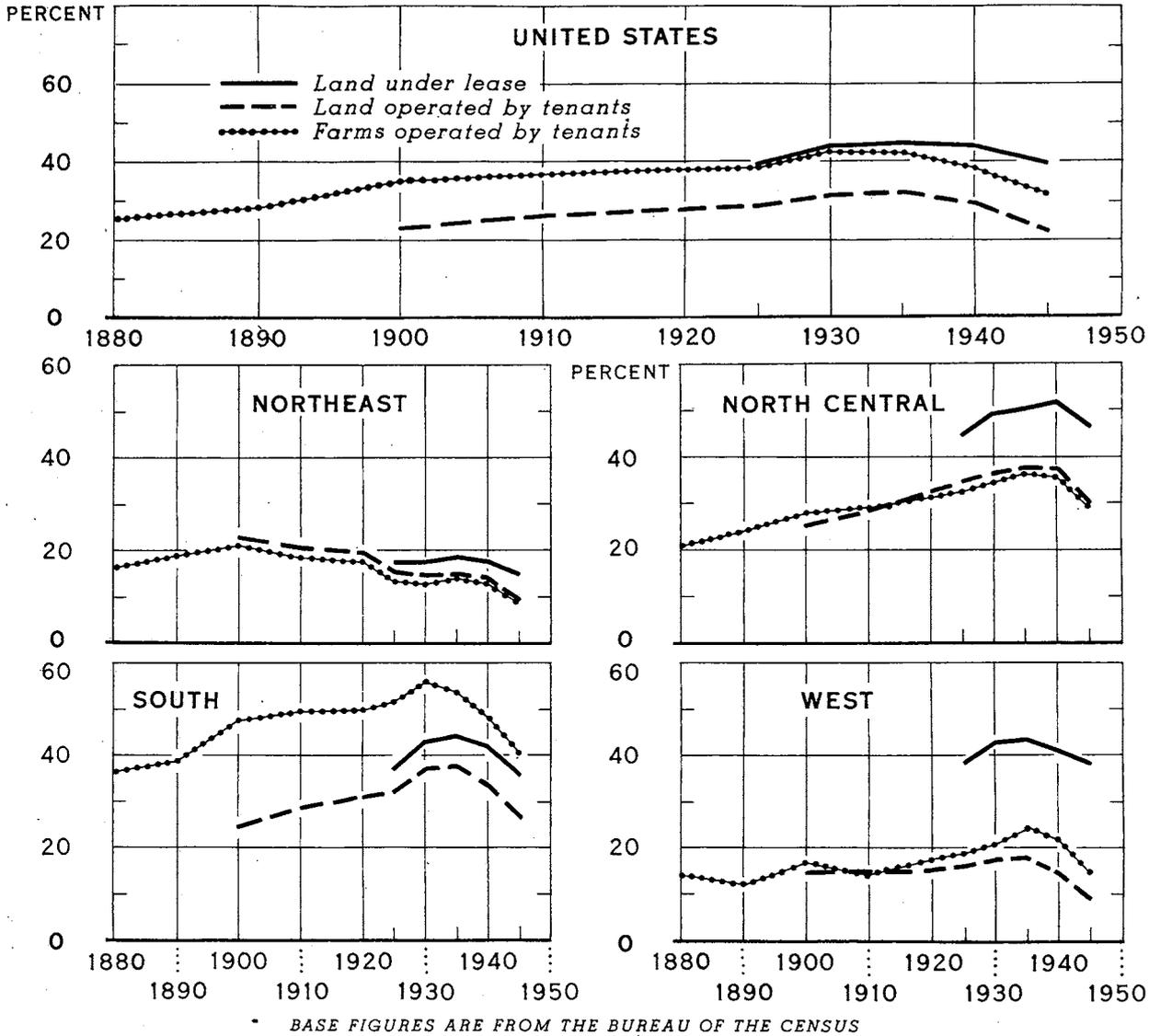


PERCENT OF FARMS AND FARM LAND OPERATED BY TENANTS, AND TOTAL FARM LAND UNDER LEASE, FOR THE UNITED STATES AND REGIONS, 1880-1945



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NEG. 46368 BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

The percentage of the Nation's farms operated by tenants, as well as the absolute number of such farms, was lower in 1945 than at any time since 1890. In 1945, the percentage was 31.7 which represented a considerable decline from 42.4, the high point registered in 1930. Before 1930, the tenancy ratio increased uninterruptedly from 1880, the first date for which tenure data were gathered by the Census Bureau. There was a natural increase in tenancy following a period of homestead entry. Then many homesteads proved to be uneconomical as operating units, in some cases for grain producing and in others for grazing. The consolidation of these relatively small ownership tracts and the expansion in the number of croppers in the tobacco and cotton areas of the South contributed materially to the increases in the proportion of tenancy until the depression of the 1930's. The more prosperous war years have brought about a sharp decline in tenancy for the country as a whole. Although opportunities for off-farm work took many tenants from the land, many owner operators and some tenants and nonfarm people bought farm lands to operate. Increased

mechanization has allowed many farmers to operate additional acreages which they have either bought or rented. This has meant a faster decline in the percentage of tenancy than in the percentage of land under lease.

Farm land under lease comprises not only the land operated by tenants but also the rented portion of both part-owner and manager-operated farms. Data on the tenure of the land in managed farms were first obtained by the Census in 1945, hence the data are slightly more inclusive for that year than for earlier years. Disregarding this qualification, the percentage of total farm land under lease was approximately the same in 1945 as in 1925, but was considerably below the percentage in 1935.

The trend in the percentage of rented farms and rented farm land varied markedly among the regions. The highest percentage of tenancy in the Northeast occurred in 1900, in the South in 1930, and in the North Central Region and in the West in 1935. Trends in the proportion of farm land operated by tenants and of land under lease have generally followed the same pattern as the proportion of farms operated by tenants in each region.