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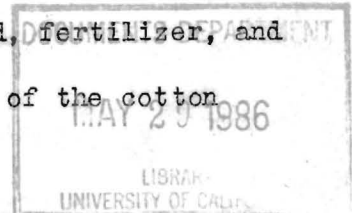
THE SOUTHERN NEGRO ON THE FARM

HIS PROBLEMS AND WHAT THE FSA IS DOING ABOUT THEM

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Farming is both a business and a way of life for half of all Negroes in America. Ninety-five percent of all Negro farm operators are in the South, and more than three-fourths of these are tenants. Farm tenants fall, roughly, into three classes:

1. Sharecroppers, who contribute labor only, receiving in return a share of the crop.
2. "Third and fourth" tenants, who supply equipment and bear some managerial responsibility and receive larger shares of the crop according to their contribution of feed, fertilizer, and equipment, a third of the corn and a fourth of the cotton being a common rental.
3. "Standing renters", who rent the land outright, paying for its use either in cash or produce.



In the South, one-half of all sharecroppers are Negroes. The number of Negro croppers exceeds the number of white croppers in Georgia, South Carolina, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Mississippi has three and one-half times as many Negro as white croppers; Louisiana has twice as many. In other states where the actual number of Negro croppers is less than the number of white croppers, the proportion of croppers within the racial group is much larger among Negroes than among whites. In Kentucky, for instance, where 30,258 white croppers constitute only 30 percent of white tenants, the 2,736 Negro croppers are 65 percent of Kentucky's Negro tenants.

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Revisions

The following figures should be substituted, as designated, for those used in The Southern Negro on the Farm:

- P. 4, line 6 Now reads: "and for this year were 26.4."
 Substitute: "and for 1938-39 were 26.4. Loans
 for 1938-39 were 23.0, making an average of
 20.0 for the first two years of operation."
- P. 4, Lines 13 and 14 Now reads: "More than 1,000 Negro families were
 living on such projects in January 1939."
 Substitute: "Nearly 1,800 Negro families were
 living on such projects in January 1940."
- P. F, line 9 After "area" add: "427 Negro families were farm-
 ing on ten rental cooperatives in January 1940.
 They constituted 47.0 percent of all families so
 located."

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Other states show even higher proportions. Mississippi's Negro tenants are 71 percent sharecroppers, and 82 percent of all Georgia's Negro tenants are in this class. Half of all Negro children growing to manhood and womanhood on Southern farms face the drudgery and neglect typical of most croppers' children of any race.

Chief among the evils which the poor man on the farm -- small owner, tenant or laborer -- has to face are poor housing, high mortality, insecurity and debt.

Bad housing and sanitation are reflected in hookworm and anemia. Faulty diets result in pellagra. The yearly toll from death and disease adds to the burden of indebtedness, while beneath all these hurtful conditions lies the menace of insecurity, crippling both landlord and tenant in any effort toward progress.

I. WHAT IS THE FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION AND WHAT IS IT DOING TO CORRECT SUCH CONDITIONS WHERE THEY EXIST?

A. What It Is:

1. It is an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture, set up to help needy farm families which are unable to get help elsewhere.

B. What It Does:

1. It makes rehabilitation loans, at 5 percent interest, for periods of one to five years. With such a loan, the farmer buys the things he needs to make a living from the land -- wagons, mules, milk cows, seed, fertilizer, etc. Usually included in the loan are reserve funds sufficient to provide

the family with food and clothing through a crop year. Farmers obtaining these loans cooperate with Farm Security Administration farm and home management supervisors in making and carrying out plans for each year's operations.

- a. Every farm plan calls for the production at home of enough food to supply the farm family with a properly balanced diet, thus preventing dietary diseases and improving general health.
- b. The farm plan also calls for the production at home of ample feed for the livestock, increasing the value of the stock and conserving cash.
- c. The plan calls for the conservation of the soil by sound farm practices, such as crop rotation, planting of cover crops, and erosion control.

Through rehabilitation loans, families are learning to keep their books, make their budgets, and live within them. Approximately 50,000 such loans, representing 12.5 percent of the total, have been made to Negro farmers in the last four years. Negro farmers are 12.6 percent of America's farm operators.

2. It enables selected renters, sharecroppers or farm laborers with energy, ambition and a good record to become established as owners on desirable land through long-time loans in larger amounts, repayable over a period of 40 years. Cooperative supervision is a part of all loan agreements. During the

first year of operation of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act -- 1937-38 -- 265 loans were made to Negro tenants, constituting 18.6 percent of the total for Regions IV, V, VI and VIII where Negroes on farms are found in appreciable numbers. Negro tenancy in this area is 34.1. Applications for 1937-38 were 19.3 percent of the total and for this year were 26.4

a. In actual figures there were five times as many Negro applications this year as last year -- 26,989 as compared with 5,089. Figures for whites rose proportionately.

3. It is trying to develop better social and economic patterns in agriculture by establishing homestead projects. Some of them are new communities, while others consist of scattered individual farms. More than 1,000 Negro families were living on such projects in January, 1939.

a. Farmsteads on these projects are provided with houses, barns, and out buildings. Representatives of the Farm Security Administration guide these homesteaders in their farm work, exactly as they help FSA rehabilitation borrowers.

b. In addition to this assistance, project farmers learn to farm cooperatively. Cooperative stores, gins and marketing services are acquainting them with the benefits of cooperatives.

c. Negro farmers, together with others, are profiting by this experience. They are established on 31 projects in 13

Southeastern States.

4. FSA also is setting up rental cooperatives, through which groups of tenants can improve their tenureship and living conditions by leasing large tracts of land through FSA loans, and operating them cooperatively, usually with an option to buy within a given period.
 - a. Thirty such rental cooperatives are being set up for operation in the Mississippi Delta area. Color ratio on these projects is determined by the need in the area.
 - b. Projects on which Negro youths can secure "internships" in modern farm practices are pointing the way for the coming generation.
 - c. By encouraging long-term written leases, FSA is trying to cure some of the worst evils of tenancy. Such leases benefit both owner and tenant, since they encourage better housing and better land use.
5. FSA supplies, without cost, a debt adjustment service which is available to all farmers. Volunteer local committees have arranged debt adjustments which have saved American farmers \$78,807,693 in the last four years. There is no racial breakdown on these figures, but case histories on file at Farm Security Administration offices show that Negro farmers especially are benefiting by this service.
6. It offers loans to small groups of farmers unable to purchase livestock, heavy farm equipment and other needed services in-

dividually, enabling them to purchase these for community use. Negroes are making increasing use of these community services.

7. It is releasing land to its proper use by limiting loans to farmers established on land suitable for cultivation, and by assisting in the relocation of farmers situated on sub-marginal or cut-over lands.
 - a. It is restoring land to cultivation through erosion control by its clients, and by instructing and directing its borrowers in soil-building practices.
8. It is shaping patterns in rural education, by providing adequate school buildings and equipment on many projects. State and County school authorities cooperate in supplying competent staffs to teach subjects carefully correlated with rural life. Negro tenants particularly are welcoming this educational guidance.
9. It is supplying medical aid through the establishment of group medical care associations, through which clients receive service of physicians and nurses at minimum rates, supplanting fear, neglect and superstition with skilled assistance.

III. HOW IS THIS PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE FSA AND THE FARMER DIRECTED?

- A. By close cooperation between FSA supervisors and borrowers, planning together for the development of each farm unit affected: the cash crop, garden produce, canning, farm procedure, and setting up of farm bookkeeping, including budget and inventory.

IV. WHAT HAVE BEEN THE RESULTS OF THIS PARTNERSHIP?

- A. Increased self-respect as evidenced by repayments -- often made ahead of time.

- B. Increases in net worth in terms of increased canning, livestock and equipment and improved diet and housing.
- C. General improvement in tenureship and in owner-tenant relationships.
- D. Increased ownership.
- E. Increased knowledge of modern agricultural methods.
- F. Improvement in health and living standards.

NOTE: The attached table shows the distribution among tenure groups of Negroes and whites in the fourteen Southern States, Maryland and Missouri -- the status of the Southern Negro on the farm.

COMPARATIVE FIGURES ON DISTRIBUTION OF FARM TENURESHIP
AMONG NEGROES AND WHITES IN SOUTH

Key: Upper figures white; lower figures Negro

STATE	FARM POPULATION (Individuals on Farms)		OWNERS		OPERATORS		TENANTS		CROPPERS	
		%		%		%		%		%
Maryland	241,596	85.2	28,798	91.3	39,595	88.9	9,976	82.3	1,061	63.8
	41,861	14.7	2,728	8.6	4,906	11.0	2,135	17.6	600	36.1
	<u>283,457</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>31,526</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>44,501</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>12,111</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>1,661</u>	<u>100</u>
Missouri	1,183,499	97.6								
	28,855	2.3								
	<u>1,212,354</u>	<u>100</u>								
Kentucky	1,307,816	96.7	170,609	97.6	270,048	97.0	99,028	95.9	30,258	91.6
	43,313	3.2	4,052	2.3	8,250	2.9	4,187	4.0	2,756	8.3
	<u>1,351,129</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>174,661</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>278,298</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>103,215</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>33,014</u>	<u>100</u>
N. Carolina	1,623,481	77.8	137,738	87.1	231,594	76.9	93,173	65.5	36,392	54.8
	460,986	22.1	20,373	12.8	69,373	23.0	48,985	34.4	30,001	45.1
	<u>2,084,467</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>158,111</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>300,967</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>142,158</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>66,393</u>	<u>100</u>
Tennessee	1,308,420	88.5	138,853	94.6	239,387	87.4	100,062	78.9	35,331	68.7
	169,917	11.4	7,843	5.3	31,396	12.5	26,545	20.9	16,096	31.2
	<u>1,478,337</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>146,696</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>270,783</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>126,607</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>51,427</u>	<u>100</u>
Virginia	1,053,469	79.6	110,477	79.9	151,421	78.1	42,874	73.4	12,137	66.5
	269,009	20.3	27,662	20.0	43,211	21.8	15,512	26.5	6,102	33.4
	<u>1,322,478</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>138,139</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>194,632</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>58,386</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>18,239</u>	<u>100</u>
W. Virginia	561,919	99.2	76,622	99.3	104,054	99.3	26,846	99.3	3,032	99.6
	4,255	.7	511	.6	693	.6	175	.6	11	.3
	<u>566,174</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>77,133</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>104,747</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>27,021</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>3,043</u>	<u>100</u>

STATE	FARM POPULATION (Individuals on Farms) %		OWNERS %		OPERATORS %		TENANTS %		CROPPERS %	
Alabama	1,138,074	69.8	80,983	83.7	182,180	66.6	100,705	57.1	34,717	51.0
	490,706	30.1	15,709	16.2	91,275	33.3	75,542	42.8	33,257	48.9
	<u>1,628,780</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>96,692</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>273,455</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>176,247</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>67,974</u>	<u>100</u>
Florida	319,658	78.8	42,627	86.2	60,093	82.4	14,777	71.3	3,153	67.4
	85,579	21.1	6,792	13.7	12,764	17.5	5,922	28.6	1,521	32.5
	<u>405,237</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>49,419</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>72,857</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>20,699</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>4,674</u>	<u>100</u>
Georgia	1,405,944	72.7	74,626	87.5	177,259	70.7	101,649	61.8	41,672	44.7
	525,613	27.2	10,571	12.4	73,285	29.2	62,682	38.1	51,404	55.2
	<u>1,931,557</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>85,197</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>250,544</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>164,331</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>93,076</u>	<u>100</u>
S. Carolina	948,435	65.0	43,548	70.3	88,967	53.7	44,802	43.5	16,001	34.0
	510,031	34.9	18,394	29.6	76,537	46.2	58,124	56.4	31,046	65.9
	<u>1,458,466</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>61,942</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>165,504</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>102,926</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>47,047</u>	<u>100</u>
Arkansas	1,180,238	78.6	89,319	88.7	181,713	71.8	91,819	60.5	24,625	37.5
	321,067	21.3	11,313	11.2	71,300	28.1	59,940	39.4	40,978	62.4
	<u>1,501,305</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100,632</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>253,013</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>151,759</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>65,603</u>	<u>100</u>
Louisiana	859,351	69.8	50,481	82.3	99,901	58.6	48,921	45.1	16,706	33.2
	371,140	30.1	10,839	17.6	70,315	41.3	59,456	54.8	33,513	66.7
	<u>1,230,491</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>61,320</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>170,216</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>108,377</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>50,219</u>	<u>100</u>
Mississippi	1,332,981	64.9	71,936	77.1	142,677	45.7	69,871	32.1	30,757	22.4
	719,114	35.0	21,288	22.8	169,006	54.2	147,693	67.8	106,156	77.5
	<u>2,052,095</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>93,224</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>311,683</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>217,564</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>136,913</u>	<u>100</u>
Oklahoma	1,015,562	91.1	75,127	91.7	195,501	91.6	119,615	91.5	10,959	80.2
	98,636	8.8	6,762	8.2	17,824	8.3	11,046	8.4	2,681	19.6
	<u>1,114,198</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>81,889</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>213,325</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>130,661</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>13,650</u>	<u>100</u>
Texas	2,332,693	85.7	190,640	90.1	429,232	85.6	235,162	82.1	50,793	66.4
	387,986	14.2	20,800	9.8	71,785	14.3	50,941	17.8	25,675	33.5
	<u>2,720,679</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>211,440</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>501,017</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>286,103</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>76,468</u>	<u>100</u>

LAND TENURE TOTALS FOR THE 14 SOUTHERN STATES

	Owners	%
All	1,536,525	100.0
White	1,353,586	88.1
Colored	182,939	11.9

	All Classes of Tenants	%
All	1,815,054	100.0
White	1,188,304	65.5
Colored	626,750	34.5

	Operators Reporting	%
All	3,367,041	100.0
White	2,557,027	76.0
Colored	810,014	24.0

NOTE:

All owners plus all tenants equal, approximately, the number listed as operators. There is some overlapping in farm census returns, causing a slight difference in the figures for operators reporting and the total for tenants plus owners.

	Sharecroppers	%
All	727,780	100.0
White	346,583	47.7
Colored	381,197	52.3

	Other Tenants	%
All	1,087,274	100.0
White	841,721	77.5
Colored	245,553	22.2

SUMMARY OF SOUTHERN NEGRO TABLES