SOME PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH LAND TENURE IN THE DELTA COUNTIES OF ARKANSAS

Thesis for the Degree of M. S.

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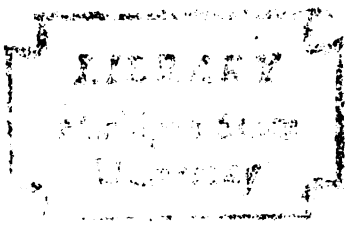

SOME PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH LAND TENURE IN THE DELTA COUNTIES OF ARKANSAS

By

Learrie White

A Problem

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Learrie White

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SOME PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH LAND TENURE IN THE DELTA COUNTIES OF ARKANSAS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Farm tenancy in the State of Arkansas has received a great deal of attention in recent years, as is reflected in the work of the Regional Land Tenure Research Project and several other tenure studies made in the State.

The percentage of tenancy is not evenly distributed throughout the state, and studies show that high tenancy is associated with counties where the major staple cash crops are largely grown. Tenancy is highest in the bottom lands of the Mississippi, lower Arkansas, and Red River Valley, where most of the farm land is used primarily for the production of cotton.

Purpose and Method.

The purpose of this study will be that of presenting, critically analyzing, and interpreting the farm tenancy situation in the Delta Counties of Arkansas. Even though some progress has been made in solving some tenure problems, there still remain numerous problems yet unsolved. After carefully examining and evluating different tenure practices, suggestions will be made for certain lines of action for their improvement.

The counties selected as being typical of this area were Chicot, Mississippi, and St. Francis.

Most of the data used in this study was secured primarily from the United States Census of Agriculture and publications from Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station.

Brief Description of Area.

The Delta area includes the counties lying in the fertile bottom lands of the Mississippi, lower Arkansas, and Red River Valleys. In this area the plantation type of farming prevails. Under it large-scale production methods are employed on five or more contiguous or nearly contiguous tracts of land, marked by renters and croppers. Artificial drainage is necessary in parts of these areas because of the comparatively level topography and heavy seasonal rainfall. Some of the farms in Chicot county have a relatively large percentage of land uncleared and undrained, or in the process of clearing and drainage. The land in most parts of Mississippi County is well drained and improved.

Early Historical Development of the Plantation System.

The invention of the cotton gin in 1793 greatly reduced the cost of producing cotton and thereby stimulated its production. The pioneer planters found the necessary physical and climatical requirements for growing cotton along the Arkansas and Red Rivers in what is now the Delta counties of the Arkansas. Cotton, better than any other crop, conformed most perfectly to the conditions necessary to the profitable use of slave labor. Furthermore, cotton-growing afforded employment for nine months whereas the crops raised on the uplands gave employment for less than six months. When not employed on the cotton crops, the slaves were used to clear more land. These facts partially explain the close correlation between cotton production and the number of slaves.

The fact that a relatively large amount of slave labor could be profitably employed per acre in cotton-raising meant that large numbers of slaves must be housed and fed on the farm. It was found that this could

be accomplished most economically by concentrating them around one center on the farm. This method of handling slave labor gave rise to the plantation system. The river bottoms and lowlands of eastern, southern, and southwestern Arkansas were given over to the large cotton plantations, some of them consisting of several thousands of acres.

The slave population in 1860 was 111,115, and had more than doubled during the decade 1850 to 1860. This growth occurred mostly in the bottom lands along the rivers, owned by wealthy planters. In six counties there were more slaves than whites; Chicot, for instance, had 7,152 Negroes to 1,722 whites. There were few Negroes in the hilly or mountainous counties. The increase in the number and value of slaves had much to do with this growth of property values, but not all by any means.[1]

Land Tenure in Relation to Cotton Growing.

Most of the farms in the cotton growing district are of less than 50 acres each, and, in general, the farmer is not the owner of the land. As a rule, the large land holdings are divided into tracts varying in size from 10 to 100 acres each. These small tracts are leased to cotton farmers. On some plantations, such as the R. E. Lee Wilson plantation, near Wilson, Arkansas, and the W. W. Driver plantation near Osceola, Arkansas, the resident owner farms a considerable part of the land. Other lands on these plantations are leased in small tracts to tenants.

Land ownership and leasing systems have a direct bearing upon the utilization of the cropped land. Land owners require their tenants (1) to grow cotton, because the cash value of crop rent per acre of cotton is

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1: Thomas, D. Y., ed., Arkansas and its People, Volume 1 and 2, pp 55-67; 113-117; 390-402.

more than that of any other general field crop, or (2) to pay such high cash rent per acre that they are forced to grow cotton in order to pay the rental charge. Further, the custom of accepting a prospective cotton crop as collateral for loans, and that of making accounts, notes, and mortgages fall due at cotton picking time which is around first of September. These customs which are adapted to cotton farming tend not only to favor the continuation of cotton growing by established farmers, but also to induce new comers to engage in cotton farming.[1]

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1. The Geography of the St. Francis Basin by Samuel T. Bratton, The University of Missouri Studies, A Quarterly of Research.

CHAPTER II

LAND TENURE SITUATION AND TRENDS

Percent of Farm Tenancy.

In 1900 over two-thirds of the farms in each of the counties: Chicot, Mississippi, and St. Francis were operated by tenants. At this time Chicot County had the largest percent; Mississippi County 70.0 percent, and St. Francis County 70.7 percent for this same period (see table I and figure I).

During the first decade after the 1900 agricultural census, the percent of farms operated by tenants increased 6.3 percent in Chicot County, 11.6 percent in Mississippi County, and 6.2 percent in St. Francis County. There was a rapid increase in the number of tenant operated farms up until 1930, at which time tenancy in the State and in each of these Delta counties reached its peak. During this period when tenancy reached its peak, Mississippi county had the largest percent of tenant operated farms with 90.3 percent, while both Chicot and St. Francis county had 87.7 percent each.

After this period there was a steady decline in the percent of tenant operated farms. During the decade 1930-40, the percent of tenant operated farms declined 12.4 percent in Chicot county; 12.9 percent in Mississippi county, and 7.2 percent in St. Francis county.

During the war years 1940-45, the percent of tenant farms decreased 5.7 percent in Chicot county, 3.8 percent in St. Francis county, while those in Mississippi county increased 1.5 percent.

During the half century 1900-50, the percent of tenant operated farms decreased 7.8 percent for the State as a whole; 20.2 percent for Chicot county; while Mississippi county had an increase of 8.9 percent, and 5.1 percent increase in St. Francis County during this same period.

FIGURE 1. TRENDS IN FARM TENANCY

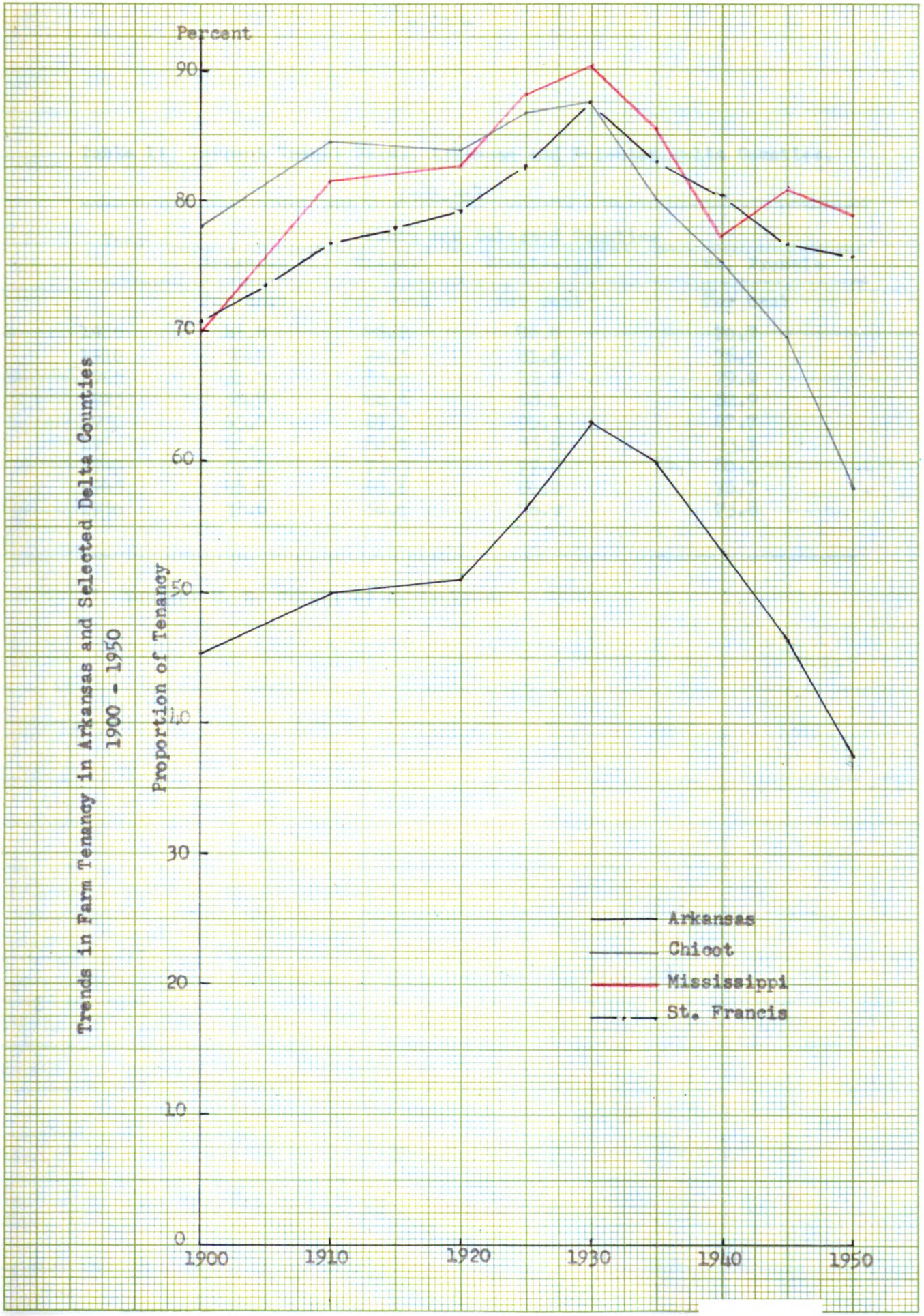

Table 1: Percent Tenant Farms, Arkansas and Selected Delta Counties, 1900-50[1]

Year	State and Selected Counties			
	Arkansas	Chicot	Mississippi	St. Francis
	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
1900	45.4	78.2	70.0	70.7
1910	50.0	84.5	81.6	76.9
1920	51.3	83.9	82.9	79.2
1925	56.7	86.6	88.1	82.9
1930	63.0	87.7	90.3	87.7
1935	60.0	80.0	85.8	83.1
1940	53.3	75.3	77.4	80.5
1945	46.6	69.6	80.9	76.7
1950	37.6	58.0	78.9	75.8

1. Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

Present Land Ownership Situation.

The land ownership situation in all three selected counties has changed considerably during the last 20 years (table 2). According to the

Table 2:: Trends in Land Ownership in Delta Counties, 1930-50[1]

County and Tenure of Operator	Selected Periods			Change	
	1930	1940	1950	Number	Percent
	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	
Chicot:					
Total land in farm	148,567	238,047	272,816	+123,249	83.0
Land owned	31,394	105,332	198,560	+167,166	532.5
Land rented	*	100,797	87,361	- 13,436	-13.3
Average size farm	35.9	57.3	112.5	+76.6	213.4
Mississippi:					
Total land in farm	335,034	491,406	499,041	+114,007	34.0
Land owned	48,695	155,913	227,337	+178,644	366.9
Land rented	*	307,808	365,561	+ 57,653	18.7
Average size farm	31.7	51.2	69.9	38.2	120.5
St. Francis:					
Total land in farms	258,824	300,203	347,789	+ 88,965	34.4
Land owned	116,315	127,183	221,879	+105,564	90.8
Land rented	*	150,312	188,282	+ 37,970	25.3
Average size of farms	39.8	55.0	70.6	30.8	77.4

* Not available

1. Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

1950 preliminary census of agriculture, all three counties showed large percentage increases in the amount of land owned. The most striking increase (percentagewise) for the 20 year period (1930-50) took place in Chicot County. The percentage increases for Chicot, Mississippi, and St. Francis Counties respectively were 533; 367; and 91.

The largest increase in the number of acres rented by operators took place in St. Francis county. The percentage increases for Mississippi and St. Francis counties were 19 and 25, while Chicot county showed a de-

crease of 13 percent in this tenure group.

Size of Farms.

All counties showed large increases in the average size of farms during this period. The largest increase (percentagewise) occurred in Chicot county (213.4 percent); 120.5 percent in Mississippi county, and 77.4 percent in St. Francis county. The increase in the average size of farms has been favored by two factors: (1) increasing farm mechanization, and (2) the scarcity of farm labor during the war years. Farm mechanization has made it possible for many owner and tenant families to expand their farming operations and has made it desirable and economic to buy or rent additional land.

Between 1940 and 1950 the number of small farms containing less than ten acres showed a large decrease, while those farms between 220 and 500 acres more than doubled, (table 8) .

Table 8: Size of farms in Selected Delta Counties, 1930-50[1]

Size of Farms	Selected Periods			Change	
	1940	1945	1950	Number	Percent
0-9 acres	2,592	1,856	1,845	- 747	-28.8
10-29 "	7,320	6,398	6,213	-1,007	-13.7
30-49 "	3,573	3,449	2,387	-1,186	-33.2
50-69 "	899	908	826	- 73	- 8.1
70-99 "	1,244	1,042	1,072	- 172	-13.1
100-139 "	533	552	679	+ 146	27.4
140-179 "	463	360	381	- 82	-17.7
180-219 "	185	147	182	- 3	- 1.6
220-259 "	118	104	169	+ 51	43.2
260-999 "	481	496	673	+ 192	39.9
1000 and over	106	96	152	+ 46	43.4

1. Total number for Chicot, Mississippi and St. Francis counties.
Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

The largest decreases in the smaller size farms occurred in the classes 30-29 acres. There was a 33.2 percent decrease in the class 30-49 acres and a 15.7 percent decrease in the class 10-29 acres. Other small farms up to 100 acres showed slight decreases. The 140-179 acre class showed a decrease of 17.7 percent, while the 180-219 acre class had a decrease of only 1.6 percent. The combined classes 220-999 had a 83 percent increase while those farms of 1000 acres and over showed an increase of 43.4 percent for this period. The trend toward increased size of farms is quite evident from this data and from all indications this trend is expected to continue.

Major Tenure Groups.

The tenure classification used by the census apply only to farm operators and they may be broken down further to full owners, part owners, tenants, and croppers. The operater is a person who operates and directs a farm unit on his own responsibility. The full owners are those who own all the land they operate. Most of them hold their farms in fee simple ownership and thus have exclusive rights or what is quite often called a "bundle" of rights. Their power to use or misuse their land is restricted only by the State's exercise of its powers of police, taxation, and eminent domain.

Next in importance to the full owner group are the part owners. They are farmers who own part and rent part of the land they operate. Sometimes their owned holdings are small in comparison with their leased holdings. Manytimes these operators have growing families and rent additional land so as to adapt the size of their farm business to their expanding farm family labor supply. Others rent land in addition to that they own because of the inflated land prices which makes it more economical to rent land and invest their capital in equipment and other capital assets.

The farm manager group is very small in number relative to the previous mentioned groups. Quite often they are used on the larger plantations because of the day to day supervision carried on. In many cases they are specially trained and fitted for their job.

In case of the tenant operators, title to land and its improvements is vested in a person other than the operator, a person called the landlord. The tenant's possession is only temporary and he frequently shares managerial rights in the farming business with the landlord. Tenants may be further broken down into cash, share, and share-cash.

Cash tenants are quite often regarded as the highest and most efficient group because they possess more capital assets, take all the risks of farming, and make cash payments for the land they rent.

The share tenants operate more on a partnership basis with the landlord supplying varying amounts of power, equipment, feed, production cost etc. Under this arrangement the landlord receives his rent in kind and thus assumes part of the risks from poor crops and/or low farm prices.

The number of full owners in Mississippi and St. Francis counties reached their peak in 1940. The number of full owners showed an increase of 7.8 percent in Mississippi county and 20.6 percent increase in St. Francis county for this same period (table 4).

Table 4 : Tenure and Number of Operators, 1930-50[1]

County and Tenure	Selected Periods			Change	
	1930	1940	1950		
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Percent
Mississippi					
Full owners	873	1,437	941	+ 68	7.8
Part owners	113	303	513	+ 400	353.9
Managers	36	41	52	+ 16	44.4
Tenants	9,561	6,085	5,634	- 3,927	-41.1
St. Francis					
Full owners	734	947	885	+ 151	20.6
Part owners	52	89	276	+ 224	430.8
Managers	17	27	30	+ 13	76.5
Tenants	5,704	4,393	3,738	-1,996	-35.0

1. Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

The part owner class in both counties showed a steady increase during this period. Mississippi county showed a 354 percent increase compared with a 431 percent increase in St. Francis county.

There has been a slight increase in the number of managers in both counties. The percentage increase for Mississippi and St. Francis counties respectively were 44.4 and 76.5.

The number of tenants, unlike the three previous mentioned tenure groups have shown a steady decline since 1930. This, however, is not regretted since the number of people in agriculture is far too many, and there is an inverse relationship between the number of people in agriculture and their per capital income. The percentage decrease in this tenure group for Mississippi and St. Francis counties respectively are 41.1 and 35.0. Similar decreases also occurred in Chicot county in this group.

Color and tenure of operator.

During the 15 year period 1930-45, St. Francis county showed an increase of 5.5 percent in the number of white operators while the percent of non-white operators had a decrease of 29.5 percent (table 5).

There was a 83 percent increase in the number of white full owners in this county (St. Francis) while the non-white full owners showed an increase of 17.4 percent.

There was no significant changes in the number of managers in this county.

There has been a considerably large decrease in the tenant group among both races. The percentage decreases in this tenure group for white and non-white respectively are 22 and 33.

Table 5 : Number, Color, and Tenure of Operator, 1930-45.[1]

County, Color and Tenure	Selected Periods 1930	1940	1945	Change	
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Percent
St. Francis					
All White Operators	1,424	1,553	1,503	+ 79	5.5
Full owners	350	575	640	+ 290	82.9
Part owners	29	66	57	+ 28	96.6
Managers	17	27	22	+ 5	29.4
Tenants	1,028	1,282	784	- 224	-21.8
All non-white Operators	5,083	3,903	3,585	-1,498	-29.5
Full owners	384	372	451	+ 67	17.4
Part owners	23	23	16	- 7	-30.4
Managers	--	--	--	--	--
Tenants	4,676	6,371	3,118	-1,558	-33.3

[1] U. S. Census of Agriculture

Farm Values and Equities by Color and Tenure.

There has been a steady increase in the value of land and buildings held by white operators while this relationship has been just the reverse for non-white operators (table 6).

Table 6: Value of Land and Buildings by Color and Tenure of Operators, 1930-45[1]

County, Color and Tenure	Selected Periods 1930	1940	1945	Change	
	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Percent
Chicot:					
White operators	4,196,627	6,301,587	6,783,766	+ 2,587,039	61.6
Non-white operators	4,449,538	2,362,915	2,763,951	- 1,685,587	-37.9
Mississippi					
White operators	22,080,575	39,705,735	51,569,207	+24,488,622	110.9
Non-white operators	10,445,541	5,314,563	7,882,623	- 2,562,918	-24.5
St. Francis					
White operators	4,580,528	7,519,559	11,883,475	+ 7,302,947	159.4
Non-white operators	7,622,035	4,233,201	5,638,121	- 1,983,914	-26.0

[1] Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

During the 15 years period (1930-45), the value of land and buildings held by white operators in Chicot county showed an increase of 62 per cent, while that of non-white operators had a decrease of 38 per cent. A similar pattern also took place in Mississippi and St. Francis counties. Even though there was a net decrease in the value of non-white operators' land and buildings for the entire period, there was a slight increase in each of the three counties during the war years. This increase, however, was probably brought about by more favorable prices for farm products during this period. It was also discovered that the lack of improvement and maintenance on the part of the non-white operators was an important factor which caused their property to decrease in value.

Average Value of Land Per Acre.

The average value of land per acre has increased considerably in both Mississippi and St. Francis counties, while Chicot county showed only a slight increase (Table 7).

Table 7: Average Value of Land Per Acre, 1930-50[1]

County and Land	Selected Periods			Change	
	1930	1940	1950		
	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Per cent
Chicot:					
Average value per acre	$58.20	$36.40	$60.16	+ 1.96	3.4
Mississippi:					
Average value per acre	97.08	*	235.84	+138.76	142.9
St. Francis:					
Average value per acre	47.15	39.15	89.01	+ 41.86	88.8

1. Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture.

The most striking increase in the average value of land occurred in Mississippi county. The percentage increase in the average value of land per acre for Chicot, Mississippi, and St. Francis counties respectively were 3.4; 143; and

89. The great difference in the average value of land in Mississippi county as compared with Chicot county was due largely to the degree of land improvement carried on between the two counties. Most of the land in Mississippi county has been cleared and drained, whereas Chicot county is just beginning to make some head way in this work.

CHAPTER III

COMPOSITION AND CHANGES IN FARM LABOR FORCE

In recent years significant changes have taken place in the composition and also in the number of persons in the farm labor classes. Part of this change occurred as the results of increased use of farm mechanization, but mostly because of the rapid rate of out-migration of farm tenants to the larger metropolitan areas. This trend, if continued, is expected to help eliminate some of the problems of agriculture and especially Southern agriculture where the heaviest concentration of the lower status groups are found.

Farm Labor Force.

According to the 1950 preliminary census of agriculture large changes took place in the different farm labor classes. The family and/or hired worker class lost heavily (percentagewise) in both Chicot and Mississippi counties. For this class, Mississippi county had the largest loss with -38.1 per cent from 1940 to 1950; -35.8 per cent for Chicot county, while St. Francis county showed a +6.7 per cent for the same period (Table 8). In the family workers including operators class all three counties lost heavily. The largest loss occurring in Chicot county with a -61.8 per cent, -54.0 per cent in Mississippi county, and a -33.5 per cent in St. Francis county. Part of this loss was caused by the induction of men into the armed forces together with a rapid rate of migration of people to defense jobs in the cities. The 1940 figures were not available for comparison in the operators and unpaid members of family classes. It is believed, however, that a similar pattern existed in each of these classes.

Table 8: Changes in the Composition of Farm Labor Force, 1940-50

Labor Classes	Chicot 1940	Chicot 1950	Per cent change + or -	Mississippi 1940	Mississippi 1950	Per cent change + or -	St. Francis 1940	St. Francis 1950	Per cent change + or -
	Number	Number	Per cent	Number	Number	Per cent	Number	Number	Per cent
Family and/or hired workers	6,031	3,870	-35.8	19,446	12,032	-38.1	7,182	7,665	+ 6.7
Family workers including operators	4,993	1,907	-61.8	11,395	5,252	-54.0	5,995	3,989	-33.5
Operators	*	1,852	--	*	5,115	--	*	3,904	--
Unpaid members of family	*	801	--	*	1,488	--	*	1,138	--
Hired workers	*	1,217	--	8,051	5,429	-32.6	1,187	2,617	+120.5

* Not available

St. Francis county gained greatly in the hired workers class with a +120.5 per cent while Mississippi county lost heavily (-32.6 per cent). The 1940 figures for Chicot county were not available for comparison. Part of the persons lost in Mississippi in this class was partly reflected in the large increase in St. Francis county, since plantation to plantation migration is very common in this area.

Farm Labor Force.[1]

According to a recent study made in Arkansas the small farms were mainly one-family farms, with most of the work being done by the operator family. On the medium sized farms, the operator family handled the major portion of the crop, but there were nearly as many workers from cropper families as from the operator families. On the large farms, the operator families averaged only two workers, as compared with 24 cropper workers. Other tenants and resident wage hands provided two additional workers.

In addition to these resident workers, day hands were hired to help

with the operators cotton on the large farms, and to some extent on the medium sized farms. These day hands were used primarily in the cotton chopping and harvesting operations.

In 1947, the United States Department of Agriculture published Preliminary Survey of Major Areas Requiring "Out-Side Labor"[1] and on page 66 had the following to say about Arkansas:

"The Arkansas, White, St. Francis, and Mississippi River Valleys in Arkansas, annually produce about 1,300,000 acres of cotton, and at the peak of the harvest about 35,000 outside workers are needed. Picking gets under way about September 1 and is usually over by December 15. With bad weather it may run into January or February. In addition to the cotton crop there is also grown in the section some 327,000 acres of rice, the harvesting of which requires an additional 1,500 outside workers from September 1 to November 15. Here the outside workers are also white and Negro farmers, operators and tenants of small subsistence farms, coming from the nearby hill counties of Arkansas and Missouri. A considerable number of Latin Americans also came in from Southern Texas for cotton picking."

In 1948, the following statement appeared in Arkansas Agricultural Activities - 1948, the past season report of the Arkansas State Employment Service:

"An ever increasing number of farm tractors are now being used. While this usage tends to reduce the labor requirements preceding and during the planting season, it has resulted in greater acreage and, therefore, has stimulated the demand for choppers and pickers. It is estimated that approximately 250 mechanical pickers were used during the harvest season last year (1947), many of them for the first time."

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1. "Outside labor" refers to those living too far from the field to commute daily.

Seasonal Labor Requirement.

Cotton remains the most important single source of farm income in Arkansas. Next in importance to cotton as a cash crop is rice. As with most types of agricultural production, rice farming requires considerable labor, much of which is seasonal in nature. In most cases a great deal of this labor is recruited within the local area. During the war years, however, recruitment of labor needed for harvesting rice with the binder-thresher method was difficult.

[1]Rice farmers like cotton farmers are confronted with two periods of heavy labor demands. This demand varies in intensity, depending upon the other crops grown and the method of harvest used.

With the binder method of harvesting, the first peak labor load occurs during June and the first part of July, in connection with the oat harvest. However, the period of heaviest labor demand is associated with the rice harvest, which begins early in September with binding and shocking, and ends with the threshing operation which is generally finished around November 15. During these peak periods operators who use the binder method hire considerable outside labor. A common practice is to exchange work with neighbors to make up the threshing crews, but generally it is possible to provide only a part of the workers required for the threshing operations in this way. With the binder method of harvesting, about 40 per cent of the total labor required in the production of rice, and about 50 per cent of that required for oats, must be hired or obtained through exchange of services with neighbors. Approximately 3,000 hours of labor are required dur-

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1. Comparison of Farming systems for small rice farms in Arkansas, Bul. 498, p. 19.

ing the entire year for the rice-oats-lespedeza system when the harvesting is done with binders, and about 40 per cent of the total must be hired from off the farm. These estimates assume two full-time workers in the operator's labor force.

One of the chief advantages of the combine method of harvesting is the reduction in the amount of labor required for harvesting rice and other crops. For the rice-oats-lespedeza system the total labor required for the entire production and harvesting operation is only two-thirds as much as is required with the binder method. Furthermore, the fact that combine harvesting eliminates much of the labor needed at peak seasons results in a more even labor distribution and makes it possible for two-full-time workers to perform approximately 80 per cent of all work required for the year.[1]

Number of Families by Tenure.

The number of resident families and single wage hands per 10,000 acres of cropland continued to decline through the 1939-44 period. There were roughly 100 fewer families and wage hands per 10,000 acres of cropland on surveyed farms in 1944 than in 1932 for all of the counties except Clark and Chicot, where decreases in numbers were greatest. Resident families per 10,000 acres of cropland land ranged from 462 in Chicot county in 1932 down to 90 in Independence county in 1944 (Table 9).

In 1944 there were only about two-thirds as many renters per 10,000 acres of cultivated land in the Delta counties. The number of share-croppers families in 1944 had also declined to about one-third to slightly more than one-half of the numbers in 1932, except in Mississippi and Pulaski counties

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1. Farming system for small farms in Arkansas, Bul. 498, June, 1950, pp. 19-21.

where the shift from wage families to share croppers, begun in 1940 and 1941, was especially strong in 1943 and 1944. In the Delta type area, where numbers of wage families were relatively high in the late 1930's and early 1940's there were only about one-half of the 1932 numbers of these families in Chicot and Mississippi counties and a little more than one-third in Pulaski county where competition for labor in war industry was most acute.

In 1939 slightly more than one-half of the labor force in the Delta county was composed of share-cropper families, and about one-fourth wage families. In 1944 the proportion had shifted to slightly more than two-thirds for the share-croppers and about one-sixth for the wage families.

Importance of Mechanization.

In recent years a new factor has entered in farm mechanization. Many cotton and rice farmers in the Delta counties and other counties of the State

Table 9: Number of Families, by Tenure and by Counties, 1938 and 1944

Tenure	Delta Type Area						Coastal Plain Area		Hilly Upland Area			
	Chicot		Mississippi		Pulaski		Clark		Pope		Independence	
	1938	1944	1938-1944		1938	1944	1938	1944	1938	1944	1938-1944	
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Share renters[1]	144	167	23	22	39	24	82	30	56	28	54	25
Share croppers	373	307	265	341	477	348	97	47	9	6	6	7
Wage families	177	55	248	134	103	31	1	2	5	3	1	3
Single wage hands	28	41	22	11	24	17	1	2	0	0	4	0
Total	722	570	558	508	643	420	181	81	70	37	65	35
Number farms	24	23	31	30	31	26	31	30	39	33	34	32

1. Seven cash-renter families included with share renters for 1938, and 12 for 1944.

Source: Arkansas Experiment Station. Bull. 459

are looking to mechanization to cut labor costs of some, or all, or their operations. But there are still a lot of questions which need to be worked out. For example, what variety of cotton is best adapted to mechanization? When is the best time to plant them and how far apart should the rows be spaced? Aside from these, there are questions as to the desirability of flame cultivation, and ways of thinning to replace hand chopping. In eliminating one problem with machines quite often we introduce others, such as the need for first defoliating the plant before a machine can strip the bolls. All of these factors have to be carefully studied and evaluated in the light of their practability and their economic soundness if we are to have a better southern agriculture.

The 1949 issue of the Arkansas Agricultural Activities describes the situation in the below manner:

> "The use of mechanized equipment is steadily on the increase, particularly in the plowing, planting and cultivation of cotton crops. This year mechanical cotton choppers were used in several instances, and landowners found this method and cross row cultivation to be superior to hand labor. There was a definite increase in all areas in the use of mechanical cotton pickers, although no figure is available as to the total number in operation. A Pine Bluff plant is now manufacturing the Rust Picker; several sales were made locally, and planters observed first hand the advantages and disadvantages of their operation. The Blytheville area alone had 100 pickers in operation. It is the general opinion that the mechanical picker can be used successfully and economically when the cotton harvest reaches the pulling state but that the amount of debris gathered by the machine along with the cotton lowers the

quality, and therefore, makes it impracticable for use in the first picking and for premium cotton."

"Mechanization is not expected to reduce the demands for labor materially in the near future. Fewer out-of-state workers may be needed during the chopping season in the not-too-distant future, and it appears likely that, if mechanization is used more for snapping and pulling, the duration of high labor demands for the harvest will be shortened. The high level of employment experienced normally during most of the harvest probably will not be lowered by mechanization until improvements are made to eliminate the amount of trash gathered by the machine; new methods are devised to change from the commonly used drill planting to check row planting; and cotton gins are equipped to extract the litter gathered with the cotton."

In 1950, the post-season report series carried the following quotation:

"Because of the late crop and heavy rains, very little cotton in 1950 was harvested by mechanical pickers. Further improvement in such machines and more gins will require changes to better handle machine-picked cotton, before general use of mechanized pickers can be made."

"Continued expansion in use of mechanical cotton choppers occurred during the year, as well as in check-row planting, with both developments helping to lessen the need for hand labor for cotton chopping activity."

Number of Workstock on Farms.

During the last twenty years the number of workstock kept on farms

have decreased considerably. Changes that have taken place in Southern Agriculture, as the results of increased use of mechanical power, was little dreamed of twenty years ago.

According to the 1950 preliminary census of agriculture, Chicot county showed a decrease of 1,679 horses (51.6 Per cent) since 1930; Mississippi had the heaviest losses in this class both in number and per cent. In number Mississippi showed a decrease of 8,602 (83.9%) and St. Francis county had a decrease of 4,332 (68.6%) for this same period (table 10).

In the horses and colts including ponies class, Chicot loss for this period was 189 (9.5%); Mississippi loss was 402 (28.5%), and St. Francis showed a slight gain of 106 (7.1%) during this period.

Table 10: Number of Workstock kept on Farms, 1930-1950.[1]

County and kind of Workstock	Selected Years			Changes in:	
	1930	1940	1950	Number	Per cent
Chicot:					
Horses and/or mules	3,253	*	1,574	- 1,679	-51.6
Horses and colts including ponies	2,001	1,805	1,812	- 189	- 9.5
Mules and mule colts	5,491	5,744	2,660	- 2,831	-51.6
Mississippi:					
Horses and /or mules	10,260	*	1,658	- 8,602	-83.9
Horses and colts including ponies	1,412	2,312	1,010	- 402	-28.5
Mules and mule colts	19,441	17,567	4,671	-14,770	-76.0
St. Francis:					
Horses and/or mules	6,319	*	1,987	- 4,332	-68.6
Horses and colts including ponies	1,487	1,578	1,593	+ 106	+ 7.1
Mules and mule colts	9,585	7,124	6,119	- 3,466	-36.2

1. Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

* Not available

For the mule and mule colt classes Chicot had a decrease of 2,831 (51.6%); Mississippi county had an enormous decrease of 14,770 (76.0%), and St.

Francis had a decrease of 3,466 (36.2%) for this class during this period.

From this data it is quite evident that the workstock is really loosing in importance in these counties, and from all indication this trend is expected to continue.

Cotton Production Practices in Arkansas.[1]

The principal variation found in producing cotton in the Delta area were those associated with the size of farm and which resulted primarily from the different kinds of power and equipment used. Production operations and practices were limited mainly to hand and workstock methods on the small farms, but tractor equipment was found in use on most of the large farms.

Although mechanical equipment for chopping and harvesting cotton has been on the market for some time, its performance has not been entirely satisfactory and at the time of this study its use was rather limited. Very few choppers and only one mechanical picker was found in use on the sample farms. It appears that, for the immediate future, farm operators will continue doing these jobs with hand labor. This labor may come from families kept on the farm or from off-farm nearby cities. There has been an increasing tendency on the part of farm operators to use off-farm labor for these seasonal jobs rather than keep croppers on the farm.

Combination of Tractor and Horse-Drawn Equipment.[2]

According to a recent study, the combination of horse and tractor equipment was found on the large and medium sized farms. This situation resulted from the fact that these farms were just beginning to make the shift to tractors and from the practice of some of the large operators of using a

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1. Cotton Production Practices in Arkansas, by M.W. Slusher and H. Scoggins, Bul. 507, April, 1951, p. 80.

2. Bul. 507, pp 78-79

tractor on the cotton they operated, and also using it to do the heavy-draft land preparation operations on land farmed by croppers.

When horse and tractor equipment were used in combination, the usual practice was to use the tractor equipment for all of the seedbed preparation operations and the horse equipment for planting and other operations. When this procedure was followed, about 38 man, 3 tractor, and 22 horse hours were used per acre for the pre-harvest operations.

Extent of Farm Mechanization.

Studies show that the increase in the number of tractors per 10,000 acres of cropland was consistent during the entire 1939-44 period. This increase was greatest in Mississippi where the number of workstock used showed the largest decrease in number.

According to this study in 1941, per 10,000 acres of cropland, there were on farms surveyed in the Delta Type Area 14 2-row and three 4-row cultivators. There were also five 2-row and three 4-row planters. By 1944 there was a 50 per cent increase in these types of cultivators and planters. At this time only one mechanical chopper was in use on the farms surveyed. In 1944 the number of choppers in use increased to five. The number of operators check-rowed cotton increased from three in 1941 to 10 in 1944.

The number of work stock per 10,000 acres of cropland in various counties in 1944 were: Chicot 395, Mississippi 300 and Pulaski 272. Some of the operators with tractors indicated that the number of workstock being kept by them at that time was in excess of their needs.

Other findings reveal that wage families and single wage hands made up a higher proportion of the labor force on farms on which tractors had been used longest. Renters made up a major part of the labor force only for the group of farms on which no tractors were used (table 11).

The number of tractors per 10,000 acres of cropland from 1939 to 1944 was almost four times as great on farms on which no tractors were used prior to 1939 as on which tractors were already in use at the beginning of the period. In 1944 a little over one-half of the tractors on farms on which tractors were used prior to 1939 were medium-sized, 2-plow tractors, while the proportion of tractors of this size on farms on which use of tractors was begun during the 1939-44 period was more than two-thirds, with a correspondingly lower proportion of larger tractors. Three fourth of the tractors added by

Table 11: Tractors Per 10,000 Acres of Cropland, By Period of Tractor Use and Years, Delta Type Area, 1939-44

Farms having tractors, 1939-44	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No
All of the time	23.9	28.4	32.3	32.8	34.8	33.0
Part of the time	7.7	22.8	34.0	32.5	35.3	46.2

operators of farms in the farmer group were of the larger type, while corresponding figure for the latter group was one-fourth.[1]

According to the 1950 preliminary census of agriculture the number of grain combines in the various counties were: Chicot county 140; Mississippi county 1,026, and St. Francis county 26.5. Figures for periods 1930 to 1940 were not available for comparison. A study made by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in 1945 reported that Mississippi county produced one-third of the acreage and 44 per cent of the total tonnage of alfalfa harvested in Arkansas in 1944.

1. Land Tenure in Arkansas by O. T. Osgood and John W. White, Bul. 459; August, 1945, pp 23-24.

Hay harvesting methods and equipment have changed considerably. There has been a shift to mechanized equipment to reduce the hand labor needed and to shorten the time required to harvest the hay crops. This change has been particularly rapid in Mississippi county and other Delta Areas (table 12 and figure 2).[1] This accounts for such large number of grain combines in use in this county.

For corn pickers Chicot county reported 5 in 1950; Mississippi county 151, and St. Francis county 37. Figures for previous period were not available for comparison.

The number of motortrucks increased tremendously in all three counties. Again, Mississippi county had the largest increase with 2,144 between the period 1930 to 1950; Chicot county had the least increase with 498, and St. Francis county had an increase of 1,331 for this period. Each county showed a large increase in the number of tractors on farms in 1950. The most striking increase took place in Mississippi county with an increase of 4,711; the least increase occurred in Chicot county with an increase of 871, and St. Francis showed an increase of 2,101 for this period.

Farm mechanization has been, and is, a factor too important to ignore. In 1951, the following statements occurred in the article "Mechanization is Being Forced On the Farmer":

"After the successful 1948 season, 16 Negro families on Alexander place discovered they had earned $26,000 clear of all debts. They had done pretty well in 1947 too.

But eight of these families moved away in the winter of 1948-49. Those that remained don't want to work with mules any more. They even come to

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1. Harvesting Methods and Costs for Alfalfa in Mississippi County, Arkansas, 1945, Bul. 481, p. 3.

Table 12: Mechanical Power Used on Farms, 1930-50

County and Kind of Equipment	Selected Periods 1930	1940	1950	Change
	Numbers	Numbers	Numbers	Numbers
Chicot:				
Grain Combines	*	*	140	---
Corn Pickers	*	*	5	---
Motortrucks	104	203	602	+ 498
**Tractors	95	171	966	+ 871
Mississippi:				
Grain Combines	*	*	1,026	---
Corn Pickers	*	*	151	---
Motortrucks	230	803	2,374	+2,144
Tractors	151	710	4,862	+4,711
St. Francis:				
Grain Combines	*	*	265	---
Corn Pickers	*	*	37	---
Motortrucks	138	253	1,469	+1,331
Tractors	127	219	2,128	+2,101

* not available

** all kinds

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

the Alexander house and ask for a tractor when they go after wood."

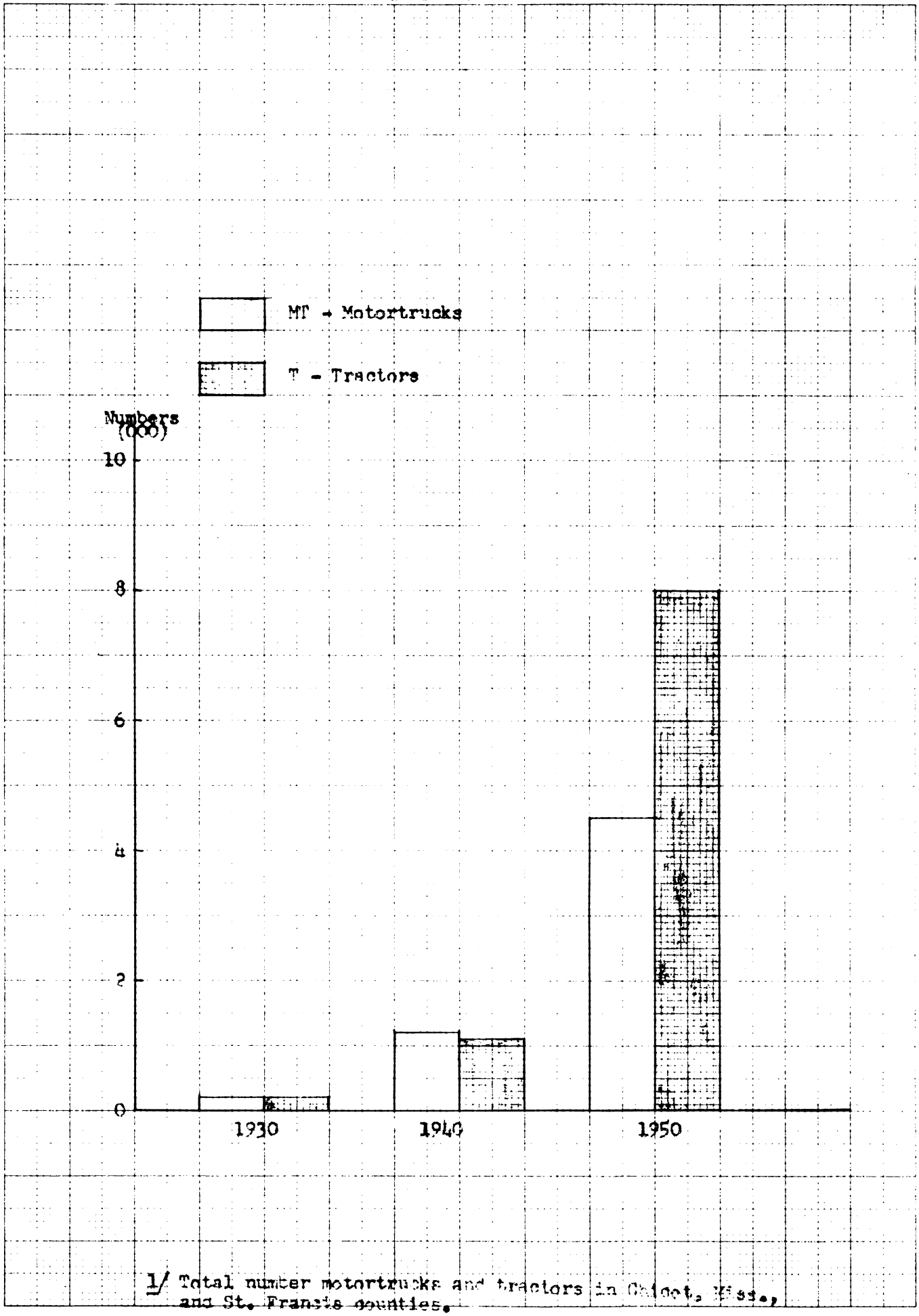
Mark Valentine of Galloway offers a different answer: "The Government takes care of idle people nowadays," he says. "We haven't dispossessed our sharecroppers. Those who left just wanted to go North. The women move to town to get on relief. Every dependent child is worth money to her."

"Over in St. Francis county, L. B. Jones and Son of Madison has kept a greater percentage of families than some other planters in Eastern Arkansas. But even the Jones farms have only 65 of the 125 sharecroppers and tenants who lived there in 1945.

Wiley T. Jones says the land is prepared with tractors but most of the cultivation is done with mules."

FIGURE 2 [illegible] 1/

1930 - 1950



1/ Total number motortrucks and tractors in Choctaw, Miss., and St. Francis counties.

"The state Agricultural Extension Service says machines have not displaced labor. Instead, farmers have had to mechanize to offset the loss of workers and to compete with each other." [1]

1. Arkansas Gazatte Newspaper, September, 1951

CHAPTER IV

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF FARM TENANCY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe some of the more obvious characteristics and consequences of tenant farming, since statistical information in itself can be of little value unless it is given specific meaning in term of characteristics and consequences.

It is very important that one realizes that farm tenancy does not have the same characteristics and does not lead to the same consequences in all sections. The major difference from section to section or from county to county are manifold and complex. Many differences exist between individual counties and occasionally between individual farms in the same county. It is hoped, however, that those characteristics which are considered here will afford a better understanding of tenant farming in the Delta counties and develop a basis of background material for further study and interpretation of the problem.

Delta Type Area.

[1]The Delta Type Area includes the 18 counties lying adjacent to the Mississippi, lower Arkansas, and Red Rivers. These counties do not, of course, include all of the bottom land areas of Arkansas; they are those within whose boundaries all or almost all of the area is river bottom land. It is characterized by the plantation type of farming; under large-scale production methods; worked by renters and share croppers, and a high proportion of the agricultural population of the area is colored. Cotton production is the major agricultural enterprise.

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1. Farm Tenancy Sit. in Arkansas, Bull. 384, Vol. 50 #874, p. 31.

Plantations.

A cotton plantation in Arkansas may be defined in general terms as a large-scale agricultural enterprise devoted principally to cotton production. The typical plantation is composed of a large tract or contiguous tract of land, a part of which is worked on a renter or a share-cropper basis.

Various factors, physical, economic, and racial, have tended to make the Delta the "super-plantation" area of the state.

Income.[1]

The major part of the cash income of croppers and share tenants on plantations is derived from the cotton crop, conservation payments, wage work, and to lesser extent from the sale of livestock and livestock products.

Aside of the cotton crop, wage work is the largest source of income for both croppers and other tenants. The average wage of croppers according to a recent study was $25. compared with an average of $21. for the other tenants from similar work. The average wage hand must generally depend entirely on wage work for his cash income. The amount of this work varies with such factors as growing seasons, the size of the cotton crop, the wage rates, and the amount of non-crop work, such as clearing new ground and ditching. This element of insecurity or uncertainty is largely responsible for a general preference by both croppers and wage hands for the cropper status.

Strangely enough very few tenants capitalize on the advantage of growing more food for home use. This, however, is partly due to the reluctance of the landlord to encourage the growth of products which brings to him no rent. Never-the-less, some of this is due to the lack of shiftness and

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1. Farm Tenancy Situation in Arkansas, p. 37.

Foresight on the part of the tenant. According to the operators and from personal observations by the author, there is a decided unwillingness on the part of the tenants to properly prepare and care for a garden. Tenants insist that their gardening is hindered by the lack of available garden space, and by a conflict between other work and garden work at critical periods of the year.

The lack of full-time utilization of labor accounts in part for low incomes to plantation workers. It is difficult to arrive at an exact income figure that reflects the standards of living for the different tenure groups.

Supervision.

In this area the land lord or his agent assumes a great deal of day to day control over farm operations. The tenants, both renters and croppers, have little more choice in the selection of crops and in methods of cultivating, harvesting, and marketing the crops than the hired wage laborers. In some instances, renters or croppers who have earned the confidence of the landlord are permitted to perform their farm operation with little or no direct supervision. The duration of these special rites continues as long as the tenant uses methods acceptable to the landlord.

The ill effect on the tenant under this type of close supervision is a lack of initiative and self-reliance. He is not free and quite often unwilling to accept responsibility and to make good, sensible decisions for himself. Consequently, he relies on the landlord for all important management decisions, and as a result he fails to develop good managerial ability needed by a successful farm operator. The tenant is thus poorly prepared for land ownership and its accompanying responsibilities of management. In this manner the system of complete supervision has tended to perpetuate the existing tenure pattern in the plantation area.

Credit

The renters and croppers are not only dependent upon their landlords for supervision, but quite often they turn to the landlord as a source of credit for food and other supplies necessary for making their crops. Quite often on the plantation this credit is furnished in the form of commodities from the plantation commissory or store. This type of credit is known as the "furnishing" system, and is generally a part of the agreement between landlord and tenant. Generally, under this system of credit the landlord agrees to furnish or to extend to each tenant a certain amount of credit per month during the crop season in the form of food, clothing, and other supplies.

This type of credit is very risky, and because of this, the tenant has to pay a very high price for credit to offset the risk taken by the landlord. The usual procedure is that at the beginning of the year, the tenant opens an account at the commissary or store and the account is not closed until after the harvesting season. A survey of short-term credit in the State found that 83 per cent of the credit obtained by share-croppers and 50 per cent of that obtained by renters in a plantation district of Jefferson county was obtained from landlord.[1] The average term of credit according to this study was 6.7 months for share tenants and 6.2 months for share-croppers. This survey found that share croppers on plantations were paying a 44 per cent interest rate, while the small renters were paying 39 per cent on credit from merchants and landlords were the only kind obtained by croppers. Small cash and share renters obtained approximately 26 per cent of their credit from sources other than banks. Bank credit costs small share renters an interest rate of 10 per cent.

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1. "Farm Credit in a Plantation and on Upland Cotton District in Arkansas," B. M. Gile and A. N. Moore, Arkansas Agriculture Experiment Station, Bul. No. 228.

Contrary to the popular beliefs of many, high interest rates or the "furnishing" business is not always a profitable one. It is quite unprofitable not only to the renters and croppers but to the landlords as well, since occasionally many landlords and merchants have gone bankrupt because of the inability of the tenant to pay their debt at the end of the year.

Health.

Medical service is usually provided for the tenants and croppers by arrangements on the part of the plantation operators.[1] According to a study made in the state of Mississippi it was found that some of the larger plantations in the Delta retained the services of a plantation doctor on a monthly or annual basis to look after the tenants and croppers. The practice used most commonly in the Delta counties of Arkansas as well as in Mississippi is for the operator to arrange for a doctor's visitation in cases of severe illness. In other cases the patients are sent to the doctors office, when medical service is needed. The latter is the practice used mostly in St. Francis county because of the reluctance of physicians to go into the rural areas. The medical cost is paid by the operator and he charges the cost to the tenants account.

Medical costs were usually high, considering the relatively low incomes of the tenants, and quite often many of them resorted to patent medicines. Many times the medicines bought were more harmful than beneficial. This rural health problem reflected itself during World War II in a very high per cent of rejections among rural young men.

Housing standards and facilities in the Delta for the farm tenants and croppers are, for the most part, poor. Very few, if any, of the homes of this group have running water, and only a very few have sanitary toilets. The water is usually very distasteful and is secured from shallow pump which may be near although in some cases were relatively long distances from the house.

Advancement Opportunities.

The "agricultural ladder" or the steps through which a farm operator passes a laborer on the home farm or a neighbor's farm, to tenant, part owners, and finally to full owner is largely nonexistent in the Delta. Counteracting forces such as large operating units, high land values, (Figure 3), the persistence of the cost system, the need of large capital investments in land and equipment, and the lack of managerial skills, reduce the probability of tenants and others of lower economic status ever rising to the status of ownership. This is not meant to imply that farm ownership by this group is impossible, but is rather to show that their chance of becoming owners is highly improbable.

The principle problem faced by most prospective farm owners in this area or most areas of the State centers around their accumulation of investment capital needed to purchase the farm they desire. In some respects, capital requirements for livestock, equipment, and other production expenses.

Mobility.[1]

A very important characteristic of tenancy in the Delta area is the extreme mobility of the tenants. According to a study made in Arkansas, more than one half, 57.1 per cent of tenants of this area in 1935 had been on the farm they occupied for less than two years. A case study published in the "Arkansas Gazette" describes the recent mobility of tenants in the below manner:

"The Arkansas tenant farmer, the legendary martyr whose lack of ambition often was exaggerated even while his landlord's virtue was being maligned, is disappearing.

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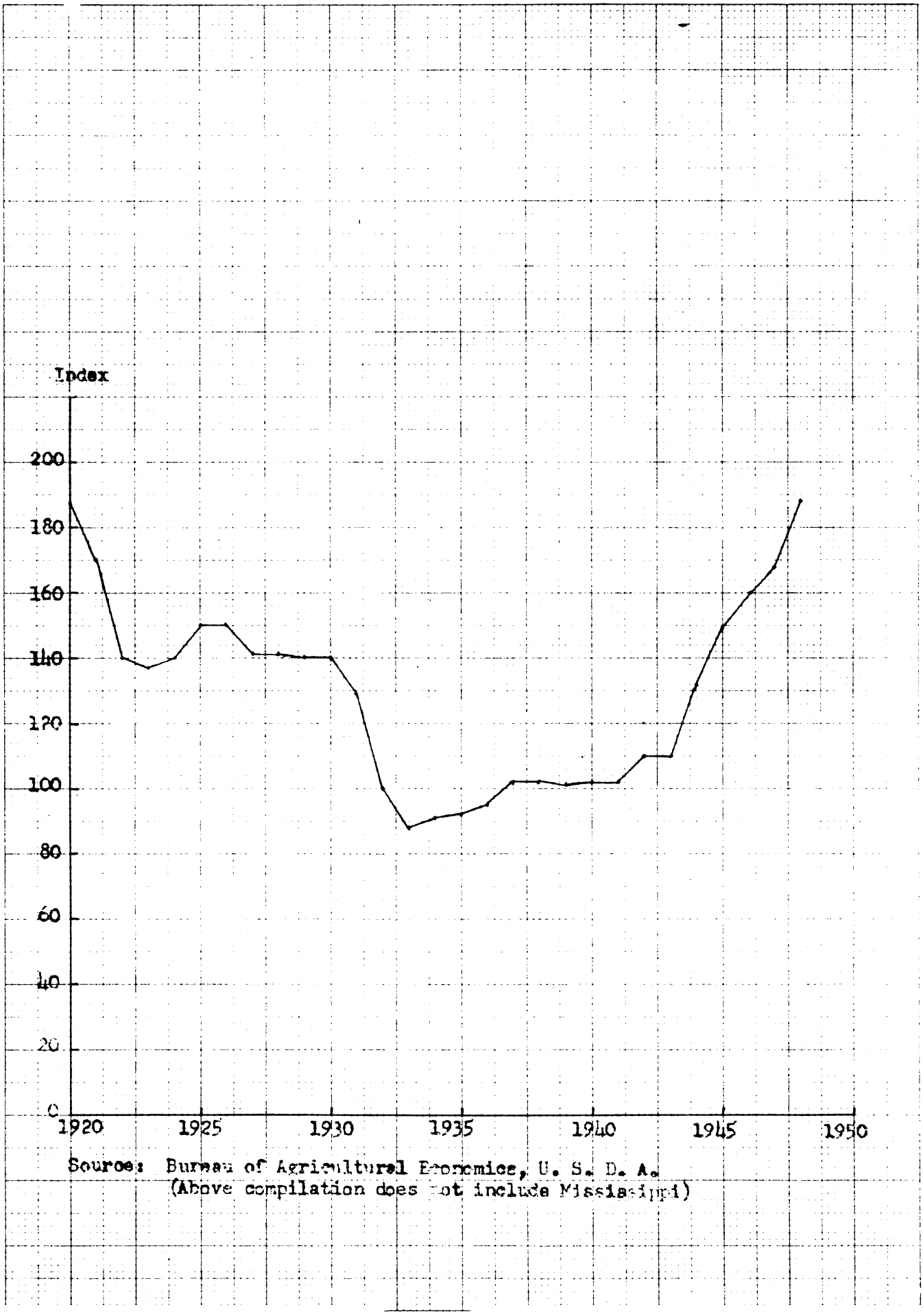
1. Arkansas Gazette, "Sharecroppers, Tenant Farmers Last Vanishing," September 12, 1951, p. 16 by John L. Fletcher.

FIGURE 3.



Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. D. A.
(Above compilation does not include Mississippi)

H. T. Ohlendorf of Osceola, who operates 6,500 acres in this magnificent farming country had 250 to 300 families on his place 20 years ago when one man was assigned to a mule and plow."

Today, he has 50 sharecroppers. About 40 other families live on his farm but they hire out as day laborers.

"Before coming to Mississippi county I checked plantations all of the way from Little Rock and found similar conditions prevailing. The situation is not as marked in some isolated spots - such as Madison, St. Francis county, and in Pecan Point, in this country.

How're you gonna Keep 'em down on the farm after they've tasted life in Memphis, Forrest City, Little Rock?

The answer: You aren't.

"As noted in Mississippi county yesterday, the Arkansas tenant farmer and sharecropper are going to town. At least 60 per cent of them have vanished from the land since the Army and the war plants gave them a view of the city 10 years ago."

Even though the tenants are very mobile, studies show that they usually move from one plantation to another. However, during the past decade this tendency has been changed somewhat and more tenants are moving to Little Rock and other cities such as St. Louis, Chicago, Detroit and others.

Soil Conservation.

In this area, gully erosion is usually not a problem, but drainage, sheet erosion, and soil depletion are associated with tenant farming.

According to the study made by the Southwestern Land Tenure Research Committee the factors which tend to affect conservation are the following: (1) Land parcels in the region are subject to frequent transfer thus making it difficult to establish long time conservation programs. Related to this is a lack of conservation philosophy incident to the recent

free land era. (2) Conservation practices on the smaller tracts is relatively limited since under these circumstances it is difficult to adjust farm enterprise organization to the requirements of conservation programs. (3) Where mobility is high incentives for conservation are lacking for both the tenant and the owner, the farmer cannot reap future benefits of conservation, the latter because he feels that any investment made may be jeopardized by a rapid turnover of operators. Under conditions of high mobility tenants usually forego practices that promise to pay off at a distant future date. Similarly, in any given year, exploitative practices apparently pay the individual renter-operator. These factors create passiveness toward conservation programs. (4) Leasing arrangements and statutory agreements have established the owner's prior position with respect to possession and use. Consequently, the set-up of active conservation programs is relatively greater among owner-operators. (5) Few written leases include statements of comprehensive conservation practices. Furthermore, those practices which are impediments to conservation are difficult to change since many of them are based on traditional procedures and attitudes. (6) The type of landowner influences the progress of conservation programs. Female landowners, estates, and those who own land primarily for anticipated mineral values show a relative lack of interest in conservation. (7) Of great importance to conservation and to all other economic activities are the general price relationships existing at a given. For example, high prices for beef and dairy products tend to promote conservation while the same situation for hogs, cotton, and cash grain tend to promote more exploitation.

Share cropping.

The sharecropper is commonly thought of as a tenant, and sharecropping as a part of the system of tenancy. This concept, however, is not

entirely accurate.

The status of the cropper is not always distinct and clear since, under the law, he may be either a tenant or a laborer. Generally, there is some confusion on this point, but under the present state statute, he is legally a laborer paid in kind. This means that the cropper contract is one establishing an employer-employee relationship, giving him the legal rights and privileges of a wage laborer.

The problems of sharecropping revolve about two primary qualities of the plantation system: The cropper contract fails to provide incentives and opportunities for economic and social advancement of the operator and his family; and, being an employer - employee agreement, it fails to promote stability and security of relationship between the two parties. Factors such as sub-standard living quarters, insanitary water supplies, and high disease rates, combined with the above inadequacies of the system, have tended to retard both social and economic advancement for this "tenure" group.

Tenure of Parents.

It has been well established by land economists that the tenure and economic status of parents had an important bearing upon the tenure at which children began earning life but was not related to the age at which earning life began. Even though children of owner parents generally began earning life with little more capital than those of nonowning parents, they were also in a more advantageous position to secure credit either directly or through the sponsorship of the parents. At any rate, the son has an heir interest in the home farm upon which he can count sometimes in the future.

Parents of husband and wife appeared to have equal influence upon

the tenure status of the family. Educational attainment for the children was positively associated with higher tenure status of parents and also a relatively heavier out-migration of children to nonfarm occupation, together with a higher beginning farm tenure status. It was found that the difference in the rate of out-migration was probably more closely related to the educational attainment than to the tenure status of the parents.

Young people tend to marry within their tenure groups and a result concentrate the farm wealth within a relatively few families. However, usually children inherited only a part of the farm and must but the rest from other members of the family who might have migrated to other farms or to nonfarm occupations. It was found that on the whole those owners who bought their farms were more efficient operators than those who inherited them. This, however, was probably due to a greater appreciation for farm life together with more of those managerial skills and know-how needed by a successful farm operator.

Level of Living.

According to the findings of the Southwestern Land Tenure Research Committee, the socio-economic status of the farm families generally rose with increases in net family income. Families at the lower end of the income scale below $300 remained approximately constant.

It was found that for a given scale of farm operation, part owners rank higher in socio-economic status than renters and renters, higher than croppers. Part owners, however, were not uniformly lower than full owners but are uniformly higher than renters. An array of all families into given groups based on status score shows no croppers in the highest status group. All tenures, however, were represented in the lowest group. The wide spread in each of the tenure demonstrates conclusively that tenure alone neither

determines nor limits the status of the farm family.

The index of movable possessions, a measure of the part of the family possessions for which the operator is himself primarily responsible was also used as a part of the status scale. The broad tenure comparisons show that the combined renter group has an index considerably above that of the renter. For the index of movable possessions, renters as a whole are farther along the scale from croppers to owners. This indicates that tenants have used their consumer purchasing ability to improve their socio-economic status even though they don't for non-movable possessions such as for housing facilities.

With respect to the index of social participation, the combined owner group shows a higher index than the renter group. Renters in turn are followed by the croppers but the entire spread among these averages was much less than that for the movable possessions index.

It was found that Negro croppers consistently have a higher index of social participation than white croppers. At the same time, however, they have a lower housing index and a lower index of movable possessions.

Fertility Index.

The fertility index was computed for each family, based on the number of children born to the male head and divided by the number expected for his given age. The entire population of the United States was used as a yardstick. According to the findings of the Southwestern Land Tenure Research Committee the white part owners showed a higher fertility than the white full owners in Arkansas and the Texas samples. In Arkansas and Mississippi sample areas renters of both races had significantly higher fertility rates than croppers of the respective areas. Income and other factors associated with tenure or method of wage payment is more important than

tenure itself with respect to fertility rates. In other words it was found that fertilities rates for the different groups in different areas followed no set pattern. In general the high birth rates occur on low priced and low productive land, even though the land is often found in the areas of high percentage ownership.

Federal Programs and Land Tenure.

In the past most of the government programs that operated for the benefit of agriculture has evolved to meet some new and current problems. As a result, the composite of these programs has not been based on a clearly visualized set of goals or objectives. This lack of intergration, however, is due in part to the fact that it has not as yet been possible to determine a set of long-run ends with which the majority of the persons concerned are in substantial agreement.

Among the many different types of services offered by the Agricultural Extension program, it was found that a substantial number of all farmers were in contact with county agents. The percentage of colored farmers was somewhat lower than that of white, running somewhat under 50 per cent for Arkansas and Mississippi Coastal Plains area. In general, the higher the tenure status, the greater the number of contacts.

A composite measure of participation in the several programs studied disclosed that practically all farmers in the State in each of the tenure groups participated in one or more of these programs in 1942.

The programs of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and the Agricultural Extension Service are essentially universal in their appeal; the program of the Soil Conservation Service appeals more specifically to landowners. The credit facilities of the FCA and FSA are arranged to meet the needs of different types of borrowers; hence, there is little duplication of

participation in these two programs.[1]

In general, this data points to the need for more adequate adaptation of the federal programs to meet the needs of the less favored tenure groups who constitutes, in most cases, a much larger per cent of the total farm population.

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1. Land Tenure in the Southwestern States, Bulletin 482, October, 1948.

CHAPTER V

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH FARM TENURE

Before one can critically analyze the problems associated with farm tenure, it is very necessary that he familarized himself with our present tenure goals. This requisite is very important since programs designed to achieve these goals often conflict with other current objectives of American Agricultural policy. For example, the improvement of the position of farm tenants might involve programs and activities that conflict with another current objective, that of securing a better balance between industry and agriculture.

It is very necessary that we look at our more important tenure objectives before attempting to analize our present tenure problems. These objectives are as follows:

1. The family farm. i.e. encourages ownership of family farm by those who till the soil.
2. Security of Expection. provide a reasonable degree of security for all parties having rights in land.
3. Conservation. promote the best use of all factors in farm production.
4. Equitable Distribution of Income.

In approaching these objectives, essential as they may be, certain tenure problems are encountered. Among the most common problems facing farm people in the Southwest and in many other areas are: (1) farm ownership, (2) leasing arrangements, (3) federal and state land programs, and (4) share cropping.

Farm Ownership.

The principal problem faced by most prospective farm owners in the

Southwest centers around their accumulation of the funds of investment capital they need to purchase the farm they desire. In some respects, this problem has been made more serious by increasing land values and by higher capital requirements for livestock, equipment, and other production expenses. The problem has been made more acute as the average size of farm units increase. As a result, there is often greater competition for land, particularly as non-agricultural opportunities decrease. The virgin soils, available to our grandfathers for a little cash, are no longer present. Opportunities on new lands are limited to high cost ventures in drainage, irrigation, and clearing. The development of this land has depended to a large extent upon public efforts, since the risks involved are often too great and the over-all costs too burdensome for the individual operator.

Purchasing a farm is usually the most important single financial transaction in the life of a farmer. It is rated as such, since the farmer is buying not only the income-producing capacity of the land but, more important, a home for his family. A primary barrier to overcome is the price of the farm which will decide, to a large degree, his success or failure. As some economists have pointed out, "the time one is born is more important than one's efficiency in predicting his success or failure in farming." In other words, if the transaction is not sound, due to excessively high land prices or to poor mortgage arrangements, the farmer's control of the unit as the principal source of income and as a permanent home is endangered.

The proper allocation of one's limited capital resources is very important and should not be considered too lightly. According to the Southwest Land Tenure Research Committee, the traditional pattern has been for the farmer and his family to live on a minimum during the early years of ownership, in order to pay off an over-capitalized land debt. With this

pattern prevailing, larger farm incomes resulting from improved cultural methods will be reflected primarily in higher land prices. Consequently, one of our tenure goals conflict in the sense that greated productivity (larger net farm income) shows up immediately in still higher land prices. This tendency multiplies family sacrifices in achieving ownership and eventually eliminates many capable prospective owner-operators.

Another ownership problem lies in the conflicting rights which arise when land is used for mineral production.

Subsurface rights are separate from the surface title and are transferred through mineral deeds. In several areas, transfers and segmentation of these rights have resulted in extremely heavy cost for clearing and abstracting titlesto the surface. Each person who owns a portion of the subsurface occupies absut the same position in regard to complete title as the owner who holds the surface. In some cases, the cost of tracing subsurface owners and abstracting land titles has been more than the agricultural value of the land. In addition, separation of subsurface rights usually impairs the security value of the land for a loan, and the addition of credit practically ceases, especially if more than half of the surface rights have been sold off. Studies show that in areas of active leasing, the price of farm land is affected materially. The price of land with all mineral rights intact sell for about twice as much as land on which such rights have been sold separately.

The problem of proportionality is very important in regard to farm ownership, even with the increased emphasis being placed upon it, is not desirable in all cases. To clarify this point we may ask ourselves the following question: Does a tenant better his position by sacrificing an efficient unit for an inefficient one, even to become an owner? Before one could really answer such a question, the advantages of ownership must be

weighed carefully against the reduction in farm income and loss of efficiency. In many cases the man with limited resources may utilize these to the best advantage by operating an adequate unit owned by someone else. This is particularly true if he is assured a reasonable degree of tenure security and an opportunity to reap the reward gained through extra effort.

Maintaining Farm Ownership.

Many farmers have acquired ownership in the past only to lose it because the income they have received from their farms has not proved sufficient to support their families and still carry their credit and tax loads. This situation often results from such factors as low farm price levels, inadequate farms, over-valuation of farms for purchase or credit purposes, crop failures, family crisis, and similar problems.

Stimulants, such as short periods of excessively high incomes tend to cause many farmers to forget that land values should be based on incomes expected over long periods of time.

Recommendations:

To provide a relatively large degree of stable owner-operatorship, these suggestions are made:

1. Discourage land prices that are too high in terms of long-time productivity through these means:
   a. Credit agencies, public and private, continue to extend land mortgage credit, only when it is based on the long-time earning capacity of the land.
   b. Modify certain provisions of internal revenue statutes that tend to encourage non-farmer buying of farm land (avoid speculation). The allowed deduction from non-

farm income of losses resulting from farming is a specific example of procedures which may be changed.

c. Establish public rural appraisal services to furnish reliable land value information to prospective buyers.

d. Land value clinics conducted by educational and credit agencies would acquaint large groups of farmers with the land market situation.

2. Encourage operators who plan to become owners to purchase adequate family units, and to add to in adequate units, if and when suitable tracts are available. In most cases, tenants should not be encouraged to become owner-operators, if relatively greater sacrifices in income potential are involved.

3. Public programs of extending credit to competent tenants could be strengthened by delaying this aid until land prices are more in line with long-time earning capacity.

4. Encourage agencies extending land mortgage credit to include long-term amortization plans, pre-payments, flexible payments based on income, low interest rates, and loan servicing. All federal agencies should adopt these improvements.

5. Automatically apply stand still agreements in times of depressions etc., to prevent foreclosure proceedings, so long as the borrower continues reasonably good farming practices and pays the lender the customary share-rent that a landlord would receive from such a unit. Basic legislation may be required to meet this suggestion.

6. Suggestions for resolving some of the difficulties in conflicting mineral and agricultural rights include:

a. Legislation to limit the duration of subsurface rights if no minerals are found.

b. Provide for separate taxation of subsurface rights as a means of deflating land values in affected areas, and of clearing titles that have been clouded through perpetual mineral deeds.

c. Consider that the farmer buys only the surface rights, if this will materially lower the purchase price of a farm.

7. Educational agencies, cooperating with research efforts should stress timely information on land price trends and their significance.

Leasing Arrangements.

The problem of farm tenancy is essentially one of allocating the rights and responsibilities of farm operatorship between landlords and tenants. Since this allocation process involves the supplying and contribution of capital and labor as well as sharing of income, it of necessity involves income and cost factors. It also involves other details in leasing arrangements and landlord-tenant relations. Among the more promising tenancy problems are the relationships that exist between the use of varying types of leasing arrangements. Evidence indicates that tenant operation in the past have not been as favorable as owner operation, with regard to such factors as security of occupancy, upkeep and improvement of farm resources and farm family living.

Studies have shown conclusively that many problems arising out of leasing arrangements are associated with the historical tenure goal that all farmers should become owners.

Since leasing is primarily a contractual arrangement, sanctioned and modified by law, most of the less desirable qualities of tenancy are

associated with the provision of the contract.

Customs impinges so heavily with regard to the 'third and fourth' lease arrangement that provision for adapting new crops and livestock enterprises on tenant farms have been slow in developing. In many instances the 'third and fourth' provisions are not adapted or suited to new crops and livestock ventures. Rental rates and division of income and expense between owner and tenant, determined by custom, often do not reflect the contributions of the two parties. Written leases, generally speaking, serve only the primary purpose of insuring collection of the rent and of regaining possession of the land at the end of each current production period. Most written lease agreements, with few exceptions, actually discourage conservation practices and other improvements.

Numerous problems in landlord-tenant relations exists. Among the more important of these are problems of:

1 Vague rental agreements. That is, most lease agreement involve nothing more than a short oral discussion covering such items as when the tenant will move on the farm, the size of his labor force etc. Agreements such as this only provide a basis for future misunderstandings and poor quality farming.

2. Duration of leases. Uncertainty of occupancy makes for tenant unrest, instability in farming operations, and high mobility. This type of arrangement discourages the tenant from making desireable improvements.

3. Distribution of farm income. Custom, especially in the South, plays a dominant role in the determination of rental rates. The customary share cropping and 'third and fourth' share tenancy of the South can be cited as a vivid example.

Considerable work remains to be done in determining what is

and what is not "fair rent" and what effect varying rental arrangements have upon resource use.

Recommendations: To overcome some of the difficulties involved in leasing farm land.

1. Revise present farm lease contracts on the basis of equity, flexibility, and their long run effect upon land use.
2. In order to establish greater security for all parties concerned, enact legislation to insure adequate notice of lease termination.
3. Provide for voluntary arbitration of land-owner-tenant problems, when questions arise between the two parties.
4. Legislation on minimum housing and other facilities on rented farms may aid in solving this problem of living conditions.
5. Encourage group meetings by educational agencies in counties to discuss lease matters of mutual interests to both parties.
6. Encourage research on leasing so that more definite recommendations can be made.

Federal and State Land Programs.

Most of the federal programs for agriculture have been set-up with little regard to differences in the socio-economic status of subgroups. Attempts at coordinating the AAA, FSA, and FCA relating to land have not been very effective, and quite often programs designed to meet a particular problem have aggravated other problems or, in a few instances, have even created new ones. For Example: the AAA program benefits represented by cash payments were distributed essentially as farm income; hence, owners received somewhat higher benefits than renters and substantially more than croppers. To make sure a program will aid the farmer in his ascent of the tenure ledder

it is necessary that emphasis be placed on programs especially designed for those in the economically less favored groups.

Recommendations: To direct our federal programs of benefits to the less favorable economic groups are:

1. The payments should be shifted, in the main, from a production to a consumption basis, the latter to include capital investments in the human agent.
   a. This change will necessitate less emphasis upon farm land and other material resources... and more upon measures of social welfare.
   b. It is necessary that government payments be distributed increasingly in such a way that they will reach the particular farm families with inadequate incomes and that they will help rather than hinder socially desirable migration.[1]
2. Congress should pass legislation to strengthen the Farmers Home Administration financially, in an effort to aid more tenants in their ascent up the tenure ladder.
   a. Such a program should be administered equitably among all citizens.
   b. Priority should be given tenants who have exhibited good managerial abilities or capabilities.
   c. The schools and extension service should be responsible for aiding prospective land owners in acquiring the necessary managerial skills.

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1. Shultz, T. W. Production and Welfare of Agriculture, p. 161.

d. Persons unable to qualify for this aid should receive training in other vocations.

e. Only people who have the integrity and training should administer this aid.

f. The desired end or goal should be kept in mind at all times.

Sharecropping.

The problems of share cropping revolves about two primary qualities of the plantation system:

1. The cropper's contract fails to provide incentives and opportunities for economic and social advancement of the operator and his family and,

2. Being an employer-employee agreement it fails to promote stability and security of relationships between the two parties.

The economic advancement of the cropper is regulated by the small amount of resources assigned each family. This amounts to 20 to 40 acres, most of which is for cotton, and frequently with very little devoted to food or feed crops.

In some cases the possibility of supplementing his low farm income with outside work is limited because of location and the scarcity of jobs. As the results of these barriers, the cropper's total income does not allow him to accumulate enough capital to begin farming as an independent tenant. In addition, croppers are so closely supervised that they never gain the managerial skills needed by an independent farmer.

Recommendations:

1. Establish legislation in which the two parties are to receive

stipulated shares of the crop.

2. An educational and credit program designed to increase the resources used by each cropper would improve his status. Features should include:
   a. Credit based on farm planning.
   b. Diversified enterprises including feed production and pasture.
   c. Provisions for supplementing farm income by the production of more food crops etc.

3. In a program enlarging the operating resources of the croppers- many will leave agriculture in the process.
   a. Promote better rural education which will inevitably enlarge the capacity of and opportunity for farm youth to enter other occupations.
   b. Efforts should be made to develop more industrial opportunities in the Southwest.

Summary and Conclusions

Positive action is needed through educational programs, legislative enactments, and policies of administrative agencies of federal and state governments. Research in tenure relationships and the impacts of these relationships upon the use of land resources is of increasing importance.

Educational agencies, including state extension services, vocational agricultural education, and the action programs must be conscious of their responsibility to aid in solution of the human problems in agriculture.

It is realized that research recommendations cannot always be put into effect instantly, therefore, answers to many of these problems will be slow in coming. Research and education must have their place and can, in

fact, substitute for legislation in many cases.

Some of the suggestions for improving tenure arrangement that can be put into practice at once are:

1. Encourage the enlargement of farms for adequate income and management opportunity.
2. Encourage more investments in farm improvement and living facilities during inflationary periods instead of heavy indebtedness for land priced too high. Insist on mortgage credit adapted to agricultural needs.
3. Seek information relative to land values based on earning capacity.
4. Use improved lease contract farms. Such a lease should promote conservation, give adequate notice of termination, and arbitrate any difficulties.
5. Make use of resource persons from extension service and state agricultural colleges for answers to tenure questions.

Finally, recommendations for tenure improvements must have an informed support and interest among the farm population, since it is here that the immediate responsibility lies in how to hold and use the land. Because of this responsibility, farm people must realize their obligation to society. On the other hand, the development of a tenure consciousness among rural groups is an ever-growing challenge to both public and private organizations dealing with rural life and its problems.

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