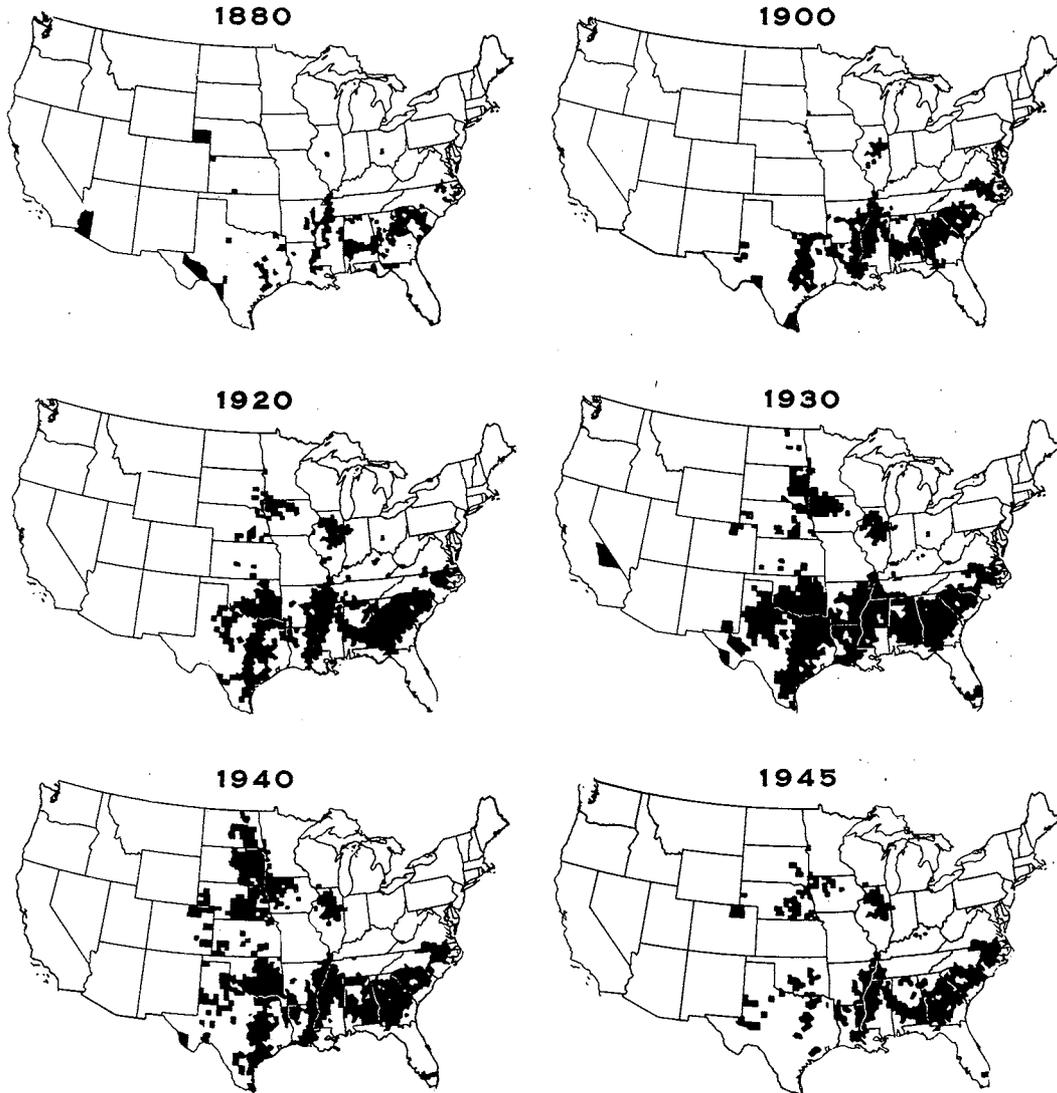


COUNTIES IN WHICH AT LEAST HALF THE FARMS WERE OPERATED BY TENANTS, 1880, 1900, 1920, 1930, 1940, AND 1945



BASE FIGURES ARE FROM THE BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NEG. 46372 BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

The number of counties in which at least one-half of the farms were operated by tenants increased steadily from 1880 to 1935 but has since declined rapidly. There were 180 such counties in 1880, 382 in 1900, 588 in 1920, 821 in 1930, 891 in 1935, 750 in 1940, and only 372 in 1945. Before 1900, these counties were located principally in the plantation areas. By that date, the number of these counties had expanded considerably in the South and included some counties in central Illinois. From 1900 to 1920, there was a further expansion in the South, particularly in Georgia, Oklahoma, and Texas, and in north central Illinois and northwestern Iowa. The expansion continued rapidly for the next decade in the same areas. The area in Iowa had expanded westward into Nebraska and northward into South Dakota.

In 1940, the number of counties with a majority of their farms tenant-operated was below the 1930 total. This decline occurred mostly in the western Cotton Belt where farmers were using more mechanical equipment and where some were shifting to cattle raising. In this area, many operators of small farms, mostly tenants, left the farm. However, tenancy continued to

expand in the northern Great Plains where thousands of owners were losing their farms through voluntary surrender of title or through foreclosure. The new owners were often State credit agencies, life insurance companies, and other corporations.

The sharp decline in tenancy during World War II was most pronounced in the States along the 100th meridian, in Iowa, and, to a lesser extent, in the eastern Cotton Belt. In the northern States some newcomers, in this period of favorable farm prices, were becoming farm operators through purchase, while many owner and tenant operators were enlarging their holdings, by either purchasing or renting, as former operators went into other employment. In the cotton-producing areas of the South, many croppers and other classes of tenants and wage laborers left the land for other work. Throughout the South, owner operators tended to increase, especially around centers of population. By 1945, the counties with at least one-half of their farms operated by tenants were largely in those parts of the South where cotton and tobacco share croppers were maintained, and in the cash-grain-producing areas of Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska.