

CHAPTER III

NONAGRICULTURAL PURSUITS OF THE RURAL-FARM MALE POPULATION

Part-time farming, insofar as it connotes a combination of agricultural and industrial pursuits, is dependent upon the employment opportunities in both agriculture and industry. The relative amount of the agricultural activity and of the industrial activity of part-time farmers in any area is dependent upon their individual adjustment to their opportunities. Thus the types of farming suited to the area and the nature of the industries which have developed are factors in determining the extent of part-time farming and the organization of such farms.

The extent and geographic distribution of part-time farming in the United States were discussed in chapter II without reference to the nature of the nonagricultural activities of part-time farmers, nor to the organization of part-time farms. In this chapter are presented data which show, at least roughly, the kinds of work represented by the days spent off the farm at nonagricultural pursuits in the various sections of the country, while in chapter IV the organization of part-time farms will be discussed for a few special areas, mostly individual counties.

Occupations of the rural-farm population in 1930.—No data are available from the 1935 Census as to the nature of the nonagricultural off-farm work, except for a few areas, for which the nonagricultural group as described in chapter II is subclassified and presented in chapter IV. The principal industrial pursuits of the gainfully occupied rural-farm male population, however, were secured in the 1930 Census of Population and are presented in this chapter by divisions and States.

In table 7 is presented the number of gainfully occupied rural-farm male population, 10 years old and over, classified by specified industry groups. Table 8 presents the percentage of all gainfully occupied male population (urban and rural) in each of the specified industries represented by the rural-farm males. Table 9 gives the percent of gainfully occupied rural-farm male population represented in agricultural and non-agricultural industries, respectively, and a percentage distribution of the nonagricultural by specified industries. The data from which these tables were prepared are given in the 1930 Census of Population, volume III, table 10, for the individual States.

Definitions and explanations of the data presented are as follows:

Rural-farm population.—The rural population, as defined by the Census Bureau, is, in general, that residing outside incorporated places having 2,500 inhabitants or more. The rural-farm population as shown in the table comprises all persons living on farms in rural areas without regard to occupation. The classification of farm population at the Census of 1930 was based upon the reply to the inquiry on the population schedule, "Does this family live on a farm?"

Gainful workers, in census usage, includes all persons who usually follow a gainful occupation, although they may not have been employed when the census was taken.

Occupation and industry.—The occupation and industry classifications are as of April 1, 1930, and were based upon the replies to three inquiries on the population schedule as follows: (1) A statement of the "trade, profession, or particular kind of work done" by each gainful worker; (2) a statement of the industry or business in which he (or she) works; and (3) a statement of whether he (or she) is (a) an employer, (b) a wage or salary worker, (c) working on his (or her) own account, or (d) an unpaid family worker. If a gainful worker had two or more occupations, his principal occupation was to be entered on the schedule.

The industry groups specified in the accompanying tables were selected largely on the basis of their importance as measured by (1) the proportion of the rural-farm male population in each industry group, and (2) by the proportion of the total male population in each industry group represented by the rural-farm male population. In several instances closely related industry groups were combined.

In order to show the relative importance of non-agricultural work where it represents the principal occupation of rural-farm males, totals are shown for agricultural and nonagricultural pursuits. Farm operators, foremen, and unpaid family laborers are shown under "Agriculture" separately from wage laborers.

Automobile agencies, garages, filling stations, greasing stations, automobile laundries, and repair shops are so closely allied, particularly in rural areas, that they are shown as one group, although separately they comprise portions of three major industry groups, namely, (1) manufacturing and mechanical industries, (2) transportation, and (3) trade. This new grouping represents one important type of off-farm work. If, however, its component parts were shown under the three listed major industry groups, its relative importance would not be so apparent. The combination is further justified in that the same individual frequently works at two or more of the pursuits included.

Limitations of data.—The data are presented primarily for the purpose of showing the types of nonagricultural work open to part-time farmers in the various parts of the country. The figures shown are for all rural-farm males and not for farm operators only.

Male farm operators, however, comprise nearly two-thirds of the total gainfully occupied rural-farm males. In 1930 the rural-farm population represented 99.1 percent of the total farm population. Of the total farm operators, approximately 96 percent are males. Applying this percentage to 99.1 percent of the number of farms in 1930 gives approximately 5,983,000, which may be assumed to represent roughly the number of farms operated by males living in rural areas. This number comprises about 64 percent of the 9,318,959 gainfully occupied rural-farm males in 1930. Between 1930 and 1934 many readjustments were necessary because of the unsettled economic conditions. The possible effects of such readjustments must be taken into account when using 1930 data.

As a measure of the distribution of part-time work by industry groups, the data are fairly reliable insofar as they relate to part-time farm operators who consider their off-farm work as their principal occupation and their farming as of secondary importance. Since most farm operators, who spend a large proportion of their time off the farm, work at nonagricultural pursuits, the data should be fairly representative of this class of part-time farmers. In fact, a high degree of correlation is shown when either the percentage of all farm operators who worked 100 days or more at off-farm work in 1929, or those who worked 100 days or more at off-farm work in 1934 (table 2), is compared with the percentage of rural-farm males whose principal occupation in 1930 was nonagricultural (table 9).

As a measure of the distribution by industry groups of all part-time farmers who worked off their farms at nonagricultural occupations, the data are of less value since only the principal occupation is shown. Thus the data give no adequate measure of the importance of any of the specified industries as secondary occupations. Rural-farm males whose principal occupation is farming will appear only under the agricultural classifications, although they may work off their farms at nonagricultural occupations. Off-farm work which is highly seasonal in character may require so few days that it would be secondary to farming, and its relative importance, therefore, might not be apparent. If the percentage of all farm operators, who worked off their farms at nonagricultural occupations in 1934 (see table 3 for basic data), is compared with the percentage of rural-farm males whose principal occupation in 1930 was nonagricultural (table 9) very little relationship is evident. This lack of correlation is probably due, in a large measure, to part-time farmers whose principal occupation is farming and whose secondary occupation is nonagricultural. The use of 1930 data with 1934 data, however, probably affects the comparison somewhat.

Another limitation of the data is their presentation on a State basis. Areas presenting similar conditions

as to opportunities for nonagricultural off-farm work are very limited in extent. This is particularly true where the nonagricultural pursuit depends upon some natural resource. If the data were presented for rather homogeneous areas as a unit, the relative importance of industries dependent upon natural resources would be much more evident.

Opportunities for off-farm work at nonagricultural pursuits.—Part-time farming represented by a combination of agricultural and nonagricultural pursuits depends upon the opportunities either for off-farm work at nonagricultural pursuits, or conversely, opportunities for farming by persons whose primary occupation is nonagricultural. The prevalence of part-time farms in any area indicates the existence of such joint opportunities. The maps presented in chapter II indicate that, in general, part-time farms are most numerous, or represent a higher proportion of all farms, around urban centers in highly industrialized areas, or where forestry, fishing, or mining is important.

The significance of forestry, fishing, mining and other pursuits common to rural areas, as sources of off-farm work, is also indicated in table 8. Although for the United States as a whole, the rural-farm male population having nonagricultural pursuits represents only 3.5 percent of all males having nonagricultural pursuits the rural-farm males comprise 16.9 percent of those engaged in forestry and fishing, 10 percent of those in lumber and furniture industries, 7.2 percent of those occupied with the extraction of minerals, 4.6 percent of those in transportation, and 4.2 percent of those whose occupation is included under automobile agencies, garages, and filling stations.

When considered on the basis of the relative number of rural-farm male population engaged in each industry group (table 9), the manufacturing and mechanical industries constitute 36.8 percent of the total having some nonagricultural pursuit as their principal occupation, transportation 16.5 percent, trade 12.3 percent, extraction of minerals 8.2 percent, professional service 6.5 percent, automobile agencies, garages, and filling stations 4.7 percent, and forestry 4.5 percent. Under the manufacturing and mechanical industries, "Building" represents 9.6 percent of the total rural-farm males engaged in nonagricultural industries, and "Lumber and furniture", consisting primarily of saw and planing mills, represent 8.1 percent. Under transportation, "Roads, streets, and sewers" and "Railroads" are of equal importance, each representing 5.5 percent of the total nonagricultural, with Postal Service, street railways, telegraph and telephone, radio, express, and water and air transportation representing the remaining 5.5 percent. Under extraction of minerals "Coal mines" represent 4.2 percent, "Oil and gas wells" 1.8 percent, with "Other mines and quarries" representing the remainder, or 2.2 percent.

Geographic distribution of nonagricultural off-farm work.—In chapter II is presented a dot map showing the number of part-time farm operators in 1935 whose principal occupation on days worked off the farm in 1934 was classified as "nonagricultural." Of the total farm operators reporting days worked off the farm approximately 7 out of each 10 worked at some non-agricultural occupation. In every State nonagricultural work was much more important than agricultural work off the farm. This map shows the distribution of nonagricultural off-farm work within the States and if used in conjunction with the tables presented in this chapter the nature of the off-farm work in the various parts of the country will be more evident. This map and the one showing the percentage of all farm operators working 100 days or more off their farms in 1934 show clearly the dependence of part-time farming on the extractive industries such as forestry, fishing, and mining, and on urban or industrial centers.

Forestry and fishing.—Forestry as an off-farm pursuit is widely distributed, and if saw and planing mills, which are closely associated, are considered with forestry, the timber industry in 1930 accounted for more than 1 out of 10 rural-farm males whose principal occupation was nonagricultural. As a secondary pursuit of part-time farmers whose principal occupation is farming, forestry, and saw and planing mills may be of equal, if not of greater importance, than where they constitute the principal pursuits and farming the secondary pursuit.

The timber resources of the country as a basis for off-farm work are most important in the Pacific Northwest, the Ouachita and Ozark Mountains, the Appalachians, and the Gulf Coast States. In Washington and Oregon more than one-third of the rural-farm males having a nonagricultural occupation were engaged in forestry and lumber industries. In all the Gulf Coast States, except Texas, and in Arkansas, Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia approximately one-fifth or more were engaged in forestry and lumber industries. Other areas in which forestry and lumber industries are relatively important as off-farm work include northern New England, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

Fishing is of importance as off-farm work only in very restricted areas along the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf coasts and the Great Lakes. Of the 6,747 rural-farm males having fishing as their principal occupation, 1,983 or nearly 30 percent were in Virginia.

Extraction of minerals.—Of the 83,012 rural-farm males engaged in the extraction of minerals, 42,006, or over half, are included under coal mines. Of these 8,945, or over one-fifth, were in Pennsylvania, 6,492 were in Kentucky, 5,753 in West Virginia, 3,791 in Ohio, and 3,620 in Illinois. In West Virginia and in Kentucky approximately one out of each five rural-farm males having nonagricultural occupations was engaged

in coal mining, and in Pennsylvania approximately one out of eight.

Work off farms in connection with oil and gas wells represents the principal occupation of 4,630, or about one out of each five rural-farm males in Oklahoma having a nonagricultural occupation. Though much less important relative to other industries, oil and gas wells provide off-farm pursuits for 2,420 in West Virginia, 2,343 in Texas, 1,800 in Pennsylvania, and 1,558 in Ohio.

Other mines and quarries represent the principal pursuit of 22,385 rural-farm males of which 1,781 are in Missouri, 1,509 in Pennsylvania, 1,428 in Michigan, 1,303 in Indiana, 1,112 in Ohio, and 1,095 in Tennessee. Although relatively unimportant as a whole, the industries represented in this group provide off-farm work for a large percentage of the farm population in many of the restricted areas to which these industries are confined.

Many of the industries included under the "Chemical and allied industries" and under "Clay, glass, and stone" are closely associated with the extraction of minerals, being largely dependent upon nearby mineral resources. Such related industries include charcoal and coke works, marble and stone yards, lime, brick, tile and terra-cotta factories, and potteries. Of the 28,229 rural-farm males engaged in chemical, clay, glass, and stone industries, 3,373 were in Ohio, 3,049 in Pennsylvania, and 1,940 in Indiana.

Food and allied industries.—Of the 22,252 rural-farm males included under this group, 2,830 were in "Bakeries", 2,302 in "Slaughter and packing houses", and 17,120 in "Other food and allied industries." In the last group are included butter, cheese, and condensed-milk factories, fruit and vegetable canning, flour and grain mills, and fish canning and packing.

Most of the States in which this group of industries is important are also important in dairying, or in the production of fruits and vegetables for canning. Of the 22,252 rural-farm males included under this group 1,847 were in New York, 1,742 in Wisconsin, and 1,483 in Pennsylvania. California, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Virginia, and Louisiana were next in order.

Automobile factories and metal industries.—Of the 10,693 rural-farm males whose principal occupation was in automobile factories, 4,546 were in Michigan, 1,723 in Indiana, and 1,112 in Ohio. Approximately three-fifths of the 51,942 rural-farm males engaged in the metal industries, mainly iron and steel, were in the East North Central and the Middle Atlantic divisions. In Pennsylvania with 8,089 and Ohio with 8,275, approximately one out of each eight rural-farm males having nonagricultural occupations was in this group.

Textiles.—The textile industries are important relative to other off-farm pursuits in the New England States, particularly in Massachusetts, Rhode Island,

and Connecticut, in the Carolinas and Georgia, and to a lesser extent in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Tennessee, and Alabama.

Other industries.—The industries included under "Transportation", "Trade", "Professional service", "Building", "All other manufacturing and mechanical industries", "Automobile agencies, garages, and filling stations", and "All other nonagricultural" are more generally distributed throughout the country and therefore are not discussed as to their geographic distribution.

Pursuits of part-time farmers on days spent off their farms.—The data presented in this chapter are not entirely adequate for showing the relative importance of all off-farm work by farm operators in 1934, either as to geographic distribution or as to the various types of off-farm work. The inadequacy of the data is largely due to their failure to account for (1) the type of off-farm work of operators, whose principal occupation is farming, and (2) the readjustments which have

resulted between 1930 and 1934 because of unsettled economic conditions. Previously, it was pointed out that a high degree of correlation exists between the percentage of farm operators working 100 days or more off their farms and the percentage of rural-farm males having nonagricultural pursuits as their principal occupation. If it is assumed that farm operators working 100 days or more off their farms had some nonagricultural pursuit as their principal occupation, then approximately half of all farm operators who worked one or more days off their farms at nonagricultural pursuits have farming as their principal pursuit. Although 1,483,719 farm operators in 1934 worked off their farms at occupations classified as nonagricultural, only 760,772 worked 100 days or more off their farms.

In the chapter which follows, for some of the areas selected for special study, a rough classification has been made of the occupations represented by the nonagricultural group.