3

H. G. Hunt came to the conclusion¹ recently with reference to parliamentary enclosures in Leicestershire that "It would be wrong to say.....that the engrossing of land by a few large proprietors and almost complete disappearance of the small landowner generally preceded and facilitated parliamentary enclosure by removing a class who would otherwise have opposed it". The validity of Dr. Hunt's generalization may possibly be limited by the fact that he confined his attention to forty-four Leicestershire awards where approximately the whole acreage of the parish was enclosed under the parliamentary award. In Warwickshire, at least, such an enclosure was probably not typical of most,² and usually represented a type of rural society, where the freeholders still dominated.³ However, as far as it went this statement could also be applied to a number of enclosures of the period 1742-1769 in Warwickshire. Not all, however, and probably few in the period before this, and in the later years of the 18th century.

When we come to consider the aims of this type of enclosure of the 1740's and 1750's, we find again considerable shifts of emphasis compared with the early awards carried out by great landowners. Here we can let the freeholders of Wolfhamcote speak

"That the soil is naturally unfit for ploughing....the fields will not produce half the crops as the lighter and more mixed soils do in the neighbouring fields with half the labour and expense.....the turf in Flecknoe field is very proper for grazing.

That the farmers have scarce got corn enough for some 4 years to maintain their own families and sow the land again".

In short enclosure was a device by which these freehold farmers sought to rescue themselves from the calamities of the 1720's. These heavy clays were more suited to grass land; even in their open state, the freeholders declare, they had long depended chiefly on their flocks and herds. Now the wet

1. We have estimated that parishes or large hamlets where the whole area was enclosed in Warwickshire probably embraced 45 out of 131 awards. ~~See the analytical tables contained in Appendix VI.~~

2. See the analytical tables contained in Appendix VI.

3. See Appendix VI.

4. See M.S. in War. C.R.O. 2/121-2.

and animal disease of these years had reduced many of the freeholders to poverty, so that many were forced to bring in the sheep and cattle of farmers from other villages on to their own land in order to check its impoverishment. The expense of attempting to bring these lands back into a state of good husbandry would be too great for these poor freehold farmers.¹ Some form of enclosure and conversion to pasture was the only way out. Unfortunately, six of the thirty-two freeholders refused to agree to the transformation, and the change was delayed until 1745. That distress of this kind was common in other freehold parishes is clear from the parish register; many 'paupers' were buried in the early decades of the 18th century and these are references to 'poor farmers reduced to poverty'.²

The aims of enclosure may have been in the middle 18th century between 1750-1770, more strictly connected with changes in farming, than in the early years, or later on when the emphasis was on enclosing for improved rentals. In the 1720's and 1730's the aims had been those nearest to the heart of the landowner rather than the farmer; the consolidation of a great estate, often bought up in the years preceding enclosure in small freeholds; and as a consequence the enlargement of rentals and an enhancement of the marketable value of the estate. From the 1780's also it was the great landowner and the speculator in land who inspired enclosure. In these last twenty years of the 18th century, and the early decades of the 19th, the typical enclosure was where the land still lay fairly widely divided amongst small landowners, but where the great landowner already had a foothold. This qualified him to pursue the idea of a general enclosure, which would not only increase the value of his own land in the parish concerned,³ but would also very

1. This was before the costly Parliamentary method of enclosure became general.
2. For example the parish of Priors Marston (enclosed 1758) where the register records the burial of 26 paupers 1701-1735, more than in any other descriptive category.
3. Occasionally, the motive was connected with exploitation of minerals, particularly around the N. Warwickshire coalfield. See, for example, the preamble to the Chilvers Coton award 1774; enclosure was a necessary preliminary to drainage and extension of the coalfield.

greatly increase his opportunities as we shall see, of enlarging it, at the expense of the smaller owners. Such improved parishes as these were lucrative prey to the great improving landlords in the years of prosperity in the countryside, after 1780. Typical examples of the parishes we have just been describing were the great 'open' parishes where the level of prosperity, rents, and farming were low, and land ownership still widely divided.¹ In contrast the period 1750-70 saw many freehold farming communities seeking an enclosure act in order to improve their farming by more rationalized land use.

It should not be thought, however, that all freehold communities seeking enclosure in the middle years of the 18th century did so with the aim of conversion to pasture. A number of such parishes were seeking enclosure in parts of the Felden county more suitable to arable farming, and did so with the purpose of improving the arable.² We may take the parish of Alveston as an example of such a parish. Situated, like many others of this type, in the fertile Avon Valley, its relatively high level of prosperity in the later 17th century is revealed in the 1663 Hearth Tax Returns, where there are no households exempted on the grounds of poverty.³ Even in the early 18th century while the parish remained in its open-field state, there is evidence that this freehold society was an enlightened one.⁴ P. Styles concludes that it was the difficulties of securing improvements in husbandry practices that must have led to the enclosure of 1772.⁵ After the enclosure this tradition of improved farming continued, and two Alveston farmers receive special mention from the Board of Agriculture reports in 1794.⁶

1. For example the parishes of Fenny Compton & Napton (1779), Harbury (1780), Ilmington (1781), Brailes (1787), Wolvey, and Easington (1797), Tysoe (1798), Oxhill (1798), Whichford (1807).

2. For example the parishes of Barford (1760), Bidford (1766), Haselor (1767), & Alverton (1772).

3. See the hearth tax figures in Appendix II.

4. See above Chapter II, p. 29.

5. See P. Styles' account in V.C.H. Warwick, Vol. III, p. 285.

6. Ibid p. 285.

We may conclude, therefore, that in respect of aims, the people promoting enclosure, and the kind of society involved, enclosures in Warwickshire in the 18th century differed considerably from one period to another. This may go far to explain the conflict of opinion about the social consequences of the enclosure movement during the period 1660-1820, a point we have already stressed.

CHAPTER III

THE SMALL LANDOWNER, TENANT FARMER AND ENCLOSURE

CHAPTER III

THE SMALL LANDOWNER, TENANT FARMER AND ENCLOSURE(i) The Small Landowner and Enclosure

It is possible to analyse the awards of enclosure commissioners and to construct tables which give an impression of the state of landownership at the time of enclosure.¹ From these tables we get an idea of the strength of different categories of landowner and how far inequality in the division of the land had advanced even before the effect of Parliamentary enclosure was felt. This can be assessed most accurately in parishes where the award dealt with the acreage of the whole parish. Unfortunately, in most cases this was not so, and unless (as sometimes happened) the award dealt with open and enclosed land, only a rough idea of the character of landownership structure can be secured. An attempt to overcome this difficulty is discussed below.

The first thing we observe from the landownership tables is that a considerable degree of inequality in the division of landownership had already come about by the enclosure date, in the majority of parishes. Even those which were still dominated by freeholders showed this trend. Freehold farmers ranged from those in possession of only two or three acres, to those who cultivated 100-150 acres or more of their own land. Then again, most parishes, even 'Open' parishes like Tysoe had, by enclosure date, their big estates created in an earlier period by some big landowner. Almost no Warwickshire parishes were without one or more of these big estates. If we look at the total proportion of land being enclosed which came to the small landowner of between three and 100 acres we find that it ranged from 23% to 35% of the total. We had the impression they were strongest in parishes enclosed in the period 1750-89, as we see from the following table.

1. See Appendices V & VI

Table I. LANDOWNERSHIP STRUCTURE IN AWARDS:
The small landowners

Period	No. of Awards	Proportion of land allotted to owners of 100 acres				
1720-49	12	3,579 acres, 23.2% of total acreage				
1750-69	35	7,776	"	32.5%	"	"
1770-89	38	21,817	"	35.8%	"	"
1790-1815	25	7,413	"	30.3%	"	"
After 1815	15	3,354	"	24.8%	"	"

It is on the disappearance, or otherwise, of the small landowner during the era of the parliamentary enclosure movement, that the attention of historians has been particularly focused.¹ Several historians have declared that the parliamentary enclosure movement is exonerated from responsibility for the decline of the small landowners because the intensive disappearance of this social class took place in the period after 1660, while the parliamentary enclosure movement did not become large-scale until the period after 1780.² In a recent study, of landownership in Leicestershire illustrated by analysis of forty-four enclosure awards covering the whole parish area³, H. G. Hunt found that 32% of the land was granted to small owners, and that in 30 parishes enclosed after 1780 there was an average of 20 land owners per parish just before enclosure took place. His conclusion was that the consolidation of estates by great landlords did not seem to have preceded enclosure in Leicestershire, and that furthermore, the small landowners were still numerous in open-field parishes after 1780.

However, it seems to the present writer that the real point has been missed by all these writers: that enclosure could mean a very different thing at different times, and in different

1. For this see in particular A. H. Johnson "The Disappearance of the Small Owner" Ford Lecture 1909. E. Davies "The Small Landowner in the Light of the Land Tax Assessments." Econ.H.R. Vol.1, 1927, V. M. Lavrovsky "Expropriation of the English Peasantry in the 18th Century", Econ. H.R. 2nd Series, Nos.1,2,3, 1956-57, pp.271-282.
2. Johnson, Davies, Lavrovsky above.
3. H.G.Hunt, "Landownership and Enclosure", 1750-1830 by H.G.Hunt, Econ. H.R.-2nd Series, Vol XI, No. 3, 1959.

places, even within the same county. None of these writers brought out the point that the strength of the small landowner could vary considerably from parish to parish, and also perhaps, in different phases of the enclosure movement. Mainly this was due to their failure to look at all the enclosures within a given locality and over the whole period. To state as Hunt does that 32% of the land remained in the hands of the small landowner is to use the evidence of a special kind of enclosure (where the whole parish area remained in an open state) to speak for all, and to fail to distinguish between different periods.

Furthermore, in Warwickshire the connection between enclosure and the weakening of the small landowners hold on the land, seems to show up in the tables. An analysis of some forty-five awards (see Appendix VI) where approximately the total parish area was dealt with under the award reveals that in this type of parish where the open fields remained wholly intact until the date of the award, freehold society probably remained strongest. A summary of this evidence is as follows:

Table II LANDOWNERSHIP STRUCTURE IN PARISHES WHOLLY ENCLOSED UNDER AWARDS

Dates	No. of Awards	Proportion of land allotted to owners of 100 acres	
1730-59	10	4,790 acres	30%
1760-79	14	5,949 acres	36%
1780-99	7	3,271 acres	35%
1800-1815	9	1,836 acres	30%
Post-1815	5	1,769 acres	21%

It is clear from the above list that if one looks only at this type of enclosure, the small owner was still fairly strong at the time the award was made, especially in the middle years of the century when the promoters of the act were often, as we have seen, the freehold farmers themselves.

If we now look at the contributions made by landowners in

Warwickshire towards the land tax between 1780 and 1825 we can make certain useful comparisons.¹ In the first place it seems not impossible that even in the parishes enclosed in the middle eighteenth century, the small landowner had declined in strength between the award and 1780. It should be added, however, that this loss would seem to have been to the advantage of the larger yeoman owning between 100 and 150 acres who remained, both numerically and in the amount of land they possessed, very strong in 1780 in the parishes where enclosure had taken place.

It is in throwing light on the social consequences of enclosure made after 1780 that the land tax can be put to most convincing use.² Here the land tax assessments (which survive from 1779) can provide us with a picture of landownership³ before, and after, the event. In the summaries below we compare the state of landownership before enclosure⁴ with that revealed by analysis of the land tax assessments of 1825, after enclosure had taken place.

Table III. COMPARISON OF STRENGTH OF THE SMALL OWNER BEFORE AND AFTER ENCLOSURE IN PARISHES ENCLOSED AFTER 1780

A Before Enclosure (Based on Land tax Contributions in 1780)

<u>Period of Enclosure</u>	<u>No. of Parishes</u>	<u>(Equivalent) Total Acreage</u>	<u>Share of the Small Landowner Acreage Possessed</u>	<u>Proportion of Whole</u>
1780-1822	27	58,017	14,322	25%

B After Enclosure (Based on Land Tax Contributions in 1825)

<u>Period of Enclosure</u>	<u>No. of Parishes</u>	<u>(Equivalent) Total Acreage</u>	<u>Share of the Small Landowner Acreage Possessed</u>	<u>Proportion of Whole</u>
1780-1822	27	56,877 ⁵	9,751	17%

1. In using the land-tax assessment an acreage equivalent has been calculated for each parish as suggested by D.B. Grigg in his article criticising the failure of students of the land tax to do this in the past. See "The Land Tax Returns" by G.B. Grigg in *Agric. Hist. Rev.* Vol. XI, 1963, part II.
2. For detailed analytical tables of acreage equivalents based on the land tax contributions in 1780 and 1825 of various groups of parishes see Appendix VII.
3. The small landowner for the purpose of analysis of the land-ownership categories exhibited in the enclosure awards was defined as landowners receiving allotments of under 100 acres. In the land tax the definition used was those paying above 4/- and less than a sum which varied for each parish according to the acreage equivalent. (Footnotes 4 & 5 on page 53.)

Between these two dates the acreage on which land tax payments were made by the small landowner may have declined from 14,322 acres to 9,751 acres, that is by 4,571 acres or 33%.

We can thus say that in the period after 1780 when the land tax can be used with most confidence, there is an impression that the small man lost ground in parishes which underwent enclosure.¹ Furthermore, the land which came into the possession of the great landowners owning estates of over 500 acres seems to have been considerable in the same period. In some sixteen parishes enclosed between 1780 and 1798, the land owned by this class rose from 10,891 acres in 1780 to 14,786 acres in 1825, that is by 3,895 acres or 40%. In parishes enclosed after 1800 a much larger proportion was already in the hands of the great landowners, but all categories of big landowner owning above 200 acres increased in landowning strength between 1780-1825. The amount of land in the possession of owners of between 200 and 500 acres in fact doubled between 1800 and 1825.

In all parishes which had undergone enclosure between 1720 and 1780, the land in the possession of the small landowner may also have diminished in the period 1780-1825. The amount involved, was, perhaps less than in the parishes which experienced enclosure in these years.²

Footnotes from p. 52

4. For a full analysis of the land tax assessments of these parishes in 1780 and 1825 see Appendix VII.
 5. Despite careful re-checking, this discrepancy in the total contributions of money remains. It is almost certainly the result of carelessness in recording tax contributions due from larger landlords, who had bought exemption from the tax by the downpayment of a lump-sum. Such exempted contributors continued normally to be recorded in the assessments, after 1800, though the *raison d'être* had been removed by exoneration.
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1. Since calculations based on these statistics must allow for an error of about 10% we cannot do more than refer to general tendencies.
2. For the details of this decline see Appendix VII.

Table IV. Comparison of Strength of Small Owner in
1780 & 1825 in Parishes enclosed before 1780

<u>Period of Enclosure</u>	<u>No. of Parishes</u>	<u>Acreage of Small Land owner in 1780</u>	<u>Share of Total in 1780</u>	<u>Acreage of Small Land owner in 1825</u>	<u>Share of Total in 1825</u>
1726-59	13	5,883	23%	4,389	18%
1760-69	11	4,915	19%	4,286	16%
1770-79	12	6,822	25%	6,228	22%

<u>Fall in Acreage 1780-1825</u>	<u>% Fall in Acreage</u>	<u>Fall in Share of Whole Land</u>
1,494 Acres	25%	from 23% to 18% = 5%
629 Acres	13%	from 19% to 16% = 3%
594 Acres	9%	from 25% to 22% = 3%

We observe from the above statistics that the small landowner, perhaps, declined even in the parishes which had already undergone enclosure. This decline was greatest in those parishes which had been enclosed longest and appears to have been to the advantage of two social groups. In the earliest enclosed parishes, it was possibly in favour of the great landlords who were already in a territorially dominant position in 1780. In the freehold dominated parishes the strength of the bigger yeomen owning a hundred acres, but under 200 acres was, perhaps, increased.

Let us turn now from the evidence of statistics, and examine further material which would lend strength to the view that a decline may have occurred in the land possessed by the small landowner. There were three particular points of time when the buying up of landed estate, and consolidation of the bigger landowner seems to have occurred: in the years immediately preceding the application for a Private Act of Parliament (though in some cases this process of piecemeal consolidation had been going on over a very long period before enclosure took place.)

1. For example the Parish of Temple Grafton enclosed in 1815. But enclosure shows that the consolidation of land into large estates was in process between a survey of 1540 and another of 1740. By the latter date 52% of the land was enclosed in Temple Grafton and concentration of ownership had taken place in the hands of the lord of the manor and a few freeholders. See P. Styles' account in V.C.H. Warks. Vol. III, p. 96.

Also this took place during the interval of time between the application for an Act of Parliament and the making of the Enclosure Award. Finally, it occurred in the years after enclosure.

About the buying up of estates in the years immediately preceding enclosure, it is difficult to find evidence because of the lack of source material. However, information has come to light in one or two cases, and there must have been many more examples of the same sort of thing. This is particularly true of the early enclosures following the tradition of the 17th century agreement. Here the lord of the manor or some other principal landowner bought out most of the freeholders, and then came to an agreement to carry out an enclosure with one or two of the bigger landowners who were left. Thus in the parish of Hunningham Lord Leigh¹ is found buying up the estates of many small freeholders in the years immediately preceding the enclosure of 1735. In the award he received 400 acres,² and in 1780 he contributed £29 land tax for his estate in this parish (making it about 500 acres). Similarly before the enclosure of Binton in 1779 Viscount Beauchamp, one of the county's improving landlords is found in the years between 1770 and 1778 buying out the four freeholders, who themselves had in the years prior to this, consolidated the whole of the common field land in their hands. Then as the sole proprietor he made an agreement with the rector to carry through a general enclosure. This fell through, but the parish was enclosed with the adjoining hamlet of Drayton under an act of 1779. Allotments in Binton amounting to 1192 acres all went to Lord Beauchamp with the exception of 13 acres to the rector.³ But the clearest examples of pre-enclosure estate purchase exists within the scope of the land tax assessments

1. See Leigh Collection in Birthplace, Stratford, Series C 5, Bundles 2-7 Purchase deeds of estates in Hunningham from H. & S. Jefferyes (1727), Thos. Cox (1727), W. Grove (1732), R. Cox (1732), R. Summers (1735), R. Pettifor (1735), by Ed. Lord Leigh. Similarly Lord Leigh is found buying up estates prior to the enclosure of Kenilworth in 1756 (award). See Leigh M.S. Series C.6 Bundles 2 and 3.
2. Out of a total of a little over 600 acres. He also purchased tithe in these years.
3. See Mr. Styles' account in V.C.H. Warks. Vol. III, p. 62.

after 1780. We find that at Easington, Long Compton, and Tysoe the contributions of the principal landowners to the land tax was noticeably increased in the ten years or so preceding the enclosure of these parishes.¹

Table V. CONSOLIDATION OF ESTATES IN YEARS PRECEDING ENCLOSURE ACT

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Land Owner</u>	<u>Payment of Land Tax at Various Dates</u>		
		<u>1781</u>	<u>1785</u>	<u>1795</u>
<u>Easington</u> (Enclosed 1795)	Evelyn Shirley Esq.	£43. 8. 6.	£53. 8. 0.	-
<u>Long Compton</u> (Enclosed 1797)	Earl of Northampton	£73.11. 8.	£85. 9. 9.	

Evidence of the influence which enclosure could exert on rural society is offered by the enclosure awards themselves, which often refer to the buying up of estates between the passing of the Act, and the Award. Details of information furnished by the awards about this is recorded in Appendix VIII. A summary of the evidence yields the following results.

1. We see the same trend in other parish land tax returns for example Lord Northampton's tax returns for Tysoe.

Table VI. EVIDENCE ABOUT THE PURCHASE OF ESTATES DURING
THE PERIOD OF ENCLOSURE NEGOTIATIONS

Period

1750-69	Total Awards in which reference to buying up of estates between Act and Award	- 15
	Total number of estates involved	- 37
	Total acreage bought up	- <u>1303 acres</u>
	This total includes 36 yardlands, so described, and a number of cottage commons and tithe (converted into land at enclosure)	
1770-89	Total Awards making reference to buying up of estates	- 14
	Number of estates sold	- 35
	Total acreage bought up	- <u>685 acres</u>
	This total includes 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ yardlands so described, and a very large number of cottage commons.	
1780-1815	Enclosure Awards in which reference is made to buying up of estates between Act and Award	- <u>total number 14 awards</u>
	Number of estates involved	- <u>68 estates</u>
	Total acreage bought up from landowners between Act and Award	- <u>2415 acres</u>
	This includes 97 $\frac{1}{2}$ yardlands so described as bought up in the awards, also tithe.	
After 1815	Enclosure awards in which reference to purchase of estates between Act and Award	- <u>12 awards in total</u>
	Number of estates involved	- <u>66 estates</u>
	Total acreage bought up from landowners between Act and Award	- <u>3205 acres</u>
	This includes 105 $\frac{1}{4}$ yardlands and also tithe and cottage commons. Also 451 Acres sold to defray the expenses of these later Acts (and bought up by the great landowners, invariably).	

In conclusion we may say that on the evidence of the awards, some 55 or about half, contain examples of estates bought up by the big landowners in the interval between the Act and the Award. This involved the buying up of over 200 estates totalling 221 yardlands so named, large numbers of cottage commons and tithe converted to land at the enclosure. The total acreage recorded by the commissioners in their awards

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as having changed hands in this way was 7608 acres. This we may regard as a minimum, since it was not incumbent upon the commissioners to record changes in ownership which had recently taken place. They presumably only did so in order to clarify the identification of the allotments with which they were dealing.

This evidence from the enclosure awards themselves lends some support to the picture presented by a study of the land tax statistics. It will be noted that the most extensive estate purchase is recorded in the enclosure awards after 1780, and in particular after 1815. One reason for this would probably be the trebling of enclosure expenses between 1750 and 1790 with which we shall be dealing in due course. However, a further reason would be the longer interval between the securing of the Act and the making of the enclosure Awards, which is a characteristic of enclosure after 1815.

It might be of some interest to mention some of the more spectacular examples of whole-sale estate purchases in the course of the enclosure negotiations. In the 1750's at the enclosure of the parish of Radway, 11 yardlands were sold up by 10 Freeholders involving 347 acres and a certain amount of tithe. The main purchaser was Sanderson Miller, Warwick Shire Halls' architect who received $9\frac{3}{4}$ yardlands - 319 acres. The other purchaser bought up $1\frac{1}{8}$ th yardlands of 3 freeholders. At Napton in 1779, 9 small owners sold a total of 5 yardlands - over 150 acres, in the course of the enclosure proceedings.

After 1780 there were a number of examples of whole-sale estate purchases. At Easington, for example, when 25 yardlands out of 72 were sold up in the course of the enclosure by eleven different small landowners to three big owners. Wm. Horniblow, an apothecary and surgeon of Shipston-on-Stour² bought up $20\frac{1}{2}$

1. Of a total net acreage of 146,000. Perhaps this was no more than would be expected to change hands between Act and Award.
2. He is a most interesting example of a member of the medical profession, who is found buying up considerable landed estate in a number of late 18th century parish enclosures. By 1797 had acquired 1220 acres under the awards of the parishes of Ilmington (1781), Brailes (1787), Dr. Pillerton (1795), Oxhill (1797), Easington (1797) and Shipston-on-Stour (1815). For reference to his profession see agreement between Shirley and Horniblow (Shirley M.S. Box 3/1 in War C.R.O.) All these estates had been purchased recently since his name does not appear at all in the list of freeholders of Warwickshire contained in the Poll Book of 1774 (Published Coventry 1775. Now the copy is in the Warwick C.R.O.)

yardlands from 9 different proprietors of open field land. Evelyn Shirley, the chief landowner, whom we have already seen increasing his land tax contributions in the years before the enclosure, now purchased a further 4 yardlands totalling 64 acres. At Long Compton enclosure in 1812 Lord Northampton received a vast estate of 1,596 acres in lieu of 50 yardlands of his own land, and 21 yardlands "lately bought and purchased" off ten named men. That part of this land which had just been purchased totalled 486 acres. In the 19th century land purchase at Nether Whitacre (1826), Wolverton (1826), Burmington (1836), Woolford (1842) was very considerable while at Winderton (1854) the Marquis of Northampton became the sole proprietor as a consequence of the buying out of three freeholders estates totalling 166 acres.

An impression that some consolidation of the great estates, and a consequent decline of small landowners may have been going on in the years after enclosure is borne out by the contribution of individual owners to the land tax. In appendix IX we have used the land tax contributions to give a more subjective approach: the name and contributions of the principal landowner(s) in some 63 parishes undergoing enclosure at various dates, have been noted in the year 1780, and compared with their contribution in 1825. At the latter date, new big landowners have also been recorded. We find in this way that considerable growth in the size of the chief landowner(s) estates took place in some 37 out of the 63 parishes; in 19 of these parishes consolidation of the principal landowners estates was striking.

Some growth in the size of the great landowners' lands seems to have been spread over parishes enclosed in all periods of the movement. It was, however, noticeably absent from those parishes situated in the fertile Avon valley which carried on a flourishing arable husbandry prior to enclosure, and which underwent enclosure specifically for an improvement and extension of arable farming. We have already mentioned Alveston in this connection; similarly placed were the parishes of Haselor and Wixford, Draycott, ~~Meanington, Kiers, Bards, and Brinkley~~

Leamington Priors, Barford and Brinklow.¹ These were all enclosed however, in the middle years of the 18th century before 1779, and it is likely that such change as did take place occurred before 1780.² Such growth was absent also from some of the freehold/^{dominated}parishes of the heavy clay lands towards Northampton. Here, however, much land came, as we saw, into the hands of the larger yeoman.

Once again the land tax contributions are helpful in assessing the growth of the great estates in the post-enclosure period during the years after 1780. Some examples of this are given below.

Table VII. THE GROWTH OF GREAT ESTATES FOLLOWING ENCLOSURE

Parish	Landowner	Land Tax Payments at Various Dates				
		1781	1790	1800	1820	1825
		£. s. d.	£. s. d.			£. s. d.
Brailes (Enclosed 1798)	W. & R. Sheldon	161. 9. 0.	189.10. 0.	-		226.13. 0.
Long Compton (Enclosed 1812)	Earl of Northampton	73.11. 8.	85. 9. 9.		£148	155. 0. 0.
Eatington (Enclosed 1795)	Evelyn Shirley Esq. Wm.Horniblow	43.8. 6.	53. 8. 0.			76. 2. 0.
		2.19. 6.	4. 8. 0.	£34		-

Yet another influence which may have aided the consolidation of the great estates was the conversion of tithe payments into land. The opportunity to make this change was almost universally taken in Warwickshire at the time of enclosure. This had the effect of increasing considerably the landed strength of the principal

1. Also the large parish of Aston Cantlow. Once again a 'corn' parish as shown by the high arable proportion in the 1801 Returns. The land tax showed little concentration of ownership up to 1830. However, at the enclosure of 1743 Lord Abergavenny was already in possession of 2,100 acres (almost the whole of the hamlet of Aston), and when the estate was sold up in 1918, it had then grown to 2,989 acres. See P. Styles in V.C.H. Warks. III, p. 35.
2. This is proved by the changes in Radway. It will be recalled that the enclosure of 1757 was the signal for wholesale land sales by the freeholders. As a consequence in 1780 Sanderson Miller paid £54 land tax. However, the family paid only £36 in 1825. We might have got the wrong impression had we based our opinion of post enclosure changes on those revealed by the changes in land tax contributions.

landowners, and also of the new class of large scale tenant farmers who were to dominate rural society at parish level from the last years of the 18th century. On the smaller landowners, the effect was to reduce the size of their holdings somewhat, and more important, greatly increase their enclosure costs. As we shall see later on in the chapter dealing with enclosure expenses, the cost, to the remaining proprietors, of paying for the tithe owners exemption from enclosure and post-enclosure expenses was considerable, amounting to 20% of the bill drawn up by the commissioners. Details of all arrangements for the allotment of land in lieu of tithe is contained in Appendix X.

From this appendix we may draw the following conclusions: Out of 125 awards studied, no less than 118 in this county allotted land to the Church or lay impropiators in lieu of tithe and glebe. However, in 4 of these awards the total allotted was only 5 acres, out of a total of 3,148 acres (presumably glebe only). Thus in 113 awards covering 146,160 acres gross 25,538 acres were transferred either to the Church or laymen in recompense for tithe payments; that is to say 17.4% or between 1/6th and 1/5th of the total land enclosed by Private Act in Warwickshire dealing with open-field land. Perhaps the most significant point is that out of this 25,538 acres, representing over 4% of the gross county acreage, and a very much more substantial proportion of the cultivated area, distinctly more than half of this total, 13,513 acres in fact, went to lay impropiators, and not to the Church at all. We can conclude, therefore, that tithe arrangements, which invariably accompanied enclosure, in Warwickshire, represented a major factor in the decline of the landowning strength of the small landowner, and very greatly strengthened the position of the principal landowners in rural society.

The occasional reference to opposition to parliamentary enclosure further supports the view that the small landowners did not always see the proposed change favourably. We have referred already to the opposition of a group of the small

freeholders (6 out of 32) to enclose at Wolfhamcote in 1730.¹

At Priors Marston, another freehold parish with some big land-owners, ^{was} enclosed in 1758; there are references in the Commissioners Expense Schedule attached to the Award, of payments to witnesses to attend Parliament "on account of the opposition".²

At Atherstone³ which in the early part of the 18th century was surrounded by its common fields, but was already developing into a market town, the freeholders and cottagers successfully resisted a Parliamentary enclosure for over 30 years (1730-1765). The number of freeholders seem to have declined after enclosure from the sixty named in the 1730's. Only 36 are listed in the Freeholders lists of the Poll Book 1774.

In the parish of Alveston, enclosed in 1772, the proprietors of 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ yardlands opposed the bill of 1792 by refusing to sign the petition.⁴ Opposition is recorded to the enclosure of Ilmington (1781) whose enclosure bill incurred the scathing criticism of Lord Chancellor Thurlow.⁵ Once again the expense account of witnesses on behalf of the promoters, in attending Parliament was very heavy,⁶ a reflection of the opposition encountered. At the enclosure of Erdington and Witton in 1801, the freeholders while not opposing the enclosure, raised objections to the claims of the Lord of the Manor, George Birch.⁷ At Wolverton where the enclosure, as we have seen, was the signal for much land sale, there was opposition, and the expense schedule included a special "appeal fund" to counter this.⁸ At Sutton

1. See above "The True Case Stated for the Enclosure of Flechnoe Fields" 1730 Loc. Cit.

2. Priors Marston Enclosure Award dated 1758. In War. C.R.O.

3. See Bracebridge M.S.S. Box H.R./35 "The Case of Atherstone....." Drawn up by Wm. Baxter and others Jan. 1738 in War. C.R.O.

4. See P. Styles in V.C.H. Warks. Vol. III, p. 284.

5. See J. & B. Hammond's "The Village Labourer" 1912 p. 35. Also W. E. Tate's "Parliamentary Counter Petitions during the Enclosures of the 18th century and 19th century" in English Historical Rev. Nos. 59-60, 1944-45, p. 392.

6. See the expense schedules of commissioners.

7. Transcript of the Minutes of the Commissioners by M. Beresford in B'ham Ref. Library M.S.S. No. 326709.

8. The Enclosure Award Schedule of Commissioners.

Coldfield in the north of the county, there was a system by which the arable was divided into an "infield" and "outfield" organization. Its threatened abolition was seen as a serious threat to the small owners.¹ In 1778 some 153 householders had opposed enclosure, while 78 supported it. The enclosure was delayed until 1801. Similarly, the enclosure of Bickenhill was proposed in 1787, but owing to opposition was delayed until 1818.² In the Feldon parish of Stockton the whole parish was enclosed in 1792, but the parish register records that an enclosure had been attempted in 1778 and 1786, "without success" due to opposition. In the year 1791 "the Inclosure Business was resumed, and after many meetings and debates the Bill was at last signed in the presence of Sir Thomas Biddulph at the Rector's house on the memorable February 10th 1791".³

Altogether, there is an impression of a degree of unavailing opposition, from the smaller owners, to enclosure in some parishes.

As a final judgement on the effect of enclosure on the small landowner we might recall the remarks of the local Board of Agriculture Reporter speaking in 1794, when consolidation of estates may have been considerable here: "Upon all enclosures of open fields the farms have usually been made much larger - from these causes the hardy yeomanry of country villages have been driven for employment into Birmingham, Coventry and other manufacturing towns....."⁴

Evidence suggesting the likelihood of migration out of some parts of rural Warwickshire will be discussed more fully in the chapter dealing with population trends. We can content ourselves here with remarking on the tie-up between the evidence of the awards, contemporary comments and the parish registers. How far the reverse process took place is difficult to say: i.e. that

1. See "Lot Acres" M. W. Beresford Econ. H.R., Vol. XIII Nos. 1 and 2 1943, pp. 74-79.

2. See Birmingham Reference Library Manuscript No. 435853. Opposition and delay for many years also at Shotton and ~~Sixtford~~ Stratford - but big owners involved see V.C.H. III p. 266 et. seq.

3. Memorandum in Parish Register 1777-1809 in County Record Office Ref. D.R.O. 58.

4. "General View of the Agriculture of Warwickshire" 1794 by J. Wedge for Board of Agriculture page 21.

the rural population was attracted by higher monetary rewards in the industrial north of the county and betook themselves to Birmingham, leaving behind a labour shortage which made enclosure necessary. As elsewhere, there is some evidence of rising rural wages in the later 18th Century¹ in Warwickshire. The present writer discounts this theory however, not only because of the above evidence and contemporary comment, but also for other reasons; enclosure awards invariably state some of the reasons why enclosure was taking place, none put forward this argument however. Furthermore, we have seen that the landowning community was still, at the time of enclosure, both numerous and strong in their share of the land. As for the labouring class and rural population as a whole, it seems likely that even in the south-east pasture area of the county there was/certainly not between 1730 and 1801 any absolute decline in population, but merely a situation where a very high rate of natural increase (as considerable as in the industrial rural parishes of north Warwickshire) may have forced a migration of surplus population out of the locality.

Numerical Analysis of Decline of Small Landowner

The impression we get from the remarks of the Board of Agriculture Reporter, quoted above, is that not only in terms of land, but also numerically, the small landowners declined in importance as a result of enclosure.

Certainly this proves to be so in respect of land which had undergone the process prior to 1730.² In 48 such parishes which have been examined, there were on average only four landowners per parish, and less than one owner occupier in 1780. Some fourteen of these parishes were in the hands of one owner only, and thirty-five out of 48 had no owner occupiers at all. Of the total land tax contribution, 44% was paid by landowners contributing over £100 and owning approximately, 1,500 acres and upwards.

1. See J. M. Martin, Unpublished M. Com. thesis "Social and Economic Trends in the Rural West Midlands 1770-1830", - (B'ham). Discussed in chapters on farming economy. Chapter II pp. 18-76.

2. For a detailed analysis of the numbers, and land tax contributions of old-enclosed parishes see Appendix XI.

The position of the small landowner in terms of numbers in parishes undergoing enclosures in the 18th and early 19th centuries can be summarised as shown below.

Table VIII. THE NUMERICAL DECLINE OF THE SMALL LANDOWNER

Period of Enclosure	Date of Analysis	No. of Parishes	Total Owners	Owners in Possession of			
				Over 500 Acres	% of Total	3-500 Acres	% of Total
1726-59	1780)	13	282	8	3%	5	2%
	1825)		201	11	5%	5	2%
1760-69	1780)	11	200	5	3%	12	9%
	1825)		185	7	4%	12	7%
1770-79	1780)	12	326	7	2%	17	6%
	1825)		296	7	2%	13	4%
1780-1825	1780)	27	639	20	3%	25	4%
	1825)		518	20	4%	21	4%

Table cont.

	Owners in Possession of									
	2-300 acres		1-200 acs.		50-100 acs.		10-50 acs.		Under 10 acres.	
	No.	% of total	No.	% of total	No.	% of total	No.	% of total	No.	% of total
1726-59	14	5%	44	16%	37	13%	116	41%	58	20%
	8	4%	38	19%	32	16%	87	43%	20	11%
1760-69	16	8%	32	16%	45	22%	59	29%	26	13%
	15	8%	28	15%	42	22%	47	25%	34	19%
1770-79	18	6%	48	15%	54	16%	128	39%	54	16%
	12	4%	40	14%	50	17%	96	32%	78	27%
1780-1825	27	4%	75	12%	101	16%	277	43%	113	18%
	32	6%	66	13%	66	13%	189	36%	123	24%

There was little decline in the number of landowners in parishes enclosed prior to 1780 in the period 1780-1825. However, in parishes which were unenclosed when the 1780 land tax assessment was made, and underwent enclosure prior to that of 1825, there is some support for the idea of a numerical decline. In particular, it was the small owners in possession of between 10-100 acres who were most affected. Their numbers shrank from 378 in 1780 to 255 in 1825 in 27 parishes. This represents a decline of 33%.

1. For full details see the Land Tax assessment tables contained in Appendix VII.

Analysis of the land tax also serves to confirm the observation of H. G. Hunt quoted above, that in parishes undergoing 18th century enclosure, landowners were still a numerous body on the eve of enclosure, and indeed afterwards. In 1780 Warwickshire parishes had an average of twenty owners in possession of land, while in 28 parishes in the process of undergoing enclosure at that date, there was an average of 26 owners. We can take our observations further and note that there were on average some 14 owners possessing holdings between 10 and 100 acres.

By 1825 the average number of landowners had declined slightly, more particularly where enclosure had taken place meantime.

Table IX AVERAGE NUMBER OF OWNERS PER PARISH
IN 1780 and 1825

<u>Period of Enclosure</u>	<u>No. of Parishes</u>	<u>Total Owners 1780</u>	<u>Av. No. of Owners in 1780</u>	<u>Total Owners 1825</u>	<u>Av. No. of owners in 1825</u>
1726-59	13	282	22	201	15
1760-69	11	200	18	185	17
1770-79	12	308	26	296	25
1780-1800	16	415	26	347	22
1800-25	11	224	20	171	16

ii Owner-occupiers and tenant farmers

When attempting to assess the fortune of the owner-occupier during the 18th century, and in particular as they were affected by enclosure, a considerable amount of difficulty has been met with by historians. To some it has appeared that the owner-occupiers decline was not affected by enclosure and that indeed during the war-time prosperity their numbers noticeably

increased.¹ However, it was the opinion of V. M. Lavrovsky, and others, that this increase in the numbers of owner-occupied estates was in truth a reflection of the increased prosperity of the tenant-farmers during the Napoleonic War period, and did not necessarily mean a recovery for the old class of freeholders, nor that they were unaffected by the enclosure movement. The big freeholders declared Lavrovsky, managed to survive where they could find the necessary capital to switch over to leasehold farming. Conversely, the big tenants or leaseholders were also often big owner-occupiers.

In an analysis attempted in this study, of owner-occupation in Warwickshire, care has been taken to distinguish different types of parish. This has, on the whole, had the effect of vindicating the opinions of Professor Lavrovsky in a remarkable way and at the same time, high-lighting the ambiguous use of the term "owner-occupier" as it is presented in the land tax assessments of the later 18th century.

In the first place we can endorse the remarks of H. G. Hunt, who observed that in Leicestershire by 1780, absentee owners, even in the lowest category paying between £5 and 4/-, outnumbered the owner-occupiers, taking all parishes together, outside the Forest area.³ This statement, however, conceals possible differences between one type of parish and another as we see in the summary below.

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1. See for example the article by E. Davies "The Small Landowner in the Light of the Land Tax Assessments" Econ. H.R. Vol. I, 1927, pp. 86-113. His use of the land-tax is open to certain objections. He made no distinctions between different types of parish. Thus for example in old-enclosed parishes where owner-occupiers were almost non-existent in 1780, as in certain other parishes mainly in the hands of tenants, there was an increase in the numbers of owner-occupiers by 1825 due to purchase of estates by prosperous tenants. Also in the forest-type parishes of Warwickshire where enclosure was of less significance, freeholders were more numerous than anywhere. These characteristics and developments in different areas would effectively conceal changes due to enclosure in smaller areas. He wrongly ascribed to each county a uniform acre equivalent - that for Warwickshire being placed at 1/4 so his category groupings are not really accurate.
 2. See Review by C. Hill of "A Parliamentary Enclosure of the Common Fields in England at the end of the 18th century, beginning of the 19th century" by Lavrovsky Moscow 1940 in Econ. H.R. 1941-43, p.92 et. seq. Also expropriation of the English Peasantry in the 18th century Econ. H.R. 1956-57 2nd Series Nos. 1, 2, 3, pp. 271-
 3. See H. G. Hunt "Landownership and Enclosure" (282 in Econ. H.R. 1957 loc. cit.

Table X. OWNER-OCCUPATION IN 1780 IN WARWICKSHIRE PARISHES BY DATE OF ENCLOSURE

<u>Type of Parish</u>	<u>Number of Parishes</u>	<u>Total Landowner</u>	<u>Owner-occupiers</u>	<u>Proportion of total numbers</u>
Old Enclosed	56	453	106	23%
Enclosed 1730-78	30	881	502	58%
Enclosed ¹ 1779-98	13	445	209	47%
Enclosed ¹ 1800-1822	9	223	66	30%

It can be observed that the owner-occupiers were numerically, still strong in 1780, in many of the parishes enclosed prior to this date. They were also strong in those "open type" parishes like Napton, Harbury, Brailes and so on enclosed between 1779 and 1798. They were perhaps numerically weaker in the parishes enclosed before 1730, and in parishes enclosed after 1800.

Table X cont. OWNER-OCCUPATION IN 1825 IN WARWICKSHIRE PARISHES BY DATE OF ENCLOSURE

<u>Type of Parish</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Total Landowners</u>	<u>Total Owner-occupiers</u>	<u>Proportion of total</u>
Old Enclosed	56	437	147	34%
Enclosed 1730-78	30	571	250	44%
Enclosed 1779-98	13	338	132	34%
Enclosed 1800-22	11	164	77	47%

A comparison of the fate of owner-occupiers in various parishes reveals that where enclosure had taken place and the freeholders were relatively numerous in 1780, the following period up to 1825 may have seen a decline. Thus turning to the table in Appendix XII, we find that in parishes which underwent enclosure in the interval of time between the Land Tax assessments of 1780-1825 there often occurred a sharp decline in the number of freeholders. This was particularly noticeable in the big open parishes like

1. These are detailed in full in a special Appendix XII.

Napton (from 34 to 22), Harbury, (from 27 to 15) Brailes (30 to 18) and Tysoe (from 45 to 22).

Where however they had almost disappeared by 1780, for example in old enclosed parishes, it is there that the number of owner-occupiers seems to have increased between 1780-1825. Furthermore, it is precisely in these latter parishes that the large-scale tenant-farmer dominated by 1780. This suggests the possibility that the new upsurge of owner-occupiers of the Napoleonic War Years about which so much has been made by historians, does in fact, represent a move by which the newly prosperous tenant-farmers were purchasing their farms or buying up additional land to cultivate along with their tenancies.

The same may be said about parishes left over to be enclosed after 1800. Here likewise, one gets the impression that owner-occupiers increased in numbers between 1780 and 1825. But sometimes these parishes had little open-field land left. Often such parishes were dominated by a few big land-owners and tenant-farmers as at Sherbourne (1800), Whatcote (1803), Birdingbury and Marton (1804), Sutton under Brailes (1805), Milverton (1807), Long Compton (1812), Temple Grafton (1815), and Wolverton (1831).

In Worcestershire, where the typical farm remained small in the 19th century,¹ one of the most ardent supporters of the small farm, John Carpenter of Chadwick Manor, described, in a letter to the Agricultural Magazine² how tenants of only 30 acres in his parish were purchasing their holdings. This was in 1807 at the height of the war prosperity. Many of these small tenants were ~~casualties~~ casualties after 1814, and it was only the new class of gentlemen farmers with capital of their own who were able to hang on to their newly purchased estates in the years of depression (though, of course, many of these were badly hit also).

Such a phenomenon may have had little to do with the old class of yeomen, which may possibly have continued to decline with the advance of the enclosure movement. In so far as large owners and

1. For this see J. M. Martin, M.Com. thesis "Social and Economic Trends in the Rural West Midlands 1785-1825", B'ham Univ. Ch. I, 2. Agricultural Magazine Vol. I, 1807. (pp. 1-14.
Letter dated July 11th 1807, p. 39.

tenant-farmers dominated parishes undergoing enclosure, we seem to see the same trend. Thus in the prosperous Avon Valley parish of Temple Grafton (Enclosed 1815), highly rented in the 1690's,¹ and dominated by great owners,² there was only one owner-occupier left in 1780, but in 1825 there were two. Precisely the same conditions prevailed at Birdingbury and Marton³ where under the enclosure of the whole parish area in 1804, three quarters went to 2 owners.⁴ Between 1780 and 1825, however, the owner-occupiers had increased from five to nine.⁵ At Fenny Compton where the owner-occupiers increased from five to seven, we find one of the new comers is William Payne one of the principal tenant-farmers of the land tax assessment.

About the parish of Tysoe we know rather more than about most Warwickshire parishes thanks to Miss Ashby's interest in her ancestors.⁶ One thing that clearly emerges from her impression of village life in Tysoe in the early 19th century was that the social life was dominated, not by the landlords, (who were often absentees from the parish) but the tenant farmers. "Make a farmer mad and you be done" is the revealing comment of one of the villagers.⁷ John Ashby (the grandfather of Joseph) had lost his farm and status as a consequence of the enclosure.⁸ He poached the farms of the Middletons in revenge for foreclosing his mortgage.⁹ An examination of the land tax assessment for Tysoe in

1. Prosperity shown in Hearth Tax 1663 - high acreage of over 2 hearths per household. See the Land Tax tables which show high assessment per acre in this parish.
2. See above p. 49.
3. Highly prosperous in late 17th century. Hearth Tax 1663 assessment was average of 2 hearths.
4. Roughly 1300 acres to 2 owners. Award of Birdingbury and Marton 1804 in C.R.O. ~~enclosed after 1780~~ Appendix ~~XII~~.
5. See detailed Appendix recording all owner-occupiers in parishes enclosed after 1780. Appendix XII.
6. "Joseph Ashby of Tysoe" Cambridge 1963 by M. K. Ashby.
7. Ibid page 38.
8. Ibid page 2.
9. Ibid page 4.

1790 reveals that Thomas Middleton was a prominent tenant of the great landowner in this parish, the Earl of Northampton. He was also a freeholder owning over 30 acres by 1825, perhaps the farm of John Ashby, whose mortgage he held. Another whose social rise must speak for many, was William Watts who in the assessment of 1790 for Tysoe parish is described as Lord Northampton's chief tenant holding a farm on which £18. 3. 4d. was paid. He also paid 14/8d. on his own land. In 1825 he is styled William Watts, Gent., and the payment on his own land had increased. Another big proprietor Jervoise Clark who before the enclosure had three tenants, is found in 1825 to be owner-occupying part of the land himself - yet another tendency which would increase the number of owner-occupied without benefiting the former freehold cultivators.

The links between freeholder prosperity and tenant farming is observed in many other parishes as the land tax assessments reveal. Thus at Eatington Jeff Beavington who prior to the enclosure, owner-occupied about 90 acres paying £3. 6. 0d. and also farmed some 50 acres, became the principal tenant-farmer on the newly organized lands of the chief landowner in the 1800's.¹

Leasehold is seen to be an important factor in the rise to prosperity of tenant farmers, and the survival of a class of yeomen within a parish. By leasehold, we mean those highly favourable leases for lives or a long term of years, commonly granted by institutional landowners, and also found quite often where the principal landowner is of long standing in the parish. Examples of large institutional estates are numerous in the Feldon parishes undergoing enclosure. At Fenny Compton, the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church Oxford received 400 acres at the enclosure of 1779. Similarly, Magdallen College Oxford was lord of the manor of Willoughby and principal landowner. It was no accident that both these parishes were freehold strongholds. At the enclosure of Willoughby in 1760 the College land was divided up amongst 13 leaseholders in small lots of about a yardland. Twenty owners received freehold land besides the College. A typical holding in Willoughby was that of Moses Cowley who received 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ yardlands freehold and 1 yardland leasehold of the College.

1. See Shirley M.S. in War. C.R.O. Ref. to Shirley Survey C.R299 Box 3/1 Survey of Shirley Estates 1811.

In the land tax assessment for 1780 twenty years after the enclosure there were twenty-two owners, and in 1825 they were twenty-five. In 1780, a third of the land was in the hands of the small landowner; subsequent change was as follows.

Table XI. PARISH OF WILLOUGHBY - LANDOWNERSHIP STRUCTURE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Owners of 50-100 Acres</u>		<u>Owners of 10-50 Acres</u>		<u>Total No. & Acreage</u>
1780	5	329 Acres	9	251 Acres	14 580 acres
1825	7	512 Acres	7	204 Acres	14 716 acres

Thus we see that here, where the beneficial advantages of old leasehold land were spread widely among the villagers, the yeoman character of the parish was strengthened. To the leaseholder, furthermore, it would seem that enclosure was often an unmixed blessing: they reaped all the advantages of improved cultivation, without having to shoulder the outlay of a large sum of money as the freeholders did. An example of this was the enclosure of Little Compton in 1795.¹ The lessees of Michael Corgan the lord of the manor had the costs of enclosing their lands paid by the reversioner; he was also to pay for the upkeep for seven years. The lessees were to recompense Corgan by a yearly addition to their leasehold rents.²

In other parishes enclosure was used as a means of bringing pressure to bear on leaseholders to surrender their leases and accept an annuity, thus clearing estates of undesired, useless leases (from the landlords point of view). At Brailes, in 1787

1. Enclosure Award for Parish of Willoughby in C.R.O. Warwick 1760.
2. We find a very similar situation on the estates of the Earl of Coventry at Snitterfield enclosed 1766, and those of the Earl of Northampton at Long Compton in 1812. The existence of many old leases for years would naturally affect the timing of enclosure. At Snitterfield William Cook leaseholder of the Earl of Coventry, had his enclosure expenses paid by the Earl on his estate of 87 acres and his estate was maintained for seven years. Then only did he shoulder the expense of upkeep on his estate for the remainder of his lease term. His lease rent was increased by £10. 5. Od. for the remainder of his term. An example of paying for enclosure in easy instalments!
3. Enclosure Award for Parish of Brailes dated 1787 in C.R.O. Warwick.

in the early 19th century was fiercer than that of the landlords themselves.

The parish of Elford lies on the Warwickshire - Staffordshire border in the fertile valley of a small river. As a consequence of its fertile situation, and the landowning strength of the lord of the manor,¹ the enclosure of 1765 was followed by the reorganization of the parish lands into large tenancies. As a result nine tenants on the Howard estate holding between 5-60 acres disappeared, and were replaced by 6 large-scale tenant-farmers.²

After the enclosure the tenant-farmers specialized in dairy and cattle production on a large-scale for the nearby industrial markets. The incumbent's notes prepared for the Crop return of 1801³ which are to be found in the Elford Hall collection stated that "the amount of cheese had increased since the enclosure of 1765 three, if not four fold, while beef and mutton had increased ten-fold". One of the tenant-farmers of Elford, William Bourne told the Board of Agriculture Reporter in 1796⁴ that "the rents have been trebled" (since the enclosure) but "the tenants were better able to discharge them". That this should be is not surprising since the attitude of the landlord (and he spoke for many like him) was a "desire of erring on the benevolent side" with regard to rents.⁵ In another revealing comment to his land-agent, made at the height of the Napoleonic Wartime boom Richard Howard declared that "the tenants had enjoyed their farms for many years at a very low rent".⁶ The enjoyment of low rents was not a new experience of the war years however, for the tenants at Elford.

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1. The Howards, Earls of Suffolk and Berkshire. A vast Elford Hall Collection is kept in the Birmingham Reference Library, Ref. "The Elford Hall Collection"; a special catalogue exists for this collection.
 2. Similarly the Parish of Tysoes' enclosure was followed in the early years of the 19th century by the re-organization of the estate of the Earl of Northampton. His tenants declined in number from 30 to 21.
 3. The catalogue number will be found in "Social and Economic Changes in the Rural West Midlands 1770-1825" N.Com. Thesis in B'ham University Library Chapter II, p. 20 etc. seq. by J.M. Martin 1960, B.R.L. Cat. No. 695.
 4. "General View of the Agriculture of Staffordshire", 1796, 1st edn. p. 41, by Wm. Pitt.
 5. Elford Hall Collection Ref. Cat. No. 829/3 Richard Howards' attitude was expressed in a letter to his land-agent Wm. Wyatt.
 6. Ibid. Cat. No. 786 Howard to Wyatt dated 21st January 1811.

The price of farm produce had been rising, for many years, during the 18th century, and it is made clear in the Elford correspondence that the tenants had for long enjoyed the benefit of these higher prices. The lady of the manor was informed by her agent as early as 1794 that one of her tenants might think the new advance in his rent considerable in view of "the very low rent, he has long held it at".¹

The tenant referred to above was typical of many in the later 18th century. His name was William Bourne. He was a man with capital behind him, (the Howards were very particular about their choice of tenants).² Besides being the largest tenant-farmer of the Howards in 1766 farming 402 acres, he had purchased 137 acres which he farmed with his tenanted land. He was new to the Howards estate, his name does not appear among the tenantry before the enclosure.³ In 1811 he was paying nearly £900 rent; nevertheless when his son quit "Stubble Lee Farm" in 1821 he drew up a statement of permanent improvements made by his father and himself from 1809 onwards. This bill amounted to £5,747 on a farm of 400 acres which speaks for the heavy capital outlay indulged in.

Another of the Bourne family, Charles (presumably a brother of the William described above) left a diary recounting his farming life between 1760-1814.⁴ Put in possession of a smallish farm at a rent of £144 in 1760, he also rented his fathers' land in the open fields. In April 1766 he describes entering upon the new inclosed farm under Lord Suffolk. It was much bigger, and his rent was more than double (£360). By this time he also had land of his own worth £80. He further rented his brothers' land bought from their father at the enclosure of the common fields. In June 1766 he records beginning to build the new farm-house in the "Seven lands", and a barn and other buildings on his own lands.

1. Letter 1794 Wyatt to Lady Andover quoted on M.Com. Thesis loc.cit.
2. See M.Com. thesis loc.cit. Chapter II, p.20 et seq. (p. 169.)
3. Though his father held land worth £40 in the open fields, see below.
4. Discovered by accident in 1963. It is in the private hands of Mr. and Mrs. Willdey of 28 Cambridge Road, Kings Heath, B'ham. Now a photostated copy is being prepared by the Central Birmingham Reference library: Archives Section.

The wartime boom for the cheese and dairy producer like Bourne seems to have started in 1790 when an abortive dispute between England and Spain which did not come to blows "put perhaps 10/- to 8/- per quarter of cheese into the farmers pocket", while he sold his grain "(the harvest being got in cheap)" at "a great price".¹

We discover from this diary that the fluctuation in prosperity known to the grain producer during the Napoleonic War years were not experienced in nearly the same degree, by the grazier and meat producer, that is if the remarks made by Charles Bourne can be relied upon. In August 1794 he declared that "animal food still retains a great price. If this season does not reduce it nothing will". In the autumn of the same year he took up the theme again. "I was in belief that animal food would before this been at a different price, but the people of this Island are in such habits of the consumption of food that the products of the Country are scarce equal to it - if trade had continued as at the commencement of the year 1793. I am certain animal food would not have been found sufficient for the market." He welcomed the War, "by which means we shall get rid of 4 or 5 hundred thousand Beef-eaters!" At the root of the high prices of these years Bourne saw the increase of trade before 1793, and the unkind seasons - "the former produced a demand, the latter bought the less to market".² In May 1798 "beasts of all sorts still retain high prices, part occasioned by the demand, and part by the great number of little Jobbers in them who ride about the country".

The Elford tenants were not the only ones to experience great prosperity in the war years; on the estates of Evelyn Shirley at at Eatington the Baskerville farm of 1,000 acres became a large-scale manufactory of meat and dairy produce, much of it for Smithfield. The turnover increased enormously in the war years, and

1. Diary Charles Bourne - Entries for October 1790.

2. Charles Bournes Diary Nov. 1797.

the profits and expenses of the tenant likewise.¹

The newly prosperous tenantry of the later war years invested their money in a number of ways; much was ploughed back into their farms in the form of increased and better quality stock.² Very frequently in a new mansion style farm house. Literally hundreds of new farm houses and many mansions appeared in the West Midland counties in these years as witnessed by newspaper advertisements of landed property appearing at this time.³ From the 1800's a rush of innovating farming inventions and gadgets appeared - steam winnowing machines, seed drills and so on, a reflection of a new demand amongst the Midland tenants.⁴ They were also, as we have emphasized, investing in land. The wealth of this new class of owner-occupier is revealed by the widespread purchase of exemption from the land tax after 1800.

At the end of the 18th century it was made legally possible for landowners to purchase exemption from payment of Land Tax, by the laying-down of a capitalization sum equal to about thirty years purchase.⁵ Such a purchase presupposed the possession of a considerable surplus of ready money in hand. In an investigation of the land tax assessments of some 65 parishes in the year 1825 (which give separate lists of unredeemed and exempted landowners), the following results were obtained.

Table XIII. EXEMPTION FROM LAND TAX PAYMENTS

Total Parishes	Total Owners	Total Exempted	Total Exempted Owner Occupiers	Total Exempted Owner Occupiers paying less than £10 tax.
15	1,439	432	157	148

We see that 30% of all owners had bought themselves out of these land tax obligations by 1825, an average of 6.6 owners in

1. Shirley Collection in War. C.R.O. referred to farming account books Baskervilles farm C.1809-14 referred to in M.Com. thesis. loc. cit. p. 116 et. seq.

2. See M.Com. thesis loc. cit. Chapter IV, appendix IX.

3. Ibid "New Mansions and Farm Houses in the West Midlands" based on Aris B'ham Gazette, Berrows Worcester Journal and Staffs. Advertiser 1782-1820. See Ch. III, Appendix III.

4. Ibid chapter on tenant farmers and the effect of war and other influences, on agriculture Ch. IV.

5. See "One Hundred Years of Poor Law Administration in a Warwickshire Village" Oxford's Social and Legal History. Ed. P. Vinogradoff, Vol. III of "The English Law in the 18th Century" 1959, p.22. Also Ward "The English Land Tax in

each parish. More significant is the very large number of fairly small owner-occupiers who had accomplished this. That is to say owner-occupiers paying under £10 and owning on average less than 150 acres. There was an average of two such in each parish, and they formed 10% of all owners in the parishes examined. The principal significance of this investigation is to further strengthen our view that the owner-occupiers of the war years were perhaps new men who bought up land out of the profits of their tenancies. It is unlikely that the old freehold class whose only resource was a small acreage of land, could find the ready cash for this in addition to having to cope with enclosure expenses in many of the parishes looked at.

Davies in a study of owner-occupiers during the period 1780-1832 made some years ago,¹ reached the (at the time) rather surprising conclusion that in a number of counties, owner-occupiers, considered numerically as contributors to the land tax, were on the increase. He found that this was so in Warwickshire during the period 1780-1802. Thereafter, he found there was a slump - that is in the period 1802-1832. The number of parishes he examined in Warwickshire was 207. But half of these parishes must have been unaffected by enclosure,² many were old-enclosed. It is likely that changes in parishes particularly experiencing enclosure would be effectively concealed by the trend towards increased owner-occupation in tenanted old-enclosed parishes, which, as we have demonstrated, may have in fact occurred. Davies himself remarks upon a growth in the size of individual owner-occupiers' estates between 1802 and 1832, which explained why their numbers slumped, but their total contribution to the land-tax increased. Davies' conclusions from his study were in the main two-fold: in the first place, that where they still survived in 1780, the ensuing period up to 1815 at least, saw a recovery in numbers and landowning strength of the yeomanry. Secondly, that there was no connection between their decline, and the enclosure movement.

1. "The Small Landowner in the height of the Land Tax Assessments" Econ. H.R. 1927, Vol. I, pp. 86-113.

2. As we saw the total parishes affected by Parliamentary enclosure by Private Act was 125.

Our conclusions are rather more complex. A considerable degree of inequality was apparent in the ranks of landowning society prior to enclosure in almost all Warwickshire parishes. Nevertheless, we believe that there is some evidence to suggest that a connection may exist between the enclosure movement in all its phases, and the further decline of the small landowner, including the lesser yeoman. We would exempt from this statement however, a number of parishes where special conditions prevailed: for example, where there was widely distributed and lucrative leasehold land belonging to a distant institutional body; also we would exempt certain parishes situated on highly fertile land where agriculture was in a flourishing state before enclosure, and where the latter took place for an extension of arable farming. We would also estimate that the social effects of enclosure became more devastating from the late 1770's with the appearance of land-hungry "improving" landowners coupled with the trebling of enclosure costs, whereas some of the enclosure of the middle 18th century seems to have occurred on the initiative of the freeholders themselves. As a consequence the social effect of the first wave of parliamentary enclosures and those after 1780 was more in favour of the great landowners; that of the middle years may have strengthened the greater freeholders at the expense of the smaller in a number of parishes, though even here the big absentee landlord was often present. The land tax can best be used to assess the social impact of enclosure in the period after 1780 and it can be said that in many parishes there may have been some link between social change and enclosure. This is borne out by the remarks of the contemporary Board of Agriculture Reporter writing in the 1790's.

While we would agree that there was an increase in owner-occupation during part of the war years in Warwickshire, this seems to have occurred particularly in parishes where the social structure was characterised by large-scale tenant farmers. That is to say it is found to occur in old-enclosed parishes, and those where consolidation of ownership had taken place. This was not necessarily a sign of the resurgence of the ancient freeholders

We would also agree that the yeomanry as a class had disappeared from many parishes by 1780. But then many of these parishes were in an enclosed state before 1730. These parishes were still open, or recently enclosed, the small landowners and freeholders still seemed to be strong numerically and in their share of land owned a third of the land at the time of the enclosure award. This class of small landowner, the evidence suggests, may well have shrunk in numbers and extent of land by 1825, particularly where enclosure had taken place in the meantime.

The Small Landowner and Freeholder in Forest of Arden

It would be impossible to complete a study of the small landowner and freeholder in Warwickshire, without giving separate consideration to the forest area. We have already given an account of rural society here as it had developed by the later 17th century. It probably consisted of a large population, and above all, a large landless population, partly made up of incomers from the land-hungry, and more tightly organized Felden parishes. We have seen that already by the later 17th century these parishes were semi-farming, semi-industrial communities in common with other forest areas. It was suggested that as in other similar localities the reasons for this may have been connected with the agrarian organization, in particular, the prevalent system of inheritance.¹ Also significant was the presence, at an early date, of a large landless population, following a considerable population rise in the 16th century, accompanied by migration from other areas.

The views about the character of agrarian organization leading to the disintegration of land holdings, and so to the growth of rural industry, supplementing an inadequate livelihood from the land, receives support from an examination of the enclosure awards of forest-type parishes in the 18th century. Many of these had common open fields which seem to have survived until this later period, their enclosure causing less disturbance

1. Borough English is the system associated with several forest areas

than in the Feldon. A glance at an enclosure map attached to the award of this type of parish immediately reveals a considerable distinction in respect of holdings, compared with the Feldon. In some parishes, for example Foleshill, the whole of the common fields are divided up into very small and uneconomic holdings owned by a vast number of landowners. An analysis of the land-holding structure revealed in the awards of some 14 forest-type parishes is recorded in Appendix XIII. This serves to show that the impression gained from a glance at the enclosure plans was of widespread significance. A summary of the results may be put in this way.

Table XIV. LANDOWNERSHIP STRUCTURE IN SOME FOREST-TYPE PARISHES

In the awards of 13 forest type parishes total allotments amounted to 11,489 acres net.

Total acreage of estates under 100 acres was 6,394 acres or 55.6% of total.

Total acreage of estates under 100 acres and over 10 acres was 48.8% of total.

Furthermore, we see that the land in the possession of members of the nobility, baronets, institutions, or other great landlords, was possibly in these parishes very small. This is probably connected with the relatively poorer quality land.¹

Foleshill's open fields offers the spectacle of a striking disintegration of holdings. At the enclosure of 1775, there were a total of 107 different proprietors who received allotments - mostly very small. The total acreage enclosed was 794 acres. Out of the total enclosure expenses (including the making of the enclosures) of £1,062, 81 paid less than £6 and only 6 paid above £40. We can adjudge the vast increase of population here in the 18th century from the reports of house erections. In 1730 there were 149 houses here.² In the 1775 Act schedule A included a list

1. The average assessment in the land tax, fixed in the 1690's for these parishes was under 1/- often 0.8/-, compared with an average for the county of 1.3/-.

2. Dagdale. Dr. Thomas' edition of 1730.

of 42 cottages erected in the previous 20 years. By 1831 the number of houses had risen to 1475.¹ We know that this parish even in the later 17th century was the centre of a thriving weaving industry which had spread out to the rural Arden parishes of Bulkington and Foleshill from Coventry. It should not be imagined that the small owners in those forest awards were in fact merely cottagers who had small allotments made to them in the form of crofts attached to their houses. From the analysis of the structure of landownership included in Appendix XIII we observe that out of 11,489 acres some 5,611 acres in 13 parishes were allotted in the form of holdings of between 10 and 100 acres, i.e. 50%. It is true that since the open fields were frequently numerous and smaller than in the Felden, allotments made did not always represent total holdings. Often the proprietors also held a small amount of enclosed land outside the common fields. Nevertheless, the vast number of holdings were still very small and the number of freeholders large, in the 18th century, as we can verify from the land tax returns and the election freeholders' lists of 1774.²

Nor should it be thought that this landholding structure was found only in those forest parishes in the neighbourhood of the rising industrial area of North Warwickshire. This was not so. We may take as an example of this the parish of Tanworth, situated in the south-west part of the Arden. The parish was large and as late as 1801 had an almost totally agricultural population.³ Even later, in 1871, it was described as "of very considerable extent and purely agricultural".⁴ R. H. Hilton found it called for comment as early as the 15th century because of the large number of its free tenants, which was a characteristic remarked upon by him in the forest parishes generally. The holdings in Tanworth in the middle of the 15th century were very numerous - there were 74 free and customary tenants in the medieval open fields. At that time 51 were so described as to imply severality rather than

1. See Census Schedule of 1831 in B'ham Ref. Library.

2. Published at Coventry 1775. This poll book is now in War. C.R.O.

3. The Census Return of 1801 gave occupations for this period as Agricultural 598, Industry and Trade 145, Others 952. This is the 3rd highest agricultural population in the county.

4. Kelly's Directory of Warwickshire 1872, p. 1253.

distribution in strips in the common fields.¹ In the 16th century it was remarked upon that "the freeholders of Tanworth and (an adjoining forest parish, also predominantly agricultural) were numerous, but on the whole poorer (than the Felden parishes)".² Though the glebe terrier of 1585 refers to the continued existence of a common field here, nevertheless this was enclosed prior to that of 1714.³ In the lists of Warwickshire freeholders voting in the Coventry elections of 1774, the parish of Tanworth tops the poll easily with Kenilworth, another forest-type parish, of⁴ parishes outside the Felden. In the whole county, the only parish with a higher number of freeholders voting in this election was the large Felden "open" parish of Napton (with 83 freeholders). In Tanworth 62 freeholders voted, some 23 being resident. This impression of a wide distribution of landownership in the 18th century is reinforced by an analysis of the land tax returns of 1780 for these parishes.⁵ In the 1780 return for Tanworth there were 150 owners of whom 127 paid above 4/- and 100 paid 10/- and above. However, by 1795 the number of owners paying 10/- and above had been reduced to 76 and two great noblemen had appeared in the return, one of whom was paying £100 land tax out of £365. Other parishes, the land tax reveals, were characterized by a wide distribution of ownership as we see from the list below.

Table XV. LANDOWNERSHIP STRUCTURE IN FOREST PARISHES

Parish	Total Owners Paying Land Tax 1780	Total Owners of Over 10/- Tax (holding at least 10 acres)
Allesley	63	37
Lapworth	49	42
Hampton-in-Arden*	39	33
Over Whitacre*	31	26
Barston*	55	39
Fillongley	63	53
Bickenhill*	45	32
Nether Whitacre*	41	35
Meriden*	44	37

* Open fields enclosed in 18th century.

1. "The Social Structure of Warwickshire in the Middle Ages", Dugdale Soc. Occ. Paper., R.H. Hilton loc.cit. Appendix p. 24.
2. "The Social Structure of Kineton Hundred in the Reign of Charles II", by P. Styles, Trans. B'ham Arch. Soc., Vol. 78, 1962, p.110.
3. D. Barrett "Warwickshire Glebe Terriers" loc. cit. Introduction
4. Poll-Book of Coventry Election 1774, now in War.C.R.O. (p.ii)
5. For the details see Appendix VII.

We see from the above that the picture drawn from forest parish awards is a reflection of land distribution which extended throughout many of these parishes. There was a wide distribution of ownership of small holdings among a poor population of freeholders - many of whom were resident (though absentee ownership became marked by the later 18th century), owing, in all probability to the weaker manorial organization and consequently freer land market, in the Arden.

CHAPTER IV

THE SUBSTANTIAL YEOMEN IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY WARWICKSHIRE

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The southern, Felden part of Warwickshire had, during the seventeenth century, been dominated socially by small squires and yeomen farmers.¹ A century later William Marshall remarked upon the numerical and landowning strength of the greater yeomen in his "Midland Station". This takes in a large part of Leicestershire where soils were similar to south Warwickshire. "In yeomanry of the higher class the district of this station abounds in a superior manner",² he said. Marshall is careful to emphasize that he is not talking about the yeomanry as a body, but the more substantial members of this class. Evidence suggests that the eighteenth century may have seen a considerable cleavage between the lesser yeomen, and the more prosperous freeholders who could take advantage of opportunities to improve their husbandry, for example those which enclosure offered.

The evidence of the enclosure awards suggests that in certain parishes where freehold society remained strong, mainly from 1750, the substantial freeholders in possession of over 100 acres, but less than 200 acres, were owning a fair share of the land. That a number of yeomen freeholders did possess considerable estates, sometimes over 100 acres, can be proved from the enclosure awards; for example in that of Stretton-on-Fosse 1772. Here there is a schedule of ancient enclosed homesteads in which the status of all owners is described; sixteen, or all but four, are described as yeomen proprietors.³

Two of these yeomen received allotments of well over 100 acres. Edward Gibbs, a member of a long-standing Warwickshire family, received 145 acres in lieu of six and three quarter yardlands, but he is named as a yeoman proprietor. Another Gibbs received 78

1. See P. Styles "The Social Structure of Kineton Hundred in the Reign of Charles II", Trans. B'ham Arch. Soc. 1962, p. 96.

2. "The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties". Vol. 1, 1796, p. 14, by William Marshall.

3. In 1663 Hearth Tax shows relatively high prosperity - 47 households and 85 hearths - nearly 2 per household.

acres in the award. In 1800 Edward Gibbs paid £12. 8s. 7d. land tax (acreage equivalent 316 acres) and William Gibbs £5.15s. 9d. (acreage equivalent 143 acres). By 1825 both had increased their land tax payments, William Gibbs by more than double (£14.17s. 0d. paid in 1825). Between 1780 and 1825 the number of owners remained unchanged in this parish, but the land farmed by the lesser freeholders (owning between 10-100 acres), shrank from 359 acres to 194 acres, that is by just under 50%. Taking a long view, it is clear that many freeholders disappeared from Stretton-on-Fosse in the course of the eighteenth century. In 1730 there were 22 resident freeholders here.¹ In the award of 1772, 16 landowners received allotments. In the Coventry election of 1774, 18 freeholders voted (10 resident); but by 1825 only 12 proprietors contributed towards the land tax - a sum of over 4/-, and this included both resident and non-resident proprietors. Furthermore between 1730 and 1801 the population did not rise here, and may have deteriorated.²

We have already remarked upon the flourishing state of freehold prosperity in another Felden parish - Alveston. Here also, while the land owned by the smaller freeholders declined by about 25% between 1780 and 1825, 700 acres in the possession of five owners of between 100 and 200 acres remained entirely intact. It seems clear that enclosure in the parishes which underwent the process between 1750 and 1770 was sometimes carried out as we have remarked by the freeholders themselves; in particular the more substantial class of freeholder, who could afford the process, and to whom it would bring benefits in improved cultivation possibilities.³ It also offered the opportunity of enlarging holdings at the expense of the lesser yeomen. That opposition to enclosure came from the lesser yeomen who opposed the schemes of the more

1. Thomas' 1730 edition of Dugdale's Antiquities of Warwickshire.

2. In 1730 66 families, near 300 inhabitants; by 1801 population only 292.

3. Two Alveston farmers, J. Higgins and T. Jackson, received special mention from J. Wedge in 1794 in his General View..... "for zeal in improvement"; one of these Thomas Jackson of "Alveston Pasture" was one of the earliest drill farmers in the county. At the enclosure of 1772 John Higgins, yeoman farmer had received 141 acres.

substantial freeholders is proved by the records of the pre-enclosure debate in Wolfhamcote stemming from the 1730's,¹ to which reference has already been made.

A further advantage of enclosure to the substantial yeoman was the creation of new leasehold farms as a result of tithe compensation. Thus in the parish of Stretton-on-Fosse the rector received 383 acres under the award, (the only tenanted land); this was partly in lieu of open field land belonging to him, but mainly in place of the Great Tithes. This estate was the only large one in the parish, and in the 1780's extended to well over 500 acres. It was farmed by the freeholders in addition to their own landed estates.

The differentiation of the English yeomanry was emphasized by Professor Lavrovsky in his study of sixty English enclosure awards chosen at random. He found that at the time of enclosure "the peasantry" received only 22.5% of the land allotted under the sixty awards, drawn from all over the country, and that within this social group there was "a sharp differentiation" and that the "middle category of peasantry was relatively insignificant".²

The situation in Warwickshire seems to be that in nearly all the parishes enclosed between 1750-1770, and in a large number between this date and the end of the century, the yeomanry were, as a class, in possession of a fair share of the land. That, following the enclosure, a considerable differentiation of this social group took place. The substantial yeoman continued to prosper often at the expense of the lesser. In the Napoleonic War years they continued to flourish, and it is to these men, not the yeomanry as a whole, that we owe some of the extension of owner-occupation, noted by several observers, in these years.

1. Similarly at Alveston we find that despite the dominance of the freeholders and the progressive character of farming here, in fact the enclosure of 1772 was opposed by small owners representing a total of 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ yardlands who refused to sign the petition. See V.C.H. III, p. 284-285.
2. See Review by C. Hill of "Parliamentary Enclosure of the Common Fields in England and Wales at the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century" by V. M. Lavrovsky 1940, Moscow, in Econ. H.R. 1941-43, p. 92, et. seq.
See also "Expropriation of the English Peasantry in the eighteenth century" in Econ. H.R. Vol. IX, 2nd series, No. 2, 1956-57, pp. 272-273.

Between 1780 and 1825 while the small landowner may have declined, the substantial freeholder, owning over 100 acres, did not do so. In fact, the amount of land which was in their possession at that time may well have increased. Once again the land tax returns bear witness to these changes. The fortunes of the substantial freeholder did not apparently suffer a set-back from the enclosure process. Presumably the greatly increased expense of enclosure would in their case be partly compensated for by the boom in agricultural prices in the Midland and other markets during the Napoleonic War period. Once again it is the substantial freeholder and tenant-farmer who were marketing a sufficient surplus of produce to reap the benefits of high prices, rather than the small freeholder. It is open to question how much of their farm produce the latter sent to market; if mainly consumed by themselves the high prices of the war years would for them be transformed into high living costs, and an opportunity for some, into an adversity, from their viewpoint.

Between 1780 and 1825 the land tax returns indicate that the amount of land in the possession of the substantial freeholders, remained the same except in parishes enclosed after 1800 when a small loss is recorded - probably in the years after 1815. It is likely on the other hand that numerically this class was diminishing, which is in accord with the view that freehold estates were growing larger, and that the largest freeholders were doing best.

Table I. THE SUBSTANTIAL FREEHOLDERS IN THE LAND TAX RETURNS, 1780-1825.

Period of Enclosure	<u>Owners between 100 and 199 Acres</u>					
	<u>1780</u>			<u>1825</u>		
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Acreage Received</u>	<u>Proportion</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Acreage Received</u>	<u>Proportion</u>
1750-59	44	5,903	24%	38	5,693	23%
1760-69	32	4,457	17%	28	4,518	18%
1770-79	48	5,610	20%	40	5,665	20%
1780-99	52	7,128	19%	50	7,246	19%
1800-15	23	2,995	15%	16	2,410	13%

As an example of a parish where the substantial freeholders clung to their share of the land in the face of very great landowning changes we might take the large Felden parish of Wolfhamcote. It consisted of 3,855 acres in four hamlets.¹

It so happens that quite a fair degree of information is available about this parish before enclosure.² Socially we know that this was a parish dominated by freeholders in the main, and a comparison of the number of freeholders at various dates before and after enclosure suggests that the first change to take place was the upsurge of absentee ownership and the disappearance of many yeomen. Though between 1663 and 1730 there was a small rise in population, there was a distinct decline (discussed in more detail in a later chapter) between 1730 and 1801. In 1663 there were 85 households,³ which by 1730 had risen to 95,⁴ of which 56 lay in the Hamlet of Flecknoe. This gives us a population of 427 in 1730. This had shrunk to 371 in 1801. This decline is confirmed by a shrinkage of the settlement area of Flecknoe following enclosure, of which there is both cartographic and archaeological evidence.⁵

The numerical strength of the freeholders declined between 1730 and 1825 as we see below:

1730	freeholders in Hamlet of Flecknoe <u>only</u>	were.....	32 ⁶
1781	" " " " " " " "	whole parish paying over 4/- land tax,	20
1825	" " " " " " " "	4/- land tax,	17

We can now compare the division of land ownership in the enclosure awards 1745 and 1757 with that revealed by the land tax in 1780 and 1825 as follows:

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1. Wolfhamcote, Flecknoe, Sawbridge and Nethercote. Two enclosure awards dated 1745 and 1757 covered 3,490 acres.
 2. See for example "A true statement of the case for the enclosure of Flecknoe Fields" 1730. Photostat in War. C.R.O. Ref. No. Z.12. original in Cartwright M.S.S. at Aynho, Northants.
 3. Hearth Tax 1663.
 4. Thomas' edition of Dugdale, 1730.
 5. I am indebted to Mr. David Pannett, B.A., assistant archivist in Warwick County Record Office, for information concerning the settlement area following the enclosure of several Warwickshire parishes.
 6. Evidence from document mentioned above "A true statement....." loc. cit.

Table II. LANDOWNERSHIP STRUCTURE IN PARISH OF WOLFHAMCOTE

Type of Document	The Size of Estates Recorded						
	Over 500 Acres	3-500 Acres	2-300 Acres	1-200 Acres	50-100 Acres	10-50 Acres	Under 10 acres
Enclosure Awards 1745 and 1757	1/613	-	3/745	9/1065	7/550	21/544	10/49
Land Tax Return 1780	2/1606	-	-	10/1260	8/612	16/406	11/72
Land Tax Return 1825	1/899	2/665	2/559	8/1147	6/459	10/249	5/31

The first thing we notice is that while in numbers the small landowners declined from 28 in the awards to 24 in 1780, and 16 in 1825, the amount of land in their possession changed little between the enclosure and 1780.¹ However, between 1780 and 1825 they probably declined by 30% in numbers and extent of land in their possession.

We observe on the other hand that the substantial freeholders were the most significant social group in the parish at the time of enclosure, and that both in numbers, and their share of the land, they remained remarkably firm during the next seventy years. Thus the striking consolidation of land in the hands of great owners of over 300 acres, increasing two and half times from 613 acres to 1,564 acres between the awards and 1825,² was accomplished at the expense, not of the bigger freeholder, but the lesser gentry in possession of 2-300 acres, and also, in particular, the small freeholder.

Since in many parishes enclosed between 1750 and 1770 the substantial freeholders were already, prior to the award, firmly entrenched as the dominant social group, we must look to an earlier date to trace their rise. The establishment of the yeomen as the principal landowning class could be due to the granting of leases virtually as favourable as freehold tenure as at Haselor³

².The total landowners in the parish dropped from 47 to 32 between 1780 and 1825.

³.Mr. Styles traces the establishment of the class of yeomen to the granting of 11 leases by the lords of the manor (the Throckmortons) 6 were for 2,000 years, or for ever.

¹.We should bear in mind that some 365 acres were in any case not covered in the enclosure awards.

in the early seventeenth century. More often it was due to the disintegration of the manorial lands and its division amongst the freeholders; a situation described in the parish of Oxhill by Sir Simon Archer in 1625.¹ Here, said Sir Simon "there is no Lord of the Manor, but divers freeholders doe Inheritt the Towne". In Kenilworth where in the 1774 election 69 freeholders voted, 50 of whom were resident, the class flourished as a consequence, possibly of its peculiar customs of tenure and inheritance.² These customs, as we have seen, probably influenced land holding in many parts of the Arden in the eighteenth century. Another factor congenial to the rise of the substantial freeholder was the presence of large institutional estates. At Napton, where no less than 83 freeholders voted in the 1774 election, the Earl of Leicester's Hospital received an allotment of over 400 acres under the award of 1779, all leased out to freeholders. In this parish a vast number of documents relate to the sale, negotiation and conveyance of mortgages on landed property between freeholders and husbandmen;³ a witness to the growth of freehold estates. The influence of similar institutional estates in other parishes like Willoughby and Fenny Compton has already been described.

Yet another outlet for freehold enterprise was in the gradual enclosure of the waste land of the parish, which would once again be to the advantage of the substantial freeholder at the expense of the smaller.⁴ Where the freeholder also held leasehold land even the heavy expenses entailed by enclosure could, as we have already demonstrated, be avoided. Thus at the enclosure of the parish of Snitterfield in 1766, William Cook, who held 89 acres of leasehold land of the Earl of Coventry - had all the expenses of enclosure paid for him by the Earl who was to maintain the land for 7 years. The leaseholder was to pay off the expenses over a number of years by a small increase in his yearly rent of £10.10s. 0d.

1. Quoted V.C.H., Warks. Vol. III, p. 125. Similarly in the freehold parish of Loxley. Here between 1758 award and land tax of 1779 the number of owners actually increased.

2. As elsewhere in the Arden, Kenilworth was said to have "every appearance of a rural village" as late as 1872. Kelly's Post Office Directory of Warwickshire, p. 1173.

3. See collection in War. R.O. Ref. W.R.O. NI/62 et. seq.

4. For example in the parish of Aston Cantlow after the enclosure of 1743. There was a large freehold population here. A considerable extent of waste was enclosed by the freeholders of this parish, following the enclosure of the common fields.

Prosperity following enclosure, especially in the war years, is revealed, as we have seen, by the purchase of exemption from the land tax. In the yeoman parish of Alveston described above, 8 out of 17 owners had resorted to this method of exemption by 1800.

It would be wrong to conclude a study of the Warwickshire yeomanry without doing something to modify the impression of rather clear cut divisions, which an investigation based on economic categories inevitably creates. In reality, village society was a closely knit community at this time in which, as P. Styles observed, the unifying factor of family relationships cut across the dividing lines of occupation, status or income.¹ In particular, this historian found that in the largely unenclosed villages of Felden Warwickshire during the later seventeenth century, the "ties of marriage and kinship linking yeomen to gentlemen and gentlemen to esquires and confusing the purely economic lines of division thus served to bind together the different ranks of a graded but closely-knit society. And the strength of such bonds of neighbourhood is not the least of the differences between the social structure of rural England in the seventeenth century and in our own day".² P. Styles gave as an example of what he meant the parish of Fenny Compton where the Knibbs were one of the principal freehold families in the later seventeenth century. The family had been in the parish since the sixteenth century, and had for many years provided the church wardens and other parish officers, in the same way that the gentry and esquires furnished the unpaid administration of the hundred and county. In the later seventeenth century it was found that 42 out of 415, or more than 10% of the village inhabitants belonged to this single family.

We find that in some respects rural society had changed little by the time of the parliamentary enclosure movement. The substantial freeholders were in reality the first rank of a community of

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1. "Census of a Warwickshire Village in 1698" by P. Styles in Birmingham University Hist. Journal, Vol. III, No. I, 1951, p.49.
 2. Observations made by Philip Styles in his article investigating the social structure of Kineton Hundred in the later seventeenth century, "The Social Structure of Kineton Hundred in the Reign of Charles II" in Trans. Birmingham Arch. Soc. Vol.78, 1962, p.104.

equals in village society and beyond. The enclosure awards illustrate this point time and time again. And also the further fact that it was the neighbourhood rather than the village, or parish, which formed the unit of social relations and sometimes of landownership, also. It is not rare, contrary to the opinion of one researcher,¹ to find that yeomen families owned land in more than one parish.

Thus Richard Knibb of the family mentioned above received 83 acres at the enclosure of Knightscot in 1772, and 78 acres when Penny Compton, adjoining, was enclosed in 1779. The Baseleys of Priors Marston were another important yeoman family who emerge in the enclosure awards. Seven members of the family received a total of 447 acres spread over six parishes. Job Baseley was allotted 103 acres in Priors Marston in 1758 and some 51 acres at the enclosure of the neighbouring parish of Priors Hardwick.

Numerous other family groups could be mentioned, but perhaps the most striking illustration of the connection between the substantial freeholders and the lower yeomen and cottagers is offered by the Mann family which seems to have been centred on the "open" parishes of Harbury and Napton. The family first appear in the parish register of Harbury in 1569; and there are several in the 1663 Hearth Tax Returns, of varying economic status. The lay-out of the family's open field land at the time of enclosure may be summarised as below:

1. E.g., H. G. Hunt, Econ. H. R. 1957-59, 2nd series, Vol. XI, No. 3, 1959, "Landownership and Enclosure (based on 44 Leicestershire Awards). 1750-1830".

Table III. MANN FAMILY HOLDINGS ILLUSTRATED FROM
ENCLOSURE AWARDS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Parish Enclosure</u>	<u>Allotment Received</u>	<u>Total Holding in Open Fields</u>	<u>Number of Parishes in which land held</u>
Thomas	Southam 1761 Harbury 1780	29 acres 196 "	} 225	2
William	Hillmorton 1754 Harbury 1780	95 " 13 "	} 108	2
John	Napton 1779 Harbury 1780	25 " 45 "	} 70	2
Edward (the younger)	Harbury 1780 Norton Lindsey 1809	35 " 13 "	} 48	2
Edward	Harbury 1780	39 "	39	1
Richard	Harbury 1780	32 "	32	1
John (of "Light horne")	Harbury 1780	17 "	17	1
Mary	Napton 1779 Harbury 1780	7 " 4 "	} 11	2
Edward (of "Snitterfield")	Harbury 1780	5 "	5	1

Total Acreage Received = 555 acres

From the above table two points emerge: in the first place the wide diversification in the size of land holdings owned by members of the same family; secondly the importance of the neighbourhood rather than the single parish as the unit of family connections and property.

From the return of landowners in 1874 we find that in some cases the old freehold families survived still; Daniel Knibb still owned 82 acres in Fenny Compton. Seven members of the Mann family are named in the return, though none by this date resided in Harbury. Furthermore the amount of land in the possession of this one freehold family had diminished considerably since the enclosure of the Felden parishes recorded above. In the form of allotments from the open fields alone the Manns received in the eighteenth century, 555 acres; leaving aside old-enclosed land which they owned, for example, in Chesterton. By 1874 the total acreage owned by the family was only 455 acres.

Of this total, Edward Mann of Chesterton was in possession of 328 acres. Once again it was the substantial yeoman who survived the hazards of the years.¹

To demonstrate that, during the course of the nineteenth century, many long-standing freehold families shrank numerically and in the amount of land in their possession, does not, of itself, gainsay the possibility that they were replaced by other freehold families. Though no quantitative analysis of this aspect of the 1874 return was made, the impression gained, was that this was not so. This conclusion gains strength from the recollection that many of these ancient freehold families have been traced back, through the parish registers, to the sixteenth century. By the late nineteenth century, however, they were disappearing.

1. A similar decline can be observed in the landowning strength of other yeomen families by 1874. Seven members of the Gibbs family received 780 acres under 5 awards between 1767 and 1809. By 1874 the total land in the possession of the family was only 586 acres. The Bevingtons of Eatington had disappeared altogether. The Cleavers, a lesser freehold family, seven of whose members divided up 174 acres of open field land, awarded in 7 parishes, had been reduced to two landowners by 1874.

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL ORIGIN OF THE LANDED GENTRY IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

WARWICKSHIRE

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL ORIGIN OF THE LANDED GENTRY IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

WARWICKSHIRE

The members of the peerage who figured in the parliamentary enclosure movement in Warwickshire were descended from sixteenth or seventeenth century creations. The earliest appears to be the Willoughby's, whose prosperity dated from the victory at Bosworth,¹ and the most recent, the Earls of Aylesford.² A number owed their connection with Warwickshire to marriage into the families of the principal gentry of the county. Thus the second baron Craven married at the end of the seventeenth century, the heiress of Sir Francis Skipwith of Newbold Hall,³ and the second Earl of Aylesford the hieress of Sir Clement Fisher of Packington Hall.⁴

When we turn to consider the social origin of that vast class of landed gentry, who, in most enclosures, received the largest share of the land, the situation is more complex.

Clearly some of the landowners appearing in the awards, and land tax returns before 1780 were new men, in the sense that their fortunes had been made in new eighteenth century occupations. They had then, in a manner well recognised from the fifteenth century, bought up a landed estate and with it the status of gentleman and county standing. We have already mentioned Henry Wise, landscape gardener,⁵ and Sanderson Miller, architect of

1. Sir Robert Willoughby assisted Henry VII at Bosworth, see p.2582, Burkes Complete Peerage, 103rd edition, 1963.

2. Heinage Finch was an eminent lawyer, who married the co-heiress of Sir J. Banks of Aylesford and was created 1st Earl by George 1st in 1714, Burke, p. 133.

3. Ibid, p. 612.

4. Ibid, p. 133.

5. He received 700 acres, almost the whole parish area, at the enclosure of Lillington, 1730. He had acquired this estate some years before. His son took over, as we have already remarked, the Lordship of Cubbington, in 1746, as chief creditor.

Warwick Shire Hall.¹ Others had carved a career and fortune out of the parliamentary enclosure movement itself. William Caldecote, a solicitor turned Commissioner's clerk was one of these,² and John Newcomb, yeoman farmer turned professional commissioner, was another. Although the latter was clearly of a less freehold family,³ and in the 1740's possessed only 100 acres in Brinklow, he appeared as commissioner in some thirty of the Warwickshire enclosure awards, and in the 1770's had built up an estate of over 300 acres. The principal landowner appearing in the award of Harborough in 1755 was John Shipton,⁴ a professional surveyor, who received a very large estate in lieu of open field land.

In this and in other ways it is clear that it was the substantial freeholders and lesser gentry who were most involved in carrying out the parliamentary enclosure given approval in the private acts; they were as we have demonstrated, not necessarily the chief beneficiaries, but it is these social groups which figure largely as administrators of the process. John Newcomb was only representative of a vast number of substantial freeholders or small gentlemen who acted as commissioners, surveyors, or more probably, commissioner's clerk. They are often found furnishing the initial capital to launch an enclosure, and involved themselves in other necessary tasks associated with the movement. Thus for example, Thomas Harbidge, representative of a long-standing gentry family and lord of the manor of Pillarton Hersey, received along with some 289 acres under the award of 1795, the position of Surveyor of the Roads at a salary of £10 per annum.⁵ It is clear that new roads at the general expense

1. He received 858 acres under the award of the parish of Radway 1757, partly bought of a very large number of the freeholders during the negotiation of the enclosure.

2. William Caldecote served as Commissioner's clerk in 3 awards in 6 years, for which he received £400 in fees. In the Willoughby enclosure of 1760 he received 355 acres in lieu of an estate "bought recently from William Clarke, gent".

3. In the 1663 Hearth Tax Assessment for Brinklow 8 members of this family are named, 1 at 2 hearths, 5 at 1 hearth, and 2 found non-liaible. This was a wholly freehold-owned parish, and at the enclosure of 1742 John Newcomb received 111 acres. At Southam in 1758 he was granted 108 acres in lieu of tithe. At Knightscot 68 acres, and at Napton in 1779, 50 acres for land just purchased.

4. Of Andover, Glos. He received 486 acres at the enclosure of Harborough 1755. He appears as a professional surveyor in many awards, inter alia of Wolphamcote 1745.

5. See the enclosure award of Pillarton Hersey dated 1795 in War.C.R.C.

of the parish would hold out especial attraction to the principal landowners. Similarly, at the enclosure of Pailton in 1771, the principal landowner, Thomas Buswell received one third of the total expenses of £733 for undertaking to fence in the tithe allotment.¹

Despite instances cited above of new names amongst the landowning class, it is clear that the great mass of the gentry who appear in the eighteenth century enclosure awards are descended from families in possession, since the later seventeenth century at least, of some land in the country. Where it has been possible to trace the origin of these men, through manorial descent or other means, it is recorded in Appendix XIV.

The character of landownership in Warwickshire in the eighteenth century had, apparently, wider relevance. Mingay claims that "by the second half of the eighteenth century English landownership had settled into a fairly stable pattern - the main element of change was the constant infusion of new landed proprietors from trade, industry and the professions - but the limited amount of land available for purchase meant that such newcomers were less numerous than at any time in the two previous centuries.....there was little tendency for land to change hands".²

Thus the landowners who set in motion the parliamentary enclosure movement were not new men, but peers and gentry settled in the county from the seventeenth century or earlier. Detailed examination of the origin of the Warwickshire landowners reveals that the new eighteenth century purchasers of estates, were too few to give a significant lead to the movement, and in any case preferred to acquire properties already fully enclosed, and easy to manage. We can fully agree with Mingay when he remarks that "the supposed influence of newcomers from trade and the professions in breathing vigour into a tradition-bound system of land-management has been much exaggerated in regard to eighteenth century developments".³ Most of the landed estates advertised

1. Enclosure award of Pailton in Monks Kirby, in War. C.R.O. dated 1771.

2. See G. E. Mingay "English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century"

3. Ibid, pages 172-179.

for sale in the files of Berrow's Worcester Journal and Aris' Birmingham Gazette in the later eighteenth century were in a state which would attract buyers; enclosed, properly subdivided, and on short leases. The detailed emphasis on the organization of the land being sold, is a commentary on the importance attached to this matter.¹

This statement does not, however, deny a considerable amount of social change amongst the landed gentry: a large number of the lesser gentry may have disappeared in the period after 1660 as we have already emphasized. Their lands were, perhaps, swallowed up by the great landlords.

There had always been a considerable amount of change within this social group. When studying the landed gentry of Kinton Hundred at the Restoration, P. Styles found that only one family in the Hundred, had been in possession since the fifteenth century, and the longest established of the rest only from the middle sixteenth century.²

A number of the leading gentry families in the eighteenth century enclosure period were families which, during the seventeenth century, had secured advancement through the law. It has been remarked that "in a rural area such as South Warwickshire, the readiest way to social advancement was probably through the Law".³ Thus the Holbechs reached the ranks of the upper gentry in this way. Matthew Holbech was Town Clerk of Warwick in 1661 and the most distinguished member of the family; Ambrose⁴ (1632-1761) became a Master Extraordinary in Chancery". In the later eighteenth century they bought up a number of manors in south Warwickshire and influenced the timing of several awards in which they appear as the principal recipients.⁵ We see from the 1780 land tax that they owned very considerable estates in six parishes

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1. For a description of advertisements of landed property see "Newspaper Advertisements as a source of Historical Study", by J. I. Martin, B.A. Dissertation in Birmingham Univ. Library.
 2. See "Social Structure of Kinton Hundred in the Reign of Charles II", Trans. B'ham Arch. Soc. Vol. 78, 1962, p. 106. (1955.)
 3. Ibid, p. 113.
 4. Ibid, p. 116, described on his epitaph as "very eminent in ye law practice in ye art of conveyancing".
 5. As we have seen from Appendices XIV-XVII.

Another family whose fortunes were founded on the law were the Dickens' of Cherrington. The enfranchisement of the copyholders of Cherrington by the lord of the manor, Sir Thomas Lucy, gave the Dickens family an opportunity to build up their estate on a landed basis. In the early nineteenth century William received allotments amounting to nearly 300 acres in lieu of open land in Cherrington and an adjoining parish.¹ As a consequence of the enclosure of common fields William Dickens contribution to the land tax nearly doubled between 1780 and 1825 - from £11 to £21 on his Cherrington lands, while the landowners declined by half. By 1825 the land tax reveals the acquisition of a large estate at Ditchford nearby. They came to rank among the chief landowners of the neighbourhood² and they had been active purchasers of land in the later enclosure period. There were several other families receiving large estates under enclosure awards who owed their origin to legal wealth;³ there were eighteenth century lawyers also⁴ with estates in the county. Most of the other landowners appearing in the enclosure awards were descended from the leading families in the county during the later seventeenth century;⁵ for example the Newshams,⁶ the Bentleys,⁷ the Adderleys⁸ and the Sheldons⁹ and the Gibbs. Some of the families had been in possession since an earlier date.¹⁰

1. Sutton under Brailes 1805 received 92 acres in lieu of 4 yardlands; Cherrington 1806, 179 acres in lieu of 14 yardlands.
2. See Styles, p. 116.
3. For example, the Rainsfords. Edward had been Town Clerk of Warwick in the seventeenth century; besides acting as steward for Sir Greville Verney at Barford and a practice at Quarter Sessions. Nicholas Rainsford received an estate of over 600 acres in the Wolfhamcote awards 1745 & 1757.
4. Lord Lifford, formerly a Sergeant of Coventry (V.C.H. Warwicks. Vol. III, p. 283) received an estate of 300 acres under the award of Alveston 1772 and also paid a large sum of money on an estate in Corley in 1780.
5. The family of Newsham were leading esquires and J.P.'s in the county. Large estates received by members of family under awards of Wellesbourne Mountford 1730 and Kington 1732.
6. Bentleys received large estates under awards of Kington 1732 and Monks Kirby 1771.
7. C. B. Adderley received acreages under several awards, but the most important was Lea Marston 1776 when as lord of the manor he received 631 acres.
8. For the record of Sheldon estates and enclosure allotments, see Appendices.
9. Edward Gibbs (descended from Sir Henry of Honington) received a large estate at Stretton on the Fosse 1772.
10. For example the Bishops of Brailes dated from the sixteenth century; they received over 800 acres at the enclosure of 1787. Similarly the Willes of Leamington and the Clarkes of Wolfhamcote See "The Herald's Visitation of Warwickshire" in B'ham Trans. Arch Soc. Vol. 69, 1953-55, by P. Styles, p. 109. The Dilkes who appear as principal owner at Ryton on Dunsmore, 1761, had been in possession since the later sixteenth century.

Some of the landed gentry appearing in the awards, and often the most active improvers, were younger sons of the aristocracy - for example, Henry Greville, chief landowner at Morton Morrell,¹ George Shirley of Eatington Hall,² and Richard Howard, representing a lesser branch of the Earls of Suffolk, at Elford Hall.

Many members of the clerical profession were relatives of landed families, and considerable proprietors in their own right. P. Styles gives an account of the rector of Fenny Compton who was "like many of the county clergy of the time of local origin" - he was in fact, the fourth son of a substantial yeoman of the neighbouring parish of Farnborough.³ A Cleric with higher connections was the Rev. Peers Newsom - (the Newsoms were an old-established gentry family (see Appendix XIV) - rector of the parish of Harbury and a relative of Clement Newsom Esq., a local landowner, he received 411 acres, the largest allotment under the award of Alveston in lieu of twelve yardlands. In addition he received 236 acres at the enclosure of Harbury in 1780.

As far as it is possible to detect, the number of estate ~~own~~⁴ owners whose main occupation was in trade was small. Naturally, they are found most often in the enclosure awards associated with the open fields of Warwickshire towns. At the enclosure of Atherstone open fields which finally took place in 1765, the principal freeholder was Abraham Bracebridge, a "mere trader and no farmer" as the opponents of the enclosure were quick to point out.⁵ At the enclosure, the total acreage was 616 acres, of which Bracebridge received over half in lieu of 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ yardlands together with valuable common rights. Similarly, at the enclosure of the open fields of Stratford and Old Stratford in 1775, one of the chief recipients was John Peyton, owner of the White Lion Inn, who was interested in building development. Under the

1. The Hon. H. Greville, relative of Earl Brooke received 423 acres at the award of 1758.

2. The Hon. George Shirley, son of Viscount Tamworth of the Ferrers family very active in eighteenth century enclosure.

3. See "A Census of a Warwickshire Village in 1698" in Birmingham Historical Journal, Vol. III, No. I, 1951.

4. By landowners in this context we mean, of course, amongst the bigger landowners owning over 200 acres; in contrast to those large numbers of men engaged in other occupations including trade who are found to own small acreages of land in addition.

5. For the details of this struggle see above Chapter III on "Small Landowners".

award Peyton as a principal proprietor received 287 acres.

Earlier in the eighteenth century the manor of Gaydon had passed, prior to the enclosure of 1759, into the hands of a Birmingham snuff box manufacturer.¹

SOCIAL CHANGE AMONGST THE LANDED GENTRY 1780-1825

It will be noted from Appendix XV that the estates of all the principal landowners remained intact between these dates, and that indeed, it was a time where considerable additions were made to the size of estates, in which process parliamentary enclosure played a part. The landowning strength of the aristocracy was still further enhanced, not only by enclosure, but by purchase. It is worthy of note that when the occasional landed estate did come on the market it was bought up by the great aristocratic families of the county more often than not, and not by newcomers. Thus, we have already described how the estates of Ward Boughton in Warwickshire, came in the 1780's, to the Leigh family. We find also that Viscount Beauchamp, Marquis of Hertford, was an avid purchaser of landed estate in this period.² The manors of Ratley and Warmington were acquired by inheritance by the Earl of Jersey from an eighteenth century banker.³ Other new aristocratic names appeared amongst the landowners of the county by 1825.⁴

Despite, however, the consolidation of a number of great estates noted above, we can unmistakably observe during the Napoleonic War years and after 1815, the appearance of a number of new names among the bigger landowners. There were several

1. John Taylor - he died in 1775 worth over £200,000 and was succeeded by his son who was lord of the manor till 1814. See V.C.H. Warks. Vol. III, p. 88. According to the local reporters of the board of agriculture at the turn of the eighteenth century some few wealthy B'ham manufacturers owned estates in the neighbourhood. An example was Henry Clay who bought the Manstoke Hall estate in 1784. However, by 1812, it had passed into the hands of the Dilke family, lords of the manor since the sixteenth century. See V.C.H. Warks. Vol. IV, p. 133.
2. On the death of Sir Thomas Skipwith in 1790 without issue his lordship of the manor of Salford Friars accrued to the Marquis V.C.H. III, p. 160. Similarly see his purchase of manors of Wood and Cock, Bevington and Dunnington and that of Pophills Estate between 1790-1812. V.C.H. III, p. 161.
3. The heir of R. Childs, a wealthy eighteenth century banker resident in Warwickshire, see V.C.H. Warks, Vol. III, p. 144, Robert Childs received 311 acres at the enclosure of Ratley, 1795.
4. This is revealed by the land tax returns. New noble estates appeared at Packwood (Lord Cornwallis paid £38); Grandborough (Lord Hood paid £17); Curdworth and Nether Whitacre (Earl Howe paid £25; heir of Ashford Curzon); Minworth (Lord Newport paid £19); Leek Wootton (Earl of Clarendon paid £14); Gysse (Lord Redesdale paid £7); Nether Whitacre (Lady Harvey paid £12).

bankers. In addition to Robert Child a wealthy banker with large estates in Upton, Ratley and Warmington, acquired in the later eighteenth century,¹ the manor of Loxley was purchased by C. H. Hunt, a banker of Stratford, who went bankrupt, however, in 1800.²

S. I. Loyd, prosperous tea-merchant and banker bought the manor of Barford³ from one of the old noble families. He was later created Lord Overstone.

Sir Robert Peel, successful industrialist, is revealed by the land tax returns of 1825 to have acquired not only a vast estate around Kingsbury, but also landed property at Amington, Hampton-in-Arden, Wharton and Stockingford.⁴

But probably the most spectacular acquisition of property consisting of whole manors and other landed estates in the early years of the nineteenth century was that by Robert and George Phillips. Their grandfather had been a small local squire, lord of the manors of Teyne and Checkley in Staffordshire.⁵ His two younger sons had moved, in the middle of the eighteenth century, to Manchester. By the end of the eighteenth century their two sons, the Robert and George mentioned above, were highly successful cotton manufacturers. During the early nineteenth century Robert bought the mansion called Snitterfield Park off the Earl of Coventry. He also purchased between 1816-1845 the manors of Snitterfield, Wolverton, Welcomb and Claverdon.⁶ On the occasion of the enclosure of the open fields of Wolverton in 1826 he purchased a very large amount of land from a number of small proprietors.

George Phillips, first cousin of Robert, made even more extensive purchases of landed estate. Between 1820 and 1826 alone he bought up the manors of⁷ Whichford, Long Compton, Weston, Cherrington and Ditchford Frary. This seems to have been in

1. V.C.H. Warks., Vol. III, pp. 144, 183.

2. V.C.H. Warks., Vol. III, p. 132.

3. Ibid. V.C.H. Warks.

4. Peel was described by the land-agent of his neighbours the Howards of Elford as eager to purchase any land even single farms and advised his employer to take advantage of this. See "Social & Economic Trends in the Rural West Midlands 1785-1825". Unpublished M. Com. thesis 1960 by J. M. Martin, Ch. II, p. 34, B'ham Univ. Library.

5. Burkes Peerage, 18th edition dated 1856, page 792.

6. See V.C.H. III, Warks, pages 169, 193, 264, 71.

7. Ibid. pages 52, 34, 155, 205. See also Appendices XIV, XV, for record of estates from land tax returns.

part at the expense of the Sheldon family and the Earl of Northampton. George, was by 1823, also in possession of lesser estates in the parishes of Little Woolford and Compton Scorpion, where the land tax returns of this year indicate that he paid £90 and £21 respectively. The enclosure by parliamentary act of the parish of Buntington in 1836 was made the occasion for the purchase of six freehold estates by Phillips totalling in all 286 acres. At the enclosure of Darlingscott in Tredington in 1846 he received over 100 acres for $2\frac{3}{4}$ yardlands purchased; during the course of the enclosure proceedings of the parish of Little Woolward Phillips bought up almost the whole parish. Under the award of 1847 he received 1282 acres, which included 7 estates just purchased. Phillips was created a baronet in 1828, married off his three daughters (his co-heirs) to members of the peerage, and died in 1847.

For these two wealthy manufacturers (as for others before them), the enclosure movement offered opportunities to acquire vast estates in the county, opportunities which they effectively exploited.

However, to come back to our original statement, the fact remains that during the eighteenth century (and most of Warwickshire enclosures took place before 1790) the parliamentary enclosure movement was, as far as one can detect, mainly launched by the old landowning class, peers and substantial gentry dating from the seventeenth century at least.

CHAPTER VI

THE GREAT LANDOWNERS, LANDED GENTRY AND THE
ENCLOSURE MOVEMENT

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THE GREAT LANDOWNERS, LANDED GENTRY AND THE
ENCLOSURE MOVEMENT

In Warwickshire the extinction of the great medieval Earldom of Warwick "whence in the fifteenth century most of the gentry like inferior orbs, derived their motion," had a considerable influence on the county's social structure. Thus in the later seventeenth century the peerage were far less prominent than in some of the neighbouring counties like Stafford, Oxford or Northampton, and the only peer whose territorial influence was centred on Warwickshire was Lord Brooke, later Earl of Warwick.

This characteristic of the upper reaches of landed society in the seventeenth century, had, not surprisingly, a determinatory influence on the structure of rural society in the next. It is possible to form a picture of the geographical location, and extent, of the principal landed estates in the last half of the eighteenth century from the land tax returns. It is not possible to make an exact estimate of the total acreage of these estates, but by carefully noting all payments made by certain landowners towards the land tax, an accurate approximation can be reached. This can be compared with the parliamentary return of landownership made in 1874.

Such an investigation has been attempted, and the results are tabulated in Appendix XVI. We notice that although a number of members of the peerage resided in Warwickshire, there were no landowners whose estates were so vast as to give them a dominating position in the county. The largest estate in the later eighteenth century was that of Lord Edward Leigh, grouped around

1. For this, and following remarks, see "The Social Structure of Kington Hundred in the Reign of Charles II" by P. Styles in Trans. B'ham Arch. Soc. Vol. 78, 1962, p. 104.

Stoneleigh Abbey. By the 1790's we know that this estate extended to about 25,000 acres.¹ The land tax returns reveal that, with the exception of the Earl of Warwick who owned a great deal of town property, no other Warwickshire landowner possessed at this date, half of this total. The remaining great noble estates are tabulated in Appendix XVI with an approximate acreage estimated from the land tax assessments.

Table I. THE SIZE OF WARWICKSHIRE LANDED ESTATES

<u>Owner</u>	<u>Size of Estate</u>
Earl of Warwick	Over 9,000 acres ²
Viscount Beauchamp	9,000 acres
1. Lord Willoughby)	8,000 acres ³
2. Lord Craven)	
3. Duke of Buccleigh)	
1. Earl of Nottingham)	7,000 acres
2. Earl of Aylesford)	
3. Earl Denbigh)	
Baron Archer of Umberlade	5-6,000 acres
Earl Spencer	Under 5,000 acres ⁴

Since it has been estimated that even the smallest of the great landlords would have to possess over 5,000 acres,⁵ it is

1. His total land tax payments on landed property in 29 villages amounted to £1,211. At an average of 1/- per acre this comes to over 24,000 acres. This is confirmed by Murray, "General View of the Agriculture of Warwick", 2nd edition, 1815, p. 23.
2. This does not include large payments on vast properties in the towns of Warwick and Alcester. These cannot be accurately assessed from the land tax payments.
3. There is evidence confirming the size of Lord Craven's estate - see Murray loc. cit. "General View.....", 1815, p. 33.
4. This table does not include every great noble estate, for example that of Lord Digby situated in North Warwickshire has not been dealt with. With this exception, however, it is believed that estates of the principal nobility are included.
5. See "English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century" in Studies in Social History 1963 by G. Mingay, p. 20. Mingay confirms this impression of the landed strength of the great landlord when he remarks that "the high-rented home counties and developing industrial areas of the West Midlands were held mainly in small estates", Ibid. page 20.

clear that Warwickshire as a county was not in the hands of this class. That is less than 100,000 out of 600,000 of the county's gross acreage was in their possession.

Below the principal landowners of noble standing were a group of noblemen with smaller, though significant, estates in the county. ¹ Also merging into the class of nobility at the lower end, and overlapping, were the knights, baronets, and leading members of the squirarchy.

Table I cont. THE SIZE OF WARWICKSHIRE LANDED ESTATES

<u>Owner</u>	<u>Size of Estates</u>
Sir R. Throckmorton	Over 7,000 acres
1. William Sheldon Esq.)	Over 5,000 acres
2. George Lucy Esq.)	
1. Sir Thomas Biddulph)	4-5,000 acres
2. William Bromley Esq.)	
1. Sir F. Shuckburgh)	3-4,000 acres
2. Sir F. Skipwith)	
3. William Holbech Esq.)	
1. C. B. Adderley Esq.)	2-3,000 acres
2. William Dilke Esq.)	
3. M. Wise)	

2

Once again the above list may not be exhaustive, but it includes most of the landowners of this class recorded in the land tax returns, particularly with reference to those engaged in enclosure. All are gentry families dating from the seventeenth century.

In addition to these, the principal landowners of the county, were the lesser esquires and gentry. A number of these owned estates of over 1,000 acres. Two such were George Shirley of Eatington Hall, and Francis Canning, Esquire of Ilmington, both

1. For example the Earls of Abergavenny and Temple and Lord Robert Bertie owned between 2-3,000 acres in Warwickshire.

2. Another landowning esquire not dealt with was Charles Palmer.

active in the parliamentary enclosure movement.

At the lower end of the scale were a very large number of small-scale gentlemen owing up to 5- or 600 acres, and over 100 acres. They are variously described in the land tax as "gents" and "esquires". The most modest of their number, merge, in the economic sense, into the ranks of the greater yeomen. They were chiefly distinguished from them by the fact that their estates formed a source of rental income, and were not owner-occupied. They were marked off from the greater esquires by the narrower extent of their property, social and marriage connections. And by the scope of their local government activities. Numerous examples of these smaller esquires and gentlemen appear in the enclosure awards and are recorded in Appendix XV.

Observing the geographical layout of the great landed estates, we note that a feature common to all, was the large amount of land enclosed before the eighteenth century which each included. The nucleus of such properties were one or more "closed" parishes often described as "liberties", wholly in the hands of the great lord; such villages were commonly the site of enclosure and depopulation in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. Compton Wyniates, the parish which formed the seat of the Earl of Northampton, had been wholly enclosed under special licence given by Henry VIII,¹ and in 1730 had only four houses in it.² Similarly, Compton Verney and Chesterton the nucleus of Lord Willoughby's estate, and Coughton and Charlecott that of the Throckmortons and Lucys were also the scene of complete depopulation in the fifteenth century.³

For a number of the principal landowning families of the eighteenth century it would seem that the period up to 1815 may possibly have marked the last period of their expansion; if we compare the estimated totals drawn from the land tax assessments with the acreages owned by these landowners in 1874, a distinct shrinkage is noted in some instances, particularly in the case

1.V.C.H. Warwickshire, p. 60.

2.Dr. Thomas' edition of Dugdale's "Antiquities of Warwickshire" 1730

3. See Rous' list of depopulated vills in Tate, loc.cit. pp 59-61.

At Compton Verney Rous reported that where there had been twenty-seven holdings there was now only a manor house and church.

of the more unwieldy or long-standing estates, while few saw an expansion in the nineteenth century.

Table II. A COMPARISON OF LANDED ESTATES IN 1780-1825 AND 1874

<u>Name of Estate Owner</u>	<u>Estimated Acreage 1780-1825</u>	<u>Acreage given in Return of Landowners 1874</u>
1. Lord Leigh	25,000 ¹	14,891)
Boughton Leigh		3,164) 18,055
2. Earl of Warwick	9,000*	8,262
3. Lord Craven	8,000 ²	8,447
4. Duke of Buccleigh	8,500	6,881
5. Earl of Northampton	7,000	4,985
6. Earl Spencer	4,600	3,555

This tendency for the great estates to see a considerable degree of stability and little further big expansion after 1815³ has been noted outside Warwickshire.

An estate which does seem to have grown considerably in the period 1825-74 was that of the Earl of Aylesford. At the latter date it was one of three most extensive in the county, and appears to have almost doubled, from 6,500 acres to 12,158 acres. It is worth noting that his lands lay mainly in the north of Warwickshire where industry was springing up, and with it population, and the value of land. The Earl was not slow to exploit the advantageous location of his Warwickshire estates during the course of the nineteenth century.

The estates of Viscount Beauchamp, Marquis of Hertford, one of the improving landlords of the eighteenth century, may have

1. This figure is confirmed by Murray - see above, loc. cit. p. 25.

2. Ibid. p. 33.

3. See G. E. Mingay "English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century" 1963, p. 47. He speaks of English landownership having "settled into a stable pattern" and "the limited amount of land available for purchase". He goes on to say that "there was little tendency for land to change hands" and growth of large estates at expense of small ones.....now much less marked" (from later eighteenth century).

* This does not include a vast amount of property in Warwick and Alcester on which £240 and £107 was paid respectively.

been enlarged in the later nineteenth century. An estimate in the later eighteenth century based on the land tax payment made by this nobleman¹ would indicate that the estate consisted at that date of about 9,000 acres. In 1874 the figure quoted was 10,281 acres. The estates of Lord Willoughby de Broke were also enlarged in the course of the nineteenth century from about 8,000 acres, to make him the second landowner of the county with 12,621 acres in 1874.

The estates of many of the leading gentry of Warwickshire also saw their highest point of expansion during the period ending in the 1820's. Since their estates were less widespread, an estimate of their extent in the later eighteenth century based on the land tax assessments can be made with more accuracy.²

Table II. Cont. A COMPARISON OF LANDED ESTATES IN 1780-1825 AND 1874

<u>Landowner</u>	<u>Estimate of Size of Estate 1780-1825</u>		<u>Estimate in Return of 1874 (Acres)</u>
	<u>No. of Parishes</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	
George Lucy Esq.	7	5,800	5,765
William Sheldon Esq.	9	5,000	2,470
Sir Thomas Biddulph) Sophia Biddulph)	9	4,700	1,886) 840) 2,726
William Bromley Esq.) Rev.W.D.Bromley)	12	4,300	483) 2,020) 2,503
William Holbech Esq.	10	3,584	2,129
W. & R. Dilke Esq.	5	2,759	2,731
Matthew Wise	9	2,600	2,353
George Shirley	4	1,900	1,519

The only large non-noble landowner's estate seen which was probably enlarged between 1825 and 1874 was that of Sir Robert Throckmorton. His estates were concentrated around Bidford in the highly fertile Avon Valley, and on the outskirts of Alcester, where until forty years ago rural industry was thriving.³ All the

1. He paid a total of £605 on estates lying in 11 parishes. At an average of 1/4 per acre this gives 9,307 acres.

2. For a detailed account of these estates see Appendix XVI.

3. Needle making was carried on in almost every cottage - also glove-working from Worcester, V.C.H. Warks. Vol. III, p. 78.

larger landowners survived however, in the later nineteenth century, except the Skipwiths.

The characteristics we have noted in the state of landownership among the higher social groups is reflected in the re-allotment of land under the Warwickshire enclosure awards. Ownership was fairly widely dispersed, and the peerage as a whole received only a small part of the total unenclosed land. Though their share would be greater had we included land in the possession of younger sons of noble families, for example, that of Sir George Greville, a relative of Lord Brooke. If we exclude some thousands of acres (already described) which were granted to the Church, then, of some 146,667 acres awarded to Warwickshire landowners over the whole period of the parliamentary enclosure movement, the peerage as a class received only 15.0% or 22,928 acres. This was divided up among some sixty-two different members of the peerage. However, we note that eight peers shared 16,205 acres, or two thirds of this amount; these eight were all amongst the principal landowners of the county, and a record of their estates, and of the land received under enclosure awards is set out in Appendices XVII & XVIII. The proportion of their estates which remained, in the eighteenth century, still in an open state, varied between one landowner and another, as demonstrated in the summary below.

Table III. AN ESTIMATE OF PROPORTION OF ESTATES REMAINING UNENCLOSED IN THE 18th CENTURY

<u>Landowner</u>	<u>Total Estate 1780-1825</u>	<u>No. of Awards in which Rec. Allotments.</u>	<u>Total Acreage Received</u>	<u>Proportion of Total Estate Enclosed by Act</u>
Earl of Northampton	7,000	6 1787-1854	3,732	54%
Earl of Warwick	9,000	8 1730-1772	2,464	27%
Viscnt. Beauchamp	9,000	4 1777-1815	2,152	24%
Lord Willoughby de Broke	7,000	7 1730-1795	1,406	21%
Lord Craven	8,000	2 1756-1761	1,109	14%
Lord Leigh	25,000	8 1735-1798	1,704	9%

1. Sir Francis Skipwith was one of the leading landowners of the period 1780-1825 with an estate of about 3,700 acres.

2. This total does not include the large properties owned by the Earl in Alcester and Warwick.

From the above list we see that enclosure of the parliamentary kind was important only on the estates of about four great land-owning peers, (the rest consisting mainly of old-enclosed land). It is no coincidence that the Earl of Northampton and Lords Beauchamp and Willoughby were among the more thrustful and active landowners of the time, and secured the reputation of improving landlords. They took full advantage of the opportunities presented by the later eighteenth century economic trends; they greatly enlarged their estates and they consolidated tenancies to form large-scale farms.

To the larger esquires and landed gentry, parliamentary enclosure was of more significance. There was not always a nucleus of old-enclosed land on their estates. William Sheldon's estate lay mainly in the unenclosed parish of Brailes and Long Compton. That of the Adderley's lay in Lea Marston, unenclosed till 1776, and Sir Francis Skipwith's in the largely unenclosed parishes around Bidford.

Table III Cont. AN ESTIMATE OF PROPORTION OF ESTATES REMAINING UNENCLOSED IN THE 18th CENTURY

<u>Landowner</u>	<u>No. of Parishes where Land recvd. under Awards</u>	<u>Total Acre- age of Es- tate.</u>	<u>Total Acre- age Recvd.</u>	<u>Propor- tion of Estate.</u>
Matthew Wise	4	2,600	1,654	64%
Wm. Sheldon Esq.	4	5,000	2,879	58%
Sir F. Skipwith	6	3,700	1,620	44%
George Shirley Esq.	3	1,900	750	40%
C.B. Adderley Esq.	3	2,414	926	38%
Sir Thos. Biddulph	4	4,700	1,576	33%
Wm. Holbech Esq.	2	3,500	941	27%
Sir G. Shuckburgh	2	3,500	708	21%

Once again the evidence of land purchase and estate re-organization as a by-product of enclosure is perhaps more abundant amongst this class of landed gentry than amongst some of the great noble estates. More than one landed estate seems to have

been formed almost entirely out of land coming under enclosure. Such opportunity as this offered was grasped by wealthy members of the new eighteenth century professional and trading classes. Thus Sanderson Miller, Warwick Shire Hall's architect, bought up most of the freeholders of Radway at the enclosure of 1758; Matthew Wise, landscape gardener, built up an estate of largely unenclosed land; and another new figure, Sir George Phillips, is prominent in a number of nineteenth century enclosures, the occasion of vast land purchases. But the most remarkable member of this class was William Horniblow, an apothecary and surgeon¹ of Shipston-on-Stour. Apparently the land-hunger of medical practitioners was a long-standing and universally recognized trait. Professor F. J. Fisher wrote recently that "On the acquisitiveness and business capacity of lawyers it is needless to comment.....according to at least one contemporary, medical men showed similar qualities and the fact that Barbon, Petty and Hugh Chamberlayne, three of the biggest speculators of the later seventeenth century, were all doctors certainly suggests some affinity between medicine and money-making".²

Apothecaries were found quite high in the social scale of seventeenth century Warwickshire. A younger son of the Eades, a very influential family in the reign of Charles II, was an apothecary.³

Though William Horniblow does not appear at all in the list of freeholders contained in the Coventry Poll Book of 1774, between this date and his death in 1814 he built up an estate of well over a thousand acres, almost all purchased at the time of enclosure in a number of Warwickshire parishes as follows:-

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1. So named in agreement made with Evelyn Shirley over the tithes of Easington. (Shirley M.S. in War. R.O., Box 3/1).
 2. F. J. Fisher, "Tawney's Century" in "Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England in Honour of R. H. Tawney", 1961, p. 12.
 3. "Social Structure of Kineton Hundred in the Reign of Charles II", Trans. B'ham Arch. Soc. Vol. 78, p. 117.

Table IV. THE LANDED PURCHASES OF W. HORNIBLOW

Ilmington enclosure award 1781, Horniblow received 195 acres							
Brailes	"	"	1780	"	"	37	"
Lr. Pillarton	"	"	1795	"	"	163	"
Oxhill	"	"	1797	"	"	287	"
Eatington	"	"	1797	"	"	513	"
Shipston-on-Stour	"	"	1815	"	"	118	"

At Eatington he paid land tax in 1780 on tithes; by 1785 he had bought land as well, and paid the sum of £9.11s. 8d. But between this date and 1800 (the enclosure took place in 1797) his payments increased to £34. 2s. 2d. on land in this parish. He must have helped to push forward a number of enclosures and furnished part of the initial capital for that of Oxhill in 1797. It is clear that parliamentary enclosure with the difficulties and expenses which this entailed for the smaller freeholders furnished a few newly enriched men with the opportunity to secure their social standing in the county by the acquisition of a landed estate. Enclosure in the eighteenth century was no different to that of earlier centuries; the smaller man was pushed out in favour of eager newcomers wishing to secure status, or more commonly, the long-established families who could afford the expense of the improvements and wished to enlarge their estates.

Over the whole period of the enclosure movement the peerage, as we have already ~~said~~ said, received as a class, only 15% of the land. In addition a further 10% of the total, some 13,973 acres, were allotted to eighteen baronets. Also 11,973 acres were received by thirty-five different institutional bodies, some 8% of the whole. These last named consisted of a varied group of Oxford and Cambridge Colleges, and ecclesiastical bodies like the Dean and Chapter of Worcester. The presence of these tradition-bound leasehold lands in the county were, as we have

1. The details of these awards are given in Appendix XIX.

remarked, an important factor in the rise of the new capitalist tenant-farmer, and the continued survival of the freeholder.

The amount of land received under the parliamentary enclosure procedure by the big landowners varied probably from one phase of the movement to another. The owners of over 500 acres received over 50% of the total land enclosed in the first phase of the movement between 1720 and 1749. They also received a large proportion of the land enclosed after 1815. But in between, in particular in the middle years of the eighteenth century, where many freehold dominated parishes sought enclosure, a relatively small proportion of open-field land may have been in their possession.

It is probably true to say, therefore, that the earliest phase of the parliamentary enclosure movement was an extension into the eighteenth century ~~type~~ of enclosure by private agreement and Chancery decree which had been going on for many years prior to 1730. Here most of the land was consolidated in the hands of a great landowner, who bought out the smaller proprietors and then bargained for an enclosure agreement with those remaining; often this might be confined to the rector or owner of the Great Tithes of the parish. From the enclosure of Brinklow and Aston Cantlow in 1742, and with increasing frequency from the early 1750's, enclosure of parishes took place in which the great landowners seem to have owned a relatively small proportion, or no share, of the land being enclosed. It was only after 1800, with the accelerated consolidation of ownership of the war years, and the steep increase in enclosure costs, that once again a very large share of the land coming under the enclosure process, was already at the time of the award in the hands of great landowners owing over 500 acres.

By 1780, when the assessments to the land tax first begin to be useful, the amount of land in the hands of great landowners may have changed very little in parishes where enclosure had taken place before this date.¹

1. For a full analysis of the state of landownership in 1780 based on the land tax returns see Appendices V-VII.

Of course in those parishes enclosed before 1750 where the great landowner was already in possession of most of the land there was little scope for change in the intervening years before 1780. Any remaining small owners were frequently bought out however. Thus, at Lighthorne enclosed in 1720, the recipients of the parish land were Lord Willoughby de Broke, the rector and 4 smaller proprietors.

By 1780 the land tax return for the parish ~~reveals~~ of Lighthorne reveals that the number of smaller owners had been reduced to two, and by 1825, Lord Willoughby owned all the land in the parish except that in the possession of the rector.

In freehold dominated parishes enclosed before 1780, the great landowners owned a small proportion both at the enclosure and in 1780, as may be demonstrated from the following summary:

Table V. THE SHARE OF LAND IN POSSESSION OF GREAT LANDOWNERS AT THE TIME OF ENCLOSURE IN 1780 & 1825 LAND TAX RETURNS

<u>The Awards</u>		<u>Land Tax Returns of 1799-80</u>		
<u>Period of Enclosure</u>	<u>Owners of over 500 acres recvd.</u>	<u>Period of Enclosure</u>	<u>Owners of over 500 acres Received</u>	<u>Share</u>
1750-59 (35 awards)	12,076 acs.29%	1750-59 (13 parishes)	7,767 acres	31%
1770-89 (38 awards)	10,177 acs.23%	1760-69 (11 parishes)	6,103 acres	24%
		1770-79 (12 parishes)	6,472 acres	23%

By 1825 a degree of consolidation of landed property in the hands of great landowners owning over 500 acres seems to have taken place; there was little change however, in parishes around Bidford enclosed in the 1760's, and other very prosperous freehold dominated parishes like Willoughby, Bidford, Snitterfield and Haselor enclosed in that decade.

Table V cont.

<u>LAND TAX RETURN OF 1825</u>		
<u>Period of Enclosure</u>	<u>Owners of over 500 acres Received acres</u>	<u>Share</u>
1750-59 (13 parishes)	10,641	43%
1760-69 (11 parishes)	6,900	29%
1770-79 (12 parishes)	9,151	32%

From the above evidence we may conclude that a degree of consolidation of land in the hands of great landowners may have taken place between 1780 and 1825 in parishes enclosed prior to 1780. In particular in many of those parishes where landownership was still widely dispersed at the time of enclosure. Since consolidation could take place, (as we have already seen) prior to enclosure, and in particular during the course of the enclosure negotiations, it cannot be doubted that the great landowners benefited from the process even before 1780, though not always perhaps at the expense of the small landowner.

If we turn to the parishes which remained unenclosed in 1780, the land tax return of sixteen parishes which underwent the process during the period 1780-1799 indicates that the great owner was in possession of only a small proportion of the land, but that by 1825 when enclosure here was complete the amount of land in their hands may have increased considerably.

Table VI. COMPARISON OF SHARE OF LAND IN POSSESSION OF GREAT LANDOWNERS IN 1780 & 1825

<u>Period</u>	<u>Parishes</u>	<u>Total Acreage</u>	<u>Land Tax Return 1779-80</u>		
			<u>No.</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Proportion of Whole Acreage</u>
1780-99	16	38,676	13	10,891	28%
			<u>Land Tax Return 1825</u>		
1780-99	16	38,676	13	14,786	38%

In parishes enclosed after 1800 consolidation of ownership seems to have advanced considerably by 1780 prior to enclosure; probably under the advantageous economic circumstances of the war years this was accelerated. It is probable that since ownership was already large scale, property and ~~rents~~ rents were already "improved".¹ In such circumstances there may have been little incentive to enclose, since the economic benefits would be relatively slight, at least before the high level of war-time prosperity after 1800. In these parishes further consolidation by 1825 was negligible.

Table VII. A SIMILAR COMPARISON IN PARISHES
ENCLOSED AFTER 1800

Period	Parishes	Total Acreage	Land Tax Return 1780		
			No.	Owners of over 500 acres Acreage	Proportion
1800-1815	11	19,346	7	6,691	35%
			Land Tax Return 1825		
1800-1815	11	19,346	6	6,744	37%

The impression that consolidation of ownership went on apace from the opening of the nineteenth century is further confirmed in parishes enclosed after 1815, where vast purchases took place between act and award, and the share of great landowners receiving over 500 acres was further enhanced.

Table VIII. SHARE OF LAND IN POSSESSION OF GREAT
LANDOWNERS IN PARISHES ENCLOSED AFTER 1815

Period of Enclosure	No. of Awards	Total Acreage	Acreage received by great landowners	Proportion
Post 1815	15	17,459	7,100	40%

We will turn now to consider the landowning strength of the lesser gentry. We detect once again differences at various stages of the enclosure movement, and afterwards.

The evidence of the first wave of parliamentary awards suggests that a decline had taken place in the land owned by the lesser gentry, particularly those owning between 2-300 acres. Many of

these were absentees and their only connection with their estates was through the receipt of rents.

Table IX. THE LESSER GENTRY IN THE ENCLOSURE AWARDS

<u>Period</u>	<u>Total Parishes</u>	<u>Total Acreage</u>	<u>Acreage of Landowners Possessing 2-300 acres</u>		
			<u>No.</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Proportion of total</u>
1720-49	12	15,421	2	469	3%

The change which had occurred since the opening of Charles II's reign can be assessed from some remarks made about rural society in Kineton Hundred at that time.¹ It was said to be, on the whole, a region of small squires and yeomen farmers. It was this Hundred in particular which had the heaviest concentration of open-field villages not undergoing enclosure until the parliamentary era. Furthermore, in this period even the esquires, "the typical representatives of the upper-class gentry", were all resident in the places where their names occurred in the² Hearth Tax.

Even in the freehold dominated parishes enclosed mainly in the middle eighteenth century between 1750 and 1770, we find that, though non-freehold owners possessed as a body only half the land, some two-thirds of their share was in the hands of owners of over 500 acres. The lesser gentry with estates of 2-300 acres, once³ again received a small proportion of the whole.

The evidence of the land tax suggests that the decline of the smaller gentry in old-enclosed parishes was also very marked⁴ by 1780.

It was remarked upon some time ago by Professor Habakkuk⁵ that

1. "The Social Structure of Kineton Hundred in the Reign of Charles II" by P. Styles, loc. cit. p. 96.

2. Ibid., p. 105.

3. See p.

4. See Appendix XI.

5. H. J. Habakkuk, "English landownership, 1660-1740". Econ.H.R. 1940, Vol.10, No. I, p. 2 & 4. He remarks that "the general drift of property in the 60 years after 1690 was in favour of the large estate and the great lord" (this was based on evidence drawn from a study of land-ownership in Northamptonshire). Subsequent research has done nothing to reverse this early view and the same point was made recently in a general work by G. E. Mingay, "English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century", loc. cit. p. 15.

during the early part of the eighteenth century there was in England as a whole, a decline in the area of land owned by the small squires to the benefit of the great landed proprietors.

Evidence drawn from enclosure awards, indicating that this was likely in Warwickshire is supported by other evidence. The disappearance of many of this class in Warwickshire is, perhaps, indicated by a study of the 1663 Hearth Tax Returns.¹ An attempt to trace the survival of family names assessed at three hearths or more, in the land tax assessment of 1779-80, yielded the following results:

Table X. THE SURVIVAL OF GENTRY FAMILY NAMES BETWEEN 1663 & 1780.

<u>No. of Parishes</u>	<u>Assessment 1663</u>	<u>No. of families</u>	<u>Survival in Land Tax 1780</u>	<u>Percentage disappeared in 120 years</u>
² 41	3 hearths	94	28	70.3%
41	4 hearths & above	141	34	75.9%

It is true of course, that the survival of family names is no more than a rough indication of the survival or otherwise of actual families. Names would often change, while families in one branch or another survived. However, the marked development of absentee ownership by 1780 amongst the bigger landowners revealed in the land tax of that date sheds further light on the likely decline of the smaller squires from the middle seventeenth century.

Table XI. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ABSENTEE OWNERSHIP

	<u>No. of Villages</u>	<u>Paying Over £25 or £25</u>	<u>Paying £10-£25 (holding 150-375 acres)</u>
<u>Absentee Owners</u>	115	108 (95.5%)	134 (74.8%)
<u>Occupying Owners</u>	115	5	45

1. For an important assessment of the value of these returns for the historian see P. Styles "Introduction to the Hearth Tax Returns" in Vol. 1 of Warwickshire Hearth Tax Returns. Ed. M. Walker, p. IXXXIV, et. seq. Vol. I contains only Tamworth and Atherstone of Hemlingford Hundred, not of much use for this present study. It is the only one so far published. Most used here are from the manuscript volume of 1663 Hearth Tax Returns in War. C.R.O.
2. The sample of parishes was a random one. The number was dictated by the survival of hearth and land tax records.

The investigation of the survival of all family names appearing in the enclosure awards in the land tax assessments of 1825 is also revealing.¹ Between some date in the eighteenth century, before 1764, and 1825 we find that on average only about 34% of the family names survive.

Table XII. THE SURVIVAL OF FAMILY NAMES BETWEEN ENCLOSURE & 1825.

<u>Period of Awards</u>	<u>No. Studied (Awards)</u>	<u>Total Families shown in Awards</u>	<u>No. Surviving in 1825 Land Tax</u>	<u>% Survival</u>
1728-1745	4	47	16	34%
1755-59	8	123	42	34.1%
1760-64	6	80	27	33.8%
1765-69	8	67	31	46.2%
1770-74	5	69	32	46.3%
1775-79	5	92	51	55.4%

We find that the chances of survival for the great landowners appearing in the awards, at least till 1825 may have been greater. They could, of course, exploit the opportunities offered by enclosure, and were not to disappear as a consequence of the financial hazards, or the crisis caused by the war-time inflation and post 1814 depression.

Table XIII. THE SURVIVAL OF SUBSTANTIAL LANDOWNERS BETWEEN ENCLOSURE & 1825.

<u>At Date of Award</u>	<u>Leading Landowners</u>	<u>% Survival</u>
<u>25 Parishes Enclosed 1736-70</u>		
Land Tax 1825	34	52.9%
	18	
<u>31 Parishes Enclosed 1770-1812</u>		
Land Tax 1779	59	61.1%
" " 1825	33	

Thus we see that for the bigger landowners who survived till the time of enclosure the chances of hanging-on may have been higher than in the period after 1660.

1. See Appendix XX.

The decline of the smaller landowner in the later seventeenth and eighteenth century is illuminated by more subjective details also. The manor of Cubbington had been taken over by the Wises¹ of Leamington (referred to above) in 1746, as chief creditors. As a consequence this relatively new family appeared as chief landowners in a number of parishes, as we have seen above. The rising family of Holbech whose seventeenth prosperity like many in Warwickshire was founded on the legal profession illustrates the trend. Originating in Fillongley, where they still held a considerable estate in the 1780's, Ambrose, a local lawyer, bought up the manor of Farnborough (1684) and his son purchased in addition the manors of Fenny Compton, Avon Dassett and Mollington. In all cases the transfer of manorial ownership was accompanied by the purchase of a very substantial portion of the parish land.

On the other hand the lesser gentry families named by Mr. Styles² as building up a tradition of providing members for the office of chief constable of the hundred had almost entirely disappeared by 1780. Thus, the Leeses of Tachbrook are not mentioned in the 1780 land tax return and were presumably bought out by the Earl of Warwick who paid £124 out of £145 and was the only lay owner in the parish at that date.

Mr. Styles further mentions in the same context the Dunns and Fairfaxes of Barford. But at the enclosure of the whole parish in 1760 only one member of either family received land. A Fairfax received 71 acres in lieu of four yardlands. It would seem that even this surviving member had suffered a shrinkage in the size of his estates since the seventeenth century.³ In the later land tax returns of 1780 there is no reference to either family owning land here.

1. See for this V.C.H. Warks.

2. "The Social Structure of Kineton Hundred in the Reign of Charles II" by P. Styles, loc. cit. p. 109.

3. In the same way the Nasons of Wellesbourne mentioned by Mr. Styles as gentlemen in the seventeenth century (p.106) also suffered a shrinkage in their estates. This family paid only £4.11. 6d. land tax in 1779 (on about 90 acres). Another family the Francis' had disappeared altogether.

It is significant of this tendency towards consolidation that when Sir Edmund Boughton sold up his Warwickshire landed property between 1780 and 1794¹ it was Lord Leigh, already Warwickshire's principal landowner who acquired his property, as the land tax assessments reveal.²

It is possible that the families of some of the prominent landowners in rural society were not excluded from this decline in the course of the eighteenth century. Sir Henry Gibbs of Honington appears in the Hearth Tax as a representative of one of these families, settled at an early date in Warwickshire.³ But by the later eighteenth century the family owned little land in the county. The most substantial of this name was Edward Gibbs who received 145 acres in place of 6½ yardlands at the enclosure of Stretton-on-Fosse in 1771.

Thus to summarise our conclusions so far with respect to the smaller landed gentry. All enclosure awards up to 1770 reveal that this type of owner in possession of between 2-300 acres had perhaps largely disappeared. At enclosure they were both numerically, and in the amount of land they owned, by far the most insignificant social group.

In the parishes undergoing enclosure between 1770-1799, in particular the "open" parishes, the lesser gentry may have been, however, in a stronger territorial position at the time of the award. The position at this time is summarised below:

Table XIV. THE SHARE OF ENCLOSED LAND GOING TO THE LESSER GENTRY OWNING BETWEEN 2-300 ACRES UNDER ENCLOSURE AWARDS 1750-90.

<u>Strength of Land Owners in Awards</u>	<u>Total Acreage</u>	<u>Period of Enclosure</u>	<u>Over 500 acs.</u>	<u>3-500 acres</u>	<u>2-300 acres</u>	<u>1-200 acres</u>
35	40,418	1750-69	12,076 29%	5,717 14%	3,372 8%	5,980 15%
38	44,709	1770-89	10,177 23%	4,959 11%	5,735 13%	7,827 18%

1. For the sale of his lands see account Burkes Complete Peerage 100th edition 1953, p. 242. "The Eighth Baronet pulled down Lamford Hall and sold the estates in Warwickshire and Leicestershire between 1780 and 1794".

2. For new estates appearing in the possession of the Leigh family see Appendix XXVIII.

3. Styles "Social Structure", p. 104.

If we take our study of the lesser gentry into the period of the land tax we find that in some parishes enclosed after 1750 the lesser gentry showed little further sign of decline either by 1780 or for that matter in 1825. We can say that where they lost ground the impression was that this took place prior to 1750. Between that date and 1825 along with other social groups they may well have held their ground.

Table XV. THE LESSER GENTRY IN THE LAND TAX RETURN OF 1780 & 1825

<u>Date</u>	<u>Period of Enclosure</u>	<u>No. of Land Tax Assessments</u>	<u>Over 500 acres</u>	<u>3-500 acres</u>	<u>2-300 acres</u>	<u>1-200 acres</u>
1780-85)	1750-69		13,870 28%	8,156 16%	7,334 15%	10,360 21%
1820-25	1750-69		17,541 36%	6,532 14%	5,636 12%	10,211 21%
1780-1785	1770-99	28	17,363 25.5%	10,911 17.5%	9,280 14%	12,738 19.5%
1820-25	1770-99	28	23,937 35%	8,935 13.5%	8,656 12.5%	12,911 21%

THE POOR AND THE PARLIAMENTARY ENCLOSURE MOVEMENT

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VII

THE POOR AND THE PARLIAMENTARY ENCLOSURE MOVEMENT

The problem of poverty did not arise with the growth of population in the later 18th century, nor with the parliamentary enclosure movement. It was a constantly recurring theme in the records of earlier periods. In the "open" parishes of Felden Warwickshire the poor were large in numbers and a grievous problem to the rest of the inhabitants during various parts of the 17th and early 18th centuries. At Harbury, which, by the early 19th century, had become a rural slum and acted as a reservoir of labour for neighbouring "closed" parishes,¹ there were a large number of poor in the 18th century, and the adjoining "closed" parish of Kington and Chesterton was ordered to contribute towards the cost of the poor of Harbury in 1638.² At Napton, another typical "open" Felden parish, overcrowding and encroachments on the waste were reported in the middle 17th century, and in 1656 the parish was described as so burdened and overcharged with "poor" that "the better sort of inhabitants (are) in no way able to relieve them".³

The hard years of the early 18th century when farming in the county, as elsewhere, was hit by a series of hard winters, poor harvests, animal epidemics and farming depression, saw a great upsurge of distress in the freehold parishes of Felden Warwickshire, in particular on the clays. Here, where the soil was heavy, intractable and wet, the freeholders had in some cases been reduced, as a consequence of the weather, and animal disease, to great poverty.⁴

1. Report of the Poor Law Commissioner 1868-9, Vol. XXII. App. pt. II, p. 226.

2. V.C.H. Warks. Vol. VI, p. 103.

3. Ibid. p. 182.

4. See document relating to Wolfhamcote "A true statement of the case for the Enclosure of Flecknoe Field", dated 1730. In War. C.R.O. Photostat. C.R.O. Z.12. Also the parish registers of Friars Marston and Hardwick and Wolfhamcote where the parish registers refer to the burial of "poore farmers reduced to poverty".

The parish registers of these years refer to the burial of a number of such pauper farmers. We are told that these freeholders could not afford the expense of bringing back the soil to good arable. Owing to the depletion of their own flocks and herds, those of wealthy neighbours were being grazed on the village fields in order to fertilize it.¹ Speaking in terms of the country as a whole, G. E. Mingay is certainly of the opinion that misfortunes experienced in the early 18th century could be equally as disastrous as any influences felt after 1750. He feels that the low grain prices, bad harvests and the cattle sickness of the first half of the 18th century induced many casualties among small farmers.²

The enclosure of commons by which the poorer inhabitants lost valuable rights, was a frequent occurrence in the 16th century,³ and continued throughout the 17th and early 18th centuries. In this context we might recall what happened at Temple Grafton.⁴ Similarly, a long process of piecemeal enclosure was completed at Hampton Lucy by the partition of the heath in 1735.⁵ The aim of enclosure in the later 17th century was often to preserve the rights of the better-off tenants and freeholders; with the rise of population in the 17th century and again after 1740, the commons were frequently being rendered of little use owing to their overcrowding by the cattle of the general body of commoners, often without stint. Thus the initiative had been taken, and a petition presented to the Lord of the Manor, Sir Robert Throckmorton

1. "A true statement....." loc. cit. Ultimately, when the countryside had been swept by the cattle distemper of the early 1740's, an enclosure of the common lands was set in motion.
2. See "The Size of Farms in the Eighteenth Century" by G. E. Mingay in Econ. H.R. 2nd Series XIV, 1962.
3. For example the 1585 glebe terriers offer valuable evidence of this. In the parish of Wasperton the commons had been reduced by this date, as a result of enclosure. See "Ecclesiastical Terriers of Warwickshire Parishes" by D. Barratt, Intro. p. VIII.
4. Surveys 1540 and 1740 (B.R.L. 247148) quoted in V.C.H. III p. 96. See above p. 49.
5. Ibid. p. 101.

by the twenty-four tenant commoners of Sambourne in 1707, with this aim.¹ Very frequently the rise in population seems to have been followed by the reduction in the stint of the parish commons,² or by the introduction of a stint for the first time,³ which would be to the disadvantage of the cottagers.

Poverty was not confined to the Felden. We have already described the generally low standard of wealth of Arden parishes shown by the 1663 Hearth Tax Returns. From the later 17th century particularly, the large areas of waste in these parishes were attracting a migrant population and as a contemporary aptly⁴ remarked "there are fewest poor where there are fewest commons". Nor was the growth of a large, and poor rural industrial population an exclusive feature of the later 18th century. The parish of Bedworth in North Warwickshire had been already in the time of Dugdale,⁵ well known for coal-mines and ribbon weaving. And in the 1663 Hearth Tax Returns we find that of 256 households no less than 205 were recorded as exempted from taxation on grounds of poverty. Here already at the Restoration the population was rural-industrial, large and poor.

When we turn to consider the treatment which the poor received under the parliamentary enclosure awards we could profitably direct our attention, in the first instance, to seeking the answers to two questions: did the smallest owners of land in the open fields receive just treatment; were the landless cottagers satisfactorily compensated for loss of customary rights by which their livelihood was eked out, under the open field system of cultivation.

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1. "Though containing nearly 1000 acres of waste ground, yet of small profit". Ibid. p. 87.
 2. At Lighthorne there is evidence of this taking place before 1585. Barratt loc. cit. p. Ivii. See also terrier of glebe of parish of Exhall near Bidford dated 1714 in War. C.R.O. Ref. D.R.200. At Fenny Compton a meeting was called to stint the common in early 18th century. See War. C.R.O. D.R.O. 161.
 3. Fenny Compton meeting in early 18th century War. C.R.O. D.R.O. 161.
 4. T. Hartless "His Legacie" 1652 p. 42. quoted in "Industries in the Countryside" by Joan Thirsk in Essays in Honour of R. H. Tawney, Ed. by F. J. Fisher.
 5. Dugdale's "Antiquities of Warwickshire" see also V.C.H. Warks. (Vol. VI, p.26.

An examination of the awards makes it at once clear that there were absolutely no rules of procedure to guide the commissioners in their work. No restrictions at all were placed on the commissioners, and their decisions once made, were final. Much therefore, could depend on the character and integrity of individual commissioners. We describe elsewhere the methods used for choosing commissioners. In general one represented the interests of the principal landowner, another the owner of the Great Tithes, and a third the remaining proprietors. Usually the commissioners were socially below the rank of gentleman: freeholders; farmers; surveyors and solicitors in the main. Their only guide to action was the accumulation of experience in such work. It is not surprising, therefore, that, as the 18th century wore on, enclosure awards began to conform to some sort of pattern, following the growth of a degree of professionalism amongst those engaged in this work. The early awards were markedly individualistic in character. They occasionally made surprising concessions to justice for the humbler members of the village community. Where these gestures on behalf of the smallest owners were made, they can be highly revealing, since it is precisely in their silence in these matters, that the majority of Warwickshire enclosure awards leave in doubt the degree of concern shown for the lowest social groups in rural society.

Looking first of all at the small owner of land who received compensation for loss of a yardland, or fraction of a yardland in the open fields, we find that he received injury in several ways. His rights were often considered last, and compensation, when it came, commonly took the form of one or more tiny allotments situated at a very great distance from his homestead. Not unnaturally, it was the men who paid the piper, the principal landowners, who called the tune. The awards occasionally bear eloquent witness to the resolution with which the commissioners pursued the interests of their clients. Their lands were to be

set out first, they were to be in the form of large, compact, and contiguous allotments, and were, if possible, to be adjoining the great house or rectory. Not infrequently these primary considerations were actually set out in the preamble of the enclosure award as a first call on the attentions of the commissioners. Thus, for example, in that of Wolfhamcote, in 1757, we read that,

"all land due to the lord of the manor is to be set out in one entire plot from the northwards of the said Justinian Raynesford's allotment in such a manner that it might be together, and be situated as near and convenient as might be to the dwelling-house of the said Robert Clarke".¹

The lord of the manor, as principal landowner of common field land was duly awarded 241 acres in one allotment. In one award only has recognition of this injustice to the smaller owner been made explicit,² and compensation granted, though it may have been of frequent occurrence. It is no accident that this is at Wellesbourne Mountford, the second parliamentary enclosure to be undertaken in the county, and one of the earliest in the country (1730). It was written into the preamble to the award "that in consideration of the great distance which the allotments are from the several cottages of Thos. Gleather and Thos. Rowshan, 30-40 perches shall be added to each". Perhaps little loss was felt on the larger estates where new farmhouses were to rise up in the midst of the newly enclosed fields, but to the smallest owners this must have brought injury and inconvenience where no provision was made.

The Award of Wellesbourne Mountford, described above was noteworthy in its regard for the smaller owners in another respect. It granted compensation to one small owner for the poor quality of the land awarded to him. Thomas Bland who received in all 75 acres, was to get an extra 5 acres added to his plot "in compensation for the meanness of the quality of his land".

1. The second award for parish of Wolfhamcote dated 1757 in War.C.I.R.O.
2. As far as the present writer could detect.

Silence in later awards leaves us in doubt about compensation granted on this score. Many an injustice may have been committed in this way. It still wrangled in the minds of the inhabitants of the parish of Tysoe many years after the enclosure of 1796. Their attitude to this aspect of enclosure was summed up in the biting words of one villager,

"enclosures would have done good if there had been justice in 'em. They give folks allotments now instid o' their rights - on a slope so steep, a two-legged animal can't stand; let along dig".¹

Another direction from which the small owners received injustice in the enclosure awards, was over the question of making the enclosures. After an exhaustive investigation of one Warwickshire enclosure Professor A. W. Ashby came to the conclusions that

"the duty of fencing the allotments fell with varying incidence on the different proprietors...A careful reading of the award shows beyond doubt that the burden of fencing fell more heavily on the smaller than the larger owners".²

For one thing we find that the land of the smaller owners had to be immediately protected on every side, while the larger owners could divide their allotments as they wished, and were required only to provide a part of the boundary fence on those sides of their allotments which abutted on other allotments. The amount of time allowed by the commissioners for the hedging, fencing, ditching and enclosing of allotments varied considerably from one award to another. Failure to fulfil these requirements in the allotted time meant that allotments were forfeited. This may have occurred in parishes like Willey where "all allotments shall within two calendar months after the execution of this Award be enclosed, hedged, ditched and fenced by the several proprietors".³

1. "Joseph Ashby of Tysoe" by M. K. Ashby, Cambridge 1963, p. 35. Miss Ashby culls many interesting conversations and observations from the days of her father's childhood.
2. "One Hundred Years of Poor Law Administration in a Warwickshire Village" by A. W. Ashby in Oxford. Social and Legal History Series. 1929. Editor Paul Vinogradoff Vol. III, p. 20-21.
3. Enclosure Award of Willey, dated 27th July, 1769.

Careful examination of the enclosure awards make perfectly plain the discrimination of the commissioners in favour of the great landlords in the matter of distribution of allotments and of fencing obligations. Perhaps we might have a close look at one award to illustrate these points. In that of Gaydon dated 1759, A. Bricknall Esq. received 620 acres out of a total of 1,470 acres. This was in compensation for twenty yardlands and £200 advanced by him to launch the award. It was granted to him in the form of two compact allotments adjoining his old enclosed estate. When we examine the lay-out of his vast holdings, we find that they lay largely next to the old enclosures of the adjoining parishes of Lighthorne, Kington and Chesterton; in another direction next to his own old enclosed lands, and in another next to the enclosed homestalls of the villagers. When we turn to the directions made for the enclosing of his allotments, we find that in so far as they bordered on the old enclosed lands of other parishes, the extent of Bricknall's obligations was "in such parts thereof as have from time ~~immorial~~ immemorial been made by the proprietors of Gaydon". (In fact, the cost was shared out equally between the various parishes). On the other hand we find that his estates nowhere touched upon the two large allotments totalling 211 acres made to the Vicar of Bishops Itchington in respect of tithe and glebe. This cleric was exempted from the cost of making his enclosures, and the cost of doing this seems to have been borne by those unfortunate proprietors whose lands lay next to his allotments, as we discover from directions made to this end in the award. Apart from Bricknall and the incumbent mentioned above, all the proprietors were small owners, the largest of whom received 113 acres. No compensation was written into the award for the luckless small proprietors who enclosed the lands of the Vicar; nor do their lands, we note, border on any old-enclosed lands. Guarantee, if any were needed, that this is not an isolated example of social injustice, is provided by the well-known personalities who acted as commissioners in this and many other enclosures. They included

the celebrated Rev. Henry Homer, and two substantial freeholders of Priors Marston, Thos. and Job. Baseley. Homer acted as commissioner in well over twenty Warwickshire awards.

Compensation to owners for an inequitable share of fencing was occasionally included in enclosure awards; this was the only form of compensation to smaller owners which appeared regularly in the awards, and it was by no means of common occurrence. More frequently, a schedule was attached to the awards, sharing out the cost of making the enclosures for the tithe impropiator's allotments; but even this did not happen often - perhaps thirty such schedules have been noted, out of some 130 awards.

The Schedule of Costs which was attached to many enclosure awards did not include the cost of making the enclosures; this was no concern of the commissioners and was left to the individual owners to carry out. Their schedule of costs did, however, include the expense of assessing the quality, surveying, and making out of individual allotments. Even though their allocation of costs include only a part of the total which the individual landowner was called upon to shoulder, nevertheless, we detect that acre for acre the process was generally much more expensive for the small landowner than the great proprietors. A summary of conclusions based on twenty-seven enclosure award expense schedules is given in the chapter below on Enclosure Costs.¹ It seems likely that other forms of monetary exaction fell more heavily on the smallest landowners - for example, there is a probability that acre for acre they paid more land tax.²

It is difficult to assess the relative cost to small and large proprietors of actually making their enclosures, though we can imagine that this may have exhibited very much more considerable differences as between the small and large holdings than did the

1. See Chapter IX, p. 185, Table III.

2. See my calculations based on land tax payments made by proprietors in 5 parishes in Appendix I. Also G. Mingay "The Land Tax Assessments and the Smallowner" Econ. H.R. 2nd Series, Vol. XVII, 1964, p. 386.

schedule of costs described above. An idea of the difference in the cost of enclosing small and large holdings is shown in one or two awards where the cost of enclosing more than one allotment was paid for by the general body of landowners. A few examples from Stretton-on-the-Fosse and Shottery are given below.

Table I. THE COST OF ENCLOSING LARGE & SMALL HOLDINGS COMPARED

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Date of Award</u>	<u>Allotment</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Cost of making Enclosures</u>	<u>Cost of this per acre</u>
Stretton-on-Fosse	1771	227 acres	Rectors Great Tithe & Glebe	£249	21.9/-
" "	1771	14-0-29 acres	Poor's Allotment	£50	71.4/-
Shottery	1787	298 acres	Ld. Beauchamp's Tithe Allotment	£226	15.2/-
"	1787	8-1-27 acres	Mr. Sidebottom's Tithe Allotment	£30.15.0	76.7/-
"	1787	2-1-16 acres	Mr. Daniel's Tithe Allotment	£20.15.0	207.6/-

If the two examples above can be taken to have wider application, it would seem that the difference in cost between enclosing large and small holdings was very considerable - more than three times as expensive in the case of the latter. Thus the general complaint of the small proprietors at the time, that enclosure was a burden unfairly distributed to their great financial disadvantage may have been justified. It is true that once again a number of awards explicitly contained references to compensation paid to proprietors for an unequal share of fencing. But these were few. The great majority made no reference to the problem of spreading the cost of enclosure more equably. In view of this attitude, it is not altogether surprising that some small proprietors, as we have already seen, may have found it necessary to sell up even before the enclosure award was made.

We are even less surprised at the action of small owners in

abandoning their holdings prior to enclosure, when we realise that the cost of physically making the enclosures (leaving aside the commissioner's heavy schedule of expenses for surveying, obtaining the act, and legal and other fees) was, even on the tiniest holdings, a sum of money which possibly represented more than the yearly wage of the average labourer. At Wellesbourne Hastings as early as 1735, the cost of merely "out fencing" the 23 acres of tithe allotment was £22. The costs of enclosure as we shall see later, trebled by the 1790's. So in the 1780's we find that at Shottery the cost of enclosing Mr. Daniels' tithe allotment of 2 acres was £20.15. 0d.

We know about the struggles of one of these small Warwickshire owners. The Ashby's originated from Willington, where in 1663 William was assessed at three hearths. They had come down in the world by the later 18th century. In 1790, Robert Ashby is recorded in nearby Tysoe as contributing 8/6d. to the land tax; this would make his freehold about 10 acres.¹ In the years after the enclosure of 1797, the family had lost their farm and status.² Their farm was lost on the closure of a mortgage,² a device used by many small owners to ward off the fatal day when they would have to part with their land. On the closure of the mortgage, the grandfather of Joseph Ashby had "parted with every stick of good furniture in order to pay to the uttermost".³

Enclosure could also adversely affect the very small owners of common field land in another way. We have noticed already that this process was used on occasion to bring pressure to bear on substantial leaseholders to give up their leases in return for annuities. The same device was used where the land was still widely divided amongst a vast number of copy holders. Such was the case at Kenilworth in the Forest of Arden. This parish furnished more than forty shilling freeholders in the 1774 election than any other

1. He was the only Ashby recorded amongst the proprietors at this date.

2. "Joseph Ashby of Tysoe" by M. K. Ashby, Cambridge 1963, p. 2.

3. "Joseph Ashby of Tysoe" by M. K. Ashby, Cambridge 1963, p. 2.

Warwickshire parish. In the award of 1756, three large fields and seven small ones were re-allotted. This included 207 acres awarded to 18 copy holders named in the award, who received between 5 and 22 acres each. It was laid down that if any of them neglected to accept their allotments within three months or to fence, hedge and enclose the same, they should revert to the owner who was to pay them a sum equal to twice their rent yearly for the remainder of their copies of leaseholds. This would amount to a very tiny sum of money.

In addition to the small proprietors who received allotments in compensation for open field land, there were in every parish men who owned no land in the open fields, but whose livelihood depended to a greater or lesser degree on the enjoyment of certain customary rights - in particular that of pasturing cattle, sheep, and other animals on the commons and waste which was attached to the ownership of certain cottages. Also the right to gather fuel from the village commons.

It would, in the first place, be of value to assess what proportion of the inhabitants in Felden parishes were without land in the open fields, and therefore, dependent in part on the use of these customary rights.

At Fenny Compton there were in 1663 85 households, but only 18 landowners received land under the 1779 award. In Napton, one of the great "open" parishes, there were in 1663, 127 households compared with 77 landowners in the award of 1779 (though in the latter parish there had, between 1663 and 1779, been a considerable increase in population). Similarly, in the Worcestershire parish of Eckington the present write found that land-occupiers represented about 51% of the total population, while Dr. Hoskins concluded that in the parish of Wigston Magna in Leicestershire 66% of the population had no land at all on the

1. This was still a very rural parish. It has been said that "Agriculture has been Kenilworth's main concern", V.C.H. VI.p.152.
 2. "Social & Economic Trends in the Rural West Midlands 1785-1825", Unpublished M.Com. thesis by J. M. Martin 1960, pp. 54-55.

eve of the 1766 Enclosure.

We can say, therefore, that even in the nucleated, manorialized parishes of the south-east Felden, and even before enclosure, there were a number of men dependent on the possession of customary rights, without any land in the open fields. When we consider the compensation made to owners of customary rights we find that once again there was no set procedure or pattern. Arrangements varied enormously from one award to another. Nevertheless, some general lines of policy can be disentangled. It is clear, in the first place, that compensation, where it was conceded by the commissioners, was to owners of dwellings to which customary rights were attached, and not occupiers. This could make a great deal of difference as we shall see shortly.

In only one instance was the above rule explicitly departed from in the Warwickshire awards. This was the enclosure of Aston Cantlow in 1743, where at the command of the principal landowner and lord of the parish (the Earl of Abergavenny) compensation was made to occupiers of cottages on his 2,000 acre estate. The results of this action was shown in the Land Tax Returns between 1780 and 1825. Little concentration of ownership took place - the total number of landowners increased from 31 to 43 (including those who paid on houses only).²

Lord Digby seems to have adopted a very different attitude at the enclosure of Coleshill in 1776. Besides a number of other clauses which severely restricted the number of inhabitants eligible to receive common right compensation,³ it was specifically laid down that such cottages as were held of him as Lord of the Manor, were excluded from such rights. Lord Digby received over 850 acres

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1. "The Midland Peasant" 1957 by W. G. Hoskins p. 217, "only 3 families in every 10 occupied any land".
 2. Further light on this question is offered by the Napton award where a schedule included the names of 64 owners of cottages who did not receive land compared with 77 proprietors who got land under the award.
 3. Of course, silence in the awards does not preclude the possibility that informal arrangements were made to compensate cottagers.
 3. Also excluded from common rights were proprietors of land in field not resident in Colehill, owners of cottages or houses in the several other hamlets within the parish, and owners of less than twenty years usage. Furthermore, cottages converted into two or more tenements within twenty years, were to be counted as one.

out of a total of 2,000 acres of common field and waste. The award states that it was lawful for the sale of common rights to be made, and Lord Digby received compensation for some seventy-nine. Forty-five other cottages were compensated, but 28 commons went to three owners. The uselessness of isolated small allotments in lieu of common waste rights is strikingly brought out by the experience of Wm. Hulton the Birmingham printer. He refers to the futility of allotments without enclosed land to which it could be added. On another occasion, however, at the enclosure of waste lands in King's Norton, he bought about 50 acres from others and laid them together to form a farm.¹

Although a large number of awards did find room to make some small provision for the poor, nevertheless a majority of those looked at did not make any reference to them at all. Even in the Wellesbourne award of 1730 one of the first two, it was laid down that all the waste and common ground should be divided "between the Lord Brooke, Mr. Wise, and the Vicar in proportion to their several yardlands". No reference was made to the poor. At the enclosure of Lighthorne, Lord Willoughby gave them short shrift: it was stated that "all those entitled to one lot of bushes on ~~some heath~~ ^{Lighthornes heath}, should have one more "let" only." No further provision was made.

Even the enclosures of entirely freehold yeoman communities like Flecknoe in Wolfhamcote, in 1745, failed to include provisions for the poor or cottagers.

The commissioners, if one can judge from the awards may have been equally indifferent in awards dealing with the enclosure of the commons and wastes in the period mainly from the 1790's. During the later 18th century whole new communities of squatters appeared on these North Warwickshire wastes. It was found that Sir R. Newdigate's cottage rents trebled between 1770 and 1815;² they were drawn mainly from common and waste land in the parish of Mancetter. Farmers and freeholders were putting pressure to bear on the great landlords to pursue the enclosure of these

1. Autobiography of Wm. Hutton 1798. B'ham Central Reference Library, Ref. L78.1.

2. See "~~Economic and Social Trends in the Rural West Midlands~~" "Economic and Social Trends in the Rural West Midlands 1770-1825". Unpublished M.Com. thesis by J. M. Martin, 1960, p. 159.

commons in order to preserve their rights from the encroachments of the newcomers. An agreement made between the freeholders of Studley to secure this aim, was arrived at in 1806.¹ In the award of Hartshill and Ansley Common in 1811, the preamble laid down that "all encroachments....except such as had been enjoyed for twenty years without interruption should be deemed part and parcel of the said Common and Waste...and should be allotted to the Lord of the Manor".²

Where compensation to commoners or the poor did take place it could take more than one form. In some cases, heaths or acres of common land were left unenclosed as at Bedworth and Warwick in the 1770's. At Warwick, in addition to allotments in lieu of cow commons, certain other common rights to cottagers were provided for by two common plots, and the continued enjoyment of latter part of the midsummer land. In addition, 15 acres were held in trust for the poor in compensation for the loss of their right to cut furze or grass.

At Great Harborough in 1755, provision for the poor took the form of an allotment of four acres on which the poor could continue to "gather bushes and enjoy the yearly produce thereof".

It seems that where common land was preserved for grazing the commoners' animals, that the stint was reduced compared with that enjoyed before enclosure, and was strictly defined. There seems evidence of this at Warwick, and at Sowe, where 30 acres of the "Outward Waste" was set aside for the use of the poor in 1756.

In addition to the allotment of tiny holdings in compensation for loss of common pasture rights, the most frequent concession in the awards was the grant of a small acreage, the rent from which should be applied to the purchase of fuel for the poor, in

1. Ref. No. C.R. 889 in War. C.R.O. "To enter on the encroachments and waste lands and to lay them again open to preserve our rights and privileges in the same, and to consider on any other method which may be advantageous to us in preserving our rights".
2. In a similar award (which, however, included open fields) that of Foleshill dated 1775, schedule A included a list of 42 cottages erected within 20 years of the Act to be leased by the Lord of the Manor to the persons in possession at the rents stated.

lieu of their right to gather firewood and furze. What is interesting about these provisions is that they were not meant to supplement the relief received under the Poor Law, nor were they for the benefit of all the poor. As the award of Napton stated in 1779, these provisions were for the "benefit of industrious and honest poor of the said parish not receiving collections or relief of the said parish"¹. If the neighbouring parish of Tysoe may be taken as an example of how the poor's allotment was handled, in fact, most of the income from the land was, by 1827, in the hands of the parish overseers, the official distributors of relief, and of coal within the parish. In 1827 in Tysoe, £26.10. 0d. was drawn from the 18 acres granted at the enclosure for loss of rights to cut fuel. Some £31 was disbursed to the poor in coal, although in reality the coals so given were valued at 4/- per cwt., when the real value at the price set by the parish was not more than 1/8 per cwt.² Occasionally, we find that commissioners adopted more unusual methods of compensating the poor. For example, charities were in some instances allotted land for specific purposes, as at Southam "to clothe ten poor men of the parish", or at Atherstone "for putting out poor children apprentices and to pay for bread for poor widows". Often the overseers of the poor and the Church wardens received a single allotment from which to provide for the poor, upkeep of the Church and repair of the highways. Such was the case at Hillmorton and Bülkington. Unusual was the action of the commissioner at Shipston-on-Stour in 1815 when he divided fifty acres into small plots of about one acre each and sold them off to the small landowners and cottagers of the village.

A detailed account of provisions made for commoners and the poor by the enclosure commissioners is given in Appendix XXI. From this it is clear that in seventy out of about 130 awards, no

1. See also the preamble to the awards of Honington and Brailes.
 2. See "A Hundred Years of Poor Law Administration in a Warwickshire Parish" by A. W. Ashby, loc. cit. p. 101. Ch. VII.

provision was explicitly made at all.¹ In many others compensation would be of very little practical value to those who lost their customary rights, and provision for the poor was to all appearances inadequate. The situation seemed to worsen after 1800, when many awards made no compensation for loss of customary rights or to the poor. Presumably, this was a consequence of the rising costs of enclosure, and great increase in the Poor Rate in these years.

Compensation for loss of rights of common has been recorded in some thirty awards of the one hundred and thirty, and grants of land to the Overseers of the Poor in forty one.

We have had occasion to recall several times before, the opposition which enclosure could arouse here; where owners of common rights were threatened in large parishes, in which they were a numerous body, their opposition to enclosure was often of long duration, fierce and vocal. Three instances of this were the enclosures of Nuneaton, Atherstone and Sutton Coldfield.

The character of Nuneaton and Atherstone in the later 17th century and their subsequent economic development was similar. The population of Nuneaton in 1663 was about twice that of Atherstone, and the town was more dependent on industry at an early date. Nevertheless, both towns were surrounded until the 18th century by their common fields and large commons. Both supported a large cottage population, many of whose main source of livelihood was the exploitation of their customary rights by which means they kept themselves just above subsistence level. In both cases the proposed enclosure brought a sharp reaction from the cottagers and freeholders; the implementation of the enclosure in both cases may have caused considerable economic and social dislocation, though this may not have been of long duration.

1. Though this does not, of course, prove that some informal provision was not made by the commissioners, which did not find a place in the awards.

The low general standard of wealth in the two towns is demonstrated by the dominance of exempted households in the 1663 hearth tax return.¹ At Atherstone, where industry was of little importance before the later 18th century, compared with agriculture supplemented by carrying services to Nuneaton and Ashby,² the population was poorer. As early as 1628, the number of poor in Atherstone was described as "extraordinary great".³

We know much about the economic and social circumstances surrounding the enclosures of both Nuneaton and Atherstone from a remarkable series of memoranda drawn up between 1730 and 1765 opposing the proposal to enclose the open fields and commons of Atherstone.⁴ These memoranda were drawn up by solicitors acting for the 120 cottagers and 60 freeholders of Atherstone. These were countered by memoranda drawn up for the principal freeholder, Abraham Bracebridge and by the Lord of the Manor, the chief supporters of enclosure. At Atherstone there was a 700 acre field "in the midst of which the town is situate", 135 acres of outwoods, and a cow pasture of 15 acres. We are told that in 1738 some 160 of the inhabitants claimed, and about 140 could prove by prescription a right of common appendant to each house for two horses and two cows.⁵ In practice, the cottagers' economic advantages greatly exceeded that to which they had a legal claim, and herein lay the heart of the trouble. It was explained that "the cottagers and farmers are restrained from

1. Nuneaton 163 out of 314 were non-liaible; At Atherstone 173 out of 99 households.

2. See V.C.H. Warks. Vol. IV, p. 127.

3. War. C.R.O. 163 quoted in V.C.H. IV, p. 127.

4. For these see War. C.R.O. Compton-Bracebridge Collection Box H.R./35. In particular "The Case of Atherstone concerning Inclosure of the Common Fields" Drawn up by Wm. Baxter & Others. Jan. 1738.

5. Ibid. Box. H.R./35. "The Case etc....."

6. The cottagers customary right of cutting timber yielded 6/- per week to the poorer cottagers who sold it in the market. The return compares favourably with the 4/- per week plus beer then paid to farm labourers.

letting their commons by pains and orders in the Court Leet. Therefore, the number of beasts actually kept by the cottagers greatly exceeded the number actually kept by the freeholders - Mr. Bracebridge, who has most land (18 out of 24 yardlands) being a tradesman and no great farmer".¹ As things fell out a petition was presented to Parliament to secure the enclosure, by Bracebridge Repington, the Lord of the Manor, and the impropiator of the tithes. Whereupon about 120 cottagers supported by "one or two persons who own about two yardlands" and by "several neighbouring gentlemen and farmers whose estates are likely to be impaired in value by this Inclosure" presented a counter-petition to Parliament. The cottagers claimed that a number of serious economic consequences would follow the enclosure,² and said that these had occurred after the enclosure of several neighbouring towns. The supporters of the enclosure, however, quoted the beneficial consequences of enclosure at Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Derby and Coventry, stating that as a result their markets had increased, and trade advanced. The cottagers rightly made reply that the flourishing state of these towns was a consequence of "their Staple Trades and not the enclosure of their fields". They claimed that a proper comparison would be with small towns like Bosworth and Nuneaton, which had suffered by enclosure, having enjoyed equal rights and privileges.³ Although they did not deny that suffering had followed the enclosure of Nuneaton, the supporters of enclosure attempted to prove that the economic

1. Compton Bracebridge loc. cit. Box H.R./35. "The Case of Atherstone....." Wm. Baxter & Others 1738.

2. Namely that the enclosure would lessen the value and lower the rents of houses which a number of men had recently bought because of their valuable appertenant rights; "diminish the number of inhabitants and increase the number of the poor and the amount of the poor rates; ruin the market and give a total wound to trade, lay a foundation for quarrells and contentions about the cottage rights, to the equivalent most of which consequences have attended the Inclosures of neighbouring towns, and at the same time only aggrandise and enrich one particular person".

3. The number of cottagers at Nuneaton was said to be 120. At the enclosure of 1733, 2670 acres were enclosed - including 76 yardlands. That it was not done without opposition is indicated in the award where it is recorded that 22 separate series of meetings took place.

consequences had been favourable.¹ Since the years immediately preceding the enclosure of Nuneaton covered the years 1727-32, we would not be surprised to find that the poor rates were lower in the ensuing five years. It is difficult to assess the true consequences of enclosure at Nuneaton in view of the conflicting claims made by the two parties at Atherstone. On the whole, there must have been some truth in the description of the Atherstone cottagers; in addition to the general distress and shortage of the period 1730-33 when Nuneaton was enclosed, we know that local industry was in a phase of depression.² Furthermore, whether the population of Nuneaton fell as a consequence of enclosure or not, it certainly appears to have declined between 1663 and 1730 in contrast to towns like Birmingham, where the population increased between the 1660's and 1770's by four and a half times.³ At Attleborough, a part of Nuneaton where much of the enclosure took place, the number of houses fell between 1663 and 1730 from 71 to 50. At Atherstone in 1663, there were 189 households, but in 1730 only 167 families.

Anyway, Parliament seems to have been impressed with the argument of the cottagers of Atherstone, and enclosure was postponed until the middle 1760's, when economic conditions were more favourable. Under the favourable economic conditions of the 1760's few of the consequences predicted by the Atherstone cottagers actually materialised. In fact, the reverse. Nevertheless, impartial opinion of the 1730's seems to have been convinced that the consequences would have been adverse at that time. As it was, the number of freeholders and cottagers must have been considerably reduced at Atherstone in the years after

⁴
the enclosure a consequence of the social dislocation caused.

1. "New houses have been built, empty ones inhabited, the market increased, the Poor Rates less by £400 during five years since the Enclosure, than they were during the five years immediately before it". "The Case of Atherstone", loc. cit.
2. Statement of cottagers of Atherstone that "Tradesmen would be deprived of keeping horses to do their business with at a distance and to fetch coals in a dull time of trade which is the case now in the two Manufactories of Tammy-Weaving and Felt-making". Box H.H./35. Loose document relating to grievances of the cottagers.
3. Conrad Gill "History of Birmingham" Vol. I. p. 159 et. seq. (Ibid.)
4. The number of freeholders in the 1730's was 60, but only a total of 36 voted in the Coventry election of 1774; only 19 were resident in Atherstone.

Sutton Coldfield in the north of the county was another parish with a large body of cottagers and freeholders. Here, there persisted until the enclosure of 1801 a system for the division of and allocation of arable from the waste, locally called "lot acres". Under this system, some 7,000 acres of waste in the parish were let to the inhabitants of the parish, 700 acres at a time. The inhabitant householders¹ received 1 acre of land by lots for five years. Despite the high rental value² of land in the parish on the doorstep of the rising town of Birmingham, enclosure was postponed here until the 19th century because of the opposition of the poorer inhabitants. When enclosure was proposed in 1778, 153 householders had opposed it, and only 78 supported it. A tract appeared dealing with the proposed Sutton enclosure entitled "General Enclosure Destructive to the Poor"³. In the petition of the opponents to the Bill for the Enclosure it was stated of the system of "lot acres" that "from them, the poor⁴ derive much benefit, and to them the expense of enclosure is greater than the amelioration".

That this latter statement summed up the attitude of a vast number of small owners and cottagers receiving compensation for cottage commons in the form of tiny allotments is illustrated by the wholesale purchase of these allotments which seem to have preceded many awards. We have already described that which preceded the enclosure of Coleshill in 1776; similar consequences have been discovered at the enclosure of Alcester in 1771. Some 282 "ancient messuages" in the town had appendant rights - but we are told that a great deal of consolidation took place between

1. For the discussion of this system and the enclosure of Sutton Coldfield see "Lot Acres" by M. W. Beresford in Econ. H.R. Vol. XIII, Nos. 1 and 2, 1943, pp. 74-79.
2. The average rental of 36 estates advertised in Aris' Birmingham Gazette was for the period 1742-47, 11.4/6 per acre. But that of 3 estates in Sutton in Aris' Gazette, 4/3/1745, 18/4/1746 and 29/3/1756 was between 13/- and 25/- per acre.
3. Beresford, loc. cit. p. 75.
4. 5 Geo. IV. exp. 14.

the Act and the Award with the result that the number of proprietors in the Award was reduced to 31. After the lord and rector, the next two largest allotments, totalling 101 acres, seem to have been formed mainly by the acquisition of common rights.¹ The same consequences can be seen at Lea Marston, enclosed in 1776. Under the award, C. B. Adderley, the Lord, received 631 acres, while 13 small owners were allotted a total of 41 acres. By 1781, Adderley paid £48 land tax, but 10 small owners continued to pay between 4/- and 8/- on allotments in lieu of common rights. By 1800, Adderley paid the whole Lea Marston land tax of £49. 4. Od. and all the small owners had disappeared from the land tax returns.²

The enclosure of Studley (1817) was similar in character to those of Alcester and Coleshill. It consisted mainly of the allotment of tiny acreages of land in compensation for the loss of common rights (there was also a small acreage of common field land). But mention is made of a number of these tiny allotments being purchased by Robt. Knight, the Lord of the Manor. A further piece of common was sold in forty small allotments in order to defray the cost of the enclosure.³

We see, therefore, that though it did not create a pauper class, enclosure may sometimes have aggravated an existing situation. A further consequence, partly of the Parliamentary enclosure movement may have been the quickening growth of a landless labouring class, which had emerged by the end of the seventeenth century as we saw earlier in even the most remote Felden parishes. That the Felden communities had, prior to

1. See V.C.H. Warks. Vol. III, pp. 15-16.

2. One should add that this may have been due to the assessor failing to record the names of these small proprietors.

3. This may have been an instance of enclosure broadening the ownership of land in the parish. Such cases have been noted in other counties and remarked upon by E. C. K. Gonner amongst others.

enclosure, a large number of families whose main occupation was not concerned with the land, we have emphasized already. If this movement was intensified in the 18th century enclosure was certainly not the only factor involved. About the vast upsurge of population from the post epidemic 1730's, we shall be talking in due course. This must have been, as at Wigston, an important cause of this growth.¹

The swarming of population in the agricultural parts of Warwickshire could only lead to a considerable surplus population. Though enclosure could provide some extra employment - the operations involved in physically making the enclosures had still, in the eighteenth century, to be performed by hand; nevertheless this gain was more than cancelled out by the large-scale conversion of much of the south-east to pasture. Only in the Avon valley locality where enclosure was for better arable farming, was a large part of this population growth absorbed into the labour force of the area. Labour-saving machinery did not appear in the Midlands until the steep rise in labour costs and high farming profit levels of the 1800's.² Along with this rise in population went the decline of rural industries in the Felden, and the growing inadequacy and ineptitude of the Poor Law Administration. The sum of these influences may have had a cumulative effect in producing the pauperization of almost whole agricultural communities.

To illustrate the quickening growth of the landless labouring class in a Felden parish, we might look at Fenny Compton. Here we can get a glimpse of rural society as it was in 1698, and as it had developed by the early nineteenth century.

We find from a census made in the parish in 1698³ that it was at this date a village almost wholly in the possession of freeholders cultivating their own land. It suffered almost no enclosure before the award of 1779. The Poll Book of 1705 reveals that

1. See "The Midland Peasant" by W. G. Hoskins 1950, Ch. VIII, p. 240. For Developments in 18th century Warwickshire see Ch. X below.
 2. See "Social & Economic Trends"; M. Com. thesis, op. cit, Ch. III, p. 81.
 3. For an account of this see "A Census of a Warwickshire Village in 1698" by P. Styles in University of Birmingham Historical Journal, Vol. III, No. 1951.

there were here at least twenty-four forty-shilling freeholders, and the Jury lists indicate that nine of these had an estate worth upwards of £10. The same story is told by the Hearth Tax assessments.¹ The standard of wealth in the parish was not high, and was widely distributed.

The character of rural society in Fenny Compton showed considerable signs of change on the eve of the enclosure of 1779. Under the award, eighteen proprietors received allotments, and twelve of these received a total of about 500 acres, that is, only 25% of the parish land, in the form of estates of between ten and one hundred acres in size. There were several substantial freeholders (in possession of 1-199 acres) but most of the 85 families do not figure in the 1779 award, and there were only 5 owner-occupiers.

Following the award, much of the land was converted to pasture, for which, being heavy clay, it was highly suited. The population declined from 415 to 383 between 1698 and 1801, and much migration must have taken place out of the parish.

In 1841 we can get a complete picture of the now completed transformation of rural society which had occurred. A hand written return made for the purpose of the 1841 census² gives a full account of occupations in the village. There were at this time sixty-three whose livelihood was derived directly from the land, and thirty-two engaged in rural crafts and trade. Of the former group, four were named as "graziers", eight as "farmers" and the rest, that is fifty-one, as "labourers". By 1840 then, the transformation was complete, though it may have been near this³ in 1779 on the eve of enclosure.

It is difficult to find evidence of the decline of local industries in rural Warwickshire, consequent upon the growth of neighbouring industrial centres, and the development of communications in the later eighteenth century. It was hoped that a

1. Only three houses were assessed to the Hearth Tax at more than three hearths, besides the Manor-house and Rectory.

2. This Return is in the War. C.R.O. and the reference is D.R.O.161.

3. See page 124 above where we refer to the enclosure schedule which refers to 18 landowners. (Box. 3-4.

few sample Poor Rate assessments at various dates would throw light on the problem, but unfortunately the only Warwickshire one known to furnish the occupation of contributors to the Poor Rate ¹ is that of Tysoe, a large south-east pasture parish. The large-scale sale of smallish estates prior to, and as a consequence of, the enclosure of 1797 was described earlier. Proof of a decline in rural industries in this remote rural parish (and we may take it as typical) is provided by a comparison of the 1801 Census Return with the Poor Rate Assessment of 1826.² This shows that the number of families engaged in trade and industry declined from sixty-five to thirty between 1801 and 1826. That large-scale migration from the south-east probably took place is not therefore surprising.

Considerable information about the decline of rural industry in Warwickshire was given by Villiers, the local commissioner, before the 1834 Committee.³ In the Feldeu, he observed, "women and children had formerly been engaged in the making of laces for women's stays in the parish of Leamington Hastings, but they had now been superseded by machinery".⁴ In Napton, another Feldeu parish, large and overcrowded in the eighteenth century, there was, declared Villiers, "now no occupation for women except haymaking". About twenty children were still employed in silk-weaving. At Tanworth-in-Arden, it was said in 1834, that there were still many landowners, while seven hundred acres of common land remained intact.⁵ In the Arden parish of Bulkington, the weaving of ribbons and winding silk, formerly widespread in this locality, provided by 1834, little employment.

We can thus conclude that by the third decade of the nineteenth century there had been a considerable decline in rural

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1. Many assessments, dating from the end of the 17th century to the early 19th century were studied, but to no avail.
 2. See A. W. Ashby "A Hundred Years of Poor Law Administration in a Warwickshire Parish" loc. cit. p. 30. et. seq.
 3. Now part of House of Commons Sessional Papers in Board of Trade Library, 1 Victoria Street, London, S.W.2. See "Reports from Assistant Commissioners" in Poor Law Sessions 4th Feb.-15th Aug. 1834. Report from C. F. Villiers Esq., No. 23. Appendix (A) Part I and Part II, p. 537a, et. seq.
 4. Ibid. p. 537d.
 5. Ibid. p. 538a.

industrial employment. Mainly this was due to the organization of industry, based on large-scale machine production in urban centres like Coventry and Birmingham. We must not be too ready to blame rural decline on the coming of power and machinery, however. In Studley, half village, and half town, the population doubled between 1801 and 1851 as a result of the application of steam power to the needle industry.

As significant for the decline of rural industry were the general economic conditions prevailing in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Many industries saw violent fluctuations in demand owing to imperfect communications, and uncertain marketing conditions during and after, the French Wars. By the later 18th century much of Warwickshire's rural industry was organized from urban industrial centres like Worcester (gloves) or Coventry (silks and ribbons), by middle-men. Every recession in trade was felt first in the outlying rural areas. The informal arrangements existing between the Coventry manufacturers and the rural parishes, made it certain that the latter were the first to lose their employment when any adversity hit the local industries.

It is not impossible that the adversities experienced in rural areas, coupled with the upsurge of population, saw a decline in moral standards in the later 18th century. We seem to detect an increase in the baptism of illegitimate children in some parishes in the later 18th century. However, the figures are too unreliable to allow any useful conclusions to be drawn. Some examples from those of eight south Warwickshire parishes are given below.

Table II. RECORDED BAPTISM OF ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN IN EIGHT FELDEN PARISHES 1725-1834.

Decade	Parishes									
	Tanworth		Grandborough		Willoughby		Hampton Lucy		Wolffhamcote	
	No.	% of Tot.	No.	% of Total	No.	% of Total	No.	% of Total	No.	% of Total
	Bapts.		Baptisms		Baptisms		Baptisms		Baptisms	
1725-34	-									
1735-44	12	2.7	2	1.7	1	1.0	2	1.7		
1745-54	9	2.1	3	1.9	2	2.2	1	0.7	2	2.1
1755-64	12	3.1	7	4.1	3	3.9	2	1.8	1	1.0
1765-74	33	8.0	4	3.1	9	9.8	9	7.0	4	4.4
1775-84	33	7.0	6	5.7	7	6.8	8	6.9	7	7.9
1785-94			9	7.7						
1795-1804										

[] = ENCLOSURE DATE

Table II Cont. RECORDED BAPTISM OF ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN
IN EIGHT FELDEN PARISHES 1725-1834

<u>Decade</u>	<u>Parishes</u>					
	<u>Tysoe</u>		<u>Ilmington</u>		<u>Baford</u>	
	<u>% of</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<u>No. Bapts.</u>	<u>No. Bapts.</u>	<u>No. Baptisms</u>	<u>No. Baptisms</u>	<u>No. Baptisms</u>	<u>No. Baptisms</u>
1725-34	2	1.0	-	-	-	-
1735-44	0	0	-	-	1	0.7
1745-54	1	0.5	-	-	-	0
1755-64	7	2.7	6	3.1	5	4.6
1765-74	9	3.3	5	2.5	5	3.5
1775-84	8	3.0	5	2.5		
1785-94	8	3.4	2	1.1		
1795-1804	12	5.4	11	6.1		
1805-14	10	4.6				
1815-24	11	4.6				
1825-34	14	9.3				

— = Enclosure decade.

The increase in the recorded baptism of illegitimate infants was similar in a number of parishes: a rise from about 1% of all baptisms in 1735-44, to about 7% by 1775-84. This means that by the latter decade the baptism of illegitimate infants represented one in fourteen of all baptisms in these parishes. It is certain that the registers under-record the baptism of illegitimate children. In some parishes where there would clearly be such a rise, no figures are recorded at all. An example of such an instance is the small Felden town of Southam, where only one or two are recorded in each decade, out of more than one hundred baptisms per decennial period. Presumably much depended on the conscientiousness of the individual incumbent.

In the above parishes, the enclosure award was invariably followed by a rise in such baptisms. However, an increase from the 1760's is also noted at Tanworth and Hampton Lucy, where no enclosure took place. The increase in illegitimacy was also noted in industrial parishes, as is evidenced by the registers of Atherstone and Bedworth. In the latter parish the illegitimacy rate rose to one in twelve in the 1800's giving it the name of "Black Bedworth".

We must treat the remarks of the 1834 Poor Law Commissioners with caution, since they clearly had an axe to grind (they wanted to prove, of course, that the moral state of the poor had deteriorated, and that this was the direct consequence of the nature of Poor Law administration before 1834). Nevertheless, for what it is worth, the opinion of the local commissioner was that the proportion of marriages where the female was already pregnant was high and had increased since the turn of the century.¹ He went on to remark that the practical effect of the old Poor Law Administration was to encourage bastardy since it punished the man, but offered the woman impunity, if not profit.²

Despite the attempts of the local commissioner to castigate the old Poor Law in 1834, it is clear that in fact, bastardy may have been on the increase in Warwickshire BEFORE Speenhamland.³ There was, in 1834, no general agreement amongst the local landowners as to the causes of the degradation of the "lower orders" in the countryside. At Rugby the opinion was that it stemmed from the estrangement between the farmers and labourers which had been taking place ever since the enclosures.⁴ At Allesley, the practice of putting children in weavers' shops as soon as they could do without their parents' assistance, and where the master was interested only in the output of ribbons.⁵

At Napton the pauperization of the labouring class was ascribed to "the deprivation to agriculturalists of recourse to the country banks which made it impossible for him to continue employment."⁶ It is true, however, that there was general agreement on the worsening of the situation caused by the various forms of the Poor Law, and in particular the "Roundsman System".

Villiers stated that this system was admitted to have been at one

1. Appendix A. Part II. "Reports from Assistant Commissioners" in Poor Law Sessions, 4th Feb., 15th August 1834, No. 23, p.9a,
2. Ibid. p. 9a.
3. Much more reliable evidence than is offered here is needed before we can say where bastardy did in fact see an increase in the later 18th century. (et. seq. loc. cit.)
4. Appendix A. "Report from Assistant Commissioners", p. 549.
5. Ibid. p. 542-543.
6. Villiers, p. 548-549.

time practiced very generally. The date of its discontinuance was not referred to a later period in many places than the occurrence of the riots in 1830. He added that great discontent appeared to attach to it at that time.¹ The universal application of this system of relief in Warwickshire in the later 18th century has been confirmed by a student of the Poor Law in eighteenth century Bidford and Bedworth,² and by the present writer's own examination of the Overseers Accounts relating to more than thirty Warwickshire parishes. This is not surprising as it was particularly suitable as an expedient for the relief of agricultural communities. Its application confirms that total expenditure on poor relief is not strictly an index by which we can measure poverty, since it became a device by which a labourer's wages were made up to provide a minimum subsistence for his family.

However, an investigation of such expenditure is useful in order to compare the reliance of various types of parish on relief at different dates, and also to estimate the pace at which this expenditure increased. We could hope further to note any connection of expenditure on poor relief, with the dislocation consequent upon enclosure.

Such an investigation has been attempted of the accounts of the Overseers of the Poor of some thirty rural parishes in various parts of Warwickshire. The results are tabulated in Appendices XXII & XXIII in detail. It will be noted that the accounts were generally very fragmentary and it was difficult to secure a series even for a few decades over the course of the eighteenth century.

In the tables given in Appendices XXII & XXIII we show the average expenditure of the Overseers of the Poor in five year periods, at various points in the eighteenth century. Given this, we can calculate the average expenditure per head of population in each parish, at various dates. Annual expenditure is calculated in 5 year periods.

1. Villiers, p. ~~542-543~~ p. 12a, (Part II) Appendix A.
 2. K. V. Bligh, "The Conditions of the Poor in Warwickshire", B.A. dissertation in Birmingham University Library, 1963. Ref. Diss. A.41363. Book No. 544,458.

We can say at once that a very great rise in expenditure on forms of poor relief took place during the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in the parishes looked at. This rise seems to have begun with the onset of population increase in the 1740's. The increase in expenditure was striking in all classes of parish: that is old-enclosed, open, Felden, Arden¹ and industrial.

It is clear that more than one factor influenced the soaring trend of expenditure in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Clearly, population rise, though significant, was not the most important factor. The tables giving expenditure per head of population show a striking real increase took place apart from population rise.

In many cases we note that enclosure took place where expenditure was rising rapidly anyway. Nevertheless, we can say that enclosure may have been associated with increased monetary outlay by the Overseers in almost all ten Felden parishes, where accounts are available for the enclosure period.

In the parishes of Tysoe, Kineton, Grandborough, Stockton, Oxhill and Monks Kirby, enclosure saw a bigger rise in the Poor Rate than at any other date in the eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries. In Grandborough, for example, the rise in outpayments in the 1760's was 180% following the 1766 enclosure, more than twice as great as that in any other decade between 1740 and 1820. The examination of the mean average expenditure per annum per head of population tells the same story. Between 1730-49 and 1750-69 this figure rose in ten Felden pasture parishes undergoing enclosure between the latter dates, from 3/- per head to 5/- per head. In other localities, however, expenditure changed little in these years as we see below.

1. The Overseers' Accounts were examined in the War. C.R.O. with the exception of that of Aston Cantlow, which was examined in the Parish, and is kept in the Parish Chest.

Table III MEAN AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER HEAD OF POPULATION PER YEAR IN EACH FIVE YEAR PERIOD

<u>Period</u>	<u>No. of</u> <u>Pari-</u> <u>shes.</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>No. of</u> <u>Pari-</u> <u>shes</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>No. of</u> <u>Pari-</u> <u>shes</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>No. of</u> <u>Pari-</u> <u>shes</u>	<u>Type</u>
		<u>Felden</u> <u>Pasture</u>		<u>Felden</u> <u>Avon</u> <u>Valley</u>		<u>Industrial</u>		<u>Arden</u> <u>Forest</u>
1730-49	6	3.0/-	5	2.2/-	-	-	3	2.1/-
1750-69	9	5.0/-	6	3.0/-	2	3.4/-	3	2.6/-
1790-					5	14.2/-)	4	10.0/-
1804	10	21.0/-	9	18.5/-	6)	16.1/-)		
1805-	9	21.1/-	7	23.3/-	4)	14.6/-)	4	14.1
1814					5)	16.8/-)		

We can conclude that already by the middle eighteenth century expenditure per head in nine Felden pasture parishes was 66% higher than in eleven parishes in other localities. By 1790, Poor Law costs everywhere had risen sharply, but the mean average expenditure per head of population in ten Felden pasture parishes was 21.0/- per year and higher than elsewhere.

The biggest cleavage from 1790 onwards, was however, between the agricultural south (the Felden) as a whole, and the Arden north. While the mean average for nineteen Felden parishes was 21.0/- and 18.5/-, those for a total of ten industrial and Arden parishes was 16.1/- and 10.0/- per head of the population.

The higher poor law costs were evenly spread over the Felden parishes as we see from the table below.

Table IV. PARISHES IN WHICH MEAN AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER YEAR WAS OVER 18/-

<u>Period</u>	<u>Felden</u> <u>Pasture</u>	<u>Felden</u> <u>Avon Valley</u>	<u>Industrial</u>	<u>Arden</u>
1790-1804	8 out of 10	4 out of 9	2 out of 6	0 out of 4
1805-1814	7 out of 9	4 out of 7	2 out of 6	0 out of 4

Between 1795 and 1800 in some Felden parishes like Tysoe which had recently undergone enclosure, annual expenditure rose to over £2 per head of population.

A high point in payments for the relief of the poor (in Warwickshire as elsewhere) was the year 1800-01, and indeed the whole

quinquennium 1800-04. However, it is worth noting that the peak period was, in most parishes, not reached until 1819, consequent upon the post-war distress.

Despite the increase in expenditure everywhere after 1815, the heaviest costs continued to be in the agricultural south of the county, rather than the forested and industrial north. In the conditions prevailing after the French Wars, little distinction is apparent between poor law expenditure in the pasture parishes, and those of the Avon Valley grain producing area.

This distinction between expenditure in the south and the north has been noted by other students of the Poor Law. The same conclusions were reached by a student comparing Poor Rate expenditure in two Warwickshire parishes, one agricultural and one industrial.¹ It was remarked that the number of poor, though considerable in both parishes during the later 18th century, was in proportion, larger in rural Bidford, than in industrial Bedworth. This was particularly so in the post-war depression period where, as elsewhere in the Felden, expenditure by the Overseers saw a considerable spurt in Bidford. In fact, neither in Bidford nor Bedworth was relief entirely accounted for by the Overseers expenditure, and this under-estimates the degree of dependence on such relief in the parish. The Dudley Charity Trust at Bidford yielded about thirty pounds each year, for the relief of the poor. This was an instance of under-estimation which may have relevance to other parishes,² for example those where some provision was made in the enclosure awards, for the relief of the poor, or at least the deserving poor. Examples of such cases have been recorded earlier.³

It is not difficult to see why such differences in expenditure should have existed between agricultural and industrial parishes. Population rise has been demonstrated to have been very considerable in all agricultural areas, though followed before 1801 in some areas, by large-scale migration. Thus in isolated agricultural regions like the Felden, where such rural industry as had

1. Miss Katherine Bligh's B.A. Dissertation, loc. cit. p. 40.
 2. Similarly at Bedworth, the Chamberlain Charity Trust gave relief.
 3. See Appendix XXI.

existed had now passed away, over-population and under-employment may have resulted, before migration became effective in re-adjusting the balance. Unlike the Arden Forest area, the entirely agricultural parishes of the Felden could offer no alternative employment when agricultural distress set in during the 1800's and particularly after 1814. The discontent in the agricultural areas culminated in the demonstrations and burning of farmers' property in the yeas before 1834.¹ A further reason for the greater degree of distress in the Felden was the more universal application of the "Roundsmen System" here. It was found that industrial Bedworth did not adopt the system for example,² although in fact, many rural industrial parishes did do so.

It seems that little distinction can be made between different agricultural parishes within the same locality. Distress seems to have affected a whole neighbourhood regardless of whether the parish was undergoing enclosure or old-enclosed. Thus expenditure in the Felden agricultural parishes of Farnborough, Budbrooke and Clarendon was as high as in any parishes in this part of Warwickshire, in spite of the fact that they were all three old-enclosed parishes. In only one such parish, Leamington Hastings, was expenditure unusually low.

Nevertheless, we would seem to be justified in thinking that in some Felden parishes the enclosure of the open fields marked the opening of a period of increased pauperization, which was to continue for many decades. The event was not only significant in itself but the ill-effects were, of course, cumulative; it considerably aggravated social division and tension, it enhanced the financial precariousness of many small freeholders; above all, it sapped the independence and self-confidence of the lower levels of Felden communities. The Overseers' accounts well illustrate this last point. In many parishes the poor were forced to barter their cottages for relief, and we find examples of parishes where the Overseers are the leading cottage landlord. Alternatively, the Overseers took over the responsibility of paying out monies to

1. Villiers, op. cit. p. 537 et. seq.

2. Bligh. op. cit. p. 30.

someone else for the rents owed by the paupers under their charge. This was also of frequent occurrence. One such parish where the ownership of the pauper cottages was transferred to the Overseers was the Felden pasture parish of Tysoe. In the parish of Fenny Compton on the other hand, the payment of many cottagers' rents is recorded under expenses in the last years of the eighteenth century. There is evidence that in addition to this growth of pauperism and to famine, parishes around Tysoe were also subject in 1795 to a further visitation of smallpox, always a reliable harbinger of increased hardship.

As a consequence of these various factors, the number of paupers may have seen an increase in some Felden parishes towards the end of the eighteenth century. In the parish of Prior's Hardwick enclosed in 1758, the register names the occupations of those entered under burials between 1750 and 1780, and even in this earlier period the number of male paupers is considerable - twenty-five out of seventy-one buried between these dates, whose occupation is recorded. The next largest category was that of "farmer" which accounted for fifteen names. However, all the evidence suggests that things got far worse in the period of the French Wars and afterwards. In 1800-1801, sixty-one individuals are recorded in the accounts of Fenny Compton as being in receipt of a weekly allowance from the Overseers of the parish. Since the population in 1801 was 383, this means 16% of the inhabitants were receiving regular relief. This is in addition to those recorded as receiving "occasional" relief. At the same date the proportion relieved by the Bidford overseers was 17% of the total population. It seems likely that the proportion of inhabitants in the industrial parish of Bedworth was considerably less than this.

In addition to weekly payments, many other forms of relief were engaged in by the overseers. Compared with the regular

1. Evidence of some rise in the burials in certain years in the last two decades of the 18th century - shown in registers. Also mention of smallpox outbreak by Ashby op. cit. "A Hundred Years of Poor Relief in a Warwickshire Village". p. 20 et seq.
 2. Accounts in War. R.O., D.R.O. 114/261.

weekly payments it seems likely that the "occasional relief" out-payments could often be the major item of expenditure. Thus at Grandborough in 1795 the "constant" collection accounted for the paying out of £70, including sums for keeping four people in a workhouse. But occasional payments in this year amounted to £250. A further item of expenditure was clothing, represented in all the overseers' accounts. Also in the war years, particularly the purchase of bread for the poor. At Napton in 1801, payment of over £19 for 669 loaves at 7d each was recorded. Payment for coals is also recorded. In the accounts of the Felden parish of Farnborough, and at Atherstone in Mancetter, payments around 1800 were made to "militia families", presumably the families of absent soldiers.

At Atherstone and in other large parishes there was the additional expense of the upkeep of the workhouse. This was a considerable sum, nearly 33% of the total expenditure was on the workhouse and its inmates.

One of the most important items under the weekly account referred to above was payment made for the lodging of paupers with other villagers. The other was subsidizing below subsistence level wages through the "Roundsman System". A notice in the late 18th century accounts of Wolfhamcote stated that occupiers employing over one man or three boys were to receive three shillings for every man and one shilling for each boy, per week. All men and boys out of employment were to go on the roads and were to be paid half out of the poor rate and half by the surveyor employing them.¹

The fact that poor-rate expenditure was sometimes as high in the Avon Valley arable parishes, as in the Felden pasture shows that such spending is not entirely a measure of over-population and under-employment, a point we emphasized at the beginning.

1. Ref. Overseers' Accounts of Wolfhamcote on Microfilm in War.C.F.O. 1788-1832. D.R/167/6.

The same comment was made by the local commissioner in 1834. Villiers revealed that in the parish of Cubbington, situated in the Avon Valley, where arable husbandry saw an extension from the enclosure of the 1760's, twenty-five out of sixty labourers were sent "on the round" not doing half a day's work. "This notwithstanding the fact that the sixty labourers were no more than was necessary for the proper cultivation of the parish",¹ he remarked.

1. Villiers op. cit. Appendix A. Part II, p. 16a.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF
ENCLOSURE

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The economic consequences of the Parliamentary enclosure process were numerous; nevertheless, it seems true to say that from the viewpoint of the landowners, who inspired the movement, it was probably regarded strictly as a form of economic investment which would yield an immediate and lucrative return on capital outlay. This would take the form of increased rents. For the great landlord, enclosure was one of the best investments of the age for his capital, since the return was likely to be five or six times the gross return on money invested in land purchase, or the Funds.¹

That this was indeed the way the landlords viewed the advantages of enclosure is clearly demonstrated by certain records of minutely detailed cost and profit calculations existing among the collection of documents relating to enclosure in Warwickshire.²

Since the landlords did not, as a body, attempt in the 18th century to improve agriculture through the enforcement of improved lease covenants, for example on home farms, enclosure was the chief means by which they made a contribution to improved husbandry. The process may well have represented in the 18th century a significant device by which rents could be raised. The table below, summarizing the results of an investigation of

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1. See G. Mingay: "English Landed Society in the 18th century" in "Studies in Social History", 1963, p. 183.
 2. For an account of several series of calculations of the economic return likely from Warwickshire enclosures see Appendix XXIV. The references are:
 Sambourne Heath 1707. Petition to Sir R. Throckmorton, 1707, quoted in V.C.H. Warks. III, p. 87. See above p. 115.
 Wolfhamcote. Document in War. C.R.O. 'A true statement....' op. cit. Photostat copy in C.R.O. 212.
 Atherstone. Calculations on a loose sheet dated 1730, in Compton Bracebridge, M.S. War. C.R.O., Box. H.R.35.
 Estates of Leigh Family - calculations preceding enclosure, in Leigh Collection at the Birthplace, Stratford. Adlestrop Papers, Bundle I in Box I, loose paper. Also notebook entitled 'Particulars before the enclosure of 1765' in Box I, Bundle 3.

rental values of estates appearing in Aris' 'Birmingham Gazette' at various dates seems to give the impression that the rental value of landed estate in Warwickshire as a whole was not rising very markedly during the 18th century prior to 1770, (though it may be questioned how far this sample here used is representative of wider changes) except in the immediate vicinity of growing industrial towns like Coventry and Birmingham. This evidence receives some support from a comment of the 1815 Board of Agriculture Reporter who remarked that rents were, in general, low in the county. (In comparison with what he does not make clear).¹ Perhaps the explanation of this is that substantial rent increases in the 18th century were taking place mostly among landowners possessing unenclosed or otherwise undeveloped properties in areas favourably situated for markets.² Only 25 per cent of the county acreage was, in fact, affected by Parliamentary enclosure. The inefficiency of the great estate, and the widespread influence of convention, and beneficial leases at the expense of economic rents (particularly among the institutional landowners)³ was remarked upon recently by Mingay. As for the estates of the gentry, which were often largely old-enclosed, they had probably been, in general, developed by their founders in the 17th century, leaving less room for rapid rent increase during the course of the 18th, at least until leases ran out at some date after 1760 (when prices began to rise at a quicker pace).

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1. "General View of the Agriculture of Warwick", 1815, 2nd Edition, p. 36, by William Murray.
 2. Evidence suggests that though enclosure and rent increase was important, it was not, as we shall see later, the only means by which income could be raised. For example, receipts from the sale of timber and royalties on coal and iron mines rose sharply in the later 18th century. Lord Leigh's estates described later and those of the Earl of Talbot and Shrewsbury (for which see my M. Com. thesis, loc. cit.) illustrate the significance of this point. See above Chapters III & V, pp. 77-102 & 146-163.
 3. "English Landed Society", loc. cit. p. 41.

Table I

SUMMARY OF CHANGES IN RENTAL VALUE OF LANDED ESTATES APPEARING IN ARIS' GAZETTE 1725-71

No. of Estates in Sample	Dates	Average Rental Value in /- per acre	Range of Rental Values	Mean Average Rental Figure	No. of Estates with Rental Value Below 10/- per acre	% of Estates ditto	No. of Estates with Rental Value between 10/- & 15/- per acre	% of Estates ditto	No. of Estates with Rental Value between 15/- & 20/- per acre	% of Estates ditto	No. of Estates with Rental Value over ₹1 per acre
7	1714-26		5/- to 15/-		2	28.5	4	57.1	1	14.2	-
15	1732-37		6/- to 18.7/-		8	53.0	5	33.0	2	13.3	-
36	1742-47		5.8/- to 21/-		12	33	20	55.5	3	8.3	1
30	1750-57		5.1/- to 21.4/-		13	43.3	11	36.6	4	13.3	2
21	1765-67		5.3/- to 22.3/-		6	28.5	10	47.6	4	19.0	1
<u>Totals for period 1725-67</u>											
109		11.6/-	5/- to 22.3/-	13.65/-	41	37.5	50	45.8	14	12.8	4
<u>50 Estates for 2 years 1770-71</u>											
50		12.4/-	5.4/- to 23.5/-		17	34.0	19	38.0	9	18.0	5

Since enclosure by Parliamentary act took place at an early date in Warwickshire, it is possible to distinguish that rise in rents which perhaps stemmed from enclosure and an enlarged commodity market¹ and that consequent upon the war boom and inflation of prices from the 1790's. The rent rise during the Napoleonic War years is, of course, well known, though here again there were considerable regional differences. Compared with the earlier decades of the 18th century, the first half of the war years saw a spectacular rise in the general level of rents in Warwickshire, amounting between 1795 and 1804 to 25 per cent.² The further improvement between 1804 and 1814 was even greater.

The manner in which enclosure was tied to prospective financial profit is further shown by a consideration of the chronology of the acts. We find that the timing of enclosures was related closely to the Midland grain market.³ A comparison of Midland wheat prices and the chronology of enclosure is demonstrated by the graph in Appendix XXXI and brings this point out fairly clearly. The graph shows the pattern of wheat prices in Birmingham from the 1730's up to 1812. The three peaks in the late 1750's, 1774 and 1782 were accompanied by high levels in the graph recording the total of private acts per quinquennium. The first appearance of enclosure acts in any numbers was from the middle 1750's when the wheat prices in Birmingham market saw the first of several marked upsurges. In 1756 and 1757 the highest wheat prices of the century up to that date were recorded in Birmingham market - 6/6d. to 7/-d. per bushel in October of these years. The high grain prices of the late 1760's and of many years throughout the 1770's in Birmingham, likewise, brought a heavy spate of enclosure acts in Warwickshire. The further

1. It is undeniable, of course, that enclosure took place when the market for commodities was growing rapidly and thus tempted the investor to put his money in land.

2. 'General View... Warwick', 2nd Edn. Wm. Murray, p. 33, Ch. IV, also p. 46. For a recent investigation of rent rise on Midland Estates 1785-1825 see "Social & Economic Trends in the Rural West Midlands 1785-1825". Unpublished M. Com. thesis 1960 by J. M. Martin, Ch. V. pp. 146-163.

3. Doubtlessly many early enclosures were also affected by rising beef and mutton prices.

upsurge of wheat prices in the 1790's, from the opening of the war, marked the last great wave of Parliamentary enclosure acts in Warwickshire extending throughout the first decade of the 19th century. Conversely, in the years of low wheat prices at Birmingham, enclosures were fewer, generally speaking.

Both publicly and privately, the main justification put forward for enclosure was, in the 18th century, that it would bring in a high return on capital outlay and improved rents to all landowners whose land underwent the process. Thus, the case for the enclosure of the wholly yeoman owned village of Flechnoe in 1730 rested on a demonstration in considerable detail of the improvement in rent which would ensue, culminating in the triumphant statement that the clear profit 'by inclosing, at a moderate computation, will be £830 per annum.¹

Similarly, the case for the enclosure of Sambourne Heath proposed as early as 1707 in a petition to the Lord of the Manor was that the rental value would be more than doubled by the enclosure of this land, amounting to 1,000 acres. The twenty-four tenant commoners also asked that not more than sixty acres should be set aside for the poor of Sambourne.²

In the long debate for and against the enclosure of Atherstone in Mancetter which went on for thirty-five years, from 1730 to 1765, the strongest reasons put forward by those who wanted the enclosure were that it would bring in a handsome profit in increased rental value, benefiting not only the chief landowner, but also the other freeholders; and even the cottagers' small allotments, so it was alleged, would be greatly increased in value; witness of this were those of Nuneaton where the cottagers' allotments were, after the enclosure, worth 12/- per annum,³ it was remarked.

1. 'A True Statement of the Case Relating to the Intended Inclosure of Flechnoe Fields in the County of Warwick'. War. R.O. Z12/1-2.
2. Petition to Sir R. Throckmorton 1707, quoted V.C.H. III, p. 87, see also p. 115, above.
3. At Atherstone, said the protagonists of enclosure, cottage rights not worth 1/- would be worth 20/- a year. See Compton Bracebridge Collection Box HR/35, loose document entitled 'On the design of Inclosing Atherstone Field'.

The enclosure of certain parts of the Leigh family estates was preceded by a minutely detailed analysis of the cost and likely financial advantages accruing from the enclosure of the two parishes, entitled 'Some Circumstances to be well considered of and things done previous to the bringing a Bill into Parliament for enclosing at Adlestrop'.¹ The Rev. Thomas Leigh then lays down the procedure to be adopted before applying for an enclosure bill, with the purpose of assisting the heir to the estates rather than of immediately implementing an enclosure, which did not actually occur until the later 1770's. In the course of this enquiry no consideration was neglected, and the landowner posed to himself a number of rather tortuous problems in the course of his investigation.²

It is significant that the final factor which the Rev. Leigh feels must be considered either "by myself or my successor" is "how far in the present situation of the Field lands not much more than one third of which are yet fallen in, and the rest still hanging out, though slenderly, upon lives of either Copy or Lease Holding, it may be prudent for me to engage in the great work of Inclosing a settled estate....". It is without question that where economic circumstances were otherwise favourable - high agricultural prices and low interest rates - yet still the final decision was dependent on the length, and character, of lease tenures. If leases were not falling in, they could postpone the prospective increased profit due to the landlord (which would meantime accrue to the tenant farmers) and thus discouraged the landlord from pursuing enclosure. This explains, of course, why many parishes where the estimated value of the land was comparable with other parts of the county which underwent the

1. Leigh Collection, Birthplace Stratford. Adlestrop Papers, Bundle 3. Notebook entitled "Particulars Before the Enclosure 1765" and other memoranda.

2. For example: "Are these Inclosures intrinsically worth what they are let at; or are they let higher than they are really worth because they are necessary to the Field Estates? If the former, is it not probable that the unenclosed lands at Adlestrop, when inclosed, will be worth a large improved rent value? If the latter, what are the Inclosures intrinsically worth? 'Particulars'" Supra.

process at an early date, remained unenclosed until the 1790's or later still. At Adlestrop the Rev. Leigh postponed enclosure for this reason until the later 1700's. (It incidentally partially explains the ruin of many lesser gentry and the prosperity of many leaseholders during the 18th century¹).

A profitable and prompt return on money laid out then was the predominant, if not the sole motive force, which led the landlords to seek Parliamentary enclosure. What the calculated increase in value, consequent upon enclosure, actually amounted to, and what enlargement of the profit margin in fact materialised, we will now attempt to assess.

A table recording the calculated increase in the value of some Warwickshire rentals is given in Appendix XXIV. The forecast increase in value varied between 210 per cent at Wolfhamcote in 1730 to 66.3 per cent on Lord Leigh's estate in the 1770's. It is clear that the likely increase would vary considerably according to the intrinsic value of the land, the state of the rents prior to enclosure, the length of leases, and so on. As early as 1707 it was calculated that the rental value of Sambourne Heath could, as we saw, be more than doubled. The very considerable value increase proposed at Wolfhamcote was presumably partly based on the projected conversion of the open fields to pasture for which it was highly suited.

At Atherstone it was calculated that, in spite of the loss of 100 acres to compensate the cottagers, and 40 acres to the tithe owner, there would be an immediate increase in total value of the remaining land of 45 per cent, which at the end of fifteen years would be increased to 74 per cent. The proposals are summarised below:-

1. See H. J. Habakkuk, 'English Landownership, 1680-1740', Econ. H.R. Vol. 10, No. 1, 1940, p. 9.

Table II. FORECAST ENCLOSURE PROFITS AT ATHERSTONEBefore Enclosure (1765)

<u>Total Acreage (acres)</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Value of Yardlands (per acre)</u>	<u>% Increase of Total Value</u>	
			<u>Immediate</u>	<u>After 15 Yrs.</u>
600	£396	12"-	45%	74%

After Enclosure

460	£575	25/-		
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We see from this that the value of the open fields at Atherstone more than doubled at enclosure, though the real increase was reduced owing to considerable tithe, and common right compensation. From the other examples given in this appendix it is clear that the value of the land was, in all cases, expected to double at enclosure, and in some cases to increase still further. The net profit, however, was, as at Atherstone, expected to be reduced by the necessity of tithe and common right compensation. The latter were not usually so burdensome to the landowners as was the case at Atherstone, however, and the return on outlay quoted in this forecast must have been a minimum. A further point of interest which emerges from the forecast rental improvements was that, though a considerable rise in value took place immediately upon an enclosure, nevertheless, a further considerable increase, nearly as great again, could be expected over the subsequent twenty years or so.

It is important to find how far the predicted increase in landed profits were realised. For this we must turn to the estate records of the Warwickshire landlords.¹ In order to assess the changes which were possibly influenced by enclosure, we can usefully take note of three trends: the development in landed income accruing to landlords during the 18th century and

1. See the summary of changes in Gross Rentals during the course of enclosure in the early 19th century on the estates of six Warwickshire and three Staffordshire landowners in Appendix XXV. The references to rentals quoted are as follows: Lord Leigh's Estate; Leigh Collection in Birthplace, Stratford, Rentals and Accounts 1762-1818, Rental No. 11 et. seq. Surveys of whole estate 1766-1775, Photostats in War. C.R.O. Ref. TD/2142 63 and Viscount Beauchamp's estates; Ragley Collection in War. R.O. C.R. 114A, Rentals 1776-1798, Ref. C.R. 114A/192/208. (cont. on p.167)

early 19th century; the net rental increases at various significant dates - in particular those taking place after the enclosure of land; and finally, changes in the average acreage value of land on the estates of the great landlords. All three trends have been noted where possible and the results are summarized in Appendices XXV-XXVII.

Looking first at the changes of income, it will be convenient to divide the study into two parts; enlargement of income in the later 18th century up to 1790; and that which took place between that date and 1820, which must in large part be attributed to the war-time inflation of prices and profits. It is clear in the first place that the whole period saw an enormous enlargement of income on most estates; this cannot, however, be attributed merely to the war-time conditions since on many estates a very considerable expansion of income took place in the later 18th century before 1790.

Thus, we find that one of Warwickshire's leading, up-and-coming landowners, Viscount Beauchamp, succeeded in building up a compact estate in the county and doubling his income between 1776 and 1797. His rental income grew from £2,224 to £5,906 in this period, an advance of 106 per cent. Furthermore, it is possible that this development was due to some extent to the opportunities presented by enclosure.

cont. from p.166.

Lord Willoughby de Broke's Estates. Willoughby de Broke Collection in The Birthplace, Stratford. Rentals 1758-1786. Compton and Chesterton Accounts.

The Shirley of Ettington Estates: Shirley Collection in War. C.R.O. Ref. C.R.299. Surveys 1789, 1797 in Box 3/1. Valuations 1811 Box 3/1. Rentals 1726-99 in Box 2/2 (117).

Howard of Elford Hall Estates: Elford Collection in Birmingham Ref. Library. Rentals Cat. Nos. 496, 693, 700, 747, 751, 814, 852. Bracebridge Estates of Atherstone. Compton Bracebridge Collection in War. C.R.O. Ref. C.R.258. Ref. Rentals 1748-1822 of estate of Abraham Bracebridge.

The references to the rentals and accounts of three Staffordshire landlords whose estates were studied are as follows: Earl Talbot's Estates. Talbot-Shrewsbury Collection in Staffs R.O. Ref. D.240/M. Bundle VI. Also 25/W.S./D. 1744.

The Hatherton estate of Sir Edward Littleton. Hatherton Collection in Wm. Salt Library Staffs. Rentals E.29, E.3, E.5, E.6, E.7 for years 1796-1825. The Farley Estate of Bill Family in Staffs R.O. Farley Collection D.554, Bundle No. 53. Rentals 1789-1825.

1. Created Marquis of Hertford in the 1790's.

We have calculated that about half of his Warwickshire estate was affected by Parliamentary enclosure in this period. Much of the growth in rental income was due to the purchase of open field land in the years immediately preceding enclosure, an event of not infrequent occurrence as we have emphasized elsewhere. But the increase in the value of land after enclosure was also an important factor in this advance. In 1776 Lord Beauchamp had purchased the Great Tithes and five yardlands in the parish of Shottery,¹ but by the enclosure award date (1787) he held a total of ~~22~~²² yardlands and received 556 acres plus a further 320 acres in compensation for the loss of his tithe.

Similarly, in the years between 1770 and the enclosure award of 1779 Lord Beauchamp bought out the four substantial freeholders in the parish of Binton² (who had themselves carried out considerable consolidation prior to this date). As a result, he was in possession of the whole parish except the glebe by 1779. The consequence was that in these two parishes his gross rents were advanced by 267 per cent and 580 per cent respectively. On the extensive old enclosed lands of Lord Beauchamp the increase in these years was only about 40 per cent over the same period of time. That the improved value of the land was probably a factor in this growth of income is demonstrated by the increase in value noted at Shottery from 17.6/- to 25/- per acre after enclosure.

The different features noted above can be summarised in the table below:

1. V.C.H. Warks. Vol. III, p. 268. He paid £11,183 for 125 acres and the tithe rental worth £190.
2. Ibid. p. 63-64.

Table III. CHANGES IN LANDED INCOME ON VISCOUNT BEAUCHAMP'S ESTATE 1776-97

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Rent Received</u>	<u>Gross % Rise</u>	<u>Description of Rents</u>	<u>Value per Acre</u>	<u>Tenants</u>
Shottery (enclosed 1797)	1776	£300)	267	Tithe Rental £190 + Rent of 125 acres 320 acres + 556 acres	17.6/- 25/-	3
	1797	£1,102)				4
Binton (enclosed 1779)	1776	1) £128)	580	From tenanted land " " "	- -	5
	1779	£600)				5
Luddington & Dodwell (old enclosed)	1776	£546)	43	" " "	"	
	1797	£781)				
Honeybourne ² (old enclosed)	1776	£300)	No Rise	" " "	"	
	1797	£280)				
Arrow (old enclosed)	1776	£712)	43	" " "	"	
	1797	£1,016)				

The above table makes it seem likely that the advance in Lord Beauchamp's income was, as we said, influenced by the opportunities which the enclosure movement offered.

The landed income of Lord Leigh also showed spectacular advance from the later 18th century. Between 1762 and 1784 the increase was nearly 100 per cent and between this date and 1818 a further 125 per cent. We find that, though the acquisition of landed estate was probably the predominant factor here, nevertheless the increase was, perhaps, partly influenced by Parliamentary enclosure; also enclosure and peopling of areas of common wasteland around Stoneleigh made a vast addition to Lord Leigh's income in the later 18th century, as we see from Appendix XXVIII where the various sources of income are recorded.

There was an abundance of waste land attached to most Arden villages, and this was especially so at Stoneleigh as the surveys and stints made plain from the 16th century onwards.⁵ The

1. To this increase must be added £270 from estate rent under heading Binton and Grafton.
2. It is not clear why rents did not rise in Honeybourne. It could be due to one of a number of accidental factors - for example, the character of leases here, or possibly to the selling up of part of the estate in this parish.
3. The survey of 1597 of Stoneleigh. The abundance of grazing ground shown by generous stints. Surveys of 1766-1776. Photo-stats in War. C.R.O. loc. cit. (cont. on p. 170.)

bringing into cultivation of tracts of this land by private enclosure brought very great additions to the Stoneleigh parish receipts, particularly in the first year or two of the 19th century, as summarized below:-

Table IV. STONELEIGH RECEIPTS 1762-1816

<u>Year</u>	<u>Rents from</u> <u>'Town'</u> <u>of</u> <u>Stoneleigh</u>	<u>From</u> <u>Outlying</u> <u>Hamlets</u>	<u>Rents</u>	<u>Total from</u> <u>Hamlets</u> (Newly peopled in former waste surrounding Stone- leigh)
1762	£647	Fleckhamstead and North Waste		£59
		As above	£245)	
		" "	£426)	
1806		"New Inclosure"	£200)	£871
		Fleckhamstead	£503)	
		North Waste	£821)	
1810		"War Inclosure"	£226)	£1,550

It would seem that the growth of population in the later 18th century, assisted by that of Coventry and the surrounding rural area, of which Stoneleigh formed part, led to the growth of entirely new rural communities here, as elsewhere. New land was farmed by them and new agricultural rents accrued to Lord Leigh. His total income from the Stoneleigh estate increased in total from £2,417 in 1762 to £10,384 in 1818. In addition to the development noted above, the open fields of Stoneleigh were enclosed without Parliamentary assistance between these dates.

It is likely that Parliamentary enclosure made some contribution to the growth of Lord Leigh's income shown by the advance in the rents of the Warwickshire tenants from £4,925 in 1762 to £7,359 in 1784, an increase of 50 per cent overall, which conceals very much greater increases in parishes where enclosure took place, as we see from Appendix XXVIII.

During the Napoleonic War years the Leigh income was increased

(cont.) from p. 169

Situated in close proximity to the city of Coventry and a heavily populated rural industrial locality, there would be no shortage of labour to people and cultivate the new/wasteland communities

by the appearance of large estates outside the county, the developments noted above, and by highly lucrative timber sales to the Navy.

Perhaps the importance of Parliamentary enclosure in advancing the rent of the great landlords may be seen in the failure of certain landed incomes to show the same remarkable advance, at least in the pre-war period. Thus, on the estate of Lord Willoughby de Broke, where Parliamentary enclosure was relatively less important, the rise in income between 1764 and 1786 was under 33 per cent,¹ as demonstrated in the statistics recorded in Appendices XXV-XXVII.

It is of value to note changes in net rentals where this can be assessed (which is very rarely).² This is particularly useful where these rentals covered the period of enclosure. Thus, that produced on Abraham Bracebridge's Atherstone estate of 330 acres between 1748 and 1790 can be put down at least in part to post-enclosure advancement after 1765. In these years rents advanced by 64 per cent from £320 to £526. Between 1790 and 1812 there was a further improvement of 80 per cent on this estate. The Tysoe rental of the Earl of Northampton was advanced after the award of 1797 by 46 per cent in eight years (1803-1811).³ This was a net increase not due to land purchase which seems to have preceded the enclosure here. It was, of course, however, affected by the war-time inflation of prices and rents.

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1. Of course, this slow rental increase may have been due to other factors apart from the absence of enclosure; it is possible that there was no drive to produce marketable commodities; the soil may have been of poor quality; or, more probably, this old-enclosed land was let out on long leases which inhibited rent rise. Nevertheless, it is not much lower than the rent rise throughout the country as a whole between 1760-90, quoted by Mingay as 40-50 per cent on the big estates. (English Landed Society in the 18th century, pp. 48-50.)
 2. Appendix XXVI.
 3. In attempting to estimate net rental increases following enclosure, one needs to consider the possibility that, prior to the award, some of the rent may have been paid in kind. This would, of course, result in an overestimate of the consequent rent rise. On the estates examined here, there is no evidence that this was the case at all. At Elford there is positive confirmation that this was not so.

A further demonstration of the improvement in rent which Parliamentary enclosure could influence is illustrated on the estates of Richard Howard of Elford Hall on the Warwickshire-Staffordshire border. The rental was not much affected by land purchase before the 19th century. The enclosure of the parish took place in 1765 and the effect was apparently quite marked. Whereas the rental rose between 1700 and 1760 only from £300 to £446, between the latter date and 1790, as a consequence mainly of the enclosure, the rent rise was over 200 per cent from £446 to £1,340. This evidence, drawn from the rentals themselves, was confirmed by one of the Elford tenants quoted by the Board of Agriculture Reporter in 1794.¹ Even the boom of prosperity of the war years, when a large scale market gardening enterprise was launched by Howard, and fat stock found their way in large quantities to the local, and Smithfield, markets, could not match the rent advance of the post-enclosure years. Between 1790 and 1811 the rent rise was only 106 per cent from £1,340 to £2,762.

On a number of Warwickshire estates it is not possible to estimate the net advance in rent because of considerable land additions due to purchase and/inheritance. It is possible, however, to note the rise in income from those parts of estates which underwent enclosure. This has already been described on Viscount Beauchamp's estates; it has also been possible to make some comparisons between pre-and post-enclosure rentals on the vast estates of Lord Leigh, recorded in Appendix XXVIII. The net rent rise was in many parishes 100 per cent or more, where enclosure took place. This was in no way affected by the war-time inflation because, almost without exception, these estates underwent enclosure well before 1790. In every rent series we get the impression that there were two major rent advances in the 18th century - in the years immediately following enclosure and over the course of the Napoleonic War years up to 1812.

A further method of attempting to assess the economic effect

1. "General View of the Agriculture of Staff, 1796", by Wm. Pitt, p. 41, 1st edition.

of enclosure on estate rentals is through changes in the average value of the land per acre. Though here again we cannot say more than that following enclosure land values rose. The results of such an investigation are recorded in Appendix XXVII. It is clear that the increase in value varied. Where the rental value before enclosure was very low, as on the Leigh estates, particularly those coming under enclosure at an early date, the subsequent increase was at least 100 per cent. Most of Lord Leigh's land seems to have been rented in open field state at under 7/- per acre, rising in the years after enclosure to about 14/- per acre, and by the end of the Napoleonic War period to about 35/- per acre.

At Elford we find that the value of the land trebled between the enclosure of 1765 and 1790, rising from 6.5/- to 19.7/-. By the end of the Napoleonic War there had been a further rise of 40.4 per cent.

At Atherstone, where the whole range of land values was on a higher plane, perhaps because it was a landed estate forming part of a growing market and rural industrial town, the value changes subsequent to the enclosure of 1765 were nevertheless considerable.

Table V.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Rental Value of Land in Atherstone per Acre</u>
1748	18.8/-
1790	30.0/-
1812	54.2/-

Where enclosure took place later in the 18th century leases for years had sometimes expired meantime, and the landowner had substituted rents of a more economic character. Thus we find that at Shottery on the eve of the enclosure of 1787 the 886 acres of tenanted land was already rented fairly highly; an average of 17.6/- per acre. Subsequent to the enclosure, the rental value was increased to 25/- per acre within ten years and prior to the impact of war-time inflationary influences.

Similarly, at Easington evidence points to high rental values prevailing before the parish came under enclosure in 1797.

Nevertheless, the post-enclosure surveys and valuations point to an impressive rise in rental value as we see from the figures summarized below:¹

Table VI. Post-Enclosure Rents at Easington

<u>Estate Landowner</u>	<u>Description of Sample</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Average Rent Value per acre</u>	<u>Enclosure Date</u>
Hon. Geo. Shirley Easington, Warks.	Farms from Survey 1789 (209 acres)	1789	20.6/-	
	Survey 1796 (1291 acres)	1796	22.1/-	1797
	Survey 1798-1811 (828 acres)	1798 1811	30.4/- 34.3/-	

We may conclude that, in spite of some evidence to suggest that rent improvement in the county as a whole may not have been rising very fast prior to the 1770's, nevertheless the changes in this direction on the estates of the great landowners were more marked; in particular on those which benefited by the improvement of estates through Parliamentary enclosure.² We may, at the same time, observe that perhaps the most considerable advance in estate values took place, as we might expect, on the estates of the up-and-coming landowners like Viscount Beauchamp, the Hon. George Shirley, and Richard Howard of Elford. There is evidence to suggest that on some vast and ancient estates, for example Earl Talbot's Staffordshire estate,³ the land was encumbered with long leases for years, or even lives, until well into the last decade of the 18th century, or even beyond. We have already emphasized the importance of the state of leases on the timing of enclosure in Warwickshire. We have seen how

1. Though here of course influenced by war-time inflation.
2. This is not to say that enclosure was by any means the only influence on rents.
3. See "Social and Economic Trends in Rural West Midlands, 1785-1825"; Unpublished M. Com. thesis, J. M. Martin, in Birmingham Univ. Library, p. 204.

Parliamentary enclosure, a costly business, was used by some landowners, like the ancient Sheldon family and the Earl of Northampton, as a device to put pressure on leaseholders to surrender their lucrative leases and accept annuities. This would greatly benefit the landlord by releasing land long unexposed to the economic influence of rising rent values. The Rev. Leigh's deliberations on enclosure and the years left in leases on his Gloucestershire estates have already been recorded. A detailed survey of leases recording the years which remained, and the rent paid, preceded the considerable enclosure activity of Viscount Beauchamp.¹ In a survey, dated ~~17~~ 1776, the enquiry showed that five estates were being held "on no lease", six on leases ending within seven years (1783), and only three estates were held on leases with long terms of years outstanding (from seventeen to fourteen years). In this situation lay the key to a large rental increase on the estates of this nobleman.

An investigation of the rental value of land forming old-enclosed estates seems to indicate that, as we have already hinted, rent levels may well have already been high here, leaving little room for rapid improvement during the 18th century. A survey of the Manor of Claverdon,² which was entirely enclosed before the 18th century, and formed a compact estate extending over the whole parish, brings out this point. The survey was dated 1792, and a summary of land values and lease details is of some relevance here. It gives a clue as to why old-enclosed land did not see similar dramatic rental increases in the 18th century. The land was already rented out at economic rents, on short leases or at will. Open-field land was often let out at rents which lagged behind current land values (even for open-field land), largely because of the encumbrance of traditional tenures. At enclosure the break with the past was not only in some cases in consolidation of holdings but in the ~~exercise-~~

1. Rugeley Collection, loc. cit. C.R. 114A/192/193.

2. Ref. War. C.R.O. HR/93.

evolution of tenures suited to rapidly changing economic circumstances. We see the rental value of land in the manor of Claverdon ranged from 12.6/- to 18.2/- per acre, which puts it on a level with the new rents fixed at the enclosure of open-field parishes in the later 18th century in this county. We can conclude that rents had possibly been rising smoothly and undramatically in Claverdon throughout the course of the 18th century.

Table VII. RENTAL VALUES AT CLAUERDON 1792.

<u>Description of Farm</u>	<u>Rent in 1792</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Rental Value per Acre</u>	<u>Lease details</u>
Lodge Farm	£240	268	17.8/-	For 7 years
Claverdon Park	£200	272	14.5/-	Expires in 1 year
Ganaway Farm	£ 90	135	13.3/-	21 yrs. from 1773
Morrison Farm	£ 32	35	18.2/-	Lease expired 1791.
Kemps Farm	£ 79	94	16.7/-	Lease 21 years from 1790.
Readings Farm	£ 90	142	12.6/-	Yearly lease
Breach Farm	£ 90	140	12.8/-	Lease 7 years unexpired.
Upper Hercules Farm	£ 35	48	14.5/-	At will.

Similarly, we saw that Lord Beauchamp's rents from two old-enclosed estates in the parishes of Luddington and Arrow saw an increase of 40 per cent between 1776 and 1797. Evidence from the estates of Staffordshire landowners ¹ suggests that in a similar way rents were sometimes rising more smoothly and therefore less dramatically in response to changing economic circumstances on old-enclosed land. We can conclude, therefore, that substantial rent advance, taking the 18th century as a whole, may have been seen on some estates unaffected by enclosure, and must therefore be attributed to factors more fundamental than this: population expansion; the increasing pressure (particularly felt in Warwickshire and Staffordshire) of the expanding commodity market; ~~brought about by the French wars~~ later on, of course,

1. See "Social and Economic Trends in the Rural West Midlands", M. Com. thesis, loc. cit. Ch. V. pp. 146-163.

2. See Ibid. "Social and Economic Trends"; Chapter on Midland Farmers in Rural West Midlands. Ch. IV & V, pp. 103-163.

the price inflation for agricultural produce brought about by the French Wars.

It is possible to estimate not only the rental changes which accrued on great estates in years after enclosure, but also those which took place on the enclosure of the 'open' parishes of the Felden where property ownership was widely divided, and where no great estates existed. This is possible because the enclosure of these parishes was made the occasion for the re-valuation of the parish necessary for a number of parish assessments, including the poor rate.

The enclosure of the large 'open' parish of Napton in 1779 was the occasion of a re-valuation of the parish which was recorded in the parish Overseers of the Poor rate book. From this re-valuation we can estimate the changes in the value of land in the possession not of a great landowner but of a vast number of very small owners, many of whom would, in fact, be yeomen farmers and freeholders, since these tended to remain strong at the time of enclosure in the large open parishes. The parish was apparently re-assessed in the later Napoleonic War period, so that we have a record of the changes in value over about 100 years as follows:

Table VIII. CHANGES IN THE VALUE OF LANDED PROPERTY IN THE 'OPEN' PARISH OF NAPTON

<u>Napton</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Land Valuation</u> <u>in £</u>	<u>% Rise in</u> <u>Value</u>	<u>Average Value of</u> <u>Land per Acre</u>
(Enclosed 1779)	1735	£1,148) 206	5.5/-
Total Parish 4027 Acres	1779	£3,512		17.4/-
By	1835	£9,300	264	46.4/-

Clearly, the enclosure of this parish which was not in the hands of great landowners was also followed by a substantial increase in land-value. At Napton, since this preceded the war years, the enhanced value of the parish lands owed nothing to inflationary influences, though this does not rule out other factors, of course.

In a similar state of property division was the large parish of Tysoe, enclosed in 1797. Here also it is fortunate that a parish valuation before and after enclosure is available. Here the rise in the parish land value was as follows:-

Table IX. CHANGES IN THE VALUE OF LANDED PROPERTY IN THE 'OPEN' PARISH OF TYSOE

<u>Tysoe</u> (Enclosed 1797)	<u>Date</u>	<u>Land Valuation</u> <u>in £</u>	<u>% Rise in</u> <u>Value</u>	<u>Change in Average</u> <u>Value of Land Before</u> <u>and after Enclosure</u>
	1790	£3,000	}	12.5/-
	1800	£4,160		39
	1820	£5,600	}	23.3/-
	1826	£3,580 ¹		35

There were several differences between the economic character of Napton and Tysoe which help to explain why the increase in rateable value was apparently greater in the former parish than the latter. In the first place, there is reason to believe that at Napton, where property was entirely divided amongst a vast army of small owners, the rents were in a more unimproved state than at Tysoe where the Earl of Northampton owned a large estate, as well as a large number of smaller owners. In the second place, the prosperity of Napton was greatly developed in the early 19th century as a consequence of the cutting of the Napton and Warwick Canal.²

It is clear that on the great estates one factor which helps to explain the considerable post-enclosure advance in rents was the consolidation which invariably took place into large farming units. This tendency is clearly discernible on the Leigh estates where enclosure took place.³ Thus, at Long Itchington between 1770 and 1779 rents increased following the enclosure from £157 to £285, but the number of tenants shrank from ten to three. We see the same thing on all Lord Leigh's land after enclosure.

1. This fall in value was, of course, the consequence of the protracted post-war depression of agriculture.
2. A further demonstration of the influence of the expanding food market on rental values.
3. See Appendix XXVIII.

Similarly, at Elford¹ enclosure saw drastic changes in the organization of the tenanted land. Following the enclosure of 1765 the farms were consolidated into huge tenancies.

On the Farley estate of the Bill² Family in neighbouring Staffordshire the rental increased from £449 in 1789 to £819 in 1825, but the numbers of tenants declined from 38 to 35.

On the Shirley estates at Easington the number of tenants declined from 31 in 1726 to 10 in 1796. Even with the post-enclosure purchase of land and the vast expansion of rents, the number in the survey and valuation of 1811 remained at 12.

It has been noted that where conditions were suitable - in particular where land was in the hands of a great landowner and where rapid assimilation of population into a larger adjoining village was possible - a drastic post-enclosure reduction may have taken place in the settlement area of a number of hamlets in Warwickshire.³

One such parish was Morton Morrell, enclosed in 1758. The whole parish seems to have been divided up between Henry Wise,⁴ who owned 300 acres of old enclosure, and Henry Greville,⁵ who was in possession of 575 acres of newly enclosed land. In a survey of 1767,⁶ Wise's land is in two farms and that of Greville in three. There are still at this date about twelve houses along a village street visible on the map, but in the post-enclosure years further considerable depopulation seems to have taken place in the hamlet of Morrell with the result that today only one farm remains at Morrell. The rest of the land is farmed from Morton.

On the estates of Viscount Beauchamp at Shottery we find that while he possessed only five yardlands in 1776 compared

1. "Social & Economic Trends". M.Com. thesis, loc. cit. p. 22-23.
 2. See Farley collection, Staffs. C.R.O., Ref. D.554, Bundle No. 5.
 3. For this information I am indebted to Mr. Pannett of Birmingham University Geography Department who has been making a study of open-field and post-enclosure settlement in Warwickshire.
 4. The landscape architect's family referred to earlier in this
 5. Relation of Earl Brook. (work.
 6. In War. C.R.O. Ref. 221/L Survey of H. Greville's Estate in
 Morton Morrell.

with twenty-two and three quarters in 1787, and though his rental here increased from £300 to £1,101 in about the same period, the number of tenants increased only from three to four. One of these had a farm of 700 acres rented at £780. A rise of rent at Binton from £125 in 1776 to £600 after enclosure, accompanied by the purchase of land, saw no change in the number of tenancies which remained at five throughout the period.

It has long been asserted - with some truth - that it was the small tenant farmers with no legal rights beyond their lease clauses who perhaps suffered most of all from the economic consequences of enclosure.² This tendency was not, of course, confined to Warwickshire. G. E. Mingay noted similar developments on the Nottinghamshire estates of the Duke of Kingston.

An investigation of tenant holdings in general in Worcestershire and Staffordshire showed however, only a small decline in numbers in the years of prosperity between 1790 and 1825.³ In Worcestershire particularly, where the small unit of cultivation was (and still is) suitable to the conditions of market gardening, the reduction in numbers was slight, as shown below:-

Table X. CHANGES IN LANDOWNERSHIP IN WORCESTERSHIRE AND STAFFORDSHIRE

Worcestershire

41 Parishes (based on Land Tax)	<u>Holding</u>	<u>1790</u>	<u>1800</u>	<u>1814</u>	<u>1825</u>
	Paying 4/- to 20/-	144	137	131	149
	20/- to 100/-	183	166	134	168
	100/- to 200/-	91	87	86	80
	Over 200/-	79	79	74	88

1. Similarly at Tysoe, the Earl of Northampton's tenants declined from 31 to 20 between 1820 and 1832.
2. See J. D. Chambers, "Enclosure and Labour Supply in the Industrial Revolution", Econ. H. R. Second Series No. 2, 1953, p.332. Also re-emphasized by A. H. John recently in "The Course of Agricultural Change 1660-1760" in "Studies in the Industrial Revolution", ed. by L. S. Pressnell, 1960, p. 126.
3. Dealt with more fully in M. Com. thesis "Social and Economic Trends in the Rural West Midlands 1770-1825"; J. M. Martin, 1960, University of Birmingham Library, Chapter I, Appendix II.

Table X Cont. CHANGES IN LANDOWNERSHIP IN WORCESTERSHIRE AND STAFFORDSHIRE

<u>Staffordshire</u>	<u>Paying on Holding</u>	<u>1790</u>	<u>1800</u>	<u>1814</u>	<u>1825</u>
(13 Parishes)	4/- to 20/-	73	90	80	84
	20/- to 100/-	104	79	70	69
	100/- to 200/-	23	27	30	26
	Over 200/-	5	6	7	6

The point about this evidence is that we must beware of thinking that a vast reduction in the number of tenancies on the estates of the largest landowners meant that tenancies as a whole throughout the county were declining in so striking a manner. This was almost certainly not so. Tenancies generally were still small well into the 19th century,¹ and the fact was a common source of complaint among agricultural writers.

Nevertheless, where enclosure did take place in Warwickshire and large estates were in the hands of progressive landlords like the Shirleys or Viscount Beauchamp, the enlargement of holdings at the expense of the tenantry were an obvious method by which rent improvement could be and was achieved, and we can conclude that on the principal estates, at least, enclosure in Warwickshire went along with a shrinkage in the tenantry, and sometimes of whole settlement areas, in order to secure the highest possible return on capital expended, in the form of rents.

We can thus bring to an end this investigation into the enlargement of landed income where Parliamentary enclosure occurred by saying that the advance during the later 18th century on the estates of the great Warwickshire landowners was very considerable; that the rise was comparable with that achieved over the whole period of the Napoleonic War in some instances. Finally, we find that the rent improvements in Warwickshire compare very favourably with what we know about that elsewhere.

¹. See the evidence of J. H. Clapham in an article in Vol. I Cambridge Historical Journal. Also G. Mingay "The Size of Farms in the 18th century", Econ. H.R. 2nd Series, XIV, No. 3, 1962, p. 469.

For example, with the doubling of Coke's rental over a much longer period - from 1774 till the end of the Napoleonic Wars.¹ Also, with the Kent estates of Lord Darnley of Cobham where the rent improvement over the whole period 1785-1820 likewise amounted in all to no more than 100 per cent.² Finally, we conclude that enclosure must have been a factor in rent increase, though not, of course, the only one.

Therefore, we must turn now to another matter of some significance - the relationship between enclosure and the development of a commodity market. That there was a connection between the availability and price of food, and enclosure,³ is clear from the appendices giving the statistical information and graphic picture of the various series in the Birmingham area and rural Warwickshire. In fact, of course, price changes, and all the evidence we have offered to demonstrate big rental increases associated with enclosure all bear witness to the fundamental fact of a considerable expansion in the market for food during the 18th century. Despite violent fluctuations from season to season and periods of years when the price of grain remained low,⁴ the long-term trend of wheat prices in the Birmingham market from the time of the first available information in the late 1730's is quite clear; it exhibits a rise which was quite considerable even before the commencement of the French Wars in 1790. This⁵ testifies to the pressure on food supplies. It was not only the price of wheat which saw a long-term rise; the level of livestock prices also was to see unprecedented heights by the 1790's in Warwickshire (as we see elsewhere in this work).⁶

1. "Coke of Norfolk and the Agrarian Revolution", Econ. H.R. 2nd Series, Vol. VIII, No. 1. p. 156. R. A. C. Parker.
2. See article by H. G. Hunt "Agricultural Rent in South East England" in Agric. H. R. Vol. VII, 1959, part II.
3. One might also perhaps have included disease epidemics and population rise, but this whole topic is dealt with in some detail elsewhere in this study. See Chapter X.
4. We might mention here that Dr. A. H. John recently estimated that, taking the country as a whole, wheat prices were between 1720 and 1750 about 25 per cent lower than they had been in 1660-1680. This would, of course, have been an important factor in population rise and in determining the pace of enclosure. See "Aspects in Economic Growth in the 18th Century" in "Essays in Economic History", Vol. II, ed. E. Carus Wilson, pp. 364 & 365.
5. A further illustration is the growing share of land devoted to wheat and other grain crops in 18th century. See Appendix II, and "The Midland Peasant", p. 235, loc. cit.
6. See above Chapter III, p. 67.

Elsewhere we offer detailed evidence to show that in Warwickshire enclosure was frequently accompanied, particularly from 1770, by very expansive road building schemes, and the occasional bridge. We have mentioned already in passing the cutting of canals in the county and the economic effect this had on land values in parishes concerned (for example, Napton on the Hill).¹ The obstacle of transportation of commodities was at least as serious as open-field farming to the development of the food market, and it is no accident that both problems were frequently attacked in the Parliamentary enclosure award of the 18th century.

There is much evidence of specialized farming for the growing food market in the rural parts of Warwickshire and Staffordshire. In particular, specialization on fat stock grazing was very widespread by 1790 and reached a yet higher level of production during the French Wars.² In Staffordshire, on the estates of the great landlords, oxen had been driven down from Scotland for fattening up for the Midland market from the early 18th century. Considerable heads of pedigree cattle and sheep were kept for their meat on both the Warwickshire and Staffordshire estates. From Warwickshire animals were sent both to Birmingham and the London market. In Warwickshire also dairying was developed on a large scale, a process under way from the late 17th century.

We have evidence of farm production from some of the very lands whose enclosure we have considered earlier - for example, the Atherstone Farm of Abraham Bracebridge and Evelyn Shirley's farm at Eatington.

Below we tabulate fat stock sale increases during some of the war years in Warwickshire:-

<u>Atherstone Farm</u>	<u>Eatington Farm</u>	<u>Hatherston Farm (Staffs)</u>
1794-98	1805-10	1798-1810
54%	21%	199%

1. See also my comments in "Social & Economic Trends" loc. cit. Chapter IV, p. 132, M. Com. thesis.
2. For a detailed account of farming developments see "Social and Economic Trends....." op. cit. J. M. Martin, M. Com. thesis, pp. 116-120, & Appendices V-X Chapter IV.
3. This evidence is drawn from farm accounts on these estates - reference areas follow:
 - 1) Ledger of Atherstone Farm in 1796-98 in Compton Bracebridge Collection W.R.O. ref. C. R. 258/367, and estate accounts 1799-1820, ref. C.R.258.
 - 2) Hatherston Farm Accounts in Hatherston M.S. Staffs R.O. ref. D.260/M/E.86, E.42.
 - 3) Ingestre Farm account book in Shrewsbury M.S. Ref. W.S./01744 also in Staffs R.O.
 - 4) Shirley Account Books, Shirley M.S. in War. R.O. (see above).

We get some idea of the concentration of farming on fat stock production from the calculations below, where receipts for this item are represented as a percentage of total gross profits.

<u>Eatington Farm</u>	<u>Atherstone Farm</u>	<u>Ingestre Farm</u>	<u>Hatherston Farm</u>
<u>1810</u>	<u>1800</u>	<u>1813</u>	<u>1810</u>
82%	33%	40%	67%

Another indication of the growth of the market for food is the striking growth in the turnover of Midland farmers.

On Earl Talbot's Ingestre Farm, for example, the receipts for the sale of fat stock in the year 1812, representing only 40 per cent of the total, were as follows:-

£2,839 for fat cattle sales
 £1,065 " " sheep "

During the whole period of Richard Baskerville, the tenant's lease - that is, between 1805 and 1813 - the turnover increased by 251 per cent.

The newspaper files of the later 18th century bear witness to the upsurge of new cattle markets in the towns of the West Midlands and to the growing importance in society of the gentleman grazier.

Another witness of the effect of enclosure, and the growth in food supplies, is the considerable increase in population which took place in Warwickshire, as elsewhere, in the 18th century, and the release from regularly recurring epidemics which this change implied. A later chapter is devoted to population changes in Warwickshire, and it will suffice here merely to mention that a rise of population by natural increase, amounting, perhaps, to about 80 per cent, took place between 1730 and 1801 in all parts of Warwickshire - agricultural as well as industrial. There was a dramatic fall in the burial rate in all parishes in the various localities looked at, though the 1725-29 mortality

1. Though there was an equally dramatic rise again in industrial parishes after 1760.

may have been the underlying factor here. Increasing and more varied food supplies must have had an influence in bringing about this fall. Food abundance, through a succession of good harvests and therefore of lower prices, would also affect the marriage and baptism rates. We have already quoted Professor John's statement to the effect that wheat prices in the period 1720-50 were 20 per cent lower than in the later 17th century, and this was precisely the crucial period when the baptism, marriage and burial rates established their revolutionary trends.

Thus, an expanding commodity market was both a cause and a consequence of a rapidly growing population in the later 18th century, and while enclosure was certainly not the only influence, it must have made, both directly and through the impetus it gave to improve communications, a very important contribution to the development of the Midland food market.

CHAPTER IX

THE COST OF PARLIAMENTARY ENCLOSURE IN WARWICKSHIRE

THE COST OF PARLIAMENTARY ENCLOSURE IN WARWICKSHIRE

In estimating the social effects of the Parliamentary enclosure movement of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the cost of the process is a major consideration. So far, only one modern writer has attempted to investigate the evidence in any detail.¹ His main conclusion was that the cost of enclosure was not in general excessive even for the smallest owners, and ends up with the remark that "in this, as in several other matters, it appears that parliamentary enclosure has been saddled with a responsibility which does not properly belong to it"² (i.e. driving the small man out of business).

This opinion was, however, contrary to that of many contemporaries, of whom, perhaps, Arthur Young was the most vocal in denouncing "the absurd extravagance" of the method of enclosure.³ It was opposed also to the views of many later writers from Cunningham to Ernle.⁴ Even Gonner, who generally views the parliamentary enclosure movement favourably, remarked that "the general expenses were heavy" and goes on to make the further point, that "in some instances little or no increase in value could be perceived for many years".⁵

In Warwickshire, whatever the reasons, there is evidence that, very commonly, the social consequences of enclosure in the eighteenth century may have been sometimes both considerable and painful. It seems reasonable, therefore, to conclude that

1. W. E. Tate, "The Cost of Parliamentary Enclosure in England (with reference to the County of Oxon)" in Economic History Review, 2nd Series V 1952, pp. 258-265.
2. Ibid. p. 265.
3. A. Young, "The Northern Tour," 1770, I, 254-60; General Report on Enclosures, pp. 12ff.
4. A. Cunningham, English Industry and Commerce, 1892, p. 487; Hasback, English Agricultural Labourer, 1908, pp. 63-66; H. Levy, Large and Small Holdings, 1911, pp. 24-25; J. L. B. Hammond, The English Village Labourer, 1912, p. 74; E. C. K. Gonner, Common Land and Enclosure, 1912, p. 78; Id. Ernle, English Farming Past and Present, 1917 edn. p. 251.
5. Gonner, Op. cit. p. 78.

a further study is necessary of the financial burden which this transformation of the landscape imposed on rural society.

We have emphasized that little detailed investigation has been made of the actual evidence of enclosure costs. In particular, almost nothing is known about the outlay of capital required for the actual making of the enclosures, as opposed to those expenses usually included in the schedule drawn up by the enclosure commissions.

In fact, a considerable amount of evidence about enclosure costs can be gleaned from the Warwickshire awards themselves. From these we can discover the total general expenses of each enclosure, and thus work out the average cost per acre. In some awards where the cost of making the enclosure, that is 'ring-fencing' or 'out fencing', and 'in fencing', or subdividing, of the tithe owners, or the Poor's allotment is undertaken by the proprietors, we can estimate the average cost of this item also. Then we can take this further and note the relative expense of enclosing large and small estates. Finally, in a fair number of enclosure awards, schedules are included which reveal the distribution of the various expenses under their separate heads, and this can be useful for calculating the proportional expense of officials' fees, legal and parliamentary expenses, and so on.

The Warwickshire awards are unusually informative about the cost of parliamentary enclosure. W. E. Tate has mentioned on two occasions the paucity of detailed information about enclosure expenditure in the enclosure awards which he has examined. In one article he declared that 'accounts of expenses involved in enclosure are very rarely entered in abstract in the awards, though these rather more commonly include a schedule showing the expenses charged upon each ¹ separate proprietor'. In a later study dealing with the cost of the process he again mentioned this dearth of evidence, and was unable to find any detailed

1. W. E. Tate, "Some Unexplored Records of the Enclosure Movement" in English Historical Review No. 57, 1942, p. 256.

accounts for Oxfordshire, and only one example for Nottingham.

For Warwickshire, on the other hand, enclosure commissioners' expense totals have come to light in no less than eighty-nine awards.² Furthermore, the detailed distribution of enclosure expenses has been located in some thirty-four awards.

The commissioners' schedule did not take account of anything but the public expenses of the act and award which were to be borne by the landowners as a body. These included the fees of the various officials, parliamentary and legal fees, the traveling and subsistence allowance of all those concerned with carrying out the enclosure, and the cost of any ancillary improvements such as new bridges, roads, or drainage schemes which might be launched at the time of the enclosure.

Those costs included in the commissioners' schedule were only a part of the total financial burden which the landowners would be required to shoulder. It is clear from an examination of the awards that the commissioners' accounts make no mention of the costs of actually enclosing the land. This is not surprising, since it is clear from the remarks of the commissioners, that the allotments remained unfenced or ditched, at the time they made their award. They went no further than to demand that these enclosures should be made within a stipulated period of time. The time allowed was often very short. In the parish of Willey,³ for example, the commissioners required that "all enclosures shall be within two calendar months after the execution of this award, inclosed, hedged, fenced and ditched by the several proprietors". It would bear most heavily on the small owners, since the entire holdings would be included under this unjunction, whereas the subdividing of holdings which could be carried out in more leisurely fashion, would affect the larger proprietors, in the main. The 'infencing' or division of large enclosed estates into farms would take a considerable time. In a recent

1. W. E. Tate, "The Cost of Parliamentary Enclosure in England", p. 261.

2. See Appendix XXX.

3. Enclosure Award of parish of Willey, 1769, in Warwickshire County Record Office (henceforth referred to as W.C.R.O.)

author remarked that "only the skeleton frameworth of the modern field-pattern came into being within twelve months or so of the making of the award"¹.

The total cost of the public operations which enclosure involved could vary considerably between one award and another. Tate calculated that the total sum included in the commissioners' schedule could amount to £1800-£2000.² In one fifth of the eighty-nine expense schedules for Warwickshire, the total sum was well over £2000. Most of these came towards the end of the enclosure era; the movement got off to an early start in this county, and the cost in the early phases was very much lower. Thus, we find that it is after 1779, that the majority of the heavy enclosure costs appeared: in sixteen out of twenty-five schedules made after this date, the total cost was over £2000; in some cases very considerably more. The reasons for this greatly increased cost of enclosure will be discussed later.

In forty-five of the eighty-nine accounts, the total public costs amounted to more than £1000, but these noticeably appeared, with two exceptions, in the period after 1760.

The average cost per acre of meeting the public expenses of enclosure increased in a most striking manner during the course of the eighteenth century. Between the period 1730-59 and the end of the century the cost more than trebled, as we see from Appendix XXX.

In Table I we summarize the evidence for the growth in enclosure expenses.

Table I. GROWTH OF ENCLOSURE EXPENSES

<u>No. of Awards</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Average Cost per Acre</u> <u>(in shillings)</u>
17	1735-59	11.0
20	1760-69	13.7
29	1770-79	19.6
6	1780-89	19.7
9	1792-97	34.08
8	1801-65	61.9

1. Alan Harris, The Rural Landscape of the East Riding of Yorkshire 1700-1850, 1961, University of Hull Publication. p. 68.

2. W. E. Tate, "The Cost of Parliamentary Enclosure in England", p. 259.

The extent of this increase has been underestimated by some modern writers.¹ But it was not confined to Warwickshire. The average cost of thirty-eight Oxfordshire awards was higher,² and saw a similar pattern of change.

From Thirty-eight Oxford Enclosure Award Schedules

<u>Parishes</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Average Cost of Enclosure per Acre (in shillings)</u>
12	1757-73	15
12	1789-96	39

In Leicestershire H. G. Hunt found the average costs per acre were lower, though the rise was almost one hundred per cent over the later eighteenth century.³

Eighty-eight Leicestershire Enclosure Award Schedules

<u>Parishes</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>Average Cost of Enclosures per Acre (in shillings)</u>
10	1755-59	12
38	1760-69	12
24	1770-79	16
11	1780-89	11
5	1790-99	23

The average cost of enclosure in Warwickshire over the whole period was twenty-two shillings, higher than that of Leicestershire, and of Lindsey (eighteen shillings),⁴ but not so high as that of Oxford (twenty-five shillings). The relatively low average cost in Warwickshire was due to the large amount of early enclosure which took place, prior to the inflationary years of the 1790's.

1. For example R.A.C. Parker speaks merely of "costs tending to rise towards the end of the eighteenth century". "Enclosures in the Eighteenth Century", in Helps for Students of History, publication of the Historical Association, No. 7, 1960.
2. W. E. Tate, "The Cost of Parliamentary Enclosure in England", p. 264.
3. H. G. Hunt, "The Chronology of Leicestershire Enclosures", in Economic History Review, 2nd series X No. 2, 1957, p.269.
4. L. Swailes, "The Parliamentary Enclosure of Lindsey", in Reports of Papers of the Architectural and Archaeological Societies of Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, XLIII 1957, pp. 233-74; also Ibid. N.W. Lincs. II, 1938, pp. 85-120.

One important point revealed both in the Leicestershire and Warwickshire awards is that costs changed little before the later 1780's. This fact, once the economic advantages of the first private act had made themselves apparent, must have been a strong incentive to landowners to seek an enclosure. The pattern of cost increase also gives a clue to the factors involved: clearly the rise in prices did not fully account for it. Largely, it must have been due to the conditions prevailing during the French Wars, which offered a favourable setting for many ambitious economic schemes on the land: not only the enclosure of parishes, where the cost, prior to 1790, had been prohibitive; but also experiments with drainage; new farming methods, and new machinery. It was in the war years that many Midland landowners and farmers began to overcome their caution in experimentation.¹ It is clear that parishes where the cost of enclosure would be small were, not surprisingly, enclosed first. The parishes which were left over to the period after 1780, and in particular the war-boom years were those where the quality of the land was poor, and enclosure would have brought, perhaps, little return unless it had been associated with expensive improvement schemes. Examples of this type of parish were 'Hungry' Harbury (where the soil was cold clay and notoriously unproductive), and Sutton Coldfield. Many other parishes where enclosure necessitated vast new road schemes are detailed in Appendix XXXI. Other parishes left over till the later 18th century were of the large 'open' type, where re-allotment of the land would be very expensive and involved, and not in any case desired by the large number of smaller proprietors. Such parishes were Napton, Harbury, Ilmington and Lower Easington. Lastly, in the nineteenth century came the enclosure, less urgent, of the North Warwickshire fields.

As a consequence of all these differences, enclosure, from the 1790's onwards, seems to have been a long-drawn out and

1. For an account of these activities in the Midlands see J. M. Martin, "Social and Economic Changes in the Rural West Midlands". M. Com. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1960, Chapter III.

complicated business. This is reflected in increased fees paid to the various officials, who received their money at a fixed daily rate. In particular, though the number of commissioners declined to three, two or one, the average sums they received in fees more than doubled. This was due, partly to the larger amount of work involved, partly to the doubling between the 1760's and the 1790's of their daily rate of remuneration.

The rate of payment of commissioners' fees seems to have increased over the years as illustrated in Table II below.

Table II. RATE OF PAYMENT OF COMMISSIONERS' FEES

<u>Award</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Daily Fee Received by Commissioners</u>
Wixford	1767) £1. 1. 0d.
Stretton-on-Fosse	1771	
Quinton	1773	
Mr. Shuckburgh	1778) £1.11. 6d.
Warmington	1778	
Fenny Compton	1779) £2. 2. 0d.
Napton	1779	
Shottery	1787) £2. 2. 0d.
Stockton	1792	
Little Compton	1795	
Lower Pillerton	1795	
Erdington	1802)

A big increase in the actual sums received by commissioners was noted by Henry Homer, as early as 1765.¹ He said that formerly they had been paid a lump sum of £200-£250, but that "now (1765) it is at least £400". At Brailes (1787) and Eatington (1795) the commissioners' fees alone amounted to £652 and £629 respectively, leaving aside the re-imbusement of their expenses.

The increase in the sums received by the commissioners in the form of fees is quite clearly revealed by the distribution of enclosure costs (Appendix XXXI). The average sum received in fees along by commissioners in nine awards dated 1744-1767 was £99.12. 0d. However, the average sum received by commissioners

1. H. Homer, Nature and Methods of Ascertaining Specific Shares of Proprietors upon Enclosure of Common Fields, Birdingbury Warwickshire, 1765, published Oxford 1766.

in twelve awards between 1779 and 1801 had risen to £338. 4. 2d. Furthermore, we find that in the first twelve awards recorded in Appendix XXXI the commissioners received in fees a total of £1,332. 6. Od., but in twelve awards 1779-1801, this was increased to £4,058.10. Od. In addition they received a further substantial sum in payment for journeys and subsistence. The payments made to other officials, in particular to the enclosure surveyors, were increased in like manner over the course of the eighteenth century. Homer confirms that all fees "had been enhanced, and some extravagantly" in 1765.¹

Fee increases were clearly one factor which contributed towards the rise in enclosure costs during the later eighteenth century. It is possible that those paid in other parts of the country were even higher than in Warwickshire. R.A.C. Parker, in a recent essay, said that commissioners normally received £3. 3. Od. for each meeting (plus travel and subsistence allowance)² while the Committee of 1808 considered that four guineas³ was extortionate, implying that this was occasionally demanded by commissioners.

This rise in fees must have been connected, in part, with the growth of professionalism amongst the commissioners and surveyors as the eighteenth century advanced. In the early days when the commissioners' panel was composed of gentlemen amateurs, there is evidence that in Warwickshire they occasionally worked for a nominal fee.⁴ For example, at Wolfhamcote (1745) five commissioners received only ten guineas each (the surveyors on the other hand received £130).

The increasing complexity of the commissioners' and surveyors' task is reflected not only in the rise of the highly skilled professional, and the rising level of fees, but also in the amount of time which the enclosure process consumed. This unquestionably increased during the later eighteenth century. In the

1. Ibid. p. 105.

2. Parker, "Enclosure in the eighteenth century", p. 8.

3. Reprint, p. 85.

4. First enclosure award of Wolfhamcote, a wholly small-Freeholder village, 1745, in W.C.R.O. Presumably the commissioners were influenced by the general poverty of this rural community which is stressed in a document dated 1730. See W.C.R.O. Z Collection (Photostat copy of original).

early days the application for the act was usually followed in the next year by the commissioners' award. But in the late eighteenth century, and more particularly in the early years of the nineteenth, four or five years' interval was common.

As an illustration of this tendency we might look at the enclosure of Bickenhill and Little Packington which was spread over the five years 1819-1824. Under the award 1663 acres were re-allocated at a cost of £3,733, that is forty-five shillings per acre on average.

It is clear from Appendix XXX that even from the early eighteenth century the cost of enclosing the open fields of North Warwickshire, where ownership was often widely divided amongst a number of small proprietors, was very much higher than in the Felden South. Thus, in the first phase of Parliamentary enclosure, the average cost in seventeen Felden awards, 1735-1739, was only eleven shillings, but that of Barston (1735) and Wilnecote (1738), both North Warwickshire parishes, was seventeen shillings and twenty shillings respectively.

It is not, therefore, surprising that most of the enclosure left over till the nineteenth century was of open fields, as at Bickenhill and Little Packington, lying in North Warwickshire. The open fields in this part of the county were in any case of secondary importance: they were small and surrounded by enclosed land.

1

The Enclosure Minute Book¹ and the Commissioners' Personal Account Book² relating to Bickenhill and Little Packington record that the first meeting to launch the enclosure took place on the first of May, 1818. Between this date and October, 1824, there were no less than thirty-one series of meetings. At least four of these meetings lasted six days, nine lasted five days, and five meetings three days. At each meeting, in addition to the daily fees, expenses were incurred by each official at the daily rate of twelve shillings for lodgings, and 17/6d. for servants, a total of £1. 5. 6d. per day.

1. Bickenhill Enclosure Minute Book, 1818-1824, in W.C.R.O. Ref. H.R.5.

2. Commissioners' Personal Account Book in W.C.R.O. Ref. as above.

It is not surprising that the total cost of these meetings, spread over six and a half years, was enormous. On the other ~~ka~~ hand, the fairly straight-forward enclosure of a Felden parish usually occurred at an early date, and commonly took only a fraction of the time. Typical of such an enclosure was that of Wixford and Exhall in 1767, when a total of thirty-three days' attendance by the commissioners is recorded in the award.

Another item which helped to swell the costs at Bickenhill and Little Packington was payment for culverts needed to form a watercourse, and for building new roads. This brings us to another major factor responsible for the greatly accelerated cost of enclosures from the 1790's onwards both in the Felden, where this decade saw the last big wave of private acts, and in North Warwickshire.

Enclosure in the French Wars frequently included very considerable expenditure on new roads, drainage operations and so on; ¹ in this respect it marked a considerable point of departure from the earlier enclosure movement. In twelve awards in which such expenditure was noted, the first dated 1792, the total outlay on such ancillary operations was £5,615 out of £25,308, that is 22% of the expenditure included in the commissioners' schedule. At Oxhill in 1798, the capital outlay on new roads was £1,010 out of £2,898. At Wolverton in 1831 a special rate ² was drawn up by the commissioners to cover the cost of new roads which amounted to £612 and was one of the most important items in their schedule of expenses. It is therefore, no surprise to discover that the cost of enclosure both at Oxhill and Wolverton was very high, working out at 51.7/- and 122.7/- respectively (exclusive of the cost of forming the enclosures).

In addition to the work already mentioned, Henry Homer, the Warwickshire cleric and commissioner, wrote a second essay in which he emphasized the opportunity which enclosure offered for building new roads. In this latter tract, though it was meant to have relevance to the country as a whole, it is worthy of note

1. See for example the awards of Stockton 1792; Wolvey 1794; Shotteswell 1794; Little Compton 1795; Lr. Pillerton 1795; Oxhill 1798; Wolverton 1831.

2. See W.C.R.O. H.R./6 for this document.

that it was addressed and dedicated to the leading landowners of the county, who formed the Trust of the two important Turnpike Roads from Dunchurch to Stonebridge, and from Ryton to Banbury. The initial objective was probably to influence the leading gentry of his own county.¹

We can conclude that where opportunity allowed, enclosure could have a considerable effect on the movement to secure improved communications in Warwickshire, and presumably also in other counties. Clearly, Homer had a significant influence in forming the opinion of the local landowners in favour of transformed communications as an absolute necessity if full ~~of~~ advantage of enclosure were to be realised. The favourable boom conditions of the French wars provided an opportunity for canalising surplus capital into such a necessary investment.

These seem to be the major factors responsible for the inflation of enclosure costs from the later eighteenth century. However, there were others in some cases; for example, it is clear that opposition was a factor in the later enclosures (probably one of the reasons why enclosure had been delayed). Where the advocates of change had to overcome such opposition, this could very considerably enhance the expense of the process. For example at the enclosure of Wolverton in 1831 the 'appeal' fund amounted to £631, probably the most important single item in the expense schedule.

It is to be observed that the rising cost of enclosure is related to social change. Not unnaturally where the public expenses of the enclosure alone amounted to between £1.14. Od. - £3 per acre (from 1790) compared with 11/- (in the 1750's), the social consequences would tend to be more quickly apparent.

Thus, from the 1780's the selling up of small estates in large numbers was common, in the years prior to, during, and immediately after the enclosure. Evidence of this is forthcoming both from the commissioners' awards, and the Land Tax assessments. The smaller proprietors did, in any case, pay more, acre for acre, than the great landowners: as is shown

1. Henry Homer, An Enquiry into the means of Preserving and Improving the Public Roads of this Kingdom, Oxford, 1767.

by the following analysis of twenty-seven awards, in the apportionment of the commissioners' general expenses. In nine awards owners of under 40 acres paid over 5/- per acre more than those of over 180 acres. In six awards owners of under 40 acres paid 2/- - 5/- per acre more than those of over 180 acres. In five awards owners of under 40 acres paid up to 2/- per acre more than those of over 180 acres. In seven awards owners of under 40 acres paid the same or less per acre than those of over 180 acres. (See Appendix XXXIII).

Table III. THE VARIABLE COST OF ENCLOSURE

Parish	Encl. Date	Size of Holdings								
		Over 180 Acres			40-80 Acres			0-40 Acres		
		No.	Acre-age	Av. Cost per acre in /-	No.	Acre-age	Av. Cost per Acre in /-	No.	Acre-age	Av. Cost per acre in /-
Bedford	1766	1	561	10.6	1	60	15.2	14	67	15.7
Bigford	1767	2	885	12.2	5	344	11.8	18	141	18.2
Blimington	1781	3	569	18.1	5	300	20.0	4	124	23.3
Brails	1787	1	2496	16.6	4	256	23.9	12	185	24.2
Little Compton	1795	1	1094	37.6	2	122	47.9	1	1½	75.2

Thirty-three Warwickshire awards include detailed expense schedules from which we can estimate the relative importance of the different items in the public costs (see Appendix XXXI). In the table below we summarize the evidence of the schedules.

Table IV. THE BREAK DOWN OF ENCLOSURE COST.

(Note: As will be seen from the Appendix, not all thirty-three schedules specify every item. Hence the percentages below relate to different totals).

Item	Total Awards	Total Sum	Cost of Item	Proportion of Total Cost
Cost of enclosing Tithe owners Allotment	21	£38,317	£6,131	16%
Commissioners & Surveyors Fees and Expenses	21	£28,471	£9,619	34%
Legal & Parliamentary Fees	30	£41,614	£15,419	37%

Thus while the cost of obtaining the act and the various legal payments was the largest expense item, the commissioners' and surveyors' fees and subsistence expenses were almost as great, and moreover were increasing, as a proportion of the total, in the course of the eighteenth century.

We shall see later that, in addition, the cost of making the enclosures for the smaller holdings was very much greater acre for acre than for the large estates. Vast sums of money were paid out by the landowners in parishes undergoing enclosure to meet the cost of enclosing the tithe-owners' allotments. In twenty-two awards £6,431 was paid out for this purpose, an average of £292 per award.

It is difficult to say whether the statements of contemporaries like Arthur Young about the cost of enclosure were exaggerated or not, since we do not usually know precisely to what expenses they refer. Young suggested that the average cost of parliamentary enclosure over the whole period was £2. 5. Od. per acre. The Hammonds cite as an example of the costliness of the process an Oxfordshire parish where 4000 acres were enclosed at a cost of £20,000-£30,000, an average cost of £5 to £7.10s. Od. per acre. They claimed that general expenses were usually about £3 per acre in a lowland parish and £2.10s. Od. in an upland one.

If they referred only to the general expenses covered by the commissioners' account, then their estimate, if applied to the Midlands, was clearly too high. If, however, the cost of making the enclosures is added to this, then this was by no means so. The evidence shows that the capital outlay required to fence, hedge and ditch holdings was very heavy indeed. This leaves aside the additional burden of 'infencing' holdings, which was as much again.

An idea of the sums involved in physically making the enclosures is forthcoming both from the awards and the accounts of individual landowners. Where the cost of making the rector's enclosures was borne by the remaining proprietors the bill for this operation was sometimes included in the commissioners' schedule. This furnishes an illustration of the cost of such

a task, which would apply equally to the holdings of other landowners. (See Appendix XXXII).

In thirteen awards the average cost of making the incumbent's fences was 24/- per acre. The cost varied considerably over the eighteenth century, from 16/- to 37/-. It also, and this is very significant, varied inversely with the size of the allotment. Thus, at Shottery, enclosed in 1787, that land received by the smaller tithe owners cost a good deal more to enclose than that received by the lord of the manor, Lord Beauchamp.

Cost of ring-fencing Lord Beauchamp's tithe allotment of 298 acres.
Av. cost in /-

		£226.16. 4	15.2
ditto Mr. Sidebottom	8-1-27 acres	£ 30.15. 0	76.7
ditto Mr. Daniel	2-1-16 acres	£ 20.15. 0	207.6

Where we have evidence of the cost of making the inward mounds and fences it suggests that this was even more considerable. For example at Warmington in 1777 the expense of making the 'out fences' of the rector's glebe and tithes was £99. That of forming the infences and mounds was £450.

From documents in the Leigh collection we can see in great detail how the various costs in making the enclosures in the parish of Adlestrop in Gloucestershire were incurred. The enclosure took place in 1776 and involved 960 acres in all.¹ From the account book of James Leigh we find that the total expense of enclosing the whole was £2,820, that is £3 per acre. The cost of the timber used between Michaelmas 1775 and the Autumn of 1776 alone, amounted to £409, that is an average of 8.5/- per acre.

The other major item was the labour cost, estimated at one shilling per day over several years. The total expenditure under this head was £79. 4. 2d. Thus, the cost of labour would work out at 16/- per acre. The final cost of the enclosure to the landlord was £4,020, because two new farmhouses were built at an outlay of £400, and two others were fitted up

¹ Leigh Ms. in The Birthplace Library, Stratford. Adlestrop Papers, Box I, Bundle III. "Account Book for the Enclosure of Adlestrop".

at £200 each. Such new buildings were a common item in enclosure expenditure.¹ It would, therefore, be quite misleading to consider that the total cost of enclosure, or even fifty per cent of the immediate capital outlay, was represented by the sums recorded in the commissioners' accounts.

If, however, we take the average cost per acre of those general expenses included in the commissioners' schedules (that is twenty-two shillings for Warwickshire) and to this add the average cost of making the ring-fences (estimated from thirteen Warwickshire awards at twenty-four shillings), we get a total of £2. 6s. 0d. per acre in this county, taking enclosures over the whole period. There is contemporary confirmation of this figure: It is near to that quoted by Arthur Young (£2. 8s. 0d.): it receives the support of Homer, the celebrated Warwickshire commissioner who stated, as early as 1766, that the cost lay between £2 and £3 per acre.² This was estimated, of course, before the sharp rise in costs of the Napoleonic War Years. Lastly, it was calculated that the prospective enclosure of Adlestrop would cost Mr. Leigh, the proprietor, at least £3,³ and this was in the middle 1760's.

The figure we have arrived at to cover the cost of enclosure per acre of land in Warwickshire is considerably in advance of those quoted by Tate or the Government Report of 1808 which gives the average cost as one pound.⁴ It also establishes that the estimate of average enclosure costs advanced by the Hammonds and quoted earlier was substantially correct. This is without taking account of the cost of sub-dividing or 'infencing' of ~~the~~ holdings. From the 1790's the cost of enclosure would be between £2.10s. 0d. and £5 per acre in Warwickshire. There seems to be no evidence to support the further statement of the

1. For the vast scale of re-building of Midland farm-houses, and the construction of mansions from the 1760's onwards, see J.M. Martin, "Social and Economic Changes in the Rural West Midlands", M. Com. thesis 1960, University of Birmingham. In particular the Appendices III & IV attached to Chapter III.
2. H. Homer, "An Essay on the Condition...." 1766, op.cit. p.12.
3. Leigh MS. in the Birthplace Library, Stratford. Adlestrop Papers Box I, Bundle III, entitled "Memoranda 1765".
4. General Report on Enclosures 1808, Appendix XVII, p.97. In the example given, although the average cost was only one pound, the expense of the fences were included, arising to £550 out of £1650; that is to say, one third of the total expenses. W. E. Tate regards, the pound quoted in this General Report as "a convenient average figure". See "The Cost of Parliamentary Enclosure in England", op. cit. p. 261.

Hammonds that the costs were different in low-lying and hilly parishes. More significant, it seems, was the date of enclosure and the structure of landownership, as a determinant of costs.

The consequences of these conclusions are more considerable yet. If we take £3 per acre as the cost of enclosing the smaller allotments (bearing in mind that the expense has been found to be much greater for them than for the great landowners), then the total cost of enclosing even a small estate of five acres would be fifteen pounds, almost equal to a labourer's wages for one year. The financial burden would certainly be heavy from the 1780's onwards, and must go some way in explaining the evidence of the selling up of small estates in many parishes coming under enclosure in these years. It is really no answer to say that the small owner could afford enclosure because of the high prices prevailing in these years, and the favourable markets for agricultural produce. High prices were more likely to affect him as a purchaser, than as a marketer of surplus produce. We are reminded by Gonner that an increase in value did not always accrue immediately from an enclosure;¹ and this was particularly so in the case of small, uneconomical holdings in the hands of men who lacked the capital to exploit the opportunity which enclosure offered for further improvement of the land. The recouping of enclosure costs was also delayed where land was rented out (as the land tax assessment show that many small estates in Warwickshire were at the end of 1760's). Owners of rented land could only receive the benefits of increased value when leases fell in.

In view of this evidence it is at least questionable whether W. E. Tate's conclusions can be upheld, namely that contemporaries and later historians had greatly exaggerated the cost of enclosure and that the monetary outlay was not "enough in itself to have any serious effect in driving the (small) man out of business".²

Though evidence is not forthcoming from Warwickshire, it has

1. E.C.K. Gonner, op. cit. 78

2. W.E.Tate, op.cit. p. 265.

been found in other parts of the country, for example, the Yorkshire Wolds, where landownership and farming were perhaps less highly developed at this time, and the small man more significant in forming local policy, that "alternatives to a full enclosure were sought in many Wold villages". One such scheme, aimed at introducing seeds and roots into the rotation, without the "immense expense" of an enclosure, was described by Isaac Leatham in a report to the local Board of Agriculture written in 1794.¹

In conclusion we can assert that in Warwickshire, at least, the cost of enclosure increased perhaps six-fold during the eighteenth century under the influence of a number of factors which have been detailed; not the least of these was the growth in the work and professional status of the commissioners and other officials connected with enclosure, leading to a rise in fees and expenses. From the later eighteenth century, that is from the enclosure of the large "open" parishes, the expense of the process became formidable, and it is difficult to escape the conclusion that from this time, if not before, the cost to the smaller landowner would be a serious burden, which would be all the heavier for the small man, owing to the relatively high cost of enclosing tiny, uneconomical allotments. He had, further, to pay his share of the cost of enclosing and fencing the tithe-owner's allotments, a very considerable expense rising to at least sixteen per cent of the commissioners' general schedule of costs. Almost all Warwickshire enclosures entailed this method of surmounting the tithe problem.

The expense of actually making the enclosures normally doubled, at least, the total cost. Such expenses were not in any instance, in Warwickshire, included in the commissioners' account of general expenses, a point which has not always been made clear by students of enclosure costs. The completion of

1. Alan Harris, op. cit. pp. 64-65.

this operation was normally required by the commissioners within a month or two of the award, on penalty of forfeiture of the allotment.

There has been a tendency for some time, reacting to the general condemnation of an earlier generation of historians, to minimise the social injustice which enclosure brought. We must, however, be aware of the heavy financial burden which the change necessarily imposed on the lower classes of rural society. In one large Warwickshire parish, at least, the memory of the eighteenth century enclosure left a bitterness which remained for generations¹ as we have remarked earlier.

1. See M. K. Ashby, *Joseph Ashby of Tysoe*, Cambridge 1963, p.38. Miss Ashby recalls many interesting conversations and observations from the days of her father's childhood in Warwickshire.

CHAPTER X

ENCLOSURE, LAND UTILIZATION AND POPULATION TRENDS

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In this chapter we examine parish registers and other documents to assess the effect, if any, of enclosure on population in Warwickshire. It was found impossible to do this, however, without taking account of the changes in land use which were perhaps hastened as a consequence of the enclosure movement in the eighteenth century.

Stated in general terms, the agrarian changes of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are seen as part of an "evolutionary process by which the rural population of each district was specializing in the kind of agriculture to which the district was physically and climatically suited....."¹

We have had occasion already to describe the contrasting soil and topographical features to be found in Warwickshire, and even within the Felden half of the county, the contrast presented by the heavy claylands of the hilly south-east, and the more fertile soils of the Avon valley. The difficulties of attempting to pursue open-field farming, with its emphasis on arable, in south-east Warwickshire, were explained by the lesser freeholders of Wolfhamcote in 1730. It was stated that "the soil being stubborn clay is naturally unfit for ploughing.....the fields will not produce half the crops as the lighter and more mixed soils do.....being naturally retentive of wet and excessive rains." It was said that "too much wet or too dry weather are almost equally prejudicial to this sort of cold clay ground". In contrast, however, "the turf in Flecknoe Field is naturally fine and good, and very proper for grazing so that the farmers chief dependence there (even) in the best of seasons is on their flocks"².

1. The words are those of A. Redford "Labour Migration in England" 1926, p.63.

2. Unsigned document in War. C.R.O. entitled "a true state of the Case relating to the intended Inclosure of Flecknoe Field in the County of Warwick", dated 1730, Ref. War. C.R.O. Z.12/1-2.

It is not, therefore, surprising that by the time of the Crop Return of 1801, a considerable contrast in land use had developed between the Felden south-east and the villages situated along the Avon and its tributaries.¹ There is some evidence that in many Felden parishes, rapid and considerable conversion to pasture cultivation may have been a consequence of enclosure.

It is fortunate, in this regard, that the results of a partially completed questionnaire circulated to the chief constables of the various Warwickshire Hundreds, by John Wedge, the Board of Agriculture Reporter in 1790, still survives, at least for Kineton Hundred, which covers much of the south-east of the county.² The information sought for by Wedge was similar to that asked for on a national scale (with more success) in 1801. It allows us to make a comparison between land utilization in 1791 and 1801 in a number of parishes.³

We find that in parishes in south-east Warwickshire where enclosure had taken place a long time before 1790, much land was already under pasture at that date. Examples of this are given below:

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1. "The Agricultural Geography of Warwickshire during the Napoleonic Wars as Revealed by the Acreage Return of 1801," by R. H. Pelham Trans. B'ham Arch. Soc. Vol. 68, 1952, pp. 101 & 103.
 2. The answers he received to his questions are printed in the form of an appendix to his Report of 1794 for the Board of Agriculture Appendix I, "General View of the Agriculture of Warwickshire".
 3. Two objections to such a comparison are possible; we have no guarantee that either Wedges' figures or those of the 1801 Return are strictly accurate; in the second place the "Arable" of the 1790 Return need not be the same as the "Area under Recorded Crops of the 1801 Return", which did not include sown grasses. Nevertheless when these two points have been conceded, there remains the fact that in all these parishes the arable area had declined between 1790 and 1801 by about 50%. The results in Warwickshire are in contrast to those in other counties, for example, Leicestershire - in nine parishes arable saw a striking extension between a return made in 1793 and 1801. See "Agricultural Returns and the Government during the Napoleonic Wars", by W. E. Minchinton, Aric. Hist. Review, Vol. I, 1953, page 42.

Table I. EXAMPLES OF PASTURE PARISHES IN 1790

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Total Acreage of Parish</u>	<u>Date of Enclosure</u>	<u>Utilization in 1790 Return (Acres)</u>	
			<u>Grazing & Meadow</u>	<u>Arable</u>
Compton Scorpion	850	Prior to 18th century	500	150
Compton Verney	840	" " "	700	80
Radway		1757	800	130

Nevertheless, in parishes which had only recently undergone enclosure in 1790, or which still remained in an open state, the arable remained very considerable at that date, but showed a very striking shrinkage by the time of the 1801 Return. And here again, perhaps, we may see the effect of conversion on population in this locality as demonstrated in a population decline 1801-1811, a decade generally very favourable to population growth.

Table II EXAMPLES OF PASTURE CONVERSION &
POPULATION DECLINE

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Total Parish Acreage</u>	<u>Date of Enclosure Award</u>	<u>1790 Enquiry</u>		<u>1801</u>	<u>Census Return Parish Totals</u>		
			<u>Arable</u>	<u>Meadow & Grazing</u>	<u>"Under Recorded Crops"</u>	<u>1801</u>	<u>1811</u>	<u>1821</u>
Ilmington	2500	1781	2000	500	1004	656	646	722
Eatinto n	3370	1795	2200	750	1036	519	515	641
Oxhill	1830	1797	1300	450	328	298	297	307

Other parishes where enclosure took place in the early 19th century, similarly saw a population decline. Examples are given below:

Table III. FURTHER PARISHES WHERE CONVERSION &
POPULATION DECLINE TOOK PLACE

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Date of Enclosure</u>	<u>1 Census Return</u>			
		<u>1801</u>	<u>1811</u>	<u>1821</u>	<u>1831</u>
Marton	1804	371	309	317	311
Stowerton	1807	201	204	203	197
Which Ford with Ascott	1807	397	419	380	441
Long Compton	1811/2	755	753	860	891

1. Furthermore the Census Return of 1801 was probably an underestimate.

It is true, however, that in many cases the population decline consequent upon nineteenth century enclosure was merely temporary.

However, in a number of cases the first census returns show the tail-end of population decline in Felden parishes, which possibly stemmed from an enclosure of a much earlier date. When the registers have been looked at we can trace the continuity of this shrinkage of population through the latter half of the eighteenth century.

Table IV. EXAMPLES OF FELDEN PARISHES IN WHICH POPULATION DECLINED IN 18th & EARLY 19th CENTURY

Parish	Date of Award	Total Baptisms		Census Return			
		in 25 yrs. before Enclosure	in 25 yrs. after Enclosure	1801	1811	1821	1831
Priors Marston	1758	(1733-58) 395	(1758-83) 371	538	532	593	655
Lower Shuckburgh ¹	1791	(1753-71) 85	(1772-1803) 75	144	139	166	165
Ilmington	1781	(1756-81) 510	(1781-1806) 427	656	646	722	856

Many other Felden parishes which had undergone enclosure at some date in the eighteenth century, saw a decline in population in the first decade or so of the nineteenth century,² perhaps the tail end of a long process of population stagnation.

In addition to Lower Shuckburgh, we have information which corroborates evidence of stagnation or decline of population in three further Felden pasture parishes.³ At Napton, one of the largest parishes in south-east Warwickshire, it was stated by the Incumbent who made the 1801 Crop Return, that following the enclosure of 1779 the population had declined by over 12%.

The connection between pasture conversion and population

1. Confirmatory evidence of population decline "since the Act of 1778" given in V.C.H. Works, V. p. 215.
2. For example the parishes of Lighthorne, Honington, Willey, Princethorpe, Stretton-on-Dunsmore, Stretton-on-Fosse, Warmington and Welford.
3. Namely, (a) Penny Compton from 415 in 1694 to 383 in 1801, see P. Styles, "A Census of a Warwickshire Village in 1698", University of Birmingham Hist. J. Vol. III, No. I, 1951, p.45 et. seq. (b) Napton from 900 in 1779 to 787 in 1801, see Pelham, loc. cit, p. 101. (c) Priors Hardwick from 222 in 1782 to 228 in 1801, see Parish Register for later 18th Century. Notes of Incumbent in Register.

decline seems plain in some parishes. At Grandborough, where the parish register shows a 25% decline in baptisms on the preceding 25 years following the enclosure of 1769, the incumbent complained in 1801 that only 120 acres were in arable, while 1702 acres were under grass. Out of some one hundred and forty-two parishes which made a return in 1801 Grandborough, Lower Shuckburgh and Wolfhamcote had the lowest recorded arable acreages. There is proof from the parish registers, and elsewhere, that all three saw considerable depopulation, following the eighteenth century enclosure.

It is possible that in this part of the county, enclosure and conversion to grass continued unaffected by the inflation of grain prices towards the close of the eighteenth century. The price of beef and mutton was also very high in the later eighteenth century in this area, and it was observed by one local tenant-farmer that it remained consistently high in these years, being less prone to the violent fluctuations observed in the price of wheat.² Dr. Pelham noting in his study of the 1801 Crop Return, the low yield of corn in south-eastern parishes,³ thought there might be evidence of soil exhaustion in the Felden, and that this in turn might account for the high proportion of land under grass in many Felden parishes at the turn of the century.⁴

The consequent increase in marketable produce both for the Midland and London markets in the new pasture lands of south-east Warwickshire has been described elsewhere.⁵ Evidence suggests

1. The 1794 Board of Agriculture is quite emphatic about the connection. "These lands being now grazed want much fewer hands to manage them than they did in their former open state.... from these causes the hardy yeomanry of country villages have been driven for employment into B'ham, Coventry and other manufacturing towns....." Wedge, page 21. op. cit.
2. Diary of Charles Bourne of Elford 1760-1814. The original in private hands of Mr. W. Wildey, 28 Cambridge Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham. Photostat in Birmingham C.R.O. Observations 1796-1800. In 1797 Bourne observes that there had been a "great reduction in price, but cattle are (still) uncommon dear". This point is emphasized many times.
3. Pelham op. cit, page 103.
4. The Vicar of Wolverly, whose parish underwent enclosure in 1795 said in his Crop Return of 1801 that he expected the cultivation of wheat would "decline apace as the land comes to be laid down in grass, as has been pretty generally the case after enclosures!" Ibid. p. 101. "Social & Economic Trends in the West Midlands 1785-1800".
5. See M. Com. Thesis J. M. Martin, Birmingham. Evidence of (1825) "eighteenth century farm accounts and stock books of Warwickshire farms is discussed. Chapter IV, p. 103.

that in some cases vast farms were created particularly in the war years, which were turned into manufactories of dairy produce and meat on a grand scale.

In contrast to the south-east Felden, the villages of the Avon and Stour valleys were enclosed to improve the arable husbandry practiced here. Soils in this part of the Felden were lighter, more mixed, and more fertile. Here in the timber-built villages of the valleys, in contrast to the stone-built and more open settlements towards the east, arable acreages under recorded crops were in 1801, among the highest in the county.¹ In particular the acreage devoted to wheat production for an inflated market, was very considerable.

Here we might expect the effect on population to be different. The first census returns from 1801² show that in most of these villages, population was increasing rapidly from that date. Information about eighteenth century population trends has come to light for one only of these parishes, Wellesbourne Hastings and Mountford. Enclosed under awards of 1730 and 1733, the two villages increased their population as recorded below. It was a fortunate chance that the population at two dates in the eighteenth century is recorded in the parish register.³

Table V. POPULATION CHANGE IN WELLESBOURNE MOUNTFORD
1663-1801

<u>1663</u>	<u>Hearth Tax</u>	<u>1730 Estimate (Thomas)</u>	<u>1767</u>	<u>1781</u>	<u>1801</u>		
<u>Families</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Families</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Population</u>		
83	374 ⁴	91	401	146	717	812	1012
			78.7%		41.1%		

Here in this Avon valley parish the enclosure awards of 1730 and 1733 were followed by a very considerable population spurt over the period 1730-67. In an almost equal period of time from 1769 to 1801 when population in general was probably increasing

1. For example Wootten Wawern, 2519 acres; Stratford, 2628 acres; Bidford, 1229 acres; Aston Cantlow, 1486 acres; Alveston, 1348 acres; Claverdon, 1290 acres; Easington, 1036 acres; Snitterfield, 1119 acres.

2. See Appendix XXXIV.

3. Register of Baptisms, 1767-1809 on the first page.

4. (On following page (210)).

at an even faster rate, the growth of population at Wellesbourne was only about half that of the previous thirty odd years.

Here we may have an illustration of enclosure leading to an improved system of arable farming, and so calling forth a very greatly increased labour supply to answer the new needs of changed economic conditions.¹ The importance of this factor in population rise in rural England in the eighteenth century has received emphasis from H. J. Habakkuk and others over the past decade.²

Here then, in a few examples from each locality, we have clues as to the possible effect of parliamentary enclosure on population trends in two contrasting parts of the Felden. The consequences may well have been tied to land utilization following enclosure.

These isolated examples prompt investigation on a wider and more detailed scale since they do not completely accord with the opinion of an authority on the Parliamentary enclosure movement: Gonner, it will be recalled, in an exhaustive study of Census Returns found no general connection between enclosure and the movement of population.³

There are available a number of sources which permit such a large-scale and detailed investigation of population movement in groups of Warwickshire parishes during the period 1660-1801. This is a period in which much parliamentary enclosure took place,

4. From previous page

In order to obtain estimate of population in 1663 and 1730, the multiple of 4.5 was used to convert total families. There is general agreement among demographers that 4.5 persons per family is the nearest approximation which can be used for the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. See D. Eversley, "A Survey of Population in an Area of Worcestershire from 1660-1850 on the Basis of Parish Records", in "Population Studies" March 1957, pp. 252-279.

1. A similar example from the Parish of Elfordon on the Warwickshire Staffs border is discussed in detail in M. Com. thesis loc.cit. Chapter II, p.18 et.seq. Between the enclosure of 1766 and 1796 the population increased from 256 to 360, due, the Board of Agriculture reporter wastold "not rising from any manufactory, but merely from the increase of labour necessary to improved cultivation."
2. He emphasizes that in the view of contemporaries the rist in population in the eighteenth century was due largely to changes in the supply and demand for labour. See "English Population in the Eighteenth century", in Econ. H.R. 2nd series, No.2, 1953-59.
3. A.K.C.Gonner, "Common Land and Enclosure" 1912, p.441, et.seq(p.117.

but which can hardly be investigated as to the effect or otherwise on population, using only the census returns, as these do not begin until the nineteenth century. Most investigators of this problem have nevertheless attempted to do this.¹ Such studies have not only failed to assess the effect of enclosure on population trends in rural areas, by an examination of demographic series before, and after the enclosure date, but also to distinguish the differential effect of the movement in different localities. Nor did they compare population trends with those exhibited in groups of old-established parishes in the same locality, and in other parts of the same neighbourhood or county even where no enclosure took place, and very different economic conditions prevailed.² Finally, such studies have not been able to assess the amount of migration taking place in different localities; this was largely due to the failure to make an assessment of actual population growth at various dates in the eighteenth century and compare this with the growth which should have taken place if the demographic trends had been a true representation of population change in the eighteenth century.

In the investigation made here an attempt has been made to remedy some of the shortcomings outlined above. We will begin by giving an account of the various sources available for an investigation of eighteenth century population movements.

In order to arrive at an idea of the actual population of groups of parishes at various dates, and so to measure the growth which in fact, took place between 1660 and 1801, the following sources have been used. In the first place the Hearth Tax Assessments of 1663³ permit us to make an estimate

1. For example Gonner loc. cit; also J. P. Chambers "Enclosure and Labour Supply in the Industrial Revolution. Econ. H.R. 2nd Series, Vol. V, No. 3, 1953, page 319.
2. This stricture cannot, however, be levelled at the investigation of J. D. Chambers, though even here much attention was given to population movement after 1801. For an attempt to assess the effect of enclosure by an examination of eighteenth century demographic trends see J. D. Chambers' latest study of this topic in his "Vale of Trent 1660-1800", Econ. H.R. Suppl. 3, 1957.
3. Which are apparently fairly complete being in an imposing bound volume, and containing full lists of those both liable and non-liable to taxation.

of population at this date.¹ The problems attached to this were outlined by D. V. Glass some years ago, since which date their value for this purpose has been demonstrated by several historians.²

Such an estimate can be linked up with one for 1730 based on Dr. Thomas' record of households and families in Warwickshire parishes at this date.³ This can, in turn, be linked up with the population figures given in the earliest censuses from 1801.

Using these documents, population figures have been worked out for a large number of Warwickshire parishes grouped in different categories; and these, and the calculated population growth between various dates are tabulated in Appendix XXXIV.

A further very valuable source of population information is furnished by the parish registers, many of which are complete for long series of years throughout the eighteenth century.⁴ The value of parish registers for analysing demographic trends has been outlined in an article written about ten years ago, and they have been used by a few students of Economic History since then.⁵

The information provided by the Hearth Tax Assessments, Thomas' estimates and the Census Returns is complementary to that yielded by a study of the parish registers; the former provide us with information about actual population growth in the course of the eighteenth century; the latter throw light on the demographic trends prevailing, and enable us to calculate the growth of population which should have resulted from the level of baptisms and burials over the period. The difference

1. The following articles by D.V. Glass "Gregory King and the Population of England and Wales at the end of the Seventeenth Century". Eugenics Review No. 37, Jan. 1946--and "Gregory King's Estimate of Population of England & Wales, 1695" Population Studies No. III, 1950, page 338.
2. For example J. D. Chambers in his "The Vale of Trent 1670-1800" Econ. H.R. Supplement 3, 1957.
3. Dugdales "Antiquities of Warwickshire" 2nd Edition by Dr. Thomas 1730.
4. Many of these registers for Warwickshire are housed in the War. C.R.O. at the Shire Hall, though at the time of writing a substantial number remain with the incumbents in the parishes.
5. Notably J. D. Chambers, Ultra; also D.E.C. Eversley "A Survey of Population in an area of Worcestershire from 1660-1850, Population Studies pp. 252-279, March 1957, "A Survey of Population in an area of Worcestershire from 1660-1850 on the Basis of Parish Records".

between actual population growth and that calculated from the evidence of parish registers can be explained only in terms of immigration or outward migration of population.

The actual growth of population in various groups of parishes in Warwickshire at various dates between 1660 and 1801 is summarized as follows;

Table VI. VARIABLE RATES OF POPULATION GROWTH IN
WARWICKSHIRE LOCALITIES

<u>Type of Parish</u>	<u>Number Looked At</u>	<u>Total Area</u>	<u>Pop. 1663</u>	<u>Pop. 1730</u>	<u>Pop. 1801</u>	<u>Total Rise 1663-1801</u>
(a) Felden Pasture	35	78,089 Acres	9382	10,684	12,475	31%
				13.8%	16.7%	
(b) Felden,) Enclosed before) 1730)	14 9		3101 2389	1983	4037 2916	30%
				-16%	47%	
(c) Felden Avon) and Stour Valley)	20 16 19	53,901 Acres	4303 3916	4822 5272	8425 8586	96%
				21%	65%	

We get the impression that there may have been a difference in the rate of growth of different groups of parishes even within the Felden, or southern half of Warwickshire, in the eighteenth century. Thus, in some thirty-five parishes grouped in south-east Warwickshire and covering an area of over seventy-eight thousand acres, the total population rise between 1663 and 1801 was estimated at only 31%. Furthermore, the rise in population between 1730 and 1801 was perhaps no greater than between 1660 and 1730 in this area.

Looking at a smaller category of parishes within this area, namely those which underwent enclosure prior to 1730, most interesting trends are observed.

Between 1663 and 1730, when in fact, a number of these "old-enclosed" parishes lost their common fields by private agreement, the population of the group appears to have shrunk by 16%, but in the later period between 1730 and 1801, the population seems to have risen considerably; thus, the growth of population in those Felden parishes which did not experience enclosure at that

time may have been around three times as great as that in south-east Warwickshire as a whole, where eighteenth century enclosure was the rule.

In contrast to the south-east Felden, the population of a group of twenty parishes situated along the valley of the Avon and its tributary the Stour, covering fifty-four thousand acres, appears to have seen a much larger increase. Slightly more than two-thirds of this growth occurred in the later period between 1730 and 1801.

It seems possible that enclosure was a factor influencing the variable growth of population in these Felden parishes. In the south-east where, as we have already emphasized, a Private Act could perhaps bring rapid and wholesale conversion to pasture in the eighteenth century, population may have hardly grown at all between 1730 and 1801, and most of such increase as did occur was perhaps after 1730, when Parliamentary Enclosure was under way here. On the other hand where, in the Felden, population growth between 1730 and 1801 seemed considerable enclosure may have acted as a stimulant.

When we look outside the Felden part of the county, at the Forest of Arden, the rural and urban industrial parishes of the north, and the market towns, the growth of population appears different again. Below is a summary of such an examination:

Table VII. VARIABLE GROWTH IN FURTHER LOCALITIES

<u>Type of Parish</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Pop.</u> <u>1663</u>	<u>Pop.</u> <u>1730</u>	<u>Pop.</u> <u>1801</u>	<u>Total Rise</u> <u>1660-1801</u>
(a) <u>Arden Forest</u> <u>Parishes</u>	18	8522		12,359	45%
	15	7558	8086	10,794	
			7%	34%	
(b) <u>Industrial</u> <u>Northern Parishes</u>	3	2557	3353	6161	141%
			32%	83%	
(c) <u>Industrial</u> <u>Urban</u> (Nuneaton)	1	1733			175%
(Atherstone)	1	851	752	2650	211%
(d) <u>Market Towns</u>	4	2634		6015	128%

We see that in the Arden, though population growth may have been more than in the south-east Felden between 1730 and 1801, it nevertheless seemed to be less than in the Avon valley.

In three rural industrial parishes population appeared to be growing comparatively fast even before 1730, and the total expansion of population under the influence of considerable immigration of labour may have been greater than anywhere in the Felden south. Population growth in the two urban industrial centres of Nuneaton and Atherstone seemed even more considerable. In the latter town, population seems to have declined between 1663 and 1730: there is evidence from the considerable manuscript material (already described) relating to the enclosure struggle, that around 1730 the trade and manufacture of the town was in a state of depression. But between 1730 and 1801, with the growth of manufacture in the town, and despite the initial hardship consequent upon the enclosure of 1765, the population growth appears to have been greater than anywhere else looked at in Warwickshire.

When we turn our attention to individual parishes in the localities under examination we find that the amount of growth appeared to vary considerably between one parish and another, in some instances.

In the thirty-five south-east pasture parishes, at least half of them seem to have seen a population decline, or a stagnation of population in both the period 1663-1730 and 1730-1801 - as we see from the table below:

Table VIII. POPULATION TRENDS IN SOUTH-EAST PASTURE PARISHES

<u>Period 1663-1730</u>	<u>Period 1730-1801</u>
16 Parishes Declined	10 Parishes Declined
6 Parishes Stagnated (Rise of under 10%)	7 Parishes Stagnated (Rise of under 10%)
13 Parishes Rose	18 Parishes Rose

However, the recovery in terms of individual parishes in the latter period was probably more dramatic in Avon Valley parishes. Here, as in the south-east, many parishes may have experienced a

population decline in the early period. But between 1730 and 1801 almost all Avon Valley parishes probably saw a considerable population rise if our figures are accurate.

Table IX. POPULATION TRENDS IN AVON VALLEY PARISHES

<u>Period 1663-1730</u>	<u>Period 1730-1801</u>
5 Parishes Declined	4 Parishes Declined
4 Parishes Stagnated	- Parishes Stagnated
7 Parishes Rose	17 Parishes Rose

Turning to the 'old-enclosed' Felden parishes which underwent the process before 1730, of the nine where a comparison of population figures can be made, only two saw a population increase between 1660 and 1730: in all the rest there was an apparent decline in population. On the other hand between 1730 and 1801, fourteen out of fifteen of this type of parish seem to have grown noticeably.

A study of parish registers enables us to assess the natural population increase, unaffected by migration. In this way we can get an impression of how much migration of population, or immigration took place. By using a base population, and adding surplus baptisms for each quinquennium, we are able to measure the growth which occurred at each stage in the eighteenth century. We are, at the same time, able to convert the baptisms, burials and marriages to rates by changing the totals for each ten year period into rates based on the population of the group of parishes at the middle year of the decade. The natural increase in each decade is calculated by taking surplus baptisms as a percentage of total baptisms. Fertility rates are calculated by dividing successive five year totals of baptisms by the marriages contracted in the previous five years. Since this was a study of comparative population growth in different parts of Warwickshire it was thought unnecessary to apply a corrective to the baptisms and burials. However, for the purpose of testing the difference this makes, and to make a comparison with a group of Worcestershire parishes studied by D.E.C. Eversley,

the baptisms and burials of twenty-five Felden pasture parishes were also increased by ten per cent. The results of applying this corrective to the demographic series are set out in a separate table in Appendix XXXVI.

The registers of twenty-five Felden pasture parishes, eighteen Avon and Stour valley parishes, and twelve Arden forest parishes have been studied.¹ The aim as far as possible has been to examine a group of contiguous parishes,² in order to reduce the chance of error due to baptisms or marriages taking place in neighbouring parishes. In order to extend the comparison of demographic trends in Warwickshire further, a group of ten old-enclosed, and three rural industrial parish registers have been analysed.

The tables of demographic totals and rates are included in appendices XXXV-XXXVII. The first thing we observe by looking at the demographic tables, is that total population growth by natural increase in the eighteenth century between 1730 and 1784, measured in terms of surplus baptisms as a proportion of the population in each decade appears to have been about the same in all rural parts of Warwickshire. We deduce from this that the contrasting economic character of the different localities did not as far as one can see perhaps greatly influence the natural increase of the population within each area. The following statistical summary illustrates this point.³

Table X. THE NATURAL INCREASE OF POPULATION IN
WARWICKSHIRE

Type of Parish	No.	Dates	Total % Growth	Population Figures
Felden Pasture	10)	1700-84	74.7	from 3925 to 6860)
Felden Pasture	10)	1730-84	55.5	from 4410 to 6860)
Felden Pasture	25)	1730-84	61	from 7439 to 12,005)

1. A selection of parishes were made to give a grouping of contiguous parishes representative of each locality, subject of course to availability of registers.
2. The parish of Wolverton has been included in both the Avon Valley and Arden forest groups - since it is a border line parish.
3. More detailed statistical tables and graphs are included in Appendices XXXV-XXXVII.

Table X cont.

<u>Type of Parish</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Total % Growth</u>	<u>Population Figures</u>
Felden Avon Valley	8)	1700-84	51.7	from 2898 to 4398)
" " "	8)	1730-84	56.2	from 2814 to 4398)
" " "	18)	1730-84	56	from 4832 to 7528)
Arden Forest	10)	1700-84	60.8	from 5474 to 8806)
" " "	10)	1730-84	55.8	from 5656 to 8806)
" " "	12)	1730-84	58	from 5799 to 9136)

However, if one looks at the whole period from 1700 to 1784, then there is perhaps a difference in the natural growth within each locality. This was due probably to the varying severity of the weather, food shortage and of the smallpox epidemic of 1725-29. The effect of the latter was possible less severe in the more widely spread pasture villages towards the Northampton border, than in the densely populated Avon Valley near the Worcestershire border. The drastic impact on the villages of North Worcestershire has already been recorded.¹

Although the growth of population by natural increase between 1730 and 1784 was perhaps about 60% in all rural localities,² differences appeared to exist as we saw between the actual population growth of these areas. If we take now only those parishes whose parish registers have been used above, then the actual growth between 1730 and 1801 in the different categories was calculated as follows:

Table XI. THE ACTUAL GROWTH OF POPULATION IN WARWICKSHIRE LOCALITIES

<u>Type of Parish</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Total % Growth</u>	<u>Total Population</u>
Felden Pasture	25	1730-1801	32	7439 to 9888
Avon Valley	18	1730-1801	57	4832 to 7579
Arden Forest	12	1730-1801	62	5799 to 9392

1. See D. Eversley, loc. cit., "Population Studies 1957", pp. 252-279.

2. No attempt was made to use the register after 1784 as their reliability after this date has sometimes been questioned. From examination of the Warwickshire registers, however, I came to the conclusion that for this area, at least, there was no apparent under-registration of baptisms in the later eighteenth century.

We can conclude on the basis of evidence drawn from the registers that if the same rate of increase occurred in the period 1785-1801 as we discovered prior to this, then the total growth of population by natural increase in all rural areas from 1730 to 1801 would have been around 80%, at least.

It seems justifiable to suppose without putting too fine a point on it, that much of the surplus population in the Felden South East Pasture area migrated out of the locality altogether before 1801, although it seems unlikely that even here any actual decline in population took place. We can further conclude that a smaller amount of migration of population seems likely in the two other areas examined.

In the differential influence of migration within the different areas we can surely detect as a contributory factor the varying impact of Parliamentary enclosure, and the consequent re-organization of the land? The registers seem, therefore, to confirm the statement of the Board of Agriculture Reporter quoted earlier to the effect that enclosure had caused migration of labour, or had at least been a contributory factor.

It seems fitting, at this point, to examine more closely the role of parliamentary enclosure in influencing population trends. So far we have the impression that the total natural increase of population in rural Warwickshire during the period 1730-84 seemed unaffected by enclosure, since in all three areas examined it amounted to between 55-60% regardless of the incidence of parliamentary enclosure. Secondly we found reason to think that enclosure may have had an effect on the incidence and degree of migration out of the rural parts of the county.

One would, perhaps, expect that if dislocation and migration was a direct consequence of enclosure, it would have at least a temporary impact on the demographic series in parishes undergoing the process. In order to find out whether this was so, an examination was made of twenty-five Felden parishes undergoing enclosure. The demographic series were tabulated for twenty-five parishes prior to, and after enclosure. The resulting baptism, burial and marriage statistics are both tabulated in Appendices I. ~~And from a cursory investigation of the registers it seems likely the rate of increase was accelerated during the last three quinquennia of the eighteenth century.~~

and recorded in graphic form (Appendices XXXVII, XXXXI). It is possible, as we see from the graphs in particular, that all the series were in fact affected by enclosure. It can be no accident that baptisms, surplus baptisms, marriages and fertility all dipped down markedly immediately after enclosure. In all cases it took twenty years for the various series to surpass the level reached before enclosure.¹ At the same time burials reached the highest peak of the whole fifty years immediately following enclosure and remained thereafter higher on average than before the change. Were it possible to work out the rates from these totals it is clear that these tendencies would be even more sharply delineated. It seems possible from all this that enclosure did have, at least in Warwickshire, a temporary effect on demographic trends, a conclusion which ties up with our observations based on the later census returns from 1801 onwards.

The temporary decline in population growth following enclosure was not apparently confined to a few parishes in the group examined. Surplus baptisms dropped during the quarter century after enclosure in fourteen out of twenty-five parishes. In four others the increase was negligible. There was an observable increase in surplus baptisms in seven only of the twenty-five parishes. On the other hand in some parishes the growth after enclosure was possibly very striking. For example, in the Avon valley parish of Alveston where arable farming was flourishing prior to enclosure, this was so.

In order to point the contrast, a study of ten parishes lying in the Felden, which underwent enclosure before 1730, were examined. Here, where life was unaffected by Parliamentary enclosure, we think there may have been a difference in population behaviour. The growth of population by natural increase may have been more considerable during the eighteenth century than in any other rural parishes examined. The registers suggest that the total natural increase between 1730 and 1784 was 71.2%. The actual growth between 1730 and the census of 1801 was 70%. It

1. The shrinkage in surplus baptisms was quite dramatic; in the ten years after enclosure, surplus baptisms dropped from 839 to 534, that is by 37% on the previous ten years.

seems possible then that these parishes were affected to only a small extent by migration. We note other differences in these parishes: the rate of growth was on average higher than in other rural areas, and this in turn appears to have been due to a high baptism rate and a high marriage-rate.¹ The marriage rate remained high throughout the period. This was based on a 12% rise in marriages in the twenty-five years 1760-84, compared with the previous twenty-five years. They began to rise rapidly from 1755 onwards and saw a peak period in 1760-64 and 1775-79.

A comparison of the population trends exhibited by these old enclosed parishes and those shown in the twenty-five parishes enclosed by parliamentary act (sixteen of them between 1756-66) is best made by reference to the graph patterns. Whereas in parishes undergoing enclosure, baptism and burial totals fluctuated violently, with baptisms declining heavily after enclosure, then surging up to new heights twenty years afterwards, in the enclosed group this was not apparently so. In old-enclosed parishes surplus baptisms dropped to a moderate degree in 1760, but rose continuously and markedly from that date onwards. On the whole we have an impression of violent disturbance in enclosing parishes with much smoother demographic trends in the old-enclosed parishes.

Much has already been said about evidence of migration out of rural Warwickshire, and it is of some importance to consider the whole question of mobility of population. The importance of the mobility of population in the rural scene of the eighteenth century has been emphasized in other local studies. D. J. Chambers found in the Vale of Trent, that during this period "the proportion of natives leaving, and strangers coming into, the village seems remarkably high".² He found that altogether 40-50% of names in the baptisms do not recur in the burial register.

It was the opinion of T. S. Ashton that, in the eighteenth century, the area of choice of marriage partners was limited,

1. Of course, we must continually bear in mind the possibility that such differences as were observed between different groups of parishes, was in fact, due to defective registration. Although the impression was that this was not so.

2. "Vale of Trent", loc. cit. p. 22.

that there was a geographical barrier to marriage which kept both the age of marriage and the number of unmarried high.¹ This view, however, has been challenged by detailed evidence from several parts of the Midlands. Chambers' calculations based on nine Nottinghamshire parishes was that the proportion of extra-parochial bridegrooms rose from 10.8% (1670-1700), to 26% in 1770-1800.²

The increase in mobility, both geographical and social, as illustrated by the origin of marriage-partners was emphasized by D. Eversley in his study of twelve Worcestershire parishes. He concluded that mobility did not begin with the Industrial Revolution. Mixed marriages, though the reason for this may have been purely statistical, were more frequent in the eighteenth, than early nineteenth century.³ In none of the ten registers examined were more than half of the mixed marriages with partners from the nearest neighbouring parish.

The evidence for the origin of marriage partners based on the registers of some seventeen Felden parishes is contained in Appendix XXXVIII.

In the ten quinquennia from 1735 up to 1784 the average proportion of unmixed marriages in these entirely rural parishes was 59%. The range was from 49% to 67%. Of the mixed marriages, less than half were contracted with partners from neighbouring parishes, in all five year periods. The average number contracted with someone from a neighbouring parish was taking all quinquennia 17%. That with non-contiguous parishes in the radius of ten miles was 20%. A further 4% were made with partners drawn from parishes more than ten miles away. There is no evidence that this geographical mobility in search of marriage partners was less in the earlier decades; in fact, the reverse. As was pointed out in that study, this was in all probability, merely a definitional difference. At any rate, during the first decade for which we have evidence, 1735-44, the proportion of

1.T. S. Ashton, "The Eighteenth Century", 1955, p.3.
 2.Chambers "Vale of Trent", loc. cit, p. 50.
 3.Eversley, loc. cit, p. 271, et. seq.

mixed marriages was high - no less than 45% of the total. Only 14% of the marriages in this decade were with partners in adjoining parishes, while those contracted with partners living in parishes within ten miles radius, but excluding the former category was 27%. Lastly, 4% were with men and women originating from more than ten miles away.

The evidence suggests a degree of mobility, with particular emphasis on local migration. The migration we dealt with earlier was covering a fairly wide area: we felt that large-scale movement of population may possibly have taken place away from the south-east pasture area of Warwickshire. At the same time this long-distance movement of population out of a locality did not seem pronounced in the Avon Valley and the Arden. In fact, of course, we can be sure that there was continual movement away from these parishes also, balanced by the influx of population from other parishes, particularly from the south-east.

The importance of short distance migration was emphasized, of course, by Redford, and more recently in Eversley's study of twelve Worcestershire parishes. Here it was discovered that the migration of population from the surrounding villages fortuitously matched exactly the influx of population into Bromsgrove during the eighteenth century. Eversley found that parishes considered individually showed a widely different pattern of excess of baptisms over burials, which could be explained only in terms of short distant migration.

It seems likely that we should not, however, see the pattern of movement in the villages of south-east Warwickshire in terms of short distance movements. From the following statistics it can be seen that in all of twenty-six parishes looked at, the figure obtained for 1784, by adding surplus baptisms to the 1730 base figure was greater than the first census total of 1801, except for the small market town of Southam, and Marton. Thus, we can conclude that migration of population took place during the eighteenth century from all these parishes, with the possible exception of the two mentioned above.

Table XII.

COMPARISON OF POPULATION ESTIMATES BASED ON PARISH REGISTERS AND THE CENSUS
 CENSUS FIGURES QUOTED IN 1801 & 1811:
 PASTURE PARISHES 1730-1801

Parish	Estimate	1784	1801	1811
Napton	886	805	845	
Ilmington	1015	656	646	
Harbury	723	857	904	
Southam	576	935	1007	
Wolfhamcote	374	371	417	
Oxhill	301	298	297	
Ratley	259	221	317	
Ladbroke	1097	235	251	
Kineton	685	779	801	
Priors Marston	376	538	532	
Priors Hardwick	1074	228	252	
Tysoe	340	891	944	
Avon Dassett	291	174	239	
Stockton	398	274	301	
Fillerton Hersey	305	384	413	
Honington	233	287	239	
Gaydon	505	219	188	
Bishops Itchington	183	151	220	
Hunningham	144	174	193	
Wormleighton	297	140	133	
Farnborough	453	241	260	
Marton and Birdingbury	306	492	486	
Radway	319	237	282	
Willoughby	300	319	346	
Churchover		245	236	

Even in the case of Southam, immigration of population was no more than .21% and did not even account for the loss of population to the two adjoining parishes of Napton and Harbury. The other small town of the area, Kineton, saw a persistent shrinkage in population throughout the eighteenth century. We can conclude that such evidence serves to confirm our impression that there was a decline in the population of the whole locality in the eighteenth century, and that the shrinkage in this area is not to be explained only in terms of short distance movements between parishes in the same area.

On the other hand, in the other localities, short-distance migratory patterns reveal themselves as in D. Eversley's Worcestershire parishes. For example, in the group of eighteen Avon Valley parishes, eight appear to have gained population by immigration, and ten seem to have suffered a loss. Some parishes like Hampton Lucy and Preston Bagot and Wellesbourne appear to have gained considerably by immigration, others to have declined sharply. Immigration into the market town of Bidford appears to have amounted to about 12% only. In this area it seems that immigration affected the surrounding villages rather than the local market-town.

Table XII. AVON AND STOUR VALLEY PARISHES 1730-1801
(cont.)

Parishes	Bidford	Ashton Cantlow	Exhall & Wixford	Binton	Alderminster	Wellesbourne	Brinklow	Loxley	Lr. Fatington	Barford	Alveston	Morton Norrell	Claverdon	Wolverton	Arrow	Hampton Lucy	Preston Bagot
Estimate 1784	760	1059	145	216	363	647	712	279	461	216	494	203	678	142	233	359	143
Census 1801	928	721	245	217	363	1012	(615) ¹	257	519	217	465	(183) ¹	402	159	245	514	210
Census 1811	1006	744	272	207	389	1004	760	290	515	207	481	245	401	159	218	551	203

1. In view of the population total given in 1811 for these two parishes it is certain that the 1801 figures quoted are underestimates.

Similar differences were seen in the case of individual parishes of the Arden. Out of ten parish registers examined, it was found that three clearly gained from immigration, three more seem to have been almost unaffected either way, while five clearly suffered some loss through migration of population. The two parishes to gain most by immigration were Kenilworth, a small market town, and Stoneleigh, where, as we have already seen, a considerable degree of enclosure and colonization of the waste land was taking place in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Table XIII
(cont.)

ARDEN PARISHES 1730-1801

	Parish	Tanworth	Powington	Kenilworth	Knowle	Stoneleigh	Over Whitacre	Bickenhill	Wroxhall	Packwood	Allesley
Estimate 1784		1909	845	1244	1380	913	279	743	111	514	893
Census 1801		1965	852	1968	843	1347	249	664	156	305	752
Census 1811		1682	839	2279	1097	1306	232	642	170	276	745

This was doubtlessly influenced by the proximity of Stoneleigh to the expanding industries of Coventry. This vast parish was the scene, as elsewhere in Warwickshire, of whole new hamlets, like Fleckhamstead, being established during the course of the later eighteenth century.

It is appropriate at this point to examine the stages, and causes of growth revealed by the demographic trends in rural Warwickshire. We may at the same time make a comparison, in this connection, between the different localities.

As in D. Eversley's study of twelve Warwickshire parishes, the decade 1700-09 seemed one of the two most important periods of growth in the Avon Valley and Forest of Arden. The other most significant period was, perhaps the decade 1750-59 in the Arden, and 1770-79 in the Avon Valley. In twenty-five south-west Warwickshire parishes, more growth occurred during the three

decades 1750-79 than at any other time during the eighteenth century. We should recall that this area was, compared with the localities further west and north towards Worcestershire, relatively untouched by the smallpox epidemic of 1725-29. In the three industrial parishes examined, the most significant growth by natural increase occurred in the 1740's and 1750's.

The highest rates of growth by natural increase were recorded in the industrial parishes (1750-59), ten old-enclosed parishes (1750-59), and eighteen Felden Avon Valley parishes (1770-79), when the uncorrected percentage growth rates were 14.9, 13.8 and 11.8 respectively. It is significant that all groups of Warwickshire parishes, including the south-east may have seen growth rates which exceeded, in some cases considerably, those recorded by Eversley in his North Worcestershire parishes.

The most significant growth decades in each locality are indicated in the table below:

Table XIII. SIGNIFICANT GROWTH DECADES IN WARWICKSHIRE

<u>Locality</u>	<u>Dates of Registers Examined</u>	<u>Most Significant Dates</u>	<u>% Growth by Natural Increase</u>
Ten Felden Pasture	1700-84	1750 - 59) 1760 - 69) 1770 - 79)	11.2) 9.8) 8.7)
Twenty-five Felden Pasture	1730-84	1750 - 59) 1760 - 69) 1770 - 79)	11.2) 9.1) 9.5)
Ten Old-Enclosed	1730-84	1750 - 59 1770 - 79	13.8 11.8
Eight Felden Avon Valley	1700-84	1700 - 09) 1770 - 79)	11.1) 11.1)
Eighteen Felden Avon Valley	1730-84	1700 - 09) 1770 - 79)	11.1) 11.8)
Ten Arden Forest	1700-84	1700 - 09) 1750 - 59)	9.6) 10.2)
Twelve Arden Forest	1730-84	1700 - 09) 1750 - 59)	9.6) 10.1)
Three Industrial	1700-84	1740 - 49) 1750 - 59)	10.8) 14.9)

In order to make a comparison with Eversley's growth rates in North Worcestershire we should raise baptisms by 15%, and burials by 10%. This correction has been made to rates in twenty-five south-east Warwickshire parishes for this purpose.

Table XIV. COMPARISON OF GROWTH RATES IN
WORCESTERSHIRE & WARWICKSHIRE.

<u>Growth in Twelve Worcestershire Parishes</u>		<u>Twenty-five Warwickshire south-east Parishes</u>	
1700-10	17.7% (Corrected)	1750-59	13.1% (Corrected)
1770-80	11.4%	1770-79	11.6%

While the highest growth rates in rural areas were recorded in old-enclosed parishes, nevertheless, the overall expansion of population by natural increase seems to have been unaffected by enclosure, where this took place. In twenty-five Felden pasture parishes, the most significant decades were precisely those where enclosure took place, between 1750-79. This is perfectly compatible with our earlier findings about the connection between enclosure and population change: when enclosure took place it may have had only a temporary effect on demographic trends, which, however, rose to new heights about twenty years after enclosure had taken place. And since, in fact, enclosure was taking place at different dates in each parish, the overall picture in the locality in these decades might be one of rising growth rates. Furthermore, the main influence on population possibly took the form of migration away from the locality.

We must turn now to a matter of some significance. An impression that migration took place out of some parts of rural south Warwickshire was obtained from the parish registers. It remains, however, to consider how far this influx of rural labour met a fundamental need of the industrial Midlands. When discussing the newly emergent industrial concentration of the later eighteenth century, it is usual to make a distinction between urban centres, and industry which was springing up in a predominantly rural setting. In particular, demographers have emphasized

the contrast between population trends in these two types of locality.¹ Thus, it is pointed out that the West Riding and Staffordshire, where industry was growing up in a relatively rural setting did not experience a soaring mortality rate which cancelled out the advantages of a sharply rising birth-rate. Consequently, these two areas saw a striking growth in population through natural increase, and immigration was relatively insignificant. On the other hand, Lancashire and Birmingham, with the deterioration of urban conditions, experienced little growth by natural increase in the eighteenth century. In fact, in Birmingham and Manchester, the baptisms exceeded the burials in only five decades of the eighteenth century.²

Present opinion is, therefore, agreed that towns like Birmingham depended very heavily for its labour force, on immigrants. Where did these immigrants come from? It is generally assumed that they came from the contiguous counties, and in particular (because of the evidence of striking growth by natural increase in the West Riding and Staffordshire) from the rural industrial areas. Here it is assumed that the high birth-rate, unaccompanied by soaring mortality, would have produced a surplus population which would naturally migrate, given time, into the nearby urban centre. Thus Deane and Cole quoting an observation made by W.H.B. Court declared that "even within the three counties (surrounding Birmingham).....most of the immigrants apparently came from the parts nearest the town rather than further away."³

How does this tie up with the evidence assembled from the Warwickshire parish registers? While we may agree about the pattern of movement, and the heavy reliance of the new urban centres on immigrant labour, we are not convinced that this

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1. For a summary of views see "British Economic Growth 1688-1959", by P. Deane and W. A. Cole, Monograph No. 8, Cambridge Dept. of Applied Economics 1962, pp. 106, 116, 120-121.
 2. Ibid. page 120.
 3. Deane and Cole, British Economic Growth, loc.cit., p. 121, quoting W.H.B. Court, "Rise of the Midland Industries", 1938.

need was invariably satisfied through the natural increase of population in rural industrial areas. Not, at least, if we can trust the evidence of a limited investigation of trends in Warwickshire. Though the registers of only three industrial parishes were examined, Bedworth, Mancetter and Chilvers Coton were three of the largest industrial parishes in North Warwickshire. Against this we must set the possibility that in large industrial parishes, recording of baptisms might be particularly defective.

It was found that growth by natural increase was 70% between 1700 and 1784, and only 54% between 1730 and 1784. It will be remembered that between 1730 and 1784 that of twenty-five Filder pasture parishes was 61%, and of the ten old-enclosed parishes over 72%. Most of the increase in industrial parishes was in the period before 1760. The relatively slow growth by natural increase may have been due to a high burial-rate which soared from 1760 and cancelled out the effects of a high, and sharply rising baptism-rate. (Or, it might, of course, be due to under registration).

It was discovered, however, that in spite of this impression of a low rate of natural increase, in fact the population of these three industrial parishes grew, between 1730 and 1784, by more than 180%. We can conclude, therefore, that speaking for Warwickshire, it seems not impossible that besides Birmingham, the rural industrial area of North Warwickshire was relying on immigration in the eighteenth century, and that part of this need may have been met by migration from the agricultural south of the county. Here, where smallpox epidemics were found to be less virulent and environmental conditions less detrimental to health, burial rates appeared low and growth of population by natural increase considerable. Enclosure may have provided, as we have demonstrated, a stimulant to migration.

Such conclusions are in accord with evidence drawn from Nottinghamshire by D. J. Chambers, who was particularly concerned with labour supply for the new industrial areas.¹ He found that

1. See D. J. Chambers, "Population and Labour Supply in the Industrial Revolution", Econ. H.R. 2nd series, Vol. V, No. 3, 1953 p. 319 et. seq.

population growth by natural increase was considerable in totally rural, no less than in industrial localities, and in fact, the rate of increase was not much lower in the former than in the latter.

Turning now to another problem, it seems from analysis of the various demographic series that the high mortality of the decade 1720-29 was of very great significance, and, from a demographic point of view, was perhaps, more important than enclosure. We find that the intensity of the epidemic and general conditions varied considerably not only (to some degree) between parishes in the same locality, but probably between different areas.

The heaviest mortality in Warwickshire seems to have been in the Feldean Avon Valley, where the timber-built villages were denser, than in the more open and hilly pasture parishes of the south-east. Within this area, the town of Bidford saw the heaviest mortality. The Arden Forest parishes were likewise hit by the epidemic, though less severely it would seem.

Both of these areas, we observe, were nearest to the Worcestershire border, where Eversley found that his twelve parishes were considerably affected. The Feldean pasture parishes to the east were, perhaps, less grievously affected by the epidemic. Eight out of twenty parishes even recorded surplus baptisms in the five-year period 1725-29.

The differential rate of growth in the 1720's was as follows for the various groups of parishes:

Table XV. THE VARIABLE GROWTH RATE IN WARWICKSHIRE IN THE 1720's.		
<u>10 Avon Valley Groups</u>	<u>10 Arden Forest Groups</u>	<u>3 Industrial North Warks.</u>
-11.0%	-4.5%	-0.6%
<u>18 Feldean South-East Pasture</u>		
+ 4.3%		
<u>10 Feldean South-East Pasture</u>	<u>(Corrected) 10 Feldean South-East Pasture</u>	
+ 3.5%	+ 5.5%	

The differential impact of the smallpox visitation seems to have had a profound influence on the character of demographic

trends in the different localities throughout the rest of the eighteenth century. The Avon Valley (where the outbreak was most devastating) saw in the 1730's an upsurge of the demographic series, with the marriage rate almost doubling - and this area was affected by the recurrence of smallpox in the 1740's and 1780's. There was thus a powerful compensatory movement in demographic trends to make good the losses incurred in the previous decade. This, in turn, affected trends in the decades 1750-59 and 1770-79, where the most considerable growth rates of the eighteenth century (except for perhaps 1700-09) were recorded.

We get the impression that in the twenty-five south-east pasture parishes examined, however, fluctuations in the trends recorded in the decades after 1729 were less apparent, and there was a steady rate of accelerated growth until the peak period of the 1750's. We have given an account of these details in order to demonstrate what seems to be a significant point: that the influence of food dearth, weather conditions and epidemics was possibly considerable in determining later demographic trends. Migration was, of course, another important determinatory influence as we see demonstrated by the quite different demographic trends and high rates from the 1720's, at least, in industrial areas of Warwickshire. Enclosure, per se, was not so easily shown to be more than one of several influences affecting, and that temporarily, the natural increase of population. Its most positive impact was perhaps in causing a compensatory upsurge of the demographic series some fifteen to twenty years after enclosure. (Presumably it would take this long to surmount the initial dislocation caused by enclosure, and allow a re-adjusted agricultural community to exploit the advantages of enclosure.)

We will turn now to consider the causes of population growth in the groups of parishes looked at. Taking, first of all, the large group of south-east pasture parishes, we find that the baptism-rate appeared to be remarkably stable throughout the eighteenth century up to 1780, with no decline at all before

1770. The rate was 29.0% in the decade 1700-09, and it was still 28.1% in 1760-69. Thus a factor in the natural increase of the population may have been a real increase in baptisms. This was associated with a marriage-rate which remained unaltered (except for a rise in the 1750's and 1760's) between 1720 and 1780. However, the burial-rate seemed to show the greatest degree of change: it was falling continuously from 1720 to 1780. How far this made a contribution towards population growth depends mainly, however, on how far this represented a decline in child mortality. This problem will be discussed later. The two sharp dips which occurred in the burial-rate in the 1750's and 1770's may have produced some of the peak growth of those decades.

In the Avon Valley, fluctuation in the baptism-rate, reflecting those in marriages, may have been greater as a consequence of the visitation of the smallpox epidemic in the 1720's and 1740's. On the whole, the decline in the baptism and burial rates between 1730 and 1760 seemed greater than in the south-east; thereafter the baptism-rate rose again, but the burial-rate remained low. So the baptism-rate may possibly have made a contribution to growth in the 1730's, and after 1760. The marriage-rate, despite fluctuations, remained high here.

In the old-enclosed parishes of the Felden, the baptism and marriage rates seemed, as we have already said, perhaps higher than in parishes undergoing enclosure. Growth rates, as a consequence, were also higher than in Felden parishes in general, and, most significantly, remained high in the 1780's. Much of the growth seems to be attributable to the high baptism rate, though here again the burial rate was also declining. In fact the decline in the burial-rate was more marked in this type of parish than elsewhere. (But here again did this represent, we must ask ourselves, a saving of infant lives?)

In the Arden Forest parishes of North Warwickshire, demographic trends seemed to place the area half way between the Avon Valley and the south-east. This is how the locality stood in respect to the mortality of 1720-29. This was more drastic

than that experienced in the south-east, but less so than that of the Avon Valley. As a consequence the upsurge of marriages and baptisms in the 1730's, 1750's and 1770's was less marked, and the fluctuations recorded in the various rates less violent, than in the Avon Valley. But we do not find, either, the slow and smooth downward movement of the baptism and burial rates recorded in the twenty-five south-east parishes.

Looking now at marriage trends, in all groups of parishes examined, the marriage rate rose up to a peak in the period 1760-69. However, in both the Avon Valley and Arden Forest parishes, this rise was matched by an earlier peak in the 1730's following the smallpox years. From 1770 the rate declined in all areas.

Fertility levels and trends seemed close in all groups of rural parishes. Taking the whole period 1730-84 there was a long-term, but slight decline (see Appendix XXXIX). Fertility levels were rising in all these groups until 1745-49. Thereafter, the graph shows a decline in all areas up to 1765-69; with a small intermediate rise in the period 1755-59; from 1769 fertility rose continuously for a decade at least, and remained high in the 1780's, in all localities.

Compared with rural fertility, that of the industrial parishes apparently saw fluctuations (though trends were similar). Two peak fertility levels were reached in 1740-44 and 1755-59. Thereafter there was a fairly sharp decline until 1765-69. From 1769 there was a slow rise in fertility up to 1784.

The fact that in all localities, rural and industrial, fertility seemed to be rising up again from 1765 onwards, strengthens the possibility that in association with rising marriage-rates in the different parts of the county, the birth-rate made a contribution in all areas to the natural increase of population.

A last point we need to examine is the change, if any, in child mortality, in the various areas studied. We have noted, already, a general decline (except in industrial parishes) in burial rates. However, this decline, to effectively influence

population growth, would need to have resulted in increased saving of infant and child lives. Also, it could affect growth through the saving of lives of women in the marriage age groups. If the fall in burials meant, merely, that older people were living longer, this would not greatly contribute to a rise in population.

About the mortality of young women, we have no evidence, but parish registers do throw light on the character and trends of child mortality. The results of an investigation of child burials in fourteen south Warwickshire parishes is included in Appendix XXXX. This appears to show no general lowering of child mortality prior to 1780, if we look at child burials as a % of baptisms. The highest levels of child mortality between 1730 and 1784 were in the quinquennia 1730-34 and 1740-44, when it was 35.4% and 36.6% of baptisms respectively; otherwise the level remained steady at about 28%. The only five year period which saw a drop in child mortality was the quinquennium 1755-59. Looking at child burials as a % of total burials a similar trend was revealed - only in the years 1755-59 did the proportion of child burials fall below 35% of the total burials. We can, therefore, conclude that, as in Eversley's twelve Worcestershire parishes, there was not much sign of a decline in child mortality before 1780. This reduces, somewhat, the influence we can attribute to the burial-rate, in bringing about a population rise.

Thus to summarise some of the main points we have found out about population in the eighteenth century. Looking first at actual population increase in Warwickshire, we determined that different parts of Warwickshire appeared to exhibit a variable total rise in the eighteenth century.¹ We got the impression that the chief causatory factor here may have been the economic structure of the locality. Where enclosure for conversion to pasture was taking place on a considerable scale in south-east Warwickshire, actual population increase was, perhaps, small between 1730 and 1801; and probably there was a migration of surplus population from the area. However, in no area was there I. This is so even if we allow a 10% margin of difference to allow for errors which might be due to under-registration.

an actual decline in population in the 18th century.

In the Avon Valley where enclosure was mainly for an improvement of arable husbandry, actual growth of population may have been considerable in the eighteenth century, and migration was perhaps unimportant (or at least was balanced by immigration). On the other hand, short distance migration, and considerable geographical mobility were apparent even in the earlier eighteenth century, in all localities.

We got the impression that the increase of population by natural increase between 1730 and 1784 (that is leaving migration out of account) seemed remarkably similar in all Warwickshire localities including the industrial parishes.

If we consider the industrial parishes of North Warwickshire, we find that the natural increase of population may have been no more than in other localities; nevertheless, the real growth of population between Thomas' estimate of 1730 and the 1801 census, was probably very great. Thus, this was the only locality examined which seemed to show considerable immigration of population. We concluded that not only Birmingham, but even the rural industrial villages of North Warwickshire may have depended on immigration from the agricultural south of the county. This seemed to be a consequence of soaring mortality even in rural industrial communities.

It seemed that some decades may have been demographically more significant than others - in most areas these were the decades 1700-09, 1750-59 and 1770-79.

In attempting to determine the factors which caused fluctuations in the demographic series we found the situation rather complex. Certainly, the differential impact of high mortality, a consequence of the smallpox epidemic and of other factors in the years of 1725-29 seemed to be a factor of significance. Secondly, the migration out of, or immigration into, localities, probably affected the demographic trends. It was very difficult to assess the effect of enclosure on the demographic series. Since the rates were falling even in old-enclosed parishes in the decades when enclosure was taking place, we can say no more than

that in the years immediately after enclosure, marriages and baptisms may have declined more sharply than elsewhere for a few years, while burials rose. However, within twenty years there seemed to have occurred a compensatory resurgence of marriages and baptisms to new heights, possibly on the basis of a community re-adjusted to enclosure, and able to reap some of the benefits. And, in fact, in twenty-five south-east Warwickshire parishes the decades which saw the highest rates of natural increase were between 1750 and 1779, precisely when enclosure was in full swing in this locality. We can only conclude therefore that, in a number of parishes, enclosure may temporarily, have had an adverse effect on demographic trends, but this loss was perhaps more than recouped within twenty years. Taking a longer view, of the locality as a whole, the period which saw the implementation of parliamentary enclosure, was that which probably saw the biggest gains in population by natural increase during the eighteenth century, even in the south-east. However, we should not go to the other extreme and see these gains as a consequence of enclosure in particular. Rather that the decades pin-pointed above were favourable to both enclosure and population rise, and were the consequence of a complex of factors, not the least of which would be a favourable series of harvests.

When considering which of the demographic series were responsible for creating the conditions for the 'take off' of population into sustained growth, some credit, it was felt, must be apportioned to the marriage and baptism-rates, which tended to remain steady for long intervals, despite rapid population increase. In some instances, the baptism-rate actually rose up in the 1770's, and this in wholly rural parishes. This view receives strength from the impression that the fertility-rate barely fell over the whole period from 1730 to 1780. It is true that in all rural localities the burial-rate declined and remained at a low level following the peak mortality of 1725-29. This, perhaps, also made a contribution to population rise, though its effective impact on population

must have been seriously reduced in view of the fact that child-mortality did not seem to decline during the course of the eighteenth century, in Warwickshire.

In respect of land use, enclosure may have been in some Warwickshire parishes as elsewhere, the signal for re-organization involving the conversion to that form of husbandry practice most suited to soil and other factors.¹ In the south-east this involved extensive conversion to pasture-farming and in the Avon Valley intensified arable-farming for grain production. We noted that land use was seen to have in many parishes looked at an effect on population and where conversion to pasture took place, considerable migration of population may have taken place.

1. Though this does not gainsay the probability, as we saw in Chapter I, that in some Warwickshire parishes the extension of convertible husbandry was advanced before enclosure took place.
See also the discussion of pre-enclosure changes at Wigston Leicestershire "The Midland Peasant" 1957, by W. G. Hoskins, pp. 232-233.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

It was found that a very considerable volume of source material is now available to students of 18th century agrarian history. This is largely the consequence of the post-1945 revolution in the organizations of archives. It was itself, a by-product of, on the one hand growing local administration, and on the other, interest in local history. This has been reflected in the establishment of many new county record offices where none existed before 1945, and the expansion of others. Then there is the minor technological revolution in photographing documents. This can now be done quickly, and comparatively cheaply.

The availability and volume of material, permits a fairly detailed investigation of the Parliamentary enclosure movement within a given locality. Only in such a study can its impact on the agrarian and social history of England be accurately assessed.

A major source of regional social history at this period are the land tax returns. Despite recent criticism, investigation seemed to show that with certain precautions this source can in Warwickshire, at least, be made to yield accurate information about the landowning structure of rural society at various dates in the period 1780-1830.

It was found that Warwickshire was, as a locality, not inappropriate for a study of the enclosure movement. Within its bounds were rural communities, representative, in their diversity, and the trends of their development, of a much wider canvass: perhaps of 18th century rural England as a whole. Certainly, of those focal points where a thickening out of population and a gathering together of industry into semi- or wholly urban settlements, was taking place, hard by.

Even at the Restoration this diversity among the rural communities of Warwickshire was firmly established. This showed

itself in the size of communities, in widely contrasted social and landowning structure, in land use, and in farming systems. Broadly speaking we defined the different localities as the East Pasture Felden, the Avon Valley Felden, and the Arden Forest. But even within these areas, there were contrasting types of community: for example the difference was marked between the 'open' and 'closed' parishes of the east Felden; and the industrial and agricultural parishes of the forest.

Furthermore, we got the impression that the open-field system of farming where it still existed in the county, exhibited a wide variety of organization. We concluded that it showed a pattern of evolution determined by the physical character of the locality an unprecedented rise in population and the demand for increased and more efficient production. Much economic change had occurred in rural Warwickshire prior to enclosure. A degree of specialization in land use and orientation of land cultivation to accord with the soil and topography of the neighbourhood concerned showed itself from the early 18th century, at least, in some parishes. In this context Parliamentary enclosure was seen from one aspect as the culmination of a long process of experimentation and evolution in farming practice.

Enclosure had a long drawn-out history in Warwickshire, but the amount of open-field land which remained to be enclosed after 1730 has probably been underestimated. This was particularly true of open-fields lying in the forest area. Enclosure by Parliamentary Act, which included open-field land, covered approximately 160,000 acres, upwards of 25% of the gross county acreage.

The character of Parliamentary enclosure was found to vary from place to place, and also possibly, from phase to phase of the movement; and this was within the confines of a single county. The enclosure of common fields could mean radically different things, depending on whether it was taking place in the east of the Felden or the west, or in the Arden forest. In character and procedure the earliest enclosures by Private Act seemed to be similar to those made by private agreement in

the 17th century. They were usually carried out by a great landowner with the aim of consolidating his estate. Most of the land in parishes which underwent enclosure before 1750 already appeared to be in the hands of one owner. Between 1750 and 1790 the character of enclosure was often different. In many parishes, much land remained divided up between a considerable body of proprietors, a number of whom cultivated their own land. Some of these private enclosure Acts may have been initiated by the Freeholders themselves. It is likely that the aim which was uppermost in some parishes was that of making it possible to experiment with new forms and methods of cultivation, better suited to soil conditions, and the demand of new markets.

With the inflation of land values and prices after 1790, the big landowner tended once again to dominate the enclosure movement. We had the impression also that in one or two parishes outside speculators were helping to push forward an enclosure Act. The dominance of big absentee landlords in parishes seeking an enclosure, was even more apparent in the early nineteenth century.

Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the open fields of the North Warwickshire Forest were undergoing enclosure with comparatively little commotion, sometimes by Parliamentary Act and sometimes without. These were numerous and small, and often of secondary importance to large acreages of enclosed pasture-land.

The timing of enclosure was influenced by a variety of factors: the social and landownership structure: the character of land tenure; the importance of the common fields within the prevailing rural economy; population rise, and not least, of course, commodity price levels.

It is probable that some parishes, like Wolfhamcote, were led to seek a Private Act by the recovery of wool and meat prices in the 1740's and their desire to convert to pasture. Others, from the 1750's may have been influenced by rising grain prices. We noted in this context some degree of correlation between the date of Enclosure Acts and wheat prices in the Birmingham market during the eighteenth century.

The most considerable volume of Parliamentary enclosure Acts appeared in Warwickshire between 1750 and 1790, and coincided with the "take-off" of sustained population growth, so that it seems likely that this also had a bearing on the chronology of enclosure.

Enclosure awards, land-tax assessments and other sources were used to form a picture of rural society, and the structure of landownership in Warwickshire during the eighteenth century. An attempt was then made to investigate the changes which occurred in the structure of rural society during the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The first thing we noticed about rural society was that in very many parishes a considerable degree of change had occurred prior to the enclosure Act. Some of these changes in village society have too readily, in the past, been attributed to the enclosure movement. Thus it was found, for example, that the majority of families in one or two parishes where this could be investigated, were already on the eve of enclosure, landless. Furthermore, in almost all parishes, even those where freehold society remained strong, a very considerable degree of inequality in the distribution of the land was observed. The awards revealed that even freeholders' holdings could be anything from a couple of acres to over 150 acres in extent. Thus already, before enclosure, we detected a certain ambiguity in the use of the term 'freeholder'. Some would still be peasant proprietors in the ancient sense: that is they cultivated the land with the help only of their own family, and would perhaps, have little surplus produce over and above their own needs. Cash crops would remain comparatively unimportant within this system of husbandry. Other freeholders, however, even before enclosure had accumulated such large holdings that they could no longer be thought of as 'peasants'; they needed, and had probably accumulated, capital. They would need extra labour, and cash crops for a growing market would constitute in all probability, an important proportion of their sowings.

With respect to the small landowner in Felden Warwickshire we reached the following conclusions. In the first place we agreed with Davies and Hunt that in many parishes enclosed prior to 1730 the small owner, and in particular the small-owner-occupier, had disappeared altogether from the rural scene. The land here was in the hands largely of great landowners and tenant farmers. Absentee landownership was also marked in most parishes even in the lowest categories of ownership. However, in parishes which were to undergo enclosure after 1730 (representing over 25% of the county area) there were still on average 20 owners in 1730. In parishes enclosed after 1730 the land tax showed an average of 26 owners. Furthermore, although this varied from phase to phase of the movement, the small owner (in possession of between 4 - 100 acres) owned about one third of the land at the time of enclosure. This seems to lend strength to the view that where Parliamentary enclosure took place, this did not always mean consolidation of the land before-hand in the possession of one great landowner. Freehold society was strongest in parishes enclosed in the 1750's, 1760's and 1770's, particularly where no previous enclosure had taken place. In such parishes nearly 40% of the land was allotted to this type of owner. Furthermore, to the substantial freeholder in some of these communities, enclosure, as we have hinted, was perhaps welcome. It meant for some, a means of consolidating farming improvements and specialized land use evolved under the open-field system.

There is an impression that, in some parishes, enclosure was accompanied by a decline in the numbers and strength of the small landowner. This is suggested by a statistical comparison of land tax returns at various dates, and also by other evidence in some parishes. In particular, some 55 awards offer examples of estates purchased by the big landowners in the interval between the passing of the Act and the making of the Award. This included the buying-up of 7608 acres involving 221 yardlands, large numbers of cottage-commons and tithe converted to land at the enclosure. In addition, there is evidence which seems to indicate that

enlargement of estates in the years after enclosure may have been widespread. Usually, this trend was to the benefit of the great landowner, but this may not always have been so. In some parishes the large-scale sale of small estates was probably to the benefit of substantial freeholders.

We had the impression that the almost universal practice of conversion of tithe into land at the time of enclosure was a factor which strengthened the hold of the great landowner on the land, and formed an additional burden of expense to the smaller proprietors in most parishes.

There is some evidence of opposition to parliamentary enclosure from the smaller proprietors in perhaps ten parishes.

Enclosure did not by any means always, however, lead to the weakening of the hold of freehold society on the land. For example, where it was for improved arable farming, or where institutional bodies owned large estates let out on lucrative and long-standing leases, smallish owner-occupiers not infrequently continued to flourish, at least until after 1814, in one or two parishes where evidence was forthcoming.

It seemed to the present writer that too much attention had been devoted by historians in the past to the small-owner-occupier as a theoretical category, and too little to a recognition of the inter-relationship between the different classes of cultivator actually living on the land. A great deal has been said about small owners, but too little about lease-holders and tenant-farmers. Often, in reality, the impression was that these were one and the same men. This is a great weakness of most source-material that we cannot differentiate, and connect the different classes of cultivator. An attempt was made to look at leaseholders and tenant-farmers in this study. The former did very well out of enclosure in the parishes examined (unless the great landowner got rid of them) and often, as we said, kept freehold farming going. The latter were often new men, brought in to farm the newly enclosed land and the newly formed tithe farms. They were men with capital and position, and probably came to dominate many rural parishes in the post-enclosure decades. They were, perhaps

the new leaders in village life and in parish administration.

There is some evidence that the apparent resurgence of the ancient freeholders class between 1790 and 1815 sometimes represented, in reality the purchase of landed property by this new class of tenant farmer. At any rate, owner-occupation often expanded in parishes long in the hands of great landowners and tenant-farmers. On the other hand, the awards and land-tax assessments seemed to show that where enclosure took place in the 18th century, both small owners and owner-occupiers may have declined numerically and in their share of the land in a majority of cases.

The ranks of the freeholders were enlarged in some parishes by the owner-occupation of part of their estates by landowners during the boom years of the French Wars. Widespread redemption of land tax exactions is apparent after 1798. This pre-supposes the availability of considerable sums of surplus cash and suggests that many owner-occupiers were now men of capital.

In addition to the purchase of landed estate, there is confirmatory evidence of great prosperity for the new class of gentlemen-farmers particularly after 1790. This included heavy investment in farming innovations and experiments on the land. Also, they turned their farms, with the aid of their landlords, into large scale manufactories for the specialized production of commodities for an expanding food market. Such large-scale capital investment was probably outside the range of that ancient class of small-scale freeholders. Only the more substantial of their number, or those who contrived to turn themselves over to leasehold or tenant-farming could, perhaps, hope to gain a foothold in the capitalist-dominated food marketing organization of the 1790's, and so survive.

In the forest parishes of the Arden both the enclosure awards and the land tax assessments suggest that the small landowner still survived in the different social and economic conditions of this part of the county. In 13 forest parishes enclosed by private act, 50% of the land went to owners of under 100 acres and 48% to owners of between 10-100 acres. The nobility and

the great institutions may have owned little land here. The structure of landownership seemed to remain relatively unchanged during the era of the land tax returns. A number of reasons were suggested for the survival of this type of land ownership structure. Significant among these factors may have been the growth of rural industry and a system of partible inheritance.

Finally we concluded that to talk of small owner-occupiers declining or not declining as a result of enclosure is almost certainly an over simplification of complex social changes. In the first place, as we have said, the term "owner-occupier" may be misleading. Secondly, whether he flourished or disappeared after enclosure depended on a variety of factors which probably differed in significance from parish to parish even within one locality. A statistical summary of trends observed, say in the East Felden, tended to conceal widely varying land-ownership changes rooted in the history of individual parishes.

We have hinted already at the further differentiation which may have occurred in the ranks of freehold society, in those parishes where this form of society remained fairly strong at enclosure. Their better means enabled the greater yeomen to surmount the ordeal of enclosure and reap the advantages of improved farming. They could furthermore grasp the opportunities offered by an extension of tenant-farming in their parish as a consequence of enclosure. It was partly from their ranks that the new class of tenant farmers was drawn. Because of all this, the class of substantial freeholders was shown by the land-tax to have, perhaps, gained in strength after enclosure in a number of parishes, and to remain in possession of an undiminished share of the land in 1825.

We concluded our study of freehold society by observing that despite the social differences, it was perhaps a closely-knit one. The unifying factor of family relationships cut across the dividing lines of occupation, status, or income. Furthermore, we had the impression that it was the neighbourhood, rather than the single village or parish which formed the unit of family and

social connections, and occasionally perhaps, of landownership also. It sometimes happened that yeomen families owned land in several parishes in a neighbourhood.

When considering the social origin of a sample of the landed gentry in 18th century Warwickshire it was concluded that the earliest were descended from 16th century creations. Though there were some new men who had made fortunes in 18th century occupations and then bought up landed estates, the impression was that the great mass of the gentry who appeared in 18th century enclosure awards may have been descended from families in possession of some land in the county from the 17th century at least. Many 17th century fortunes were based on successful careers in the law. This is in accord with a recently expressed opinion that by the second half of the 18th century English landownership had settled into a fairly stable pattern, and that the limited amount of land available for purchase meant that newcomers were less numerous than at any time in the two previous centuries.

This statement does not, however, deny a considerable amount of social change within the ranks of the landed gentry. We found evidence to suggest that a number of Warwickshire's lesser gentry (owners of estates between 2-300 acres roughly, living on the rents which accrued) disappeared after 1660 and their lands were swallowed up by the great landlords.

When we examined the evidence for social change in the upper reaches of the landowning class during the period of the Industrial Revolution (1780-1825) we concluded that the estates of most of the principal landowners probably remained intact between these dates, and that their landowning strength may, in fact, have been still further enhanced both by enclosure and purchase. Nevertheless, towards the end of this period we observed that a number of the new class of successful industrialists began to appear among the Warwickshire landowners. This trend was to gain strength as the 19th century advanced.

We concluded that by and large the parliamentary enclosure movement was launched by the old landowning class of peers and gentry dating from the 17th century at least, and that, in the main, newcomers played little part in initiating the changes.

We noticed that the men most concerned with carrying out enclosure, in the role of commissioners, clerks surveyors and so on, were often, in the period 1740-79, substantial freeholders and members of the class of lesser gentry, particularly the former. As the 18th century wore on the administration of enclosure came increasingly into the hands of men of the new professions connected with the land. Surveyors, valuers, auctioneers solicitors and the like, figured increasingly in the awards from 1780.

Looking more closely at the character of landownership structure in the 18th century, we found that, although a number of peers were resident in Warwickshire, none seemed to have estates so vast as to give him a dominating position in the county. With the exception of Lord Leigh and the Earl of Warwick there were probably no great estates of over 9,000 acres in extent and only 10 qualified as "Great Landowners" (i.e. possessed estates of over 5,000 acres in extent).

A large proportion of the great estates appeared to be enclosed before the era of the Parliamentary movement; though the period up to 1815 was to see some further expansion. A comparison with the Return of Landowners of 1874 suggests that after 1815 little, if any, further growth may have taken place on great estates in this county.

The estates of a sample of the leading gentry examined may also have seen their highest point of expansion during the period ending in the 1820's. Their estates seemed to be more affected by 18th century enclosure than was those of the nobility.

The re-allotment of land under the Warwickshire awards seemed to reflect the character of landownership structure described above. Ownership seemed fairly widely dispersed, and the peerage as a whole may have received only a small part

of the total enclosed land. In the case of only one Warwickshire peer, was more than 50% of his total landed estate affected by Parliamentary enclosure. On the estates of four peers only was enclosure of this kind important, (affecting more than 20% of their estates).

However, the estates of some eight of the leading gentry were significantly affected by the process and a number of lesser gentlemen seem to have created whole estates out of the opportunities offered by enclosure to consolidate their estates, and where enclosure took place in these years, their share of the land may well have increased significantly.

A sample of awards and land tax assessments served further to confirm the impression that some decline had occurred in the landowning strength of the resident lesser gentry by the 18th century, both in old-enclosed parishes and those affected by Parliamentary enclosure before 1770. Only in 'open' and 'unimproved' parishes enclosed after this date did the lesser gentry still appear to own above about 8% of the land, and even here almost all were absentee landlords.

The problem of poverty in rural Warwickshire was certainly present before the 18th century, particularly in certain 'open' parishes. Nevertheless, there was a very big upsurge from the 1740's onwards reflected in increasing expenditure on poor relief in all parts of the county. This growth probably cannot, however, be ascribed mainly to the Parliamentary enclosure movement. Rising poor-rate expenditure coincided not only with widespread enclosure, but also a high rate of sustained population growth by natural increase in all parts of the county, rural and industrial. The slow decline of rural industry and fluctuating industrial demand based on primitive marketing conditions were further factors influencing poor-rate expenditure. Also, from 1760 there was a long-term rise in the price of wheat in the Birmingham and other Midland markets. Furthermore, we had the impression from a sample of parishes looked at that poor-rate expenditure rose not only in parishes undergoing enclosure, but also in old-enclosed parishes

in the same locality (a point noted by Gonner). We did appear, however, to be able to distinguish differential rates of poor-rate rise between different localities, as opposed to individual parishes, whether enclosed or unenclosed. There may have existed a connection between large-scale enclosure for conversion to pasture in the East Felden after 1730, and a rise in poor-rate expenditure in some of these parishes which made it 66% higher than elsewhere in the county by the middle 18th century. Furthermore, by the last decade of the century, poor rate expenditure in a sample of parishes in the Felden agricultural south was higher than in a group of parishes situated in the industrialized north.

We may agree, therefore, with earlier writers that if we look at Warwickshire as a whole poor-rate expenditure was probably no higher than in other counties which experienced no enclosure (and it will be recalled that this county was in the highest category undergoing parliamentary enclosure). However, if we look at Warwickshire in terms of its various localities we get the impression that some had more poverty than others, and that enclosure must have been one of the factors responsible, though not perhaps the main one.

Enclosure awards generally made no explicit provision for the poor of parishes undergoing the process. Nor did the majority give formal recognition to a loss of common rights. (Though this does not gainsay the possibility of informal provision). In those where some compensation was made, this was of the meagrest kind. No pattern of procedure was laid down for the guidance of commissioners. These usually represented and were sometimes found to give distinctly favourable treatment to, the chief landowners and other interests. A close reading of some sample awards makes us aware of a number of injustices suffered by the smallest owners and cottage-commoners. Furthermore, for them, enclosure may well have represented an enormous expense, greater, acre for acre than for the big landowner.

As a consequence of a whole complex of factors, there was,

by the 1800's, a very great rise in poor-rate expenditure as shown by the accounts of parishes examined in all rural areas of the county. This was not merely, however, an index of growing poverty, but, a reflection of inflated commodity prices and the subsidization of rural wages out of the poor-rates.

Turning away from the impact of enclosure on rural society, we reached a number of conclusions about the other aspects of the movement. For example the cost of the process in its various stages. We discovered that those costs detailed in the commissioners schedule and attached to the award increased about six-fold during the 18th and early 19th centuries under the influence of a variety of factors. By the end of the century the expense was very heavy, and from the 1790's if not before, would represent a serious burden to the small landowner, all the heavier for him, owing to the demonstrably higher cost of enclosing small uneconomical holdings. Usually, he had further to pay his share of the expense of enclosing the tithe-owners allotments, the cost of which represented 16% of the commissioners schedule of costs. Though not included in the commissioners account of general expenses, the cost of actually making the new farms and holdings doubled, at least, the total expense in certain sample enclosures where this expense was assessed. In view of the Warwickshire evidence it seems possible that contemporaries like Arthur Young were not exaggerating the cost of the enclosure process, which must go some way towards explaining the large-scale selling up of small owners' allotments from the 1780's.

The economic consequences of Parliamentary enclosure were not easy to disentangle from those contributable to other influences in the 18th century. This process possibly represented for the landowners as a body the main device by which they contributed towards the Agrarian Revolution. It was the best investment for capital in this period.

An examination of a sample of 18th century estate accounts revealed some variety in the pace of economic expansion on different estates, though enclosure was only one factor which

influenced this expansion. Many estate-owners were avid purchasers of land in the later 18th century. Rentals were increased by the bringing into cultivation and colonization of vast stretches of waste and woodland, as for example at Stone-
and
leigh, Mancetter. The receipts from mineral leases, timber sales and of commodities in general, were increased in one or two instances where this could be tested, in a very striking manner. The rental increase which can be attributed to enclosure of land was therefore not easy to isolate. Clearly, it was itself prompted by, and was in any case closely associated with, the growing commodity market.

Nevertheless, a close examination showed that on some estates, enclosure was followed by a net rental increase in the parishes concerned of between 66% and 200%. Perhaps the average increase was about 100%. Not all of this increase in land value was seen at the enclosure date, and a substantial part of the increase was apparently seen in the ten to fifteen years subsequent to enclosure.

On one or two estates where enclosure was of little importance the increase in rental amounted to only about 40%. This may not of course, have been due to the absence of enclosure, but could have been the consequence of a variety of factors. For one thing, it seemed likely that on estates which were old-enclosed, for example the Clarendon estate, land was already highly rented in the 18th century. We had the impression that here rents had been rising more smoothly in line with the rise in commodity prices, from the 17th century, leaving little room for dramatic rent-rise in the 18th century. On the other hand, unenclosed land was often held in the form of small holdings on long-standing leases. It appeared, from such evidence as was available on the estates of Lord Leigh and Viscount Beauchamp, that enclosure had the effect of raising the value of land per acre to that current on old-enclosed land. Thus, we see that the basic factor in 18th century rent-rise was the expansion of the commodity market and the pressure of increased demand on prices.

The award was usually on the estates examined the signal for massive consolidation. and re-organization of landed estates into large tenancies. It often saw an effort by the landowner to clear his estate of the encumbrance of traditional leasehold, and the appearance of tenures more suited to the rapidly changing economic circumstances of the time.

Parliamentary enclosure also gave an importance stimulus to improved communication; many enclosures were made the occasion for the construction of new roads and bridges, or the improvement of old ones, and of the cutting of canals.

We find evidence from the lands undergoing enclosure, and on a much wider canvass, that farming became in Warwickshire and Staffordshire increasingly specialized in the course of the 18th century, and commodity production in response to industrial market demands increased out of all proportion, particularly between 1790 and 1815. In Warwickshire fat stock grazing and dairying became particularly important.

This expanding commodity market, associated with enclosure, was also a cause and a consequence of a striking rise in population by natural increase, in rural Warwickshire.

It appeared that actual population rise probably varied in Warwickshire from one locality to another, depending on, for example, the character of the husbandry, and economic structure found there. Thus, enclosure of Felden parishes before 1730 may have led, on the evidence of a sample of such parishes, to a population decline. Between 1730 and 1801 actual population rise in 35 East Felden parishes where conversion to pasture following enclosure was large scale, was estimated to be small. In the Avon valley where enclosure was for improved arable farming the actual rise seemed much greater in 18 such parishes, and in three large north Warwickshire industrial parishes it was very considerable.

On the other hand the natural increase of population during the 18th century seemed on parish register evidence remarkably

similar in all localities - varying only between 55% and 61% in several different localities between 1730 and 1801. We concluded that some migration of population may have taken place out of parts of the Felden, though there was no absolute decline of population in the 18th century, even in the East Felden, where large-scale conversion took place.

Short distance migration and immigration between parishes in the same locality and a degree of geographical mobility was apparent even from the opening of the 18th century, if not before.

The influence of enclosure in causing the variable growth of population in the different localities was not easy to assess. Clearly, conversion to pasture for increased animal production had brought with it changes in population in individual parishes from the 16th century onwards. Where this change in land use occurred as a direct consequence of enclosure, it is reasonable to suppose, as indeed we were able to demonstrate in some parishes, that it would affect population growth. Conversely, increased arable production, with or without enclosure would certainly tend to stimulate population growth and keep labour on the land.

It is likely, therefore, that enclosure was a factor influencing the re-adjustment of population to changing economic circumstances, through the migration of surplus population, or through immigration. It is noteworthy, however, that even in the South-east where many parishes were turned over to pasture, the population was larger in 1801 than it had been in 1730; there was, as we said, no absolute decline in the population of the locality, nor in more than a few of the individual parishes examined.

Owing to the soaring of mortality from the 1760's, it seems possible that not only Birmingham itself, but also some north Warwickshire industrial parishes were dependent on immigration of labour in order to grow. The natural increase of population in three such parishes seemed to be hardly as great between 1730 and 1784, as in the south of the county, and most of what did occur was prior to 1760.

In attempting to assess the demographic factors responsible for fluctuations in the natural increase, we found the variable impact of the mortality of 1725-29 of great significance. The effect of enclosure is not easy to see. Evidence suggests that the demographic series declined in the immediate post enclosure years, but that there was a compensatory upsurge of the whole series to new heights within twenty years. So that taking a long view, the decades which saw the implementation of Parliamentary enclosure on a large scale, between 1750-1779 also saw the biggest growth in population by natural increase in the Felden. We decided that these decades were in fact favourable to both population rise and enclosure, and the gains mentioned were the consequence of a whole number of factors.

It was felt that an impression of stability in baptism, marriage and fertility rates for long intervals, despite rapid population increase may have made an important contribution to the "take-off". The effect of a steep long-term decline in the burial-rate in most areas between 1730 and 1784 was less easy to assess, because child mortality did not show much sign of decline in the 18th century.

In conclusion we can say that a cause and effect relationship between enclosure and population change may have existed in individual parishes, but that this could take more than one form depending on the economic circumstances within the parish and the locality.

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