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APPENDIX G

NONFARM POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS, 1890-1950

It is impossible to devise a completely consistent series on nonfarm population and households for census dates between 1890 and 1950. The series presented in Table 23 and used throughout this study have been reconciled as much as available data permit but still contain some inconsistencies. The broad movements should not be obscured, however, by the variations in coverage.

Three problems are inherent in the available data. The first two relate to the inclusion or exclusion of urban farm families and quasi households in the series. The third relates to a change in the farm-nonfarm definition in 1950.

The official series on nonfarm households excludes the number of urban farm households in the years 1890-1920. The nonfarm population estimates for 1890 and 1900 were derived in this monograph by subtracting total farm population, as estimated in a study prepared by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, from total population. The residual nonfarm population thus excludes urban farm population. The official estimate of nonfarm population for 1910, presented in *Historical Statistics*, is similarly derived, by subtracting total farm population from total population. The residual nonfarm population again excludes urban farm families. In 1920 the urban farm population is segregated in the census figures, so that nonfarm population for that year can be defined either inclusive or exclusive of urban farm population. Since the nonfarm household data for 1920 are exclusive of urban farm households, it seemed desirable, for the sake of consistency, to exclude them from the population estimates. Thus from 1890 to 1920 both series presented in Table 23 exclude urban farmers.

For 1930 and 1940 the nonfarm household count, as reported by the Census Bureau, includes urban farmers. The urban farm population is identified again in census figures for those years. They are included in the population data in Table 23 so that the coverage of the two series for these years will be consistent.

For 1950 the preliminary reports of the Census Bureau currently available do not segregate urban farm population or households; both figures as presented in the table include urban farmers. Thus for the years 1930-1950 both series in Table 23 include urban farm population.

The 1890, 1910, and 1920 census figures on nonfarm households, listed in the table, include the small number of quasi households existent in those years. In 1900 and 1930-1950 the household count presented in Table 23 excludes quasi households, although for 1900 and 1930 a separate count of quasi households was made, albeit on

differing definitions. For 1930, the last year for which data on the number of quasi households are available, the total number of quasi households amounted to less than a third of 1 per cent of the number of nonfarm households.¹ Thus the error due to inconsistency in the coverage of the household series is negligible.

The differences resulting from inclusion or exclusion of the population in nonfarm quasi households are more serious. In 1930, for example, the population in nonfarm quasi households amounted to 2½ per cent of the nonfarm household population.² In 1950 it amounted to about 4½ per cent of the nonfarm household population.³ Accordingly, consistent treatment of quasi households in the population series is essential.

In 1890, 1900, and 1910 the nonfarm population series given in Table 23 are gross of population in nonfarm quasi households. There is no way of separating the population of quasi households in those years since the nonfarm figures were obtained as a residual by subtracting farm population from total population. In 1920, when the nonfarm population was directly counted by the Census Bureau, no distinction was drawn between household and quasi-household nonfarm population; the nonfarm population count in that year thus includes quasi-household population.

In 1930, 1940, and 1950, population in quasi households was segregated by the Census Bureau, so nonfarm population can be defined either way. To make the population series for those years comparable to the series for the preceding four census years, it was necessary to utilize the total nonfarm population figures including quasi-household population. The nonfarm population series in Table 23, therefore, includes nonfarm quasi-household population.

In 1950 the Census Bureau definition of farm population differed from that used in earlier years. The most important change was the exclusion from the farm population in 1950 of persons "living in houses on farms, the occupants of which pay cash rent for the house and yard only without any farm land."⁴ Such persons were considered part of the farm population in the censuses prior to 1950. Although the Bureau of Agricultural Economics has developed revised estimates of the farm population back to 1910 based on the new definition, apparently no comparable estimates of farm and nonfarm households for the years before 1950 have been prepared, and no estimates of nonfarm popula-

¹ *Fifteenth Census of the United States*, Bureau of the Census, 1930, Vol. VI, p. 10.

² *Fifteenth Census of the United States*, 1930, Vol. VI, p. 10.

³ *Census of Population 1950*, Bureau of the Census, Report P-B1, pp. 1-97.

⁴ *Revised Estimates of the Farm Population of the United States: 1910 to 1950*, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Series Census-BAE, No. 16.

tion or households for 1890 and 1900 based on the new definition are available. Further, the changes in the farm population series before 1940 involve only a minor adjustment, primarily designed to shift the series to a consistent April level. The major changes are confined to the second half of the 1940-1950 decade. Accordingly, both the population and household series in Table 23 are based on the old farm-nonfarm definition from 1890 through 1940, and both are based on the new definition in 1950.