

The number of cards which can be conveniently handled in any given project is limited. Probably 10,000 cards is nearing the maximum for most jobs unless the work divides itself early in the study. For exploratory work which does not include too much detail a number less than one-half this large will probably be adequate. In general, the greater the number of characteristics involved, the greater will be the number of cards required. As the detail increases the number of ramifications, the ultimate groups will become too small for stability of results if too few cards are used.

For small jobs in which the number of reports is only a few hundred or, in some cases, a few thousand, the entire study may be made from the cards without additional punching and machine tabulation. Pick-ups may be made of the transcribed data directly from the cards by means of adding machines.

For larger jobs in which the number of reports is so large as to make the cost of hand tabulations too high, a sample of the reports may be taken and explorations made by means of visual analysis. Since the greatest value of the card lies in its use for visual analysis, most of the exploration is made without tabulations of any kind and without even counting the cards. A draftsman's divider is usually all that is necessary for quickly measuring the lengths of grooves, when it is desirable to record them for future reference. Rarely will it become necessary in an exploratory study to record other than

relative lengths of grooves, at least in the early stages. Occasionally it will be desirable to count the cards showing certain characteristics and record the counts.

Not the least of the advantages of the visual-analysis cards is the fact that all of the operations can be performed by the person most interested in the work or responsible for the planning and direction of the work. When the final plans have been completed, the researcher knows from his own personal study of the cards what the results will be and that complete tabulations will furnish the statistical proof of his conclusions.

Knowing the relationship between the various characteristics of farms is a valuable aid in much of the work of the Agriculture Division of the Bureau of the Census. Presentation of results is being constantly improved through studies of relevancy, making the published data more valuable and more adaptable to the needs of the users of such data. In this connection, one of the principal advantages is the fact that after the cards have been prepared and tabulations originally planned have been completed, subsequent tabulations suggested by results of the originals can be made at comparatively low cost. The cards are drawn up in such manner that each card carries all of the information concerning a particular farm and/or family, and may be used in every conceivable combination or separation without further preparation.

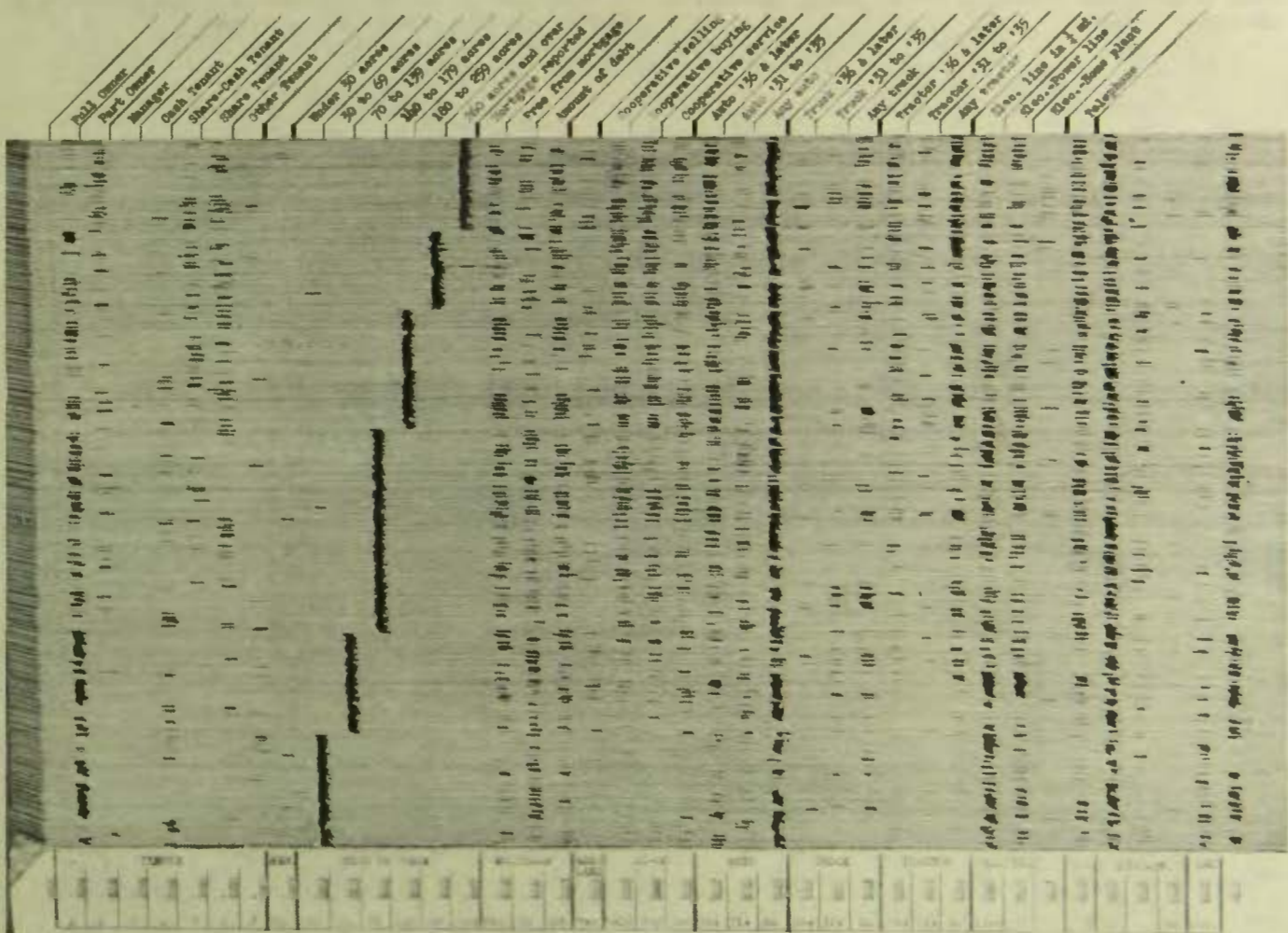


FIGURE 5.—Cards sorted to show the relationships existing between size of farm and selected characteristics.