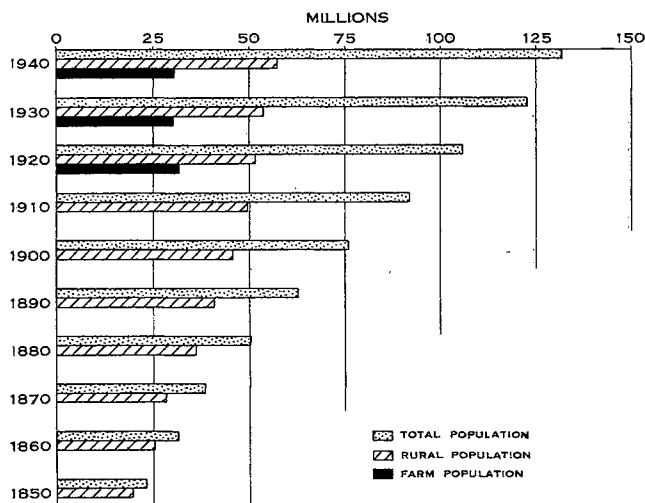


to be appreciably greater than on January 1, due to advancement of the farm season. More detailed definitions and a discussion of the comparability of the data for the various census years may be found in the 1940 Population Reports.

Trends in the rural population of the United States since 1850 and in the farm population since 1920, and their relation to the total population are shown graphically in the accompanying chart. These data are also shown in table 1. Note that although the rural population has increased steadily, its growth has not been nearly as rapid as that of the total population. In 1850 about 85 percent of the population was rural and only 15 percent urban. By 1920 less than half of the population lived in rural areas and by 1930 the proportion had further decreased until it was slightly less than 44 percent. The 1940 Census shows that, although the general trend continued, the rural population represented only a slightly smaller proportion of the total population than in 1930.

**TOTAL, RURAL, AND FARM POPULATION
IN THE UNITED STATES: 1850-1940**



Farm population, for which figures were first secured in the 1920 Census, decreased in the following decade. The returns of the 1935 Census of Agriculture showed a rather pronounced increase in the farm population. This "back-to-the-farm" movement was accompanied by a check of the flow of farm folk to industry and was generally attributed to the depression years in the early "thirties." By 1940 the movement was again toward the cities and the farm population had decreased to approximately the 1930 level. In 1940 less than 1 in 4 of the total population lived on farms. Of the rural population a few more than one-half lived on farms. In 1920 less than 1 in 3 of the total population lived on farms and these constituted about three-fifths of all persons living in rural areas.

Changes in farm population by divisions and States since 1930 are shown in table 8 and in the total population since 1850 in table 18. Except for the Great Plains area, the 1935 Census indicated a rather general increase in the farm population over that of 1930, particularly around industrial centers, mining sections, and in areas often designated as "Subsistence farming." Decreases occurred in much of the Great Plains area. Continued drought conditions resulted in a still further decline in the farm population of that area between 1935 and 1940, the last census showing total decreases for the decade ranging up to 21.1 percent for South Dakota. The 1940 Census shows that for most other areas much of the gain made in the earlier part of the decade had been offset by losses in the latter part of the decade.

In table 2 are presented some very significant United States averages relating to population and farm data. Although the averages relating to the total population tend to serve as rough measures of the per capita agricultural requirements at

the various census years they should be used with considerable caution since they do not take into account either exports or imports. The ratios based on the farm population give rough measures of the per capita agricultural production. In general, farm practices are becoming more efficient, so that fewer and still fewer farm workers are required. The rather short series for which the numbers of farm population are available coupled with the "back-to-the-farm" movement in the fore part of the past decade, and rather pronounced changes in land utilization, tend, however, to obscure this general trend. The trend is shown to better advantage in table 1 by the decreasing proportions of the total population represented by rural population.

Approximate land area of the United States.—The land area in the United States was 1,905,361,920 acres in 1940 and is defined to include dry land and land temporarily or partially covered by water, such as marshland, swamps, and river flood plains; streams, sloughs, estuaries, and canals less than one-eighth of a statute mile in width; and lakes, reservoirs, and ponds having less than 40 acres of area. Land areas in the various States are shown in table 9. The approximate land areas reported for 1940 resulted from a complete remeasurement of the United States and its individual States and, consequently, are at variance with those shown for earlier years. Figures for earlier years are given in table 3 for the United States and in volume I for the individual States.

These entirely new determinations represent the first basic remeasurement of the United States since the work of Henry Gannett, prepared for the Tenth Decennial Census of 1880. The measurements, involving geodetic values and planimeter readings, were based on U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey aeronautical charts. County areas, shown in the First Series of State Bulletins of the 1940 Census of Agriculture Reports, and in volume I, were measured from United States Geological Survey and Post Office Department State maps and adjusted to the State totals. For a more complete description of the methods used and for areas by States, counties, minor civil divisions, and cities, refer to the Census Report entitled "Areas of the United States."

The apparent increase of 2,145,280 acres in the area of the United States since 1935 is largely due to the more accurate maps used in the redetermination of areas, showing a rather general decrease in inland water areas. Variations in the land areas of the several States may be ascribed to increases or decreases in water area, map improvements involving longitudinal and latitudinal position, or to the more accurate placement of boundaries. Changes in the total area of the United States and of the individual States from 1850 to 1935 represent corrections or adjustments in the figures originally determined by Henry Gannett and were necessitated by boundary changes, drainage of lakes and swamps, building of reservoirs, and the like. The particular changes during this period and their principal causes are given in footnote 1 of table 3.

Farms.—The definition of a farm as used for the 1940 Census was carried on the schedule and read as follows:

A farm, for census purposes, is all the land on which some agricultural operations are performed by one person, either by his own labor alone or with the assistance of members of his household, or hired employees. The land operated by a partnership is likewise considered a farm. A 'farm' may consist of a single tract of land, or a number of separate tracts, and the several tracts may be held under different tenures, as when one tract is owned by the farmer and another tract is rented by him. When a landowner has one or more tenants, renters, croppers, or managers, the land operated by each is considered a farm. Thus, on a plantation the land operated by each cropper, renter, or tenant should be reported as a separate farm, and the land operated by the owner or manager by means of wage hands should likewise be reported as a separate farm.

Include dry-lot or barn dairies, nurseries, greenhouses, hatcheries, fur farms, mushroom cellars, apiaries, cranberry bogs, etc.

Exclude 'fish farms,' fish hatcheries, 'oyster farms,' and 'frog farms.'

Do not report as a farm any tract of land of less than 3 acres, unless its agricultural products in 1939 were valued at \$250 or more.

In the enumerators' handbook the following instruction was given:

The definition of a farm found on the face of the schedule must be carefully studied by the enumerator. Note that for tracts of land of 3 acres or more the \$250 limitation for value of agricultural prod-