

Characteristics and Changes in the **TEXAS FARM POPULATION**



TEXAS AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

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IN COOPERATION WITH THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

There were 1,141,000 people living on Texas farms in April 1955. This figure is not significantly different from the 1954 estimate of 1,126,000.

Farm population trends in Texas generally have been in the same direction as in the nation and the West South Central division, comprising Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. Before 1937, the State's farm population did not decline as rapidly as in the nation or West South Central division. Since 1945, however, the number of people on farms in Texas has been decreasing faster, at the present time comprising 5.1 percent of the nation's farm population. The rate of increase in 1954-55 was about the same in Texas as in the nation.

Farm people continue to make up a smaller proportion of the State's population. In 1920, 1 out of every 2 Texans resided on a farm, as compared with 1 out of 8 in 1955.

Despite general decreases prior to 1950, there still are many areas in Texas in which the farm population is more important numerically than the city population. In 30 counties, more than 50 percent of the people were classified as rural farm residents in 1950. In 85 counties, more than 40 percent of the people were similarly classified.

Nonwhites comprised 14.6 percent of the total farm population of Texas in 1950. The remaining 85.4 percent were classified as whites. Negroes have been decreasing at a faster rate on farms in recent years than whites. They also had greater losses than whites in the farm populations of the West South Central division and of the United States.

Both of the racial elements on farms make up smaller proportions of their total numbers in the State. In 1940, 2 out of 5 Negroes in Texas were farm residents. In 1950, only 1 out of 5 lived on a farm. The proportionate shares of whites residing on farms were slightly smaller, being 1 out of 3 in 1940 and 1 out of 6 in 1950.

Most of the nonwhite farm people are in the eastern part of the State; only 2 counties in the western part had more than 500 nonwhites in their farm population in 1950. Harrison, Marion and San Jacinto counties in the eastern section had more nonwhites than white people residing on farms in 1950. Only 3 counties had as many as 5,000 nonwhite people on farms in 1950; 19 had more than twice this number of white farm residents.

The average age of farm people in 1940 was 28.3 years; in 1950, it was 32.5. In 1920, 74 out of 100 people on farms were less than 35 years of age. In 1950, only 58 out of 100 were younger than 35. Each age group older than 35 makes up a progressively larger proportion of the farm population; the biggest increases are in persons 55 or over. In 1920, about 8 out of 100 people residing on farms were 55 or older. By 1950, people in this age group made up 17 out of 100.

There also has been an increase among persons 65 years of age or older who generally are considered to be at the age level where they are not a very active part of the farm labor force. In 1920, only about 1 out of 30 people residing on farms was 65 years of age or older. In 1950, this age group comprised 1 out of 14.

There are more males than females in the farm population of Texas at every age level except in the group 30 to 35 years old, where there are only 95 men to 100 women. The greatest shortages of females on farms are between the ages of 15 and 25 where there are 123 men per 100 women, and in the ages 60 and older.

Texas has a slightly older farm population than the West South Central division or the rest of the nation. This is due more to differences in the ages of Negroes than in whites in these three areas.

The age distribution of the farm population differs from that of the urban and rural nonfarm areas of Texas in several ways. Among the more important are: rural farm areas have larger proportions of children and older people, with relatively fewer in the more productive ages; urban areas have more persons in the working ages and fewer to support in the younger and older age levels; and rural nonfarm areas have an age profile more like that of the farm population except that its extremes are not so great.

These age differentials are largely the result of variations in the rates of migration into or out of the different classes of residential areas, with youth being the most important group. In Texas, 70 percent of the youngsters living on farms in 1940 between the ages of 10 to 15 were no longer farm residents in 1950. A slightly higher proportion of Negro youth left the farm than whites, 74.8 and 69.0 percent, respectively. Almost all of the white youth leaving the farm moved to a city within the State's boundaries. Among nonwhite youth, however, only about half of those migrating from farms moved to Texas cities, with at least one-third leaving the State.

Characteristics and Changes in the TEXAS FARM POPULATION

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THE BUREAU OF THE CENSUS MADE THE FIRST separate count of the farm population in the United States in 1920. Numerous changes in the farm population of Texas have taken place since that time.

These changes are particularly important to the people of Texas and to officials who enact and administer laws designed to improve agricultural conditions. Population characteristics and changes affect different types of businesses, churches, schools and organizational activities in rural areas. Each change also has far-reaching effects upon agriculture and the urban centers which are attracting farm migrants.

PURPOSE

This report outlines the significant features of the Texas farm population. It also presents some of the important changes in the farm population since 1920 and points up some of their causes and effects. Although the Texas farm population is the point of interest, this group is not an isolated entity. Comparisons are made with the farm populations of the West South Central division, comprising Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas, and the nation, and with the urban and rural nonfarm populations.

The term *farm population* includes all persons living on farms and ranches, except persons in farm houses who pay cash rent for house and yard only, persons in tourist camps and the like located on what is considered farm land, and persons in institutions located on farms. Although slight changes in definition of the farm population have been made since 1920, these have resulted in little difference in the number of people included in it. Changes in the definition of the term *urban* between 1940 and 1950 resulted in the State's having only 1,000 fewer rural farm people than if this change had not been adopted.

The *farm population* may be divided into two groups. The *rural farm population* includes all persons living on farms and ranches which are not located in the limits of any city. The *urban farm population* includes all persons on farms within the limits of cities. The latter group is relatively unimportant so far as total numbers are concerned, since it comprises less than 1 percent of the total farm population in the State.

Trends in farm population in a state are of great popular interest. The components of these trends are important since it is their combined force that causes a specific trend to exist. How is the racial composition on farms changing? How are the races distributed in different counties and sections of the State? Are farm people predominantly middle-age, young or old? To what areas are farm people being attracted and from what areas are they moving? These are some of the questions that must be answered to give a basis for better understanding the human resources in Texas' agriculture.

This bulletin concerns itself mainly with farm population trends and an explanation of why these trends occurred. One of the basic purposes of the bulletin is to lay the groundwork for more intensive studies of farm population in the future.

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THE TEXAS FARM POPULATION-1920-1955

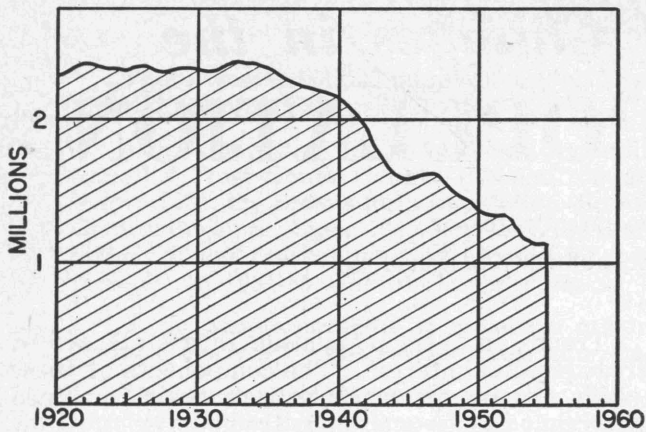


Figure 1.

SIZE OF THE FARM POPULATION

General Trends

According to estimates based on a statewide survey conducted cooperatively by the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station and the Agricultural Marketing Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, there were 1,141,000 people living on Texas farms in April 1955. This estimate is not significantly different from the estimate of 1,126,000 for 1954 (Figure 1).

A decline in the number of farm residents in Texas has occurred since 1933, when it reached an all-time high of 2,423,000. Since that year, the size of the farm population has been reduced by more than half. Changes have been particularly marked since World War II, with reversals of the declining farm population trend being of short duration. Some return to farms occurred following the end of the war and at the conclusion

RELATIVE CHANGES IN THE RURAL FARM POPULATIONS OF TEXAS, WEST SOUTH CENTRAL DIVISION AND THE UNITED STATES, 1920-1955

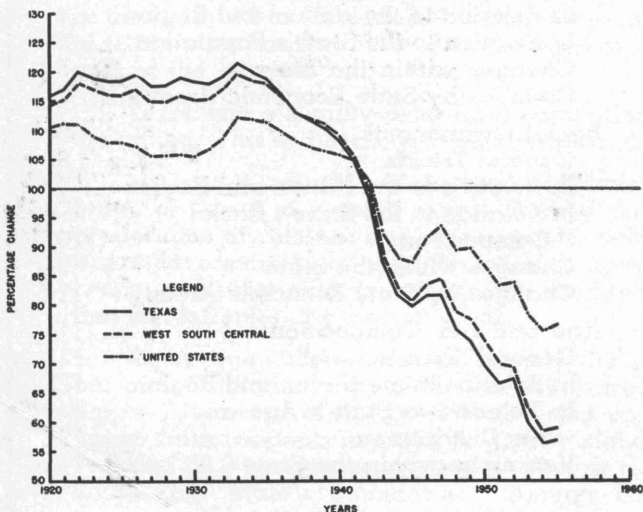


Figure 2.

ion of the Korean conflict. Nevertheless, the general trend has been downward, and the farm population decreased about 246,000 between 1950 and 1955.

In Relation to the Nation and Region

Farm population trends in Texas generally have been in the same direction as in the nation and the remainder of the West South Central division. Prior to 1937, the State's farm population did not decline as rapidly as in the nation or the West South Central division (Figure 2). Since 1941, however, it has fallen more rapidly than in the nation and also than in the region since 1945.

Differences in the relative rates of change may be attributed chiefly to several factors which are tied closely together. Prior to 1940, the industrial phase of Texas' economy had not grown as rapidly as in some other sections of the nation and it could not absorb large numbers of prospective migrants from farms. With no place to move, an abundant farm labor supply existed. With a large labor supply and small-scale farms, mechanization had not progressed rapidly in the State.

Since 1940, industry has expanded rapidly, attracting large numbers of people from farms. A shift from row crop to range and grassland farming in some sections of the State reduced manpower requirements in agriculture. Large-scale operations through the combination of two or more farms aided in spreading mechanization. Many farmers have moved to town, continuing to operate their farms but no longer technically being classed as farm residents. As a result, Texas has been losing its farm population at a faster rate since 1941 than the rest of the nation. Indications are that the State will continue to expand industrially, but at a slower rate than previously. There probably will be fewer farms but they will be larger in average size. Fewer people probably will be required on farms in the future and more people will operate their farms in rural areas while residing in the city.

During the 1940-55 period, the farm population in Texas and the West South Central division decreased about the same amount while that of the nation dropped more slowly. Since 1945, Texas and the division have lost farm population twice as fast as the nation. These losses were 28 percent for Texas, 27 percent for the West South Central division and 12 percent for the nation.

The Texas farm population comprises a consistently smaller proportion of the nation's farm population because of comparatively greater losses (Table 1). In 1930, about 8 out of 100 farm people in the nation resided in Texas. In April 1955, the State's share had been reduced to 5 out of 100 farm residents in the United States.

These figures are particularly significant for Texas agriculture. Federal funds are allocated

TABLE 1. TEXAS AND WEST SOUTH CENTRAL DIVISION FARM POPULATION AS PERCENT OF UNITED STATES FARM POPULATION, FOR SELECTED YEARS¹

| Year | Farm population by area | | | |
|------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | United States | West South Central | Percent of U. S. farm population | Percent of U. S. farm population |
| | (000) | (000) | | (000) |
| 1910 | 32,077 | 5,154 | 16.1 | 2,293 |
| 1920 | 31,974 | 5,310 | 16.6 | 2,314 |
| 1930 | 30,529 | 5,341 | 17.5 | 2,359 |
| 1940 | 30,547 | 5,057 | 16.6 | 2,160 |
| 1950 | 25,058 | 3,423 | 13.7 | 1,387 |
| 1951 | 24,160 | 3,250 | 13.5 | 1,331 |
| 1952 | 24,283 | 3,222 | 13.3 | 1,346 |
| 1953 | 22,679 | 2,899 | 12.8 | 1,193 |
| 1954 | 21,890 | 2,717 | 12.4 | 1,126 |
| 1955 | 22,158 | 2,736 | 12.3 | 1,141 |

¹Data are from reports of the Agricultural Marketing Service, the Bureau of the Census and the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, issued separately or cooperatively.

to the states on the basis of the proportions their farm populations comprise of the national farm population. Among the federal funds so distributed are certain grants-in-aid for agricultural research and extension work. Since the State's proportionate share of the nation's farm population has become smaller, its share of federal grant funds which are distributed on the basis of farm population also has become smaller. If the trend of the 1940-55 period should continue, the State's allotment of such funds stands to be reduced further.

In Relation to the State's Population

While the farm population has been declining, the total population in Texas has increased rapidly (Table 2). It jumped from 6,423,000 in 1940 to an estimated 8,579,000 in 1955. This increase of 2,156,000 within the past 15 years alone has been almost twice the size of the State's present farm population.

The number of rural residents has decreased since the 1930's in spite of steady gains in the

TABLE 2. TOTAL AND FARM POPULATION, TEXAS, FOR SELECTED YEARS¹

| Year | Population by area | | Percent of total population |
|------|--------------------|-------|-----------------------------|
| | Total | Farm | |
| | (000) | (000) | |
| 1910 | 3,922 | 2,293 | 58.5 |
| 1920 | 4,723 | 2,314 | 49.0 |
| 1930 | 5,844 | 2,359 | 40.4 |
| 1940 | 6,423 | 2,160 | 33.6 |
| 1950 | 7,740 | 1,387 | 17.9 |
| 1951 | 8,139 | 1,331 | 16.4 |
| 1952 | 8,367 | 1,346 | 16.1 |
| 1953 | 8,407 | 1,193 | 14.2 |
| 1954 | 8,479 | 1,126 | 13.3 |
| 1955 | 8,579 ² | 1,141 | 13.3 |

¹Data are from reports of the Agricultural Marketing Service, the Bureau of the Census and the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, issued separately or cooperatively.

²1955 estimate based on Bureau of the Census report of civilian population plus armed forces estimate.

rural nonfarm population. The decrease, then, is due solely to losses of the farm element of the rural population. Urban areas have attracted so many people that their proportionate shares of the State's population increased from 41 to 60 percent between 1930 and 1950. Cities have continued to grow so rapidly since 1950 that they are estimated to comprise about 66 percent of the State's total population in 1955.

Farm residents in 1955 made up 13.3 percent of the State's residents. A quarter of a century earlier (1930), more than 40 percent of the State's citizens lived on farms and ranches. However, at the present level, the farm population in Texas comprises about the same proportion of its total as in the United States.

Although the farm population includes only 13 percent of the State's total residents, it is much more important proportionately in some counties than the State figure indicates. In 85 counties, more than 40 percent of the people in 1950 were classified as rural farm residents (Figure 3). In 30 counties, more than 50 percent of the people were similarly classified. At the other extreme were 76 counties in which the farm population made up less than 20 percent of the total population. In 30 counties, the figure was less than 10 percent. These proportions usually are higher in areas which do not have cities and lower in those with metropolitan centers.

Changes within the State

Since the earliest period of land settlement, the eastern part of Texas has been more densely populated than the western. For the types of farm equipment available and subsistence economy prevalent in those days, this area was better suited for agriculture. Rainfall and water were

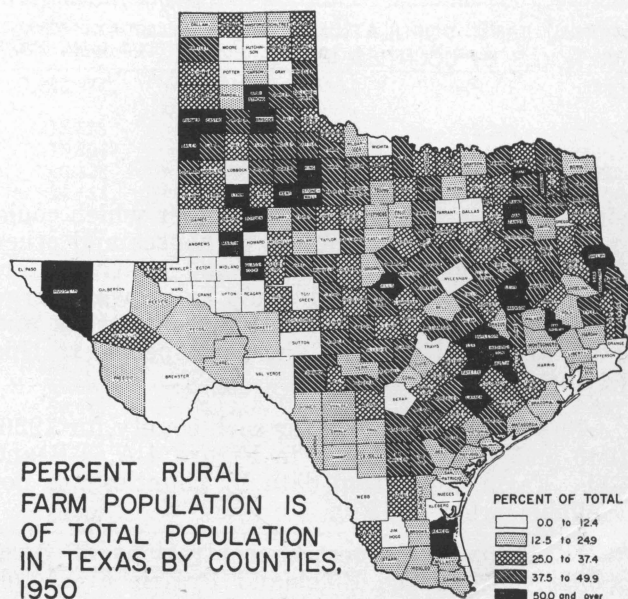


Figure 3.

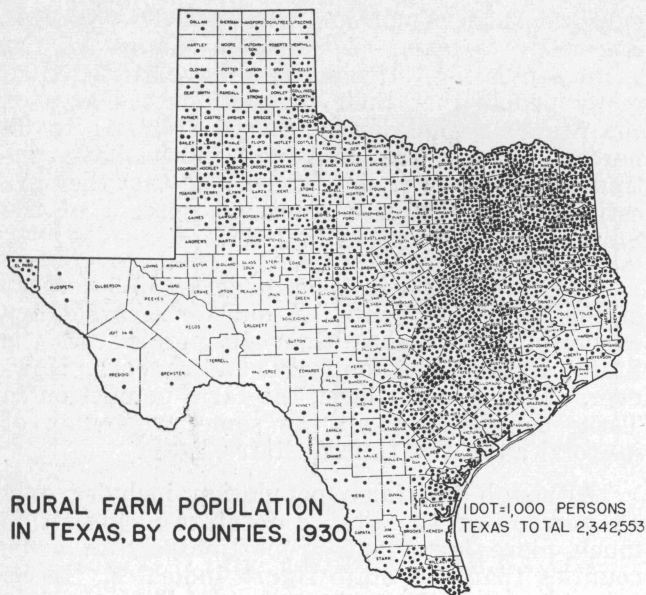


Figure 4-A.

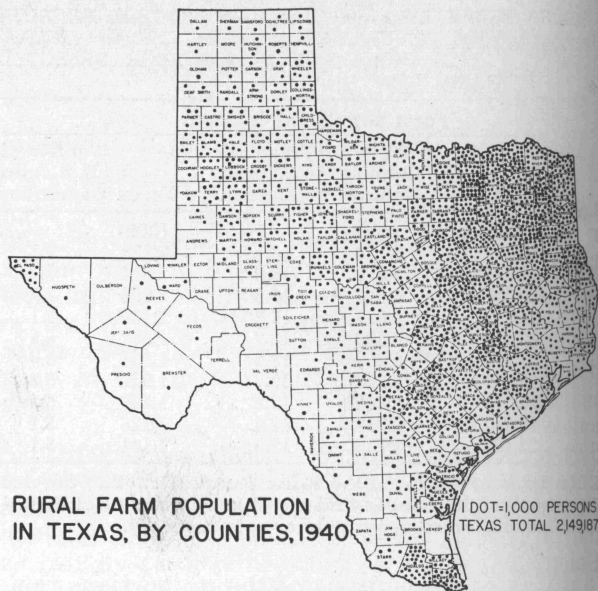


Figure 4-B.

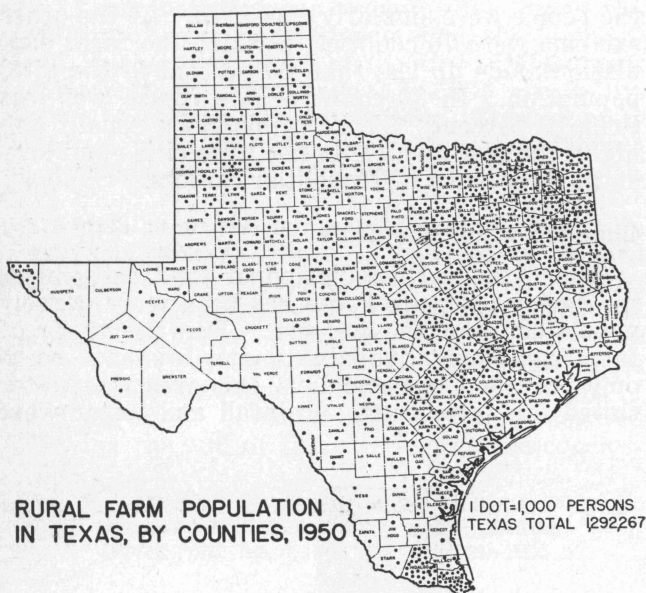


Figure 4-C.

In 1930, 18 counties had a farm population in excess of 25,000. Navarro county had the largest number, 32,799, followed closely by Smith, 31,278, and McLennan, 30,273.

During the following decade, 1930-40, 62 counties increased in farm population while the remaining 192 were losing. The total loss during the decade for the State amounted to 193,366, or 8.3 percent. The largest numerical losses were in areas where the average size of farms was comparatively small and the farm population the densest. The Blackland Prairie had the greatest decreases.

The largest increases occurred in the southeastern corner of the State (Piney Woods lumbering and Coast Prairie areas). These were due chiefly to two factors. Industrial layoffs during the early 1930's caused a number of city people to migrate back to farms. In the latter part of the decade when industrial jobs became more plentiful, a few city residents moved out to rural areas where they conducted part-time farming operations.

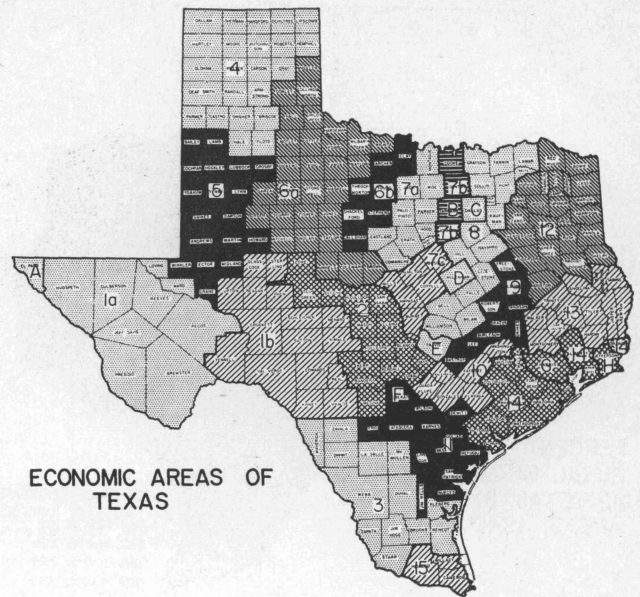
Thus the farm population in Texas increased between 1930 and 1933. Decreases occurred during the latter 7 years of the decade when industry began to develop more rapidly. Several other factors caused farmers to move to the city. With acreage allotments of cash crops in effect, not as much labor was required as previously. Mechanization also began to increase at this time. These factors pushed people off farms, particularly the tenant class which did not own land. Other factors operating simultaneously pulled farm people to cities. Programs designed to stimulate the nation's economy by the creation of jobs and the increased production of war materials gave alternative employment opportunities for farm people moving to industrial occupations.

comparatively plentiful; good timber which could be used for the construction of houses and other farm buildings was available; and relatively fertile, mellow soil, in which could be grown a large variety of crops such as cotton, corn, truck and fruit, attracted most of the farm people to this section of the State.

The farm population for each county for 1930, 1940 and 1950 is shown in Figure 4-A, 4-B and 4-C. Farm population data by counties are not available prior to 1930.

In 1930, the largest concentrations of farm people were in the Blackland Prairie area, followed by the Northeast Sandy Lands and the Lower Rio Grande Valley areas.

During the next decade, 1940-50, farm population losses were fairly general in all sections of the State. Numerous job opportunities in industry, increased mechanization and the combination of two or more farms into one unit accounted for the major farm population losses. Only 17 counties had an increase in farm population during this time. With the exception of 2 counties in the southernmost part of the State, all of those having increases were west of the 100th meridian. The expansion of irrigation accounted for better than 90 percent of the increases in farm population in these counties. Within the counties showing increases, the gains were small—averaging less than 250 additional farm residents per county for the decade. Percentage-wise, however, they may appear large in some of the counties, since fewer than 1,000 farm residents resided in 7 counties in either 1940 or 1950. Counties with the largest increases were Hudspeth, 846, and Hale, 702.



ECONOMIC AREAS OF TEXAS

Figure 5.

Changes by State Economic Areas

Separate analyses for the 254 counties in Texas are impractical because of the large number of units involved. The functional nature and the intermediate size of state economic areas make them well-suited for analyzing farm population changes in the State. These areas were first delineated and defined in 1950 by the Bureau of the Census. Each state economic area consists of a county or group of counties with agricultural, industrial and social characteristics different from those of adjoining areas.

Texas is divided into 19 state economic areas (Figure 5), composed of two classes of counties. One class includes counties with metropolitan centers of 130,000 population or more, and where the entire county is economically and socially in-

tegrated with this central city. The 8 metropolitan counties in the State are designated by letters. The remaining counties were divided into the 19 non-metropolitan areas in which type of farming was one of the principal criteria used in delineation. Each of the designated metropolitan counties has a sizable farm population and is considered as a part of its designated state economic area in the following analyses.

Only 1 of the 19 state economic areas had more farm residents in 1950 than 20 years previously (Table 3). This was area 15, which is made up of Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy counties in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Although

TABLE 3. CHANGES IN THE RURAL FARM POPULATION OF TEXAS, BY ECONOMIC AREAS, 1930-51

| Area | 1930 | 1940 | Change, 1930-40 | | 1950 ² | Change, 1940-50 | | Change, 1930-50 | |
|----------------|------------|------------|-----------------|---------|-------------------|-----------------|---------|-----------------|---------|
| | population | population | Number | Percent | population | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| The state | 2,342,553 | 2,149,187 | -193,366 | - 8.3 | 1,293,374 | -855,813 | -39.8 | -1,049,179 | -44.8 |
| economic areas | | | | | | | | | |
| 1a & A | 20,913 | 20,559 | - 354 | - 1.7 | 18,528 | - 2,031 | - 9.9 | - 2,385 | -11.4 |
| 1b | 18,658 | 18,249 | - 409 | - 2.2 | 13,404 | - 4,845 | -26.5 | - 5,254 | -28.2 |
| 2 | 75,322 | 67,917 | - 7,405 | - 9.8 | 43,328 | - 24,589 | -36.2 | - 31,994 | -42.5 |
| 3 | 40,321 | 36,533 | - 3,788 | - 9.4 | 24,144 | - 12,389 | -33.9 | - 16,177 | -40.1 |
| 4 | 61,284 | 54,485 | - 6,799 | -11.1 | 45,644 | - 8,841 | -16.2 | - 15,640 | -25.5 |
| 5 | 84,588 | 80,094 | - 4,494 | - 5.3 | 66,097 | - 13,997 | -17.5 | - 18,491 | -21.9 |
| 6a | 214,642 | 166,715 | - 47,927 | -22.3 | 106,055 | - 60,660 | -36.4 | - 108,587 | -50.6 |
| 6b | 35,445 | 30,717 | - 4,728 | -13.3 | 18,610 | - 12,107 | -39.4 | - 16,835 | -47.5 |
| 7a | 85,563 | 84,382 | - 1,181 | - 1.4 | 49,941 | - 34,441 | -40.8 | - 35,622 | -41.6 |
| 7b & B | 62,229 | 59,368 | - 2,861 | - 4.6 | 38,147 | - 21,221 | -35.7 | - 24,082 | -38.7 |
| 7c | 51,578 | 47,860 | - 3,718 | - 7.2 | 26,779 | - 21,081 | -44.0 | - 24,799 | -48.1 |
| 8 & C, D, E | 464,325 | 401,814 | - 62,511 | -13.5 | 218,862 | -182,952 | -45.5 | - 245,463 | -52.9 |
| 9 | 127,467 | 111,952 | - 15,515 | -12.2 | 56,894 | - 55,058 | -49.2 | - 70,573 | -55.4 |
| 10 | 116,874 | 98,601 | - 18,273 | -15.6 | 59,448 | - 39,153 | -39.7 | - 57,426 | -49.1 |
| 11 & F | 142,645 | 129,502 | - 13,143 | - 9.2 | 77,031 | - 52,471 | -40.7 | - 65,614 | -46.0 |
| 12 | 450,249 | 409,113 | - 41,136 | - 9.1 | 231,673 | -177,440 | -43.4 | - 218,576 | -48.5 |
| 13 | 91,131 | 103,251 | + 12,120 | +13.3 | 56,226 | - 47,025 | -45.5 | - 34,905 | -38.3 |
| 14 & G, H | 148,875 | 163,220 | + 14,345 | + 9.6 | 85,756 | - 77,464 | -47.5 | - 63,119 | -42.4 |
| 15 | 50,444 | 64,855 | + 14,411 | +28.6 | 56,807 | - 8,048 | -12.4 | + 6,363 | +12.6 |

¹ Source: Bureau of the Census reports. It should be noted that Tables 1 and 2 in this report include estimates of the farm population for Texas which have been adjusted to the 1950 Census-AMS 1950 United States level of farm population. Tables relating to the rural farm population have not been adjusted to this level. Figures in these tables, therefore, are slightly lower than they would be had they been adjusted.

² Old definition of rural farm population.

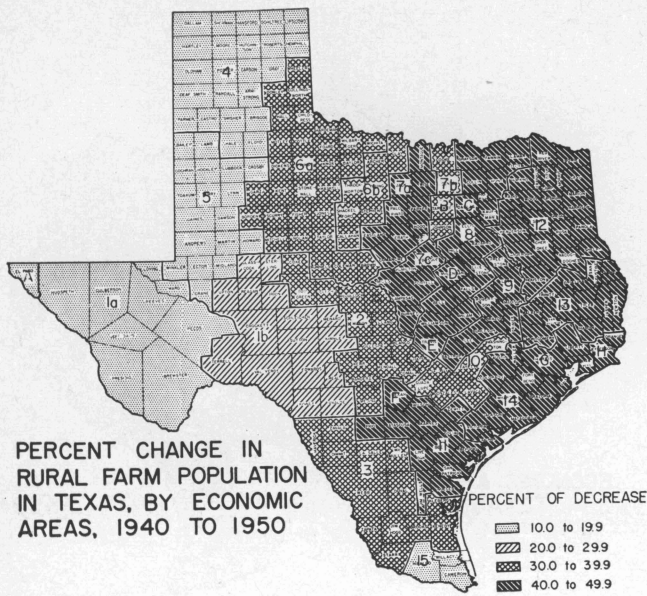


Figure 6.

area 15 had a 12 percent loss in farm population between 1940 and 1950, the increase registered during the preceding decade was large enough to show an increase for the overall 20-year period. Areas 13 and 14, where industrial development particularly in the Coastal Prairie region helped create a number of part-time farming opportunities, also increased in farm population between 1930 and 1940. In these areas, the increase in farm residents was mostly the result of city people moving to rural areas, combining their industrial jobs with farming operations and thereby becoming classified as farmers.

Farm population losses occurred in all of the economic areas between 1940 and 1950. A part of the losses can be attributed to changes in definition as well as to losses caused by migration and deaths. The smallest proportionate losses, however, were in areas 1a and 15 (Figure 6). Irrigation expanded during the decade and provided a force that permitted these two areas to hold a greater share of their farm population than others. Eight areas lost more than 40 percent of their farm people, with areas 8, 9, 13 and 14 losing more than 45 percent. All of these areas are in the eastern section, where the factors previously mentioned caused the losses to occur.

RACIAL COMPONENTS

Three major race classifications are distinguished by the Bureau of the Census: white, Negro and other races. In the latter group the major elements are Indian, Japanese and Chinese. Of the total rural farm nonwhite population in 1950, they made up only .7 percent, with the Negro element comprising 99.3 percent. For this reason, the terms *Negro* and *nonwhite* are used synonymously when referring to Texas' farm population.

TABLE 4. PERCENTAGE DECREASE IN THE RURAL FARM POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES, WEST SOUTH CENTRAL DIVISION AND TEXAS, BY COLOR, 1940-50¹

| Area | White | Nonwhite | Total |
|--------------------|-------|----------|-------|
| United States | -22.5 | -29.8 | -23.6 |
| West South Central | -34.8 | -40.6 | -36.1 |
| Texas | -38.4 | -47.0 | -39.8 |

¹ Source: Bureau of the Census reports.

Reliable data for the rural farm population by race are not available prior to 1940. This is chiefly because of changes made in the classification of persons of Mexican birth or ancestry. Such persons were designated as Mexican in 1930 and were included in the general class of "other races." Since 1940, persons of Mexican birth or ancestry who were not definitely Indian or of other nonwhite races were classified as white.

General Trends

According to the Bureau of the Census in 1950, 1,105,000 white and 188,000 nonwhite persons resided on rural farms in Texas. A decline occurred in both groups during the previous decade, with the greater losses among nonwhites. The percentage loss for nonwhites for the 10-year period was 47.0, for the whites it was 38.4 (Table 4). Negroes have a higher birth rate on farms than do whites, yet their numbers are decreasing more rapidly, indicating that comparatively more Negroes are moving from rural farm areas. In 1940, about 17 out of 100 persons residing on farms in Texas were nonwhites. In 1950, they had dropped to 15 out of 100.

In Relation to the Nation and Region

The racial trends noted on Texas farms were similar to those in the West South Central division and in the nation in several ways. Both whites and nonwhites registered losses on farms in the three areas. Each area also had comparatively greater losses among Negroes on farms than whites.

One major difference is in the rates of losses between 1940 and 1950. Texas lost a proportionately greater share of both its Negroes and whites, followed by the West South Central di-

TABLE 5. PERCENTAGE COMPOSITION OF THE WHITE AND NONWHITE ELEMENTS OF THE RURAL FARM POPULATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES, WEST SOUTH CENTRAL DIVISION AND TEXAS IN 1940 AND 1950¹

| Area | White | Nonwhite | Total |
|--------------------|-------|----------|-------|
| | 1940 | | |
| United States | 84.3 | 15.7 | 100.0 |
| West South Central | 77.5 | 22.5 | 100.0 |
| Texas | 83.5 | 16.5 | 100.0 |
| | 1950 | | |
| United States | 85.5 | 14.5 | 100.0 |
| West South Central | 79.1 | 20.9 | 100.0 |
| Texas | 85.4 | 14.6 | 100.0 |

¹ Source: Bureau of the Census reports.

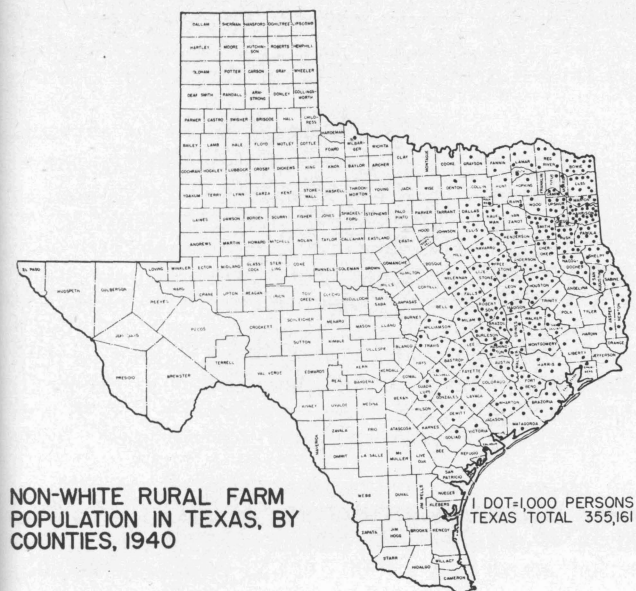


Figure 7-A.

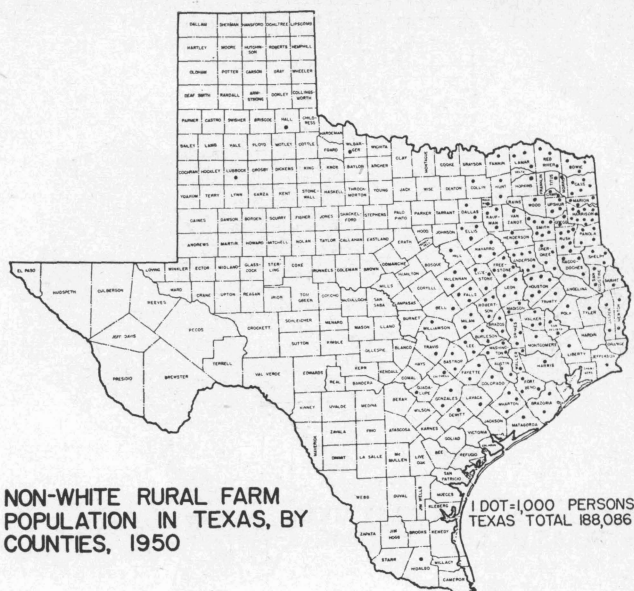


Figure 7-B.

vision, with the nation having the smallest proportionate losses.

Both racial groups made up about the same proportion of the total farm population in Texas in 1950 as they did in the nation, with whites being relatively more important than in the West South Central division (Table 5).

Since Texas had proportionately greater losses in both white and nonwhite farm people, each group comprised a smaller proportion of its respective racial element in the nation's farm population in 1950 than 10 years previously. One out of every 14 white persons residing on farms in the United States in 1940 lived on a farm in Texas. Ten years later, the State had 1 out of 18 white persons living on farms in the nation. Negroes comprised about the same proportion as whites, making up 1 out of 13 nonwhites on the nation's farms in 1940, as compared with 1 out of 18 in 1950.

In Relation to the State's Racial Composition

While both the State's white and nonwhite farm populations declined between 1940 and 1950, they were increasing in urban and rural nonfarm areas (Table 6). As a result, the relative importance of both racial elements residing on farms to their total populations in the State was reduced by about half. In 1940, 38 out of 100 Negroes

in Texas lived on farms, as compared with 19 out of 100 in 1950. The white farm population made up 32 out of 100 white persons in the State in 1940 and only 16 out of 100 in 1950.

While the large increase in the white population has been occurring mainly in the larger cities, the gains among Negroes have been more equally divided between the urban and rural nonfarm areas. This is due mainly to differences in migration patterns. Most of the white migrants from farms move to the larger metropolitan centers. Rural nonfarm areas apparently attract a greater portion of the Negro migrants than is true for the whites.

Changes within the State

The locations of Negro farmers in Texas in 1940 and 1950 are shown in Figure 7-A and 7-B. There are comparatively few Negroes outside the eastern section. They were first attracted to the area by the cotton plantation system which prevailed in the earlier days. When the cropper system developed later, they remained in the area. As cotton production moved westward in recent years, less and less hand labor was required in its new location. Consequently, Negroes remained in the eastern section.

The geographic locations of Negroes in Texas show definite contrasts. Nineteen counties, all in

TABLE 6. CHANGES IN THE RURAL FARM, RURAL NONFARM AND URBAN POPULATIONS OF TEXAS, BY COLOR, 1940-50¹

| Area | White population | | | | Nonwhite population | | | | Total | | | |
|---------------|------------------|-----------|------------|---------|---------------------|---------|----------|---------|-----------|-----------|------------|---------|
| | 1940 | 1950 | Change | | 1940 | 1950 | Change | | 1940 | 1950 | Change | |
| | | | Number | Percent | | | Number | Percent | | | Number | Percent |
| Urban | 2,489,569 | 4,035,587 | +1,546,018 | +62.1 | 421,820 | 577,079 | +155,259 | +36.8 | 2,911,389 | 4,612,666 | +1,701,277 | +58.4 |
| Rural nonfarm | 1,203,950 | 1,585,803 | +381,853 | +31.7 | 150,298 | 219,351 | +69,053 | +45.9 | 1,354,248 | 1,805,154 | +450,906 | +33.3 |
| Rural farm | 1,794,026 | 1,105,144 | -688,882 | -38.4 | 355,161 | 188,230 | -166,931 | -47.0 | 2,149,187 | 1,293,374 | -855,813 | -39.8 |
| Total | 5,487,545 | 6,726,534 | +1,238,989 | +22.6 | 927,279 | 984,660 | +57,381 | +6.2 | 6,414,824 | 7,711,194 | +1,296,370 | +20.2 |

¹ Source: Bureau of the Census reports.

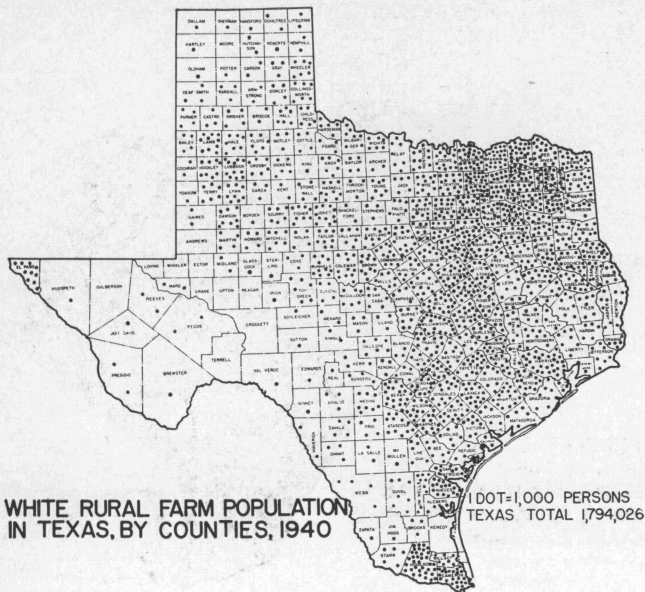


Figure 8-A.

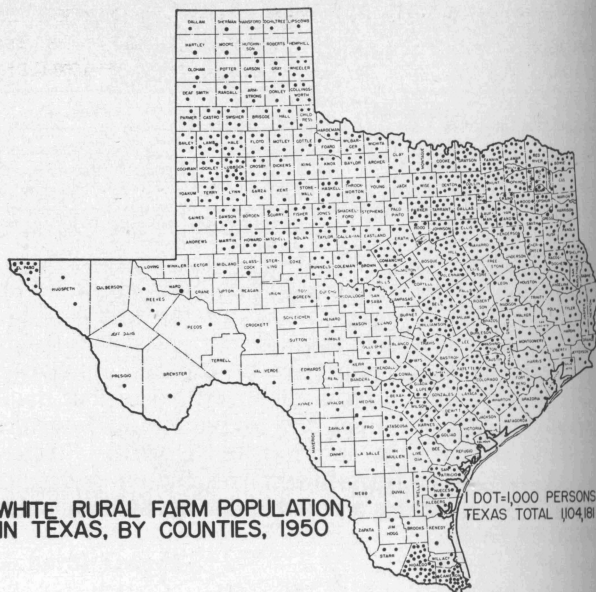


Figure 8-B.

the western section, had no nonwhite farm population listed by the Bureau of the Census in 1950. Only 1 county west of Travis and Williamson had as much as 500 nonwhite rural farm population in 1940. This county, Wilbarger, had a total nonwhite farm population of 561. In 1950, Lubbock county joined Wilbarger in this category, with 787 nonwhite rural farm people. In the eastern section, 3 counties, Harrison, Marion and San Jacinto, had more nonwhite than white farm people in both 1940 and 1950. Freestone county had more Negro than white farm people in 1950 but not in 1940.

The importance of the Negro farm population in the eastern part of the State may be shown

further by the fact that 24 counties had more than 5,000 nonwhites living on farms in 1940. The greatest numbers were in the following counties: Harrison (18,780), Smith (12,673), Rusk (10,694) and Houston (9,293). A large industrial expansion in the same sections of the State during the next decade opened up many job opportunities for Negroes, resulting in their migration from farms in large numbers. By 1950, only 3 counties had as many as 5,000 nonwhite farm people. These were: Harrison (10,327), Smith (7,241) and Rusk (6,418).

All of the counties in the eastern section of Texas lost in Negro population in rural farm areas between 1940 and 1950. A few counties in the western portion had increases, but the number of people involved was so small they are not considered important.

The heaviest concentration of the white farm population has consistently been in the Blackland Prairie and the Lower Rio Grande Valley (Figure 8-A and 8-B). In 1940, more than one-fourth (67) of the counties in the State had more than 10,000 white farm population. Among this group, 10 counties had more than 20,000. Hidalgo had the most (34,912). Other counties with more than 20,000 were Cameron, Collin, Fannin, Grayson, Harris, Hunt, Lamar, McLennan and Van Zandt.

By 1950, only 19 counties had 10,000 or more white rural farm residents, with only 2 having more than 20,000. These were Hidalgo (30,938) and Cameron (22,289), both in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

Sixteen counties showed an increase in the rural farm white population between 1940 and 1950. With the exception of Kenedy and Zapata counties in the southern portion, all were in the western section. The increases in each county were relatively small, only 3 being as large as 300.

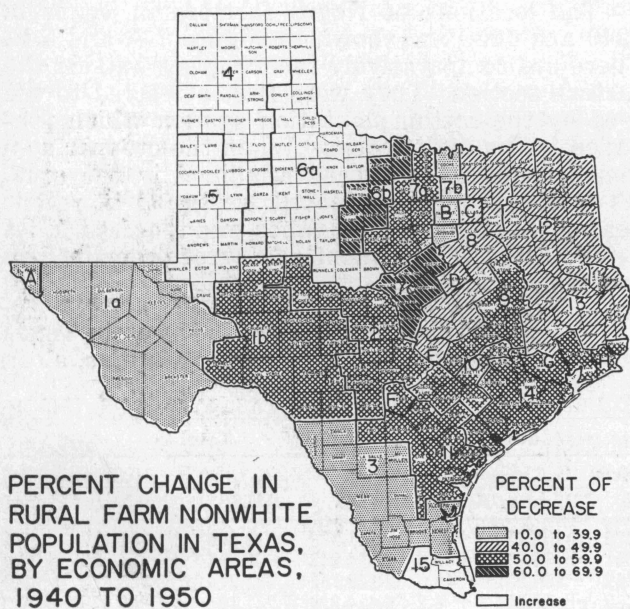


Figure 9.

The largest single increase (951) occurred in Hudspeth county. These increases may be accounted for mainly by an expansion in irrigation.

Changes by State Economic Areas

Of the 19 economic areas in the State, all but 4 lost in Negro population in rural farm areas between 1940 and 1950 (Figure 9). The 4 having increases were areas 4, 5, 6a and 15. The first 3 are in the Panhandle and the High Plains areas. The latter is in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The actual increases were relatively small, however, with all having a small nonwhite population. Area 12, in Northeast Texas, had the largest numerical loss, 62,000, followed by areas 9 and 14, with losses of 24,000 and 21,000, respectively.

All of the state economic areas showed decreases in rural farm whites between 1940 and 1950. The largest losses were in area 8 (over 150,000) and area 12 (115,000). In 8 areas, losses of over 40 percent were recorded (Figure 10).

Since the number of nonwhites and whites is changing in all economic areas, their relative importance in each area changes accordingly (Figure 11). A wide diversity exists between economic areas. At one extreme is area 7a, with fewer than 2 nonwhites per 1,000 whites. In 3 other areas, 3, 6b and 15, the ratio is less than 5 to 1,000. At the other extreme are areas 9 and 12, with 727 and 508 nonwhites per 1,000 whites, respectively.

AGE AND SEX COMPOSITION

While the size and racial composition may be among the more important farm population features, other factors should be considered to make the farm population picture more complete. One is the age and sex composition, which has a direct bearing on the size of the farm labor force and its future population potential.

General Trends

The average age of the Texas farm population is increasing. In 1940, the average age was 28.3 while in 1950 it was 32.5. This is largely the

TABLE 7. PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE RURAL FARM POPULATION OF TEXAS BY AGE GROUPS, 1920-50¹

| Age group | 1920 | 1930 | 1940 | 1950 |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Under 5 | 13.1 | 11.8 | 10.1 | 10.5 |
| 5-9 | 14.4 | 13.2 | 10.8 | 10.6 |
| 10-14 | 13.7 | 12.6 | 11.5 | 10.5 |
| 15-19 | 11.4 | 12.1 | 11.2 | 9.0 |
| 20-24 | 8.7 | 9.1 | 8.2 | 5.7 |
| 25-29 | 7.1 | 6.8 | 7.2 | 5.5 |
| 30-34 | 6.0 | 5.8 | 6.6 | 5.7 |
| 35-44 | 10.5 | 11.0 | 11.7 | 13.6 |
| 45-54 | 7.4 | 8.6 | 10.1 | 11.9 |
| 55-64 | 4.4 | 5.2 | 7.0 | 9.3 |
| 65-74 | 2.4 | 2.7 | 4.1 | 5.5 |
| 75 and over | 0.9 | 1.1 | 1.5 | 2.2 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

¹ Source: Bureau of the Census reports.

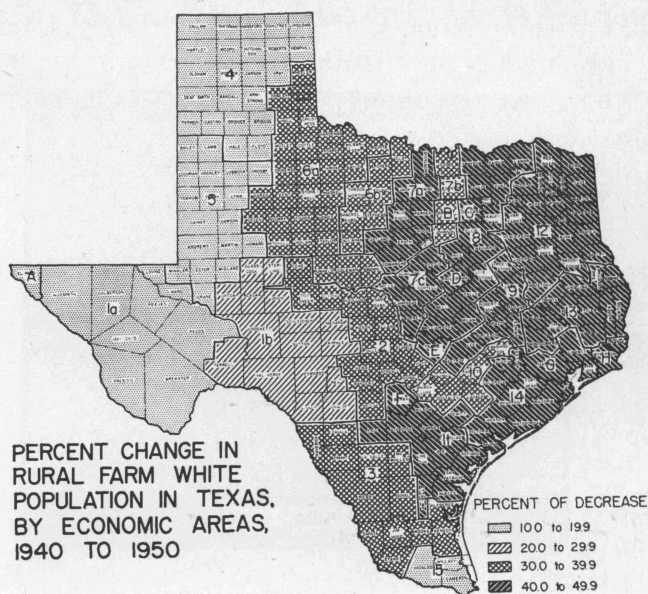


Figure 10.

result of a changing age profile. The relative importance of different age groups in the Texas farm population by 10-year intervals from 1920 to 1950 is shown in Table 7 and is illustrated graphically in Figure 12. Among the most important trends are the changing proportions that different age groups make up of the total farm population.

With the exception of a small increase for youngsters less than 5 years of age between 1940 and 1950, each age group less than 35 makes up a progressively smaller proportion of the total. In 1920, 74 out of 100 people living on farms were less than 35 years of age. Their proportions decreased each successive decade, in 1950 being only

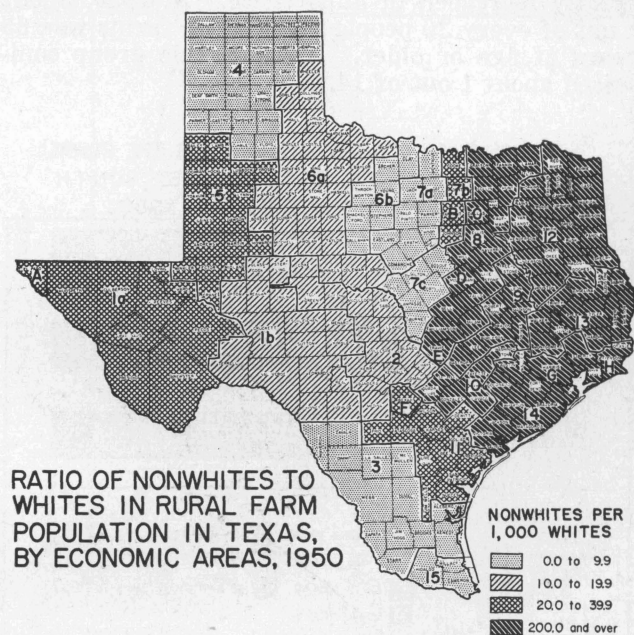


Figure 11.

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE RURAL FARM POPULATION OF TEXAS, 1920—1950.

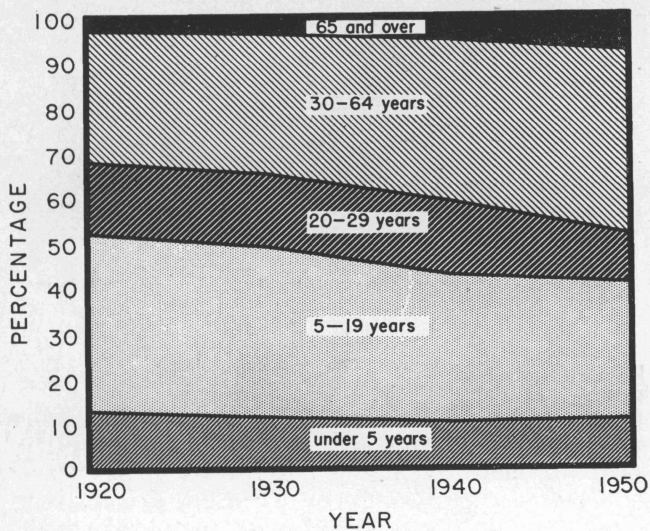


Figure 12.

58 out of 100. This trend is largely the result of a slowing down of the birth rate among farm people, a general increase in the migration of youth from farms and a general increase in the life span of those remaining on farms. These factors tend to decrease the proportions of younger people and at the same time increase those of older people on farms.

Every age group over 35 makes up a progressively larger portion of the farm population. The biggest increases were among those age 55 or older. They comprised 8 out of every 100 farm people in 1920 and 17 out of 100 in 1950. The oldest group, 65 years of age and over, also has greatly increased in importance. In 1920, about 1 out of every 30 people residing on farms was 65 years of age or older. In 1950, this group comprised about 1 out of 14.

PERCENTAGE AGE DISTRIBUTION FOR THE RURAL FARM POPULATIONS OF TEXAS, WEST SOUTH CENTRAL DIVISION AND THE U. S., 1950.

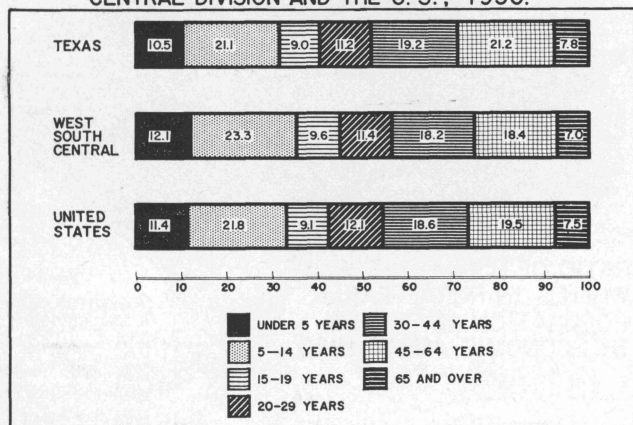


Figure 13.

The age structure of the two racial groups in rural farm areas differs in several respects. Negroes have a greater proportion of their people in the younger ages than do whites. Nonwhites less than 25 years old make up more than half of their total population (55.6 percent). Among whites, they make up less than half of the total (44.8 percent). A higher birth rate and shorter length of life are the main causes for people in the younger age groups being relatively more important among Negroes than whites. Persons in the older age groups are comparatively less important in the Negro farm population.

Since agriculture generally is considered a man's occupation, males predominate in numbers on farms. In 1950, of the total number of people residing on farms, 52.5 percent were males and 47.5 percent were females, a ratio of 110.7 males per 100 females. The sex ratio of the rural farm population was 109.8 in 1930 and 109.9 in 1940. Even though these changes have been small, each decade shows the males making up a slightly greater share of the rural farm population. This has been largely the result of the migration of women to urban areas at an increasingly faster rate than men.

The Texas farm population has more males than females at every age level except in the age group 30 to 35. In this group there are only 95.6 men per 100 women. Since there were more men than women in this age group in 1940, it may be assumed that World War II was mainly responsible for the 1950 situation. The war accelerated the migration rate from farms among young men more so than young women, with an exceptionally large number of men being in the armed forces. These young men, usually between the ages of 18 and 25 at that time, did not return to farms and resulted in more females in the 30 to 35 age group on farms in 1950. The greatest shortages of women exist between the ages of 15 to 25 where there are 123.2 men per 100 women and in the ages 60 and older, a sex ratio of 127.1. In both groups these shortages are caused by a greater degree of migration at these age levels on the part of females from farms to cities.

There are more males on farms among whites than nonwhites, their sex ratios being 112.0 and 103.3, respectively, in 1950. Another feature of the sex ratio is that while male domination in numbers increased among whites between 1940 and 1950 (110.6 to 112.0), the opposite was true among nonwhites. In 1940, there were 106.6 males per 100 females among the nonwhites, but in 1950 the ratio had been reduced to 103.3.

In Relation to the Nation and Region

The farm population is slightly older in Texas than in either the West South Central division or the United States (Figure 13). In 1950, there were proportionately more in every age group over 30 than in the other two areas.

TABLE 8. PERCENTAGE AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE RURAL FARM POPULATIONS OF TEXAS, THE WEST SOUTH CENTRAL DIVISION AND THE UNITED STATES, BY COLOR, 1950¹

| Age group | Whites | | | Nonwhites | | | Total | | |
|-------------|--------|--------------------|---------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|-------|--------------------|---------------|
| | Texas | West South Central | United States | Texas | West South Central | United States | Texas | West South Central | United States |
| Under 5 | 10.1 | 10.7 | 10.7 | 13.0 | 15.3 | 15.0 | 10.5 | 12.1 | 11.4 |
| 5-14 | 20.3 | 21.9 | 20.9 | 25.6 | 26.6 | 27.1 | 21.1 | 23.3 | 21.8 |
| 15-19 | 8.7 | 9.2 | 8.9 | 11.0 | 10.5 | 10.9 | 9.0 | 9.6 | 9.1 |
| 20-29 | 11.2 | 11.4 | 12.1 | 10.4 | 11.5 | 12.5 | 11.2 | 11.4 | 12.1 |
| 30-44 | 20.0 | 19.5 | 19.2 | 15.4 | 15.1 | 15.0 | 19.2 | 18.2 | 18.6 |
| 45-64 | 21.9 | 20.0 | 20.4 | 17.0 | 14.6 | 13.7 | 21.2 | 18.4 | 19.5 |
| 65 and over | 7.8 | 7.3 | 7.8 | 7.6 | 6.4 | 5.8 | 7.8 | 7.0 | 7.5 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

¹ Source: Bureau of the Census reports.

Almost half (48.2 percent) of the farm population in the State in 1950 was over 30 years of age, as compared with 43.6 and 45.6 percent, respectively, for the West South Central division and the nation. Thus, Texas has the smallest proportion of younger people. These age differentials are mainly the result of a slightly lower birth rate in Texas and a comparatively larger migration of youth from farms in more recent years.

There appears to be little difference in the ages of whites in the three areas (Table 8). Thus, the variations noted for the total farm population are caused by differences in the age distributions of nonwhites. Among the Negro farm populations, Texas has a larger proportion of older people, with about 1 out of 4 nonwhites being 45 years of age or older. In the West South Central division, they comprise about 1 out of 5 and slightly less than this proportion in the United States.

Differences in the balance between the sexes on farms in Texas, the West South Central division and the United States are almost negligible. Actually, Texas has the highest proportion of men among both whites and nonwhites, with the nation being the next highest and the West South Central division the lowest.

In Relation to State's Age and Sex Distribution

The age distribution of farm residents differs from that of the State as a whole in several ways. One of the most important differences is the proportion of persons in the earlier working ages. For example, only about 30 out of 100 people on farms are between 20 and 45 years old. For the State as a whole, 38 out of 100 are in this age level. Farm areas have greater proportions of their people in the younger ages, with 41 percent not yet having reached their twentieth birthday, as compared with 37 percent in the State. Another age characteristic of the farm population is a proportionately greater number of older people. Approximately 1 out of 12 is 65 years of age or older, while in the State this group includes 1 out of 14.

The relative importance of children, persons in the working ages and older people in the urban,

rural nonfarm and rural farm areas of Texas is illustrated in Figure 14.

Among the most important differences in the age distributions of the three residential classes in Texas are: rural farm areas have excessively larger proportions of children and older people and relatively fewer in the more productive ages; by comparison, urban areas have an age profile showing more people in the working ages and fewer to support in the younger and older age levels; and the rural nonfarm age profile is more like that of the rural farm areas except that its extremes are not as great.

A number of factors account for the socially significant variations in the age profiles. The excess of youngsters on farms is due to a relatively higher birth rate. The migration of youth from farms to cities leaves relatively few persons in the

INDEX NUMBERS SHOWING RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF EACH AGE GROUP IN THE URBAN, RURAL NON-FARM AND RURAL FARM POPULATIONS OF TEXAS, 1950.

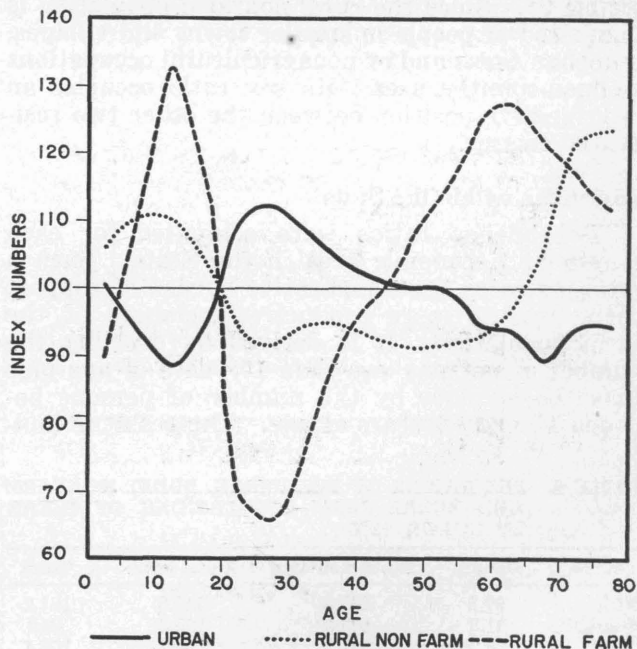


Figure 14.

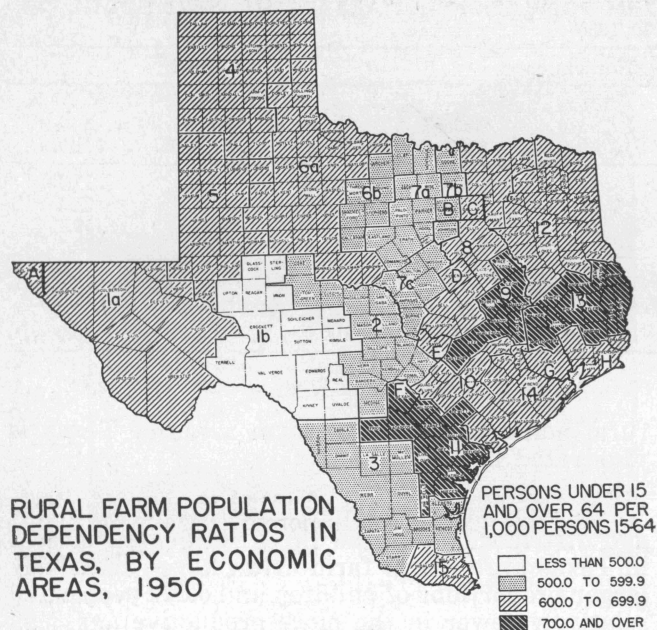


Figure 15.

early productive ages, particularly between 20 and 40. Their migration, in turn, affects the age profile in cities, where an excess of people in these ages exists. In the older ages (65 and over), people tend to migrate from farms to rural nonfarm areas. Wives generally outlive their husbands by 4 to 5 years. Upon the death of the husband, the widow usually moves to a city or small town near the farm.

The most obvious differences in the sex ratios of the three major residential classifications are the concentrations of females in cities and of males on farms among both whites and nonwhites (Table 9). Since the rural nonfarm population is comprised of people in smaller towns and villages, suburban areas and of nonagricultural occupations in open-country areas, its sex ratio occupies an intermediate position between the other two residential classes.

Variations within the State

Dependency ratios were computed for each county and economic area in the State. Such a ratio indicates the comparative burden of support borne by the more productive members of the farm population. It is derived by dividing the number of persons less than 15 years of age plus those 65 or older by the number of persons between 15 and 65 years of age. The result is mul-

TABLE 9. SEX RATIOS OF THE URBAN, RURAL NONFARM AND RURAL FARM POPULATIONS OF TEXAS, BY COLOR, 1950¹

| Race | Urban | Rural nonfarm | Rural farm | Total |
|----------|-------|---------------|------------|-------|
| White | 97.1 | 105.8 | 112.0 | 101.2 |
| Nonwhite | 91.3 | 100.3 | 103.3 | 95.1 |
| Total | 96.3 | 105.2 | 110.7 | 100.4 |

¹ Source: Bureau of the Census reports.

tiplied by 1,000 to obtain a ratio of the number of "dependent" people per 1,000 persons of working age. The variations in dependency ratios are shown by economic areas in Figure 15.

Farm population dependency ratios in 1950 ranged from 284 in Terrell county to 854 in Harrison county. Twenty counties had 750 or more dependent persons for every 1,000 persons aged 15 to 65. All of these counties are in the eastern and southern sections of the State, none being west of the 100th meridian. Thirty-five counties, all in the western section, had relatively low dependency ratios of less than 550. People in the working ages have a smaller burden to carry in these counties.

When counties are grouped into economic areas, the lowest rural farm dependency ratio is 487 in area 1b. This area, the Edwards Plateau, has sparse farm population and large ranches. The level of living is high and comparatively fewer people of Mexican descent live here than in most other ranching areas in the State. The birth rate is lower than in the rest of the State. Area 13, the East Texas Piney Woods, has the highest dependency ration in the State. It has 741 dependent persons for every 1,000 persons age 15 to 65. This is an area of dense farm population, with many small farms. The birth rate is high and the level of living among farmers is relatively lower than in the rest of the State. All of the counties in the area are classified as "serious low farm income and level of living areas in agriculture" in an April 1955 U. S. Department of Agriculture publication entitled "Development of Agriculture's Human Resources."

One of the most important determinants of the size of the dependency ratio is the extent to which youth migrate from farms. Although the exact

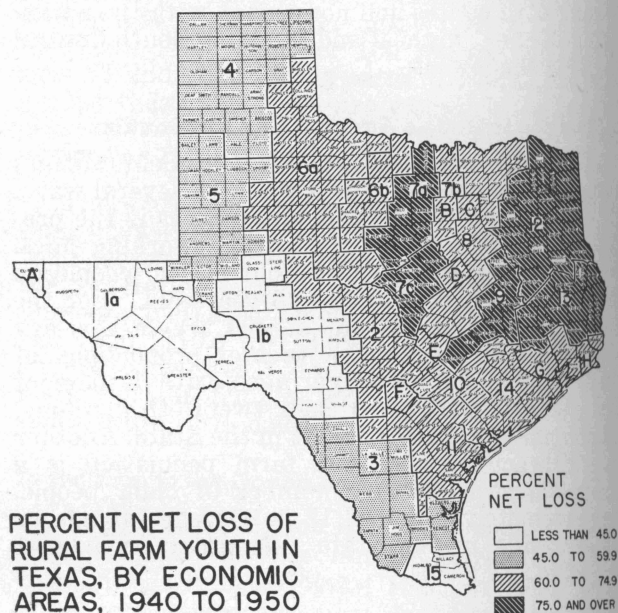


Figure 16.

TABLE 10. NET LOSS OF YOUTH FROM THE RURAL FARM POPULATION OF TEXAS, BY COLOR, 1940-50¹

| Age | Year | Males | | | Females | | | Total population | | |
|---------------------|------|---------|----------|---------|---------|----------|---------|------------------|----------|---------|
| | | White | Nonwhite | Total | White | Nonwhite | Total | White | Nonwhite | Total |
| 10 to 15 | 1940 | 104,086 | 22,517 | 126,603 | 97,822 | 21,900 | 119,722 | 201,908 | 44,417 | 246,325 |
| 20 to 25 | 1950 | 35,368 | 5,446 | 40,814 | 27,322 | 5,766 | 33,088 | 62,690 | 11,212 | 73,902 |
| Decrease in numbers | | 68,718 | 17,071 | 85,789 | 70,500 | 16,134 | 86,634 | 139,218 | 33,205 | 172,423 |
| Percentage decrease | | 66.0 | 75.8 | 67.8 | 72.1 | 73.7 | 72.4 | 69.0 | 74.8 | 70.0 |

¹ Source: Bureau of the Census reports.

magnitude of the annual loss of Texas farm youth to cities is difficult to determine, relatively recent data give a good indication of what is happening. The number of children on Texas farms between the ages of 10 and 15 in 1940 may be compared with the number living on farms between 20 and 25 years of age in 1950. Although a few will have died, the death rate at this age level is so low that the few expected deaths will be negligible. Thus, the resultant figures are a fairly reliable estimate of the actual net migration of youth from farms.

In Texas, 70 percent of the youth living on farms in 1940 were no longer farm residents in 1950 (Table 10). A slightly higher proportion of nonwhite youth left the farm than whites (74.8 and 69.0 percent, respectively). Practically all of the white youth who left the farm between 1940 and 1950 moved to a city within the State's boundaries. The number of white youth on farms decreased by 68,000. During the same period, the number of white youth in urban areas increased by 66,000. Among nonwhite youth, however, apparently fewer than half of those leaving farms moved to a city within the State's boundaries. In 1950, there were 33,000 fewer nonwhite youth on farms than in 1940, but the increase for nonwhite

youth in cities was only 16,000 for the same period. Since the number of nonwhite youth residing in rural nonfarm areas barely increased during the same period, indications are that at least 10,000 who moved from farms left the State entirely.

The relative ability of different sections of the State to hold their younger people on farms is shown in Figure 16. Economic area 1a had the smallest proportionate loss of farm youth between 1940 and 1950. Only about one-fourth (23 percent) left during the decade in area 1a, with a considerably larger share of the migrants being girls. The increase in irrigation in this area apparently opened up a number of new farming opportunities that were especially attractive to young men.

Area 13, in the eastern section of Texas, had the greatest loss of farm youth. Between 1940 and 1950, about 4 out of 5 (79.2 percent) of the farm youth in the area moved. Four other areas lost over three-fourths of their farm youth during the decade. Such large changes will continue to have marked effects upon the agricultural, residential and occupational shifts in Texas' population.



Location of field research units in Texas maintained by the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station and cooperating agencies

State-wide Research



The Texas Agricultural Experiment Station is the public agricultural research agency of the State of Texas, and is one of nine parts of the Texas A&M College System

IN THE MAIN STATION, with headquarters at College Station, are 16 subject-matter departments, 2 service departments, 3 regulatory services and the administrative staff. Located out in the major agricultural areas of Texas are 21 substations and 9 field laboratories. In addition, there are 14 cooperating stations owned by other agencies, including the Texas Forest Service, the Game and Fish Commission of Texas, the U. S. Department of Agriculture, University of Texas, Texas Technological College and the King Ranch. Some experiments are conducted on farms and ranches and in rural homes.

RESearch BY THE TEXAS STATION is organized by programs and projects. A program of research represents a coordinated effort to solve the many problems relating to a common objective or situation. A research project represents the procedures for attacking a specific problem within a program.

THE TEXAS STATION is conducting about 350 active research projects, grouped in 25 programs which include all phases of agriculture in Texas. Among these are: conservation and improvement of soils; conservation and use of water in agriculture; grasses and legumes for pastures, ranges, hay, conservation and improvement of soils; grain crops; cotton and other fiber crops; vegetable crops; citrus and other subtropical fruits, fruits and nuts; oil seed crops—other than cotton; ornamental plants—including turf; brush and weeds; insects; plant diseases; beef cattle; dairy cattle; sheep and goats; swine; chickens and turkeys; animal diseases and parasites; fish and game on farms and ranches; farm and ranch engineering; farm and ranch business; marketing agricultural products; rural home economics; and rural agricultural economics. Two additional programs are maintenance and upkeep, and central services.

RESearch RESULTS are carried to Texas farm and ranch owners and homemakers by specialists and county agents of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service.