

## SOMERSET COUNTY, MD.

Somerset County is in the extreme southern part of Maryland and, similar to Dorchester County, has the Chesapeake Bay as its western boundary. These two counties, as pointed out in the discussion relating to Dorchester, were selected for study as representing tidewater areas in which there were opportunities for employment in the fishing industry. However, the data for Somerset are not given in the same detail as for Dorchester.

Somerset County has an approximate land area of 211,840 acres, or 331 square miles, of which 55.2 percent in 1935 was represented by land in farms. In 1930 it had 23,382 inhabitants, of which 83.5 percent were classed as rural population. Of the rural, only 38.3 percent was classed as rural-farm. Crisfield was the only incorporated place of more than 2,500 inhabitants and its population was 3,850 persons. Males 10 years and over engaged in gainful occupations numbered 7,371, of which 4,100 were employed in nonagricultural pursuits distributed as follows:

	Num- ber	Per- cent
<b>Nonagricultural</b> .....	<b>4, 100</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Forestry and fishing (forestry—13).....	1, 156	28.2
Manufacturing and mechanical industries.....	1, 213	29.6
Building.....	325	7.9
Food and allied.....	337	8.2
Lumber and furniture.....	161	3.9
Other manufacturing and mechanical.....	390	9.5
Transportation.....	458	11.2
Trade.....	843	20.6
Professional service.....	155	3.8
Domestic and personal service.....	134	3.3
All other and industry not specified.....	141	3.4

As may be seen, a higher relative proportion of the gainfully employed were engaged in fishing than was true for Dorchester.

One-third of the 1935 total of land in farms in Somerset County (33.4 percent) was used for the production of crops in the previous year. The prevailing types of agriculture were the growing of grains, hays, and strawberries, Irish potatoes, and other truck crops. Only 7.5 percent of the crop acreage was used for the growing of wheat as compared with 27.3 percent for Dorchester County. However, a much higher proportion of the crop land in Somerset County was used for the production of Irish potatoes and strawberries than was true for Dorchester.

Of the 1,653 farms enumerated in 1935, about three out of every eight (37.6 percent) were in control of operators who had income from off-farm work. On an average, the part-time group of operators had considerably smaller farms which were of lower value per farm but of higher value per acre than had the non-part-time group. Thus, the average size and average values for the part-time group were 38 acres, \$1,847 per farm, and \$49 per acre as compared with 91 acres, \$3,669 per farm,

and \$40 per acre for the non-part-time group. The median size and median value of farms for the former group were 12 acres and \$1,000 as compared with 60 acres and \$2,500 for the latter group.

Farm families for the part-time group averaged 4.3 persons as compared with 3.9 persons for the non-part-time group. No conclusions can be drawn by contrasting these two major groups as to the number of persons who had moved to farms from nonfarm residences as only 54 farms in all reported such migration with but 142 persons involved. No particular differences seem to exist in the two major groups as to the length of time the operators had been on their farms.

Nearly one-fourth of all operators, or 23.7 percent, and more than three-fifths, or 63 percent, of those with additional income from their personal services were employed 100 days or more off their farms. Two-thirds of the part-time farmers whose outside occupations were classed as nonagricultural spent 100 days or more off their farms in gainful work as compared with only 45 percent of those with agricultural outside occupations so that the average amount of time for the nonagricultural group was 149 days as compared with 109 days for the agricultural group.

Slightly less than 3 out of every 10 white operators and slightly more than 6 out of every 10 colored operators had outside employment. It is interesting to note that very few of the white operators were engaged in agricultural work while employed off their farms, while upward of one-half of the colored operators were so engaged. The median size of the farms of white part-time farmers was 25 acres and of colored part-time farmers was 8 acres. The former group had a median value of \$1,500 and an average value per acre of \$49 and the latter a median value of \$600 and an average value per acre of \$47. The average size of family on farms of white part-time farmers was 4.1 persons and on farms of colored part-time farmers was 4.8 persons.

Tenure also is an important factor in the study of part-time farming in this county. Although nearly the same percentage of all full owners (37.4 percent) and of all tenants (34.7 percent) were engaged in off-farm work, the median size of the farms of the full-owner group was but 10 acres as compared with 25 acres for the tenant group. The median value for the farms of the full owners was \$1,000 and the average value per acre was \$52 as contrasted with \$1,250 and \$37 for tenant farms. Families on farms of the former averaged 4.2 persons as compared with 4.6 for the latter. Also, 15 percent of the operators of the former group had been on their farms less than 5 years as compared with 71 percent of the latter. Tenure data would be still more significant if they were available for each of the two color groups.

SOMERSET CO., MARYLAND

