



FIGURE 5.—Pack of slotted cards before beginning exploratory studies of relationships.

It will be realized, of course, that all indicated relationships between items are not, of necessity, cause and effect relationships. Changes in some items may be the effect of a causal factor not immediately evident. Especially is this likely to be true when only a limited number of characteristics are coded on the edge of the card as is the case in these examples. It is entirely possible that two or more characteristics carried on a limited card may vary in the same way and still not be influenced by changes in each other. This, however, does not detract in the least from the value of visual exploration. As nearly as possible, all characteristics should be coded and slotted and any additional characteristics suspected of having influence, but concerning which information is not available, should be kept in mind during the entire progress of the study.

Since relationships are indicated by the frequency of coinciding slots, we can speak of the relative frequencies of the slots for each coded characteristic as the pattern of characteristics for a group of farms. Hence, each time the cards are sorted, a new group is brought into existence with an accompanying new pattern of characteristics.

Before proceeding further, it is important that the reader have clearly in mind that the cards herein used for illustrative purposes are a portion of the cards used in a special study and do not represent any particular group of farms. Hence, relationships appearing in this and subsequent pictures cannot be considered as being representative of farms generally or specifically. On the other hand, the cards were not selected to show outstanding characteristics of any kind. They are strictly "run of the mill" cards and any similar group of cards will work exactly the same way.