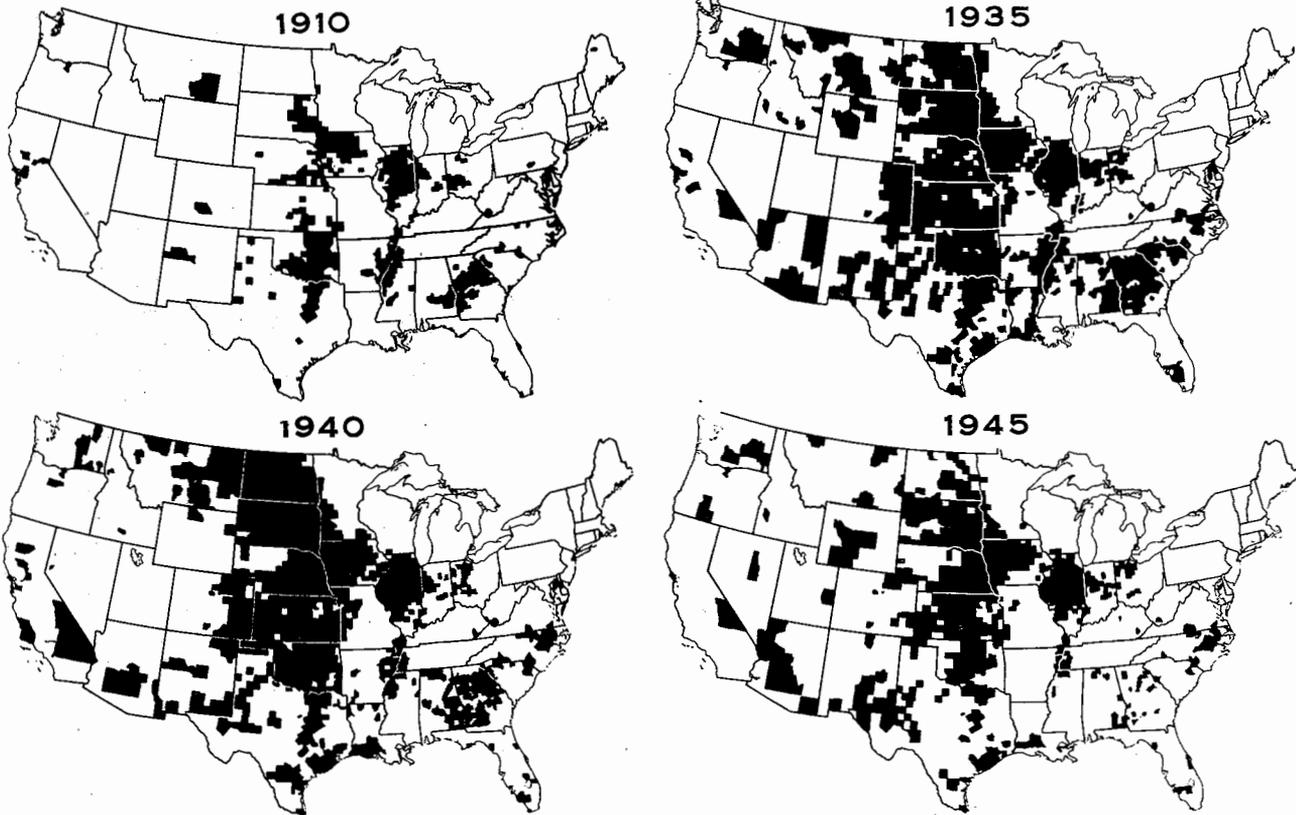


## COUNTIES IN WHICH AT LEAST HALF OF THE LAND IN FARMS WAS UNDER LEASE TO THE OPERATOR, 1910, 1935, 1940, AND 1945



BASE FIGURES ARE FROM THE BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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The rapid increase in farm tenancy in the early years of this century and the decrease in recent years are further portrayed by the counties having at least one-half of the farm land under lease to the operator. Land under lease, as represented on the above maps, includes that operated by tenants, the rented land operated by part owners, and, in 1945, the land rented by the employer for farms operated by managers. In 1910, there were only 403 counties, in 6 widely scattered areas, in which at least one-half of the farm land was rented. Three of these areas were in the Corn Belt; two were wholly in the Cotton Belt; and one was largely in the Cotton Belt, but extended into the wheat-producing counties of Oklahoma and Kansas. Most of the counties were in the Corn Belt States of Illinois, Iowa, South Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, and the Cotton Belt States of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. Only 12 scattered counties were in the West and none in New England, Michigan, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Florida, or Louisiana.

The number of counties with at least one-half of the farm land operated under lease increased to 772 by 1925 and 1,020 by 1930. In 1935, the counties in which at least one-half of the land in farms was under lease numbered 1,107, or more than one-third of the total counties in the United States. One area comprising such counties expanded until it almost covered the eastern Great Plains States and joined another greatly enlarged area in the Corn Belt. The increased acreage of rented land in the Great Plains after 1910 was largely an aftermath of the Federal Government's homestead policy which limited the size of a holding to something less than an economic unit. An operator had to rent additional land in order to have enough acreage to earn a livelihood. In the West, there was

also, during this period, an increased leasing, for farm use, of lands belonging to State and Federal agencies and private corporations. Increased representation occurred in several of the Western States—Montana, Wyoming, New Mexico, Arizona, and Washington. In the South, the number of counties also increased, particularly in the Mississippi Delta, the southern Piedmont, and the upper Coastal Plain of Alabama, Georgia, and the Carolinas, where cotton acreage had been expanded.

By 1940, the counties having at least one-half of the farm land leased had decreased slightly to 1,017. During this 5-year period, there was a marked increase in the Great Plains States, where there had been large losses in ownership through inability to meet debt payments or through delinquent-tax sales. The situation in the Corn Belt remained essentially as in 1935, with a slight thinning out in the eastern part. Reductions in cotton acreage had caused many croppers and renters to leave their farms. Consequently, there was an appreciable decrease in leased land in the eastern Cotton Belt, much of the land reverting to less extensive uses, such as to pasture for increased livestock production and to forestry.

By 1945, the number of counties had decreased to 592. The eastern Great Plains States and Iowa and Illinois remained the areas of greatest concentration. However, the Great Plains and the Cotton Belt had lost heavily in rented land. Much of the land that was lost by owner operators in the 1930's had, through higher farm-purchasing power, returned to owner-operatorship. Also, the war drained more manpower from the tenant group as tenants were younger and had fewer and weaker ties to the land. Tenants, particularly croppers, had been leaving the farms in parts of the South since the 1920's.