

CHAPTER IV

ORGANIZATION OF PART-TIME FARMS CONTRASTED WITH OTHER FARMS IN SELECTED AREAS

Foreword.—In chapter II the discussion related in the main to the number and geographic distribution of farm operators who spent some time off their farms for pay or income and in chapter III the discussion related to the nonagricultural pursuits of the rural-farm male population. In the present chapter an analysis is made of the organization of the so-called part-time farms as contrasted with all other farms as a group. In the two foregoing chapters the discussion was based on States or larger areas, though the maps and some of the statistics presented county information. It is obvious that organization factors might be very dissimilar for broad geographic regions because of varied physical, climatic, social, or economic reasons and for that reason the presentation in this chapter is largely confined to a study of county data. Within such small areas there may exist a considerable amount of dispersion in the type of part-time farms especially under the criteria of what constitutes part-time farming as used in this study. Then, too, while physical conditions within a county may be quite uniform there may be quite a variation between farms or even on a particular farm and this, coupled with location with respect to an urban center or to a natural resource, may influence the farm, crop, or livestock organization. In order to ascertain the effect of location on organization, one of the areas selected for study has been subdivided into a metropolitan area and a nonmetropolitan area.

The aim of this analysis is to give a general description of going farms in a given area with some facts about their operators and not to point out whether a part-time farmer should buy or lease his farm, the acreage of land a part-time farmer should have, the kind of crops to grow, the class of livestock to keep, etc., nor to attempt to describe successful or representative farms. Only in a very modest way is a comparison between different areas attempted.

Selection of areas.—The original idea was to select for this study general areas, each consisting of one county or several contiguous counties, where the rural farm folk had as their main opportunity for nonagricultural employment work in one of the major industries such as fishing, forestry, extraction of minerals (coal, oil, and ore), and manufacturing (either general or specialized such as automobile, steel, and textile) and also to select several areas where a large amount of the off-farm work of farm operators was performed on other farms. It was planned to have a rather broad geographic representation in each of these several industries

so that an area in one part of the country could be contrasted with another distant area with the same general type of industry. After some counties had been selected for this ambitious program, and work had gotten under way, the whole program had to be severely curtailed so that no further counties were selected. A somewhat different selection of areas probably would have been made had the original plan been to include only the very limited number of counties now included. The counties chosen, however, represent a rather broad distribution from an industry and from a geographic standpoint.

The areas selected for study are:

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| 1. Massachusetts: Worcester County. | 8. Virginia: Dickenson County. |
| 2. Connecticut: Hartford County. | 9. West Virginia: McDowell County. |
| 3. Pennsylvania: Westmoreland County. | 10. Kentucky: Pike County. |
| 4. Ohio: Columbus ¹ — Metropolitan area. | 11. North Carolina: Rowan County. |
| 5. Minnesota: St. Louis County. | 12. South Carolina: Greenville County. |
| 6. Maryland: Dorchester County. | 13. Oregon: Clackamas County. |
| 7. Maryland: Somerset County. | 14. California: San Bernardino County. |

Each area will be treated separately in the following pages. Dorchester and Somerset Counties, Md., which are on the eastern shore of lower Chesapeake Bay, represent the same broad type of area from the standpoint of opportunity for outside work. Also Dickenson County, Va., McDowell County, W. Va., and Pike County, Ky., though in separate States, are in the same general geographic area as well as the same general type of area for nonagricultural work.

The general plan of presentation.—The order of presentation follows the sequence shown above. Only one departure from a geographic order of the States represented is noted, viz, Pike County, Ky., which is made to follow the two counties in close proximity to it. For each area under study an outline map showing the districts, towns, townships, or similar subdivisions and the location of the principal cities is presented. Preceding the map is a short discussion of certain features of the area and of the farms and farming in the area. This in turn is followed by the tabular material. The complete presentation for an area includes five tables. Since Somerset County, Md., is similar to Dorchester County of the same State, not all of the types of data presented for the latter are given for the former. Like-

¹ Most of Franklin County and parts of Fairfield, Delaware, and Licking Counties.

wise, since McDowell County, W. Va., and Pike County, Ky., are somewhat similar to Dickenson County, Va., not all of the types of data presented for the last are presented for the other two counties. In all other areas where less than five statistical tables are shown, the smaller number is due to a curtailment of the study.

In the general set-up of tables some of the information relates to the operator of the farm, some to the farm itself, and the remainder to the kind of crops grown or the class of livestock kept. Contrasts are first made between two general classes of farm operators—those who did no outside work and those who performed some outside work. The latter group was subclassified according to the principal occupation while employed off their farms and according to the amount of time spent off their farms.

The tabular material is presented by color of operator only for those areas where there is a considerable number of operators who belong to the "colored" classification which includes Negroes, Indians, Chinese, Japanese, and other nonwhite races. Tenure is an important characteristic in all areas so statistics are presented for each area for full owners, part owners, and tenants. For several of the Southern counties where croppers are numerous, information for this subclass of tenants is shown along with that for the composite group "all tenants." Information for manager-operated farms is not shown separately, first because managers are not numerous, and second because managers who worked off their farms were often of unusual manager-types.

A subclassification of nonagricultural work.—For several of the areas the information relating to the operator, to the farm, and to the crop and livestock organization for those farms whose operators had nonagricultural work as their principal outside occupation is subclassified according to a mixed occupational and industrial grouping. This subclassification, resulting more from necessity than choice, is not entirely satisfactory. The following subclassification was used in all areas though separate figures are not given for each subclass in the tables:

- Mining.
- Forestry (excluding sawmills, planing mills, etc.).
- Fishing.
- Laborers (skilled or unskilled).
- Clerical, personal and public service, trade.
- Professional, executive, entrepreneurial, foremen, etc.
- Relief work.
- All other nonagricultural.

The subclass "relief work" shown above may be somewhat incomplete in some of the areas as relief work could not always be identified from the occupation reported. For example, if the occupation was given as laborer and relief laborer was meant but no indication given of it, the occupation was classed as "laborer" and not as "relief work." For that reason the data for "relief work" are grouped with those for "all other nonagricultural" in the tables.

Medians.—Following the usual custom of computing derived figures for checking purposes and as an aid to

the user of the statistics, certain averages and percentages are shown in the tables. Knowing the weakness of arithmetic averages in that they give much weight to large reports, medians (the central item in an array or a position average) were also secured to represent the acreage per farm and the value per farm. These medians are presented alongside the arithmetic averages. Because of the nature of the data to cluster about certain sizes (20, 40, 50, 60, 80 acres, etc.) or certain values (\$1,000, \$1,200, \$1,500, \$2,000, \$2,500, etc.), the medians could not always be computed by short-cut formulae to arrive at approximate results. Therefore, all medians shown in the tables are actual medians, i. e., an actual distribution of the reports was made and the central value, whether expressed as total acres in the farm or as total value of the farm, was ascertained. When an even number of reports was included in an array, the median was located midway between the two middle values (acres in the farm or value of the farm) and was always expressed as a whole number. When the two middle values were identical, the median, obviously, could be represented by either. Hereafter, when the word average without a qualifying adjective is used, the arithmetic average is meant.

Other terms needing clarification.—A facsimile of the 1935 Farm Census schedule and of the instructions contained on the reverse side of the schedule are shown in the closing pages of this report. A glance at these may be of value in ascertaining how the data contained in the following tables were obtained and what they represent. A few of the terms may need further explanation.

Occupied dwellings comprise all those located on farms occupied either by the farm operators and members of their families or occupied by any other persons irrespective of whether these persons were actually engaged in the operation of the farms.

Farm population includes all persons living on farms, whether they had anything to do with the operation of the farms or not, except that inmates of an institution were not included even though they performed some work on the farm. Persons living on farms which were either partly or wholly located in towns or cities were included as farm population. The number of farms reporting farm population, though not given as such in the tables, is identical with the number of farms reporting occupied dwellings.

Particular attention is invited to the schedule inquiries on farm labor and to the instructions relating thereto. Since this labor was supposed to have been employed during the first week in January, the numbers reporting may not be typical of labor requirements in any of the areas.

Farm operators by years on farm is an abbreviated term meaning the number who had been operating their present farms a given number of years and not how long they had lived thereon or on any farm.

Comparison of areas.—Certain salient points, several of which are worthy of mention, stand out from an analysis of the data on the following pages for these 14 general areas. No attempt is made to contrast the areas in all particulars.

The part-time farms in each area were smaller both from the standpoint of average and median size than the non-part-time farms. Also, in every area the median size of farms fell below the arithmetic average size for each group of farms. The same general picture prevails for average value per farm and median value of farms. The one exception was that the median value of part-time farms in Pike County, Kentucky, was identical with that for the non-part-time farms. It thus appears that many operators of small farms are retaining connection with the soil while employed at nonagricultural work.

Having smaller farms, it might be expected that the acre values of the part-time farms would be higher because on the smaller farms the value of the buildings tends to represent a higher proportion of the total farm value. In three of the areas, namely, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, St. Louis County, Minnesota, and Clackamas County, Oregon, this situation was reversed.

With two exceptions, namely, Dorchester County, Maryland, and McDowell County, West Virginia, families on farms of part-time farmers were larger than those on farms of non-part-time farmers. In Dorchester County, families on farms of white part-time and non-part-time operators had the usual relationship but was more than offset by a reverse situation for colored farm operators. The average size of families living on part-time farms ranged from 3.4 persons in San Bernardino County, California, to 5.7 persons in Dickenson County, Virginia.

A higher proportion of the part-time farms in all areas reported a back-to-the-land movement than was true for the non-part-time farms, and the percentage of persons on part-time farms who had moved to such farms from nonfarm homes was also higher in each case than for the non-part-time farms. One-third of the part-time farms in Clackamas County, Oregon, reported one or more persons living thereon had moved to such farms from nonfarm places during the preceding 5-year period while only 4 percent of this type of farms in Somerset County, Maryland, reported a similar migration.

A higher proportion of operators of part-time farms had been operating their farms less than 5 years than for the other group of farms. The highest proportion of the part-time operators in any area who had been on their farms less than 5 years was 63 percent reported for Greenville County, South Carolina, and the lowest proportion for this length of tenure was 25 percent recorded for Hartford County, Connecticut.

A crop or crops of some nature were harvested in 1934 on most of the part-time farms in all areas for which such data were tabulated. The lowest percentage of the farms reporting harvested acreage was 86 percent for the metropolitan area around Columbus, Ohio, and the percentage ran as high as 98 percent in two of the areas. The similar percentages for the non-part-time farms in the respective areas always equaled or exceeded those for the part-time farms. An analysis of the crops grown in each of the separate areas reveals that generally fewer of the part-time farms than of the non-part-time farms produced any one of the crops widely grown in that area though the proportions of the total crop acreage in the two general types of farms represented by any particular crop were often of about equal magnitude. This may have resulted in part from a different cropping practice on small farms from that on large farms, it being remembered that part-time farms were somewhat smaller in average size. If a small farm in Ohio had, for example, 10 acres of crop land, the whole of the 10 acres might be used for corn one year, wheat another, and hay the following year, whereas larger farms in the same area might have their crop acreage divided in any proportion among the three crops for any year. The effect of such cropping practice on small farms might, in addition to lowering the percentage of farms reporting a particular crop in a particular year, result in approximately the same proportion of all the crop land being used for any particular crop in any one year as on the larger farms. Live-stock practices might be affected similarly to cropping practices as between small and large farms or between part-time and non-part-time farms. For the latter two types of farms the proportions of farms reporting were more nearly alike for the items produced for home consumption, namely, farm gardens, cows kept for milk production, and chickens on hand. Thus, it may be seen that production of a part of the family living is important on the part-time farms as well as on the non-part-time farms.

WORCESTER COUNTY, MASS.

Worcester County is located in the central part of Massachusetts and extends entirely across the State from north to south. It is the largest county in Massachusetts with an approximate land area of 995,840 acres, or about 1,556 square miles.

This county in 1930 had a population of 491,242 persons of which about one-fifth (19.3 percent) was classed as rural. Of the rural, 19.5 percent was classed as rural-farm and 80.5 as rural-nonfarm. Worcester City with a population of 195,311 persons was the largest city in the county, followed by Fitchburg with 40,692 persons. Scattered over the county are a number of smaller industrial towns. Of the 148,387 males in the county 10 years old and over in gainful occupations, the number employed in nonagricultural pursuits was 140,021 distributed as follows:

| | Number | Percent |
|--|----------------|--------------|
| Nonagricultural..... | 140,021 | 100.0 |
| Manufacturing and mechanical industries..... | 86,867 | 62.0 |
| Building..... | 10,267 | 7.3 |
| Paper and allied industries..... | 3,161 | 2.2 |
| Metal..... | 28,363 | 20.3 |
| Shoes and leather..... | 4,867 | 3.5 |
| Textile..... | 15,261 | 10.9 |
| Other manufacturing and mechanical..... | 24,948 | 17.8 |
| Transportation..... | 11,520 | 8.2 |
| Trade..... | 20,579 | 14.7 |
| Public service..... | 3,397 | 2.4 |
| Professional service..... | 7,325 | 5.2 |
| Domestic and personal service..... | 5,921 | 4.2 |
| All other and industry not specified..... | 4,412 | 3.2 |

From the above it appears that, unless radical changes have occurred in this territory since 1930, a variety of industries present some opportunity for outside employment to almost any person residing on a tract of land qualifying as a farm if his business organization permits. It may be just as proper to say that, with industry being somewhat scattered, a worker at a nonagricultural pursuit could keep his job and live in the country and he or his family produce a part of the family living if he so desired. In such a thickly populated county as this, living in the country does not mean remoteness from urban centers. Thus, part-time farms in this area are quite generally interspersed with those that do not qualify as such.

In 1935, the Federal Farm Census enumerated 6,464 farms containing 469,126 acres, which represented 47.1 percent of the entire land area of the county. These farms averaged about 73 acres in size, though the median size was only 45 acres. Only eight of the operators were classed as "colored" and an unusually high proportion (89.9 percent) of the operators owned their farms. An additional 4 percent owned a portion of their farms.

Three of every eight (37.9 percent) of the operators performed off-farm work in 1934. These part-time farmers had smaller and lower valued farms than had the remaining group of farms. Thus, the average size for the former group was 52 acres, the median size 36 acres, the average value about \$4,600, and the median

value \$3,500 as compared with 85 acres, 57 acres, about \$6,600, and \$4,200 for the non-part-time farmers.

Farms, whose operators had off-farm work, had larger families residing on them than was true for the other group of farms, the average number of persons per occupied dwelling being 4.9 and 4.3 respectively. Twenty-one percent of the part-time farmers reported 14 percent of the population on their farms as having moved back to the land during the previous 5 years, while 17 percent of the non-part-time group reported 10 percent of the population on their farms as having so moved. Twenty-seven percent of the part-time group of operators had been on their farms less than 5 years and 49 percent less than 10 years, as compared with corresponding percentages of 17 and 33 for the non-part-time group.

Part-time farming in this county is largely a combination of agriculture supplementing industry if the 73.6 percent of the part-time farmers employed at outside work 100 days and over is indicative that farming is a secondary source of income. This is also supported by the fact that only a very minor proportion of the off-farm work was performed on another farm. There was an inverse relationship between the time spent off the farm and the average or median size of farm.

An identical proportion of the land in the part-time farms and in the non-part-time farms was in harvested crops, the proportion being almost exactly one-fourth. There was a close relationship in the percentage of the farms in the two groups reporting the individual crops except where the acreage of a particular crop did not form a high proportion of the total harvested acreage. Where differences appeared either in the percentage of farms reporting a crop or in the percentage of farms keeping a certain class of livestock, the higher percentages were for the non-part-time farms with the exception of farms reporting family living from home gardens. The same proportion of the farms in the two groups reported hogs and chickens. Fewer animals, on an average, were kept on part-time farms than on non-part-time farms. Relatively fewer farms in the 100 days and over subgroup of part-time farmers raised the individual kinds of crops or kept the various classes of animals than was true of the other two time groups.

The data for the nonagricultural group have been subclassified into several broad occupational classes and are presented in tables 12, 13, and 14. "Laborers" represented about 62 percent of the entire group. Caution is reiterated that the total for "laborers" includes both skilled and unskilled types. Approximately equal numbers are shown for "clerical" and "professional", though their combined total is slightly under one-half of the "laborers" group. No further discussion is given relative to these tables, though the lack of such does not indicate that these data are not assumed to be important.