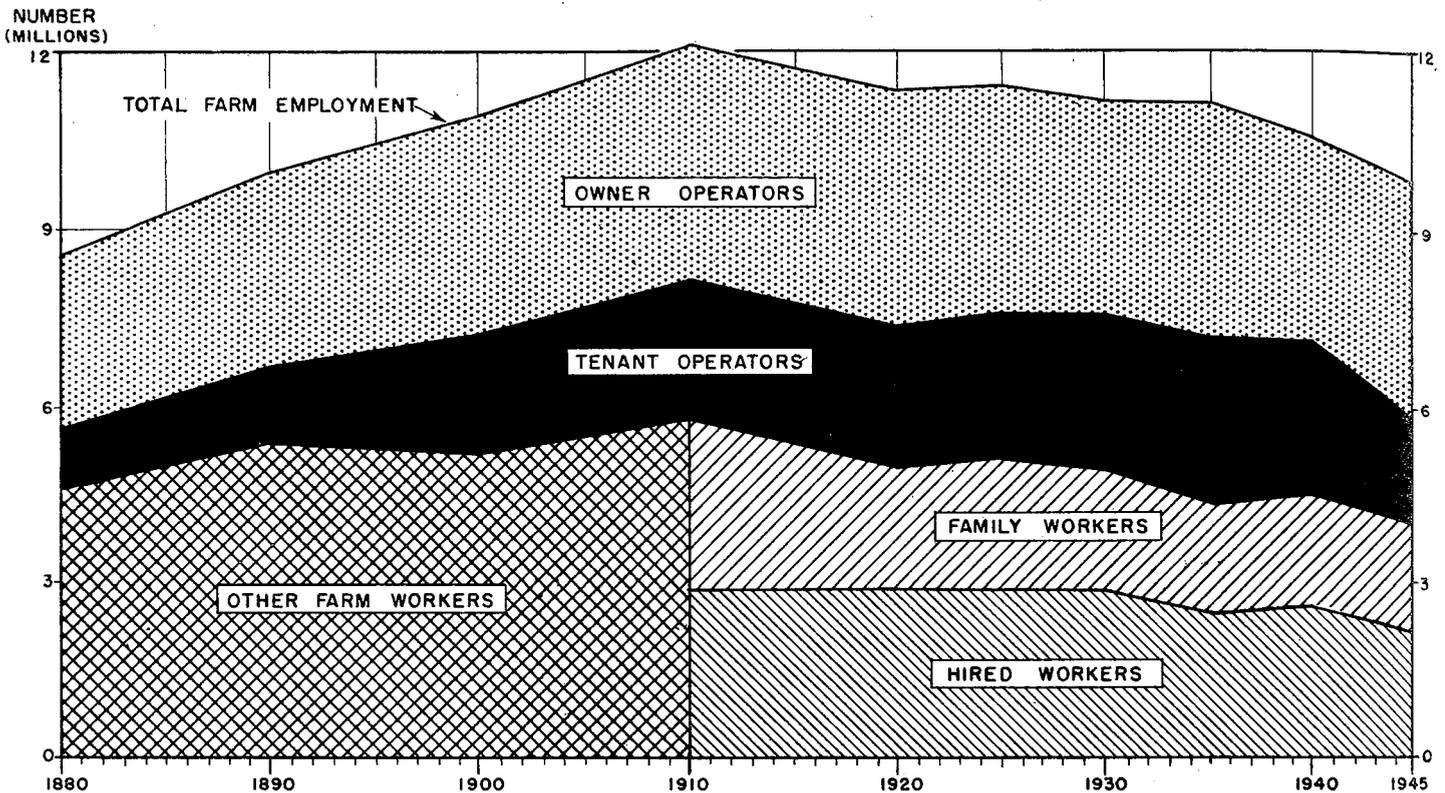


PERSONS EMPLOYED ON FARMS—NUMBER OF OWNER AND TENANT OPERATORS, OTHER FAMILY WORKERS, AND HIRED WORKERS, FOR THE UNITED STATES: CENSUS YEARS 1880-1945*



* DATA ON HIRED, FAMILY, AND TOTAL FARM EMPLOYMENT SINCE 1910 FROM BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS, U. S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE. OTHER DATA FROM THE BUREAU OF THE CENSUS, U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE.

The total number and the composition of the labor force on the farms of the Nation have changed materially since 1880. Concurrently, there has been a decline in the proportion of the total labor force employed in agriculture. The total number of persons employed on farms increased at a rapid rate until 1910 during the period when there was a rapid increase in the number of farms. Since that time, technological improvements have made possible a continued expansion in farm production with a declining number of farm workers. By 1945, the net decline in farm workers had occurred at the expense of all groups other than owners and managers. The number of tenant operators increased steadily until 1935 but dropped sharply thereafter. In 1880, about 12 percent of the persons employed in agriculture were tenant operators; in 1935, about 26 percent; and in 1945, about 19 percent. The proportion of the farm labor force represented by owner operators remained about one-third until 1945 when it reached two-fifths. It is recognized that more of the owners in 1945 were part-time operators and may have performed fewer man-hours per person at farm work than tenants in that period or owner operators in 1910.

The number of hired workers remained almost constant from 1910 until 1930, but has since declined with the greatest drop

occurring during the recent war, when labor available for farm work was extremely scarce. About one-fourth of those employed in agriculture were hired workers in 1920, 1925, 1930, and 1940, while the proportion was about one in five in 1935 and 1945. Although the average size of farms increased from 138.1 to 194.8 acres from 1910 to 1945, the number of hired workers decreased from 2,877,000 to 2,118,000. This indicates that, even with the increase in the size of farms, farm operators depended less on hired help in 1945 than in 1910. The reduction in the proportion of hired labor was most pronounced in the North Central States and in the South. In the West, particularly in the Pacific Coast States, hired workers increased in relative importance.

The number of family workers other than farm operators is designated on the chart as "family workers." There were far fewer family workers in 1945 than in 1910, the numbers being 1,867,000 in 1945 and 2,907,000 in 1910. The relative decline is indicated by the fact that family workers in 1910 represented 24 percent of the total persons employed in agriculture and in 1945 they represented 19 percent of the total. Since 1920 the proportion of family workers has remained relatively stable.