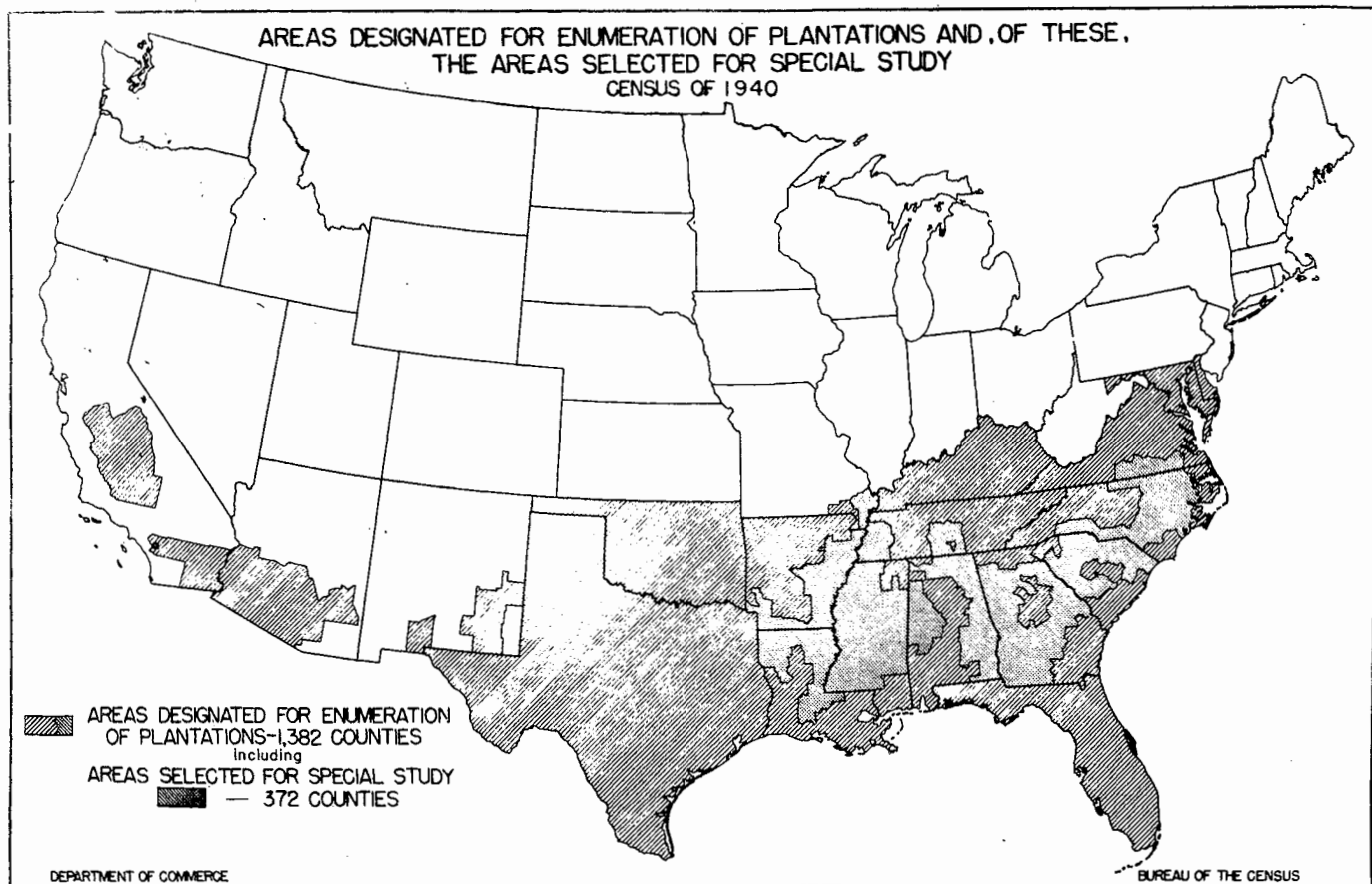


## PLANTATIONS



In the 1940 Census, as in previous censuses of agriculture, each enumerator made a personal canvass of the farms in his district. The enumerator who prepared the Plantation Schedule was usually required to prepare the Farm and Ranch Schedules. When the returns were received in Washington, the two types of schedules were checked, one with the other, as a part of the editing process. Information common to the two schedules was compared. Corrections for duplications and omissions were made on both sets of schedules. Since the Plantation Schedule was to be prepared in consultation with the plantation owner or operator and the Farm and Ranch Schedule was to be prepared from information furnished by the farm operator, slight discrepancies were expected. The editing was limited to such changes as were necessary to bring the corresponding schedules within reasonable agreement. In this checking, it was found that, in many instances, a Plantation Schedule had not been prepared when it was apparent that one was required. Additional Plantation Schedules were prepared in the office when a given landlord had five or more farms, at least one of which was operated by a cropper. One of the five or more farms was often the "home farm" which was operated by the landlord or was operated for him by a hired manager. Since the Plantation Schedule called for information which was not included on the Farm and Ranch Schedule, the office-constructed schedules for plantations necessarily lack some of the data which would have been secured if the schedule had been prepared in an interview with the plantation operator.

Part of this procedure was delayed until more pressing activities relating to publication of 1940 data for farms was completed. Work on this special report was further delayed during the war because of the shortage of manpower and the necessity of preparing for and taking the 1945 Census of Agriculture. However, the data are now being made available because of the general interest in plantations and plantation organization and because of possible usefulness of the data as a basis for planning for the 1950 Census of Agriculture.

## COMPARATIVE STATISTICS

Following the Civil War, the figures from census to census for the number of farms in the South reflected the breakdown of large plantation holdings. During this period, prior to 1920, the number of farms showed very substantial increases in each ten-year period. The average size of farm decreased from 335.4 acres in 1860 to 103.5 acres in 1925. In 1880, the first census year for which tenure figures are available, 36.2 percent of the farms in the South were operated by tenants. By 1925, over one-half of the farms were operated by tenants with nearly two-fifths of these being croppers. In 1930, the proportion of tenancy in the South reached a high of 55.5 percent with more than three-sevenths of all tenants represented by croppers. (See data given in table 1.)

No figures for plantations as operating units are available prior to 1910. In that year, tabulations of the information secured on the Plantation Schedule were made for 325 selected counties. The statistics were limited to "tenant plantations"; plantations operated by wage hands were treated as any other large farms. A tenant plantation was defined as "a continuous tract of land of considerable area under the general supervision or control of a single individual or firm, all or a part of such tract being divided into at least five smaller tracts which are leased to tenants."

To provide figures for 1940 reasonably comparable with those for 1910, State totals are shown in table 2 representing only the counties included in the 1910 report. In comparing the 1940 figures with those for 1910, it should be kept in mind that the 1940 definition was more inclusive than that used in 1910. In 1940, it was necessary that there be on the plantation only one cropper or tenant provided there were at least five total families regularly employed. The landlord's family could be included as one of the five. In that census, it was not required that there be a home farm; neither was it necessary that the tracts comprising a plantation be contiguous.