

express much surprise at the very respectable appearance of our infant town".<sup>27</sup>

It was not only the well-off who wrote such letters. The letter quoted above from John and Ann George of Aynho, published in the *Northampton Mercury*, dated 22 September 1833, written to Dear Father and Mother, said

"We like this country very well. We have purchased two cows for thirty-five dollars. We never was so well off before as we are now. We intend to have a farm as soon as you come. We are now living two miles from Pulaski, by the side road to Oswego, and it is very pleasant indeed. Our house is built with trees about a foot thick, laid one on top of another, and let in at the corners, chopt smooth on the inside; it is about 20 feet long, 18 feet wide, two storey high, the gable ends are boarded up; the roof is made secure with boards, for board is cheap in this country. We have board for the floors. Our chimney is made with brick and stopt, which makes it as comfortable as it is in England. I can get plenty of work at ditching, and well sinking, and cellar sinking, so bring your tools with you and small drills, and your stocking axes. Augers, broad-axes, saws, sickles and scythes are as cheap here, and household furniture is as cheap here... Wages is high in this country, and I get my living where I work. Bring plenty of garden seeds, a few field beans and vetches with you. Dear mother bring plenty of sewing cotton and threadneedles and pins. Father bring your measuring tape and one for me. Please to bring a pocket knife for me of Thomas's make, Banbury. Dear brother Thomas, if you was here you would make a fortune. I wish we had all come to this country when we was first married. I wish you had come when we did, if you had we should have had a farm by now".<sup>28</sup>

Such letters, coupled with the self-interest of the property owners who paid for would-be emigrants, help to explain the great numbers of people who left the British Isles for the New World. There was a real exodus from the villages around Banbury, reaching a peak in about 1845. In the two years 1844-45, South Newington sent 21 men, women and children to Canada; Adderbury sent 20; Wroxton 2; Ratley 7; Brackley St Peter 34 (it would have been 35 but William Hicks backed out because at the last minute he enlisted in the army as a musician – at the age of 13); Evenley 2; Helmdon 40; Eydon 23; Marston St Lawrence 23 in 1844 and 17 in 1845; Greatworth 14; Westwell and Falcutt 24; Deddington 19; Aynho 60. Doubtless there were others. The passenger list for the ship *William*

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<sup>27</sup> *Banbury Guardian* 8 May 1845.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Nicholas Cooper, *Aynho: A Northamptonshire Village* (Banbury Historical Society vol 20) pp 209-10.