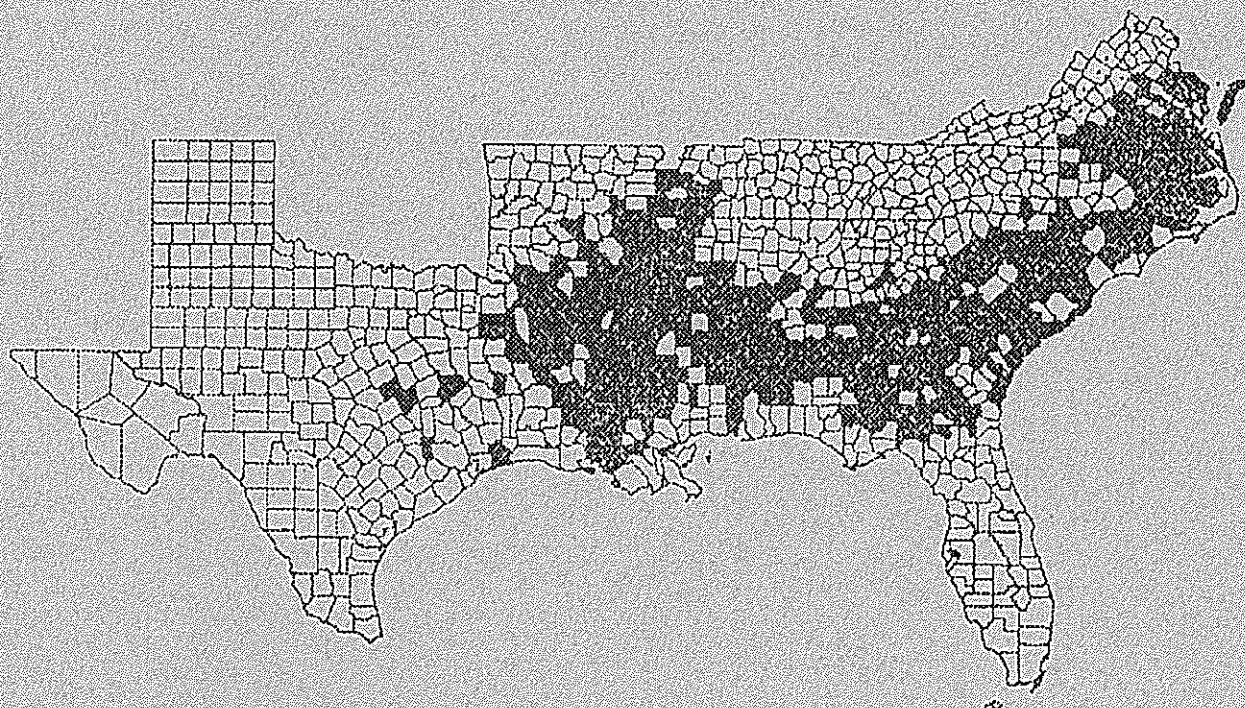


# **FOCUS ON BLACK BELT COUNTIES: LIFE CONDITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

*Proceedings of a Preconference of the  
50th Annual Professional Agricultural Workers Conference  
Tuskegee University*

*December 5-6, 1992*



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## **Editors**

**Ntam Baharanyi, Robert Zabawa, Walter Hill  
Tuskegee University  
and  
Ronald C. Wimberley  
North Carolina State University**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i> .....	1
<i>Current Conditions and Trends in the Southern Black Belt</i>	
Libby V. Morris, Ronald C. Wimberley, and Douglas C. Bachtel .....	5
<i>Demographic Changes in the Black Belt of Alabama: 1880-1990</i>	
Selwyn Hollingsworth .....	13
<i>Past-Present Conditions and Future Issues in the Black Belt of the South</i>	
Ejigou Demissie .....	25
<i>New Perspectives: Future Directions for Limited Resource Farmers</i>	
Samuel Scott, Magid A. Dagher, and Dennis O. Balogu .....	37
<i>The Economic Importance of Agriculture in Alabama's Black Belt</i>	
Melise D. Huggins, Stephen H. Kolison, and Ntam Baharanyi .....	45
<i>Environmental Justice: Mobilization of a Social Movement</i>	
Conner Bailey and Charles E. Faupel .....	51
<i>From Cotton Plantation to Pine Plantation: Forest Dependence in Alabama's Black Belt</i>	
John C. Bliss and Glenn R. Howze .....	61
<i>Opportunities for the 1890s in a Time of Qualitative Change</i>	
Rosalind P. Harris and Louis Swanson .....	69
<b>Appendix A</b>	
Work Group Report .....	77
<b>Appendix B</b>	
Letter from the Preconference Participants to the Council of 1890 Presidents .....	81
<b>Appendix C</b>	
List of Participants .....	83

## INTRODUCTION

A history of plantation agriculture, slavery, the Civil War, sharecropping, and poor socioeconomic and life conditions pervades the Southern Black Belt. Unfortunately, this history of rural poverty and disadvantage—although often forgotten or outright ignored—has not ended. The Black Belt's long legacy still constrains it.

The problems of the Black Belt affect the larger South and, to a considerable extent, the social progress and achievement of well-being for the nation as a whole. The Black Belt's trappings of impoverishment are unlikely to go away just because they are forgotten or ignored.

No doubt, the levels of change needed to turn its historic course will have to be actively and deliberately pursued by agencies, foundations, the private economic sector, religious and public interest groups, and the various levels of government. Change will require targeted programs that draw upon sound rural policies which, for maximum effectiveness and efficiency, must be grounded in good research. From the beginning to the end of this process—from the research through the outreach programs—there are roles for the land-grant universities throughout the historic, Black Belt region.

The idea for this Professional Agricultural Workers Conference (PAWC) preconference originated with McKinley Mayes of the USDA Cooperative State Research Service. He saw in the work of Ron Wimberley, Libby Morris, and Doug Bachtel an opportunity to redirect the attention of the land-grant system to the neglected, rural Black Belt.

Once this concept for the preconference was discussed and adopted by the PAWC Program Committee, support from the Farm Foundation, the Southern Rural Development Center, and the Cooperative State Research Service was quickly granted. As in the past, these organizations stood ready to strengthen research and extension of the land-grant system for the sake of rural places, institutions, and people left behind.

Approximately 60 rural social scientists and administrators met Saturday and Sunday, December 5 and 6, 1992, to examine the plight of the Black Belt and to explore potential opportunities for it. Indeed, the title of the preconference was, "Focus on Black Belt Counties: Life Conditions and Opportunities." Its purpose was to generate interaction and to develop initiatives through presentations, work group sessions, and discussion.

The studies in this volume report much of what took place. There are eight papers, the work group reports, and the draft of a collectively written letter to be transmitted to the new administration in Washington, D.C. A list of the preconference participants is appended as well.

Morris and her colleagues begin by reminding us that as agricultural mechanization and new technologies emerged, widespread farm employment quickly declined for both blacks and whites. Still, the Black Belt remains as a social and demographic crescent of southern geography that contains a significant concentration of black people. It is an area that individually and collectively continues to show poor life conditions on a number of measures such as personal income, unemployment, food stamp recipients, the poverty level, and births to teenage mothers. This analysis concludes with a call for a regional strategy for change.

Hollingsworth focuses on demographic changes in the Black Belt of Alabama for the 1890-1990 period. He asserts and shows that the drop in the need for farm workers, together with the decline of agriculture in general, has resulted in economic stagnation in many Black Belt counties. Outmigration has resulted in the loss of over one million Alabama residents. While outmigration among the region's whites over the last half

century has been almost inconsequential, this has not been the case for the black population. And since the economic factor typically weighs heavily on the decision to migrate, it is obvious that economic conditions in the Black Belt during a large part of the present century have not been conducive to retaining the less prosperous segment of its population.

Analyses by Demissie and by Scott, Dagher, and Balogu concentrate on minority and limited resource farmers, the land grant system and programs to examine past-present conditions, and future directions for Black Belt development. Demissie reminds us that many black farm operators in the South managed to acquire farmland. Thereafter, however, black farm ownership and the control of land and other resources such as capital have been severely limited due to systematic discrimination in land sales and farm credit. Various laws (the Morrill Act, Hatch Act, and Smith-Lever Act) passed through the years and applied disproportionately have continued to have a devastating effect on blacks and black farm operators in terms of farm numbers, funding at 1890 land-grant institutions, education, labor force participation, and income. In attempting to focus on possible solutions to the problems that limited resource farmers face, Scott et al. argue that there is need to focus on market oriented aspects. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), they add, must be creative, aggressive and innovative in developing strategies that are structurally and functionally integrated, and applied on a regional basis.

Huggins, Kolison, and Baharanyi use input-output methodology to put in quantitative perspective the importance of agriculture in the Alabama Black Belt. The agricultural industry still contributes to the Black Belt regional economy in terms of output, value-added, employment and income, but the manufacturing industry more consistently contributes higher value to the regional economy.

Bailey and Faupel change gears to address the issue of group interaction among key actors in the environmental justice movement, namely in the civil rights and environmental alliance. Case study materials from Mississippi and Alabama are presented to show the strength of this alliance at the grassroots level. In terms of organizational evolution, the environmental justice movement has not yet reached the institutional stage, but it is rapidly gaining organizational strength. It is still a local movement characterized by rhetoric, passion and anger, but sufficiently distinct from the environmental and civil rights movements.

Bliss and Howze examine the importance of timber that has been replacing cotton in the Alabama Black Belt economy. They conclude that poverty in the Black Belt will not be alleviated through forest-based economic development alone because the causes of poverty are too varied and complex. More particularly, the structure of forest ownership in the region, the nature of the wood harvesting and transportation business, and the lack of secondary manufacturing are all constraints to the potential contribution of forest-based development.

Harris and Swanson start by reminding everyone that land-grant universities may be in need of mission adjustments. There has been a structural transformation in agriculture characterized by the continued degradation of the environment and increased marginalization of rural nonfarm working people relative to the best paying jobs of the national economy. The related new agendas that include off-farm environmental concerns, consumer/food safety issues and rural development, represent new opportunities for all land-grant universities. These will require institutional organization and a shift in consciousness for 1890 institutions, for example, to consider their legacies as assets rather than millstones, and to be willing to transform these legacies into a broader agenda to also address the struggles of non-black southerners. There is a window of opportunity that will not be open indefinitely for the 1890 institutions and Tuskegee University, to address rural development issues for the Black Belt.

Preconference participants interacted in groups as well. Reports of the work group sessions follow in Appendix A. Participants also decided to initiate an effort through the 1890 Council of Presidents to bring the life conditions and opportunities of the Black Belt counties to the attention of the incoming Clinton administration

(Appendix B). The result of this initiative appears to have been incorporated in the overall report of the 1890 Council of Presidents to the Secretary of Agriculture.

Booker T. Washington initiated the first series of Tuskegee conferences 100 years ago in 1892. In addition, the PAWC, as successor to Washington's original series, marks its fiftieth anniversary in the present year. We hope it is more than coincidental that the 1992 Black Belt preconference—"Focus on Black Counties: Life Conditions and Opportunities"—falls on this centennial and golden anniversary.

And in another 50 years, we hope this preconference might be celebrated as a significant event that helped launch a golden era of life conditions and opportunities for those of the historically disadvantaged Southern Black Belt.

We would like to thank the Farm Foundation, the Southern Rural Development Center, and the USDA Cooperative State Research Service for the financial, logistical, and other support provided to the preconference. Thanks also to the Tuskegee University PAWC Planning Committee for its hard work on this workshop, to S. Julie Ngola for preparing the manuscript for publication, to Marie Loretan for assisting with technical editing, and to all the others who have contributed in one way or another to this document.

The Editors

## **CURRENT CONDITIONS AND TRENDS IN THE SOUTHERN BLACK BELT<sup>1</sup>**

**Libby V. Morris**  
**The University of Georgia**

**Ronald C. Wimberley**  
**North Carolina State University**

**Douglas C. Bachtel**  
**The University of Georgia**

### **Introduction**

Farming remained a major livelihood in the South after the Civil War. It persisted as part of the region's special history of slavery followed by farm tenancy. But as agricultural mechanization and new technologies emerged, widespread farm employment quickly declined for both blacks and whites.

With displacement from farming, record numbers of people left the rural South for the urban North. Many people stayed, however, and the historic Black Belt region still exists across the 11 southern states.

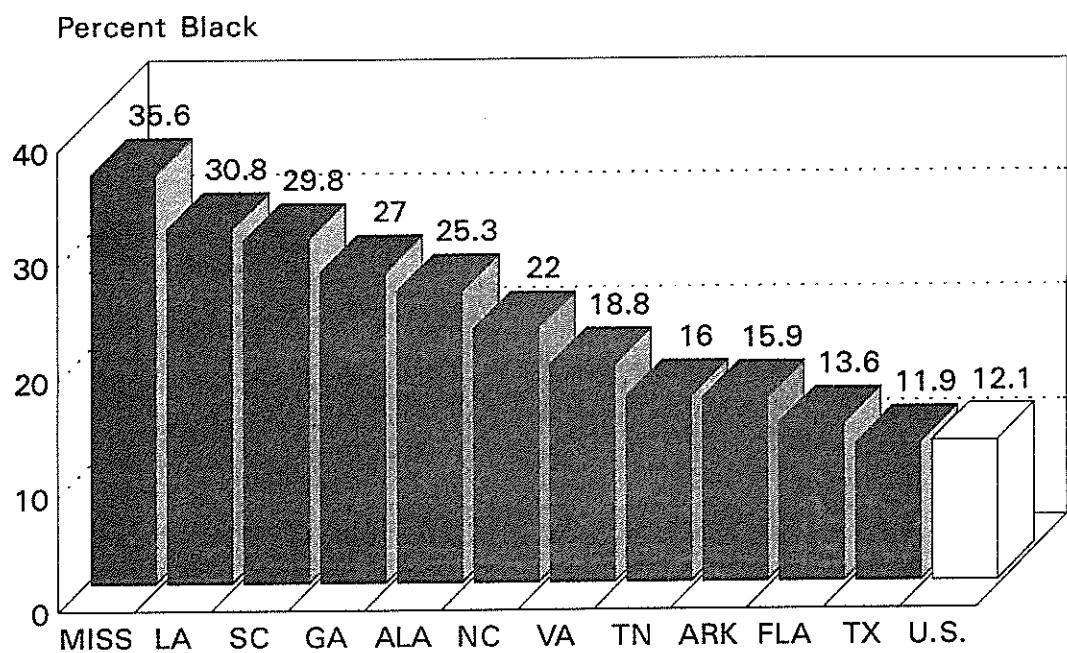
The term, Black Belt, brings several meanings to mind. Some use the term for a band of black soil in Mississippi and Alabama. But, as a social concept, it refers to a settlement pattern of people in the South. Historically, the Black Belt has been defined as places with a black population majority at the time of the Civil War. Those areas stretched from Virginia to Texas and, for practical purposes, covered the old plantation region of the South.

The contemporary Black Belt is a social and demographic crescent of southern geography that contains a significant concentration of black people. Today, the Black Belt consists of counties in the South with higher than average percentages of black residents in Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and Tennessee (Wimberley et al., 1991, 1992). A total of 13.5 million—45 percent of all African-Americans—lives in these states (Figure 1). Nationwide, blacks comprise 12.1 percent of the population and amount to 30 million people.

Across the Black Belt states, 603 counties have more than the national average of 12.1 percent black population. Almost 400 counties have 25 percent or more black residents. These counties—containing over twice the national percentage—form a fairly distinct region (Map 1). Geographically this area amounts to about 200,000 square miles, and most of its counties are rural. The rest of this paper focuses on quality of life conditions and state rankings in the Black Belt and suggestions for future directions.

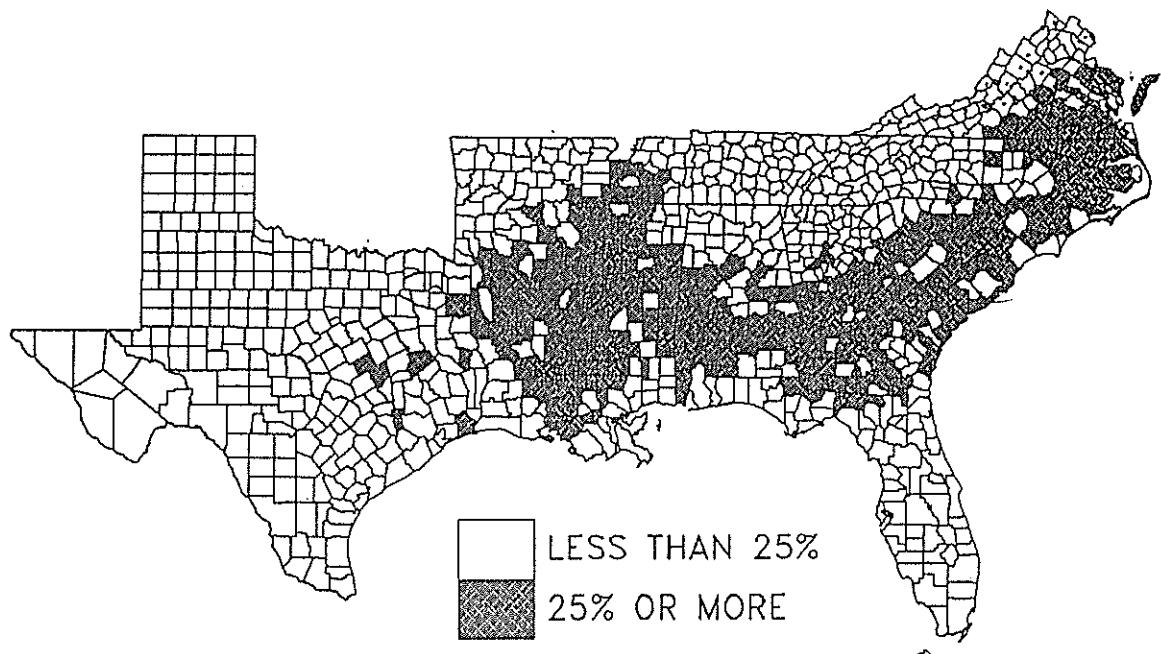
### **Quality of Life in the Black Belt**

Following the large outmigrations from the South during the 1940s through the 1960s, analyses of the southern region and the United States found the South to be a major region for poor socioeconomic conditions. National maps of socioeconomic well-being after the great outmigration (Ross et al., 1979; U.S. Department of Commerce 1977, 1980) showed the South to be the nation's largest region for low family incomes, poverty, low educational levels, crowded and rented housing, inadequate plumbing, and the like. The South was also distinctive in high cardiovascular mortality. Various indicators showed the South as low in desirable quality of life and high in factors indicating low quality of life.



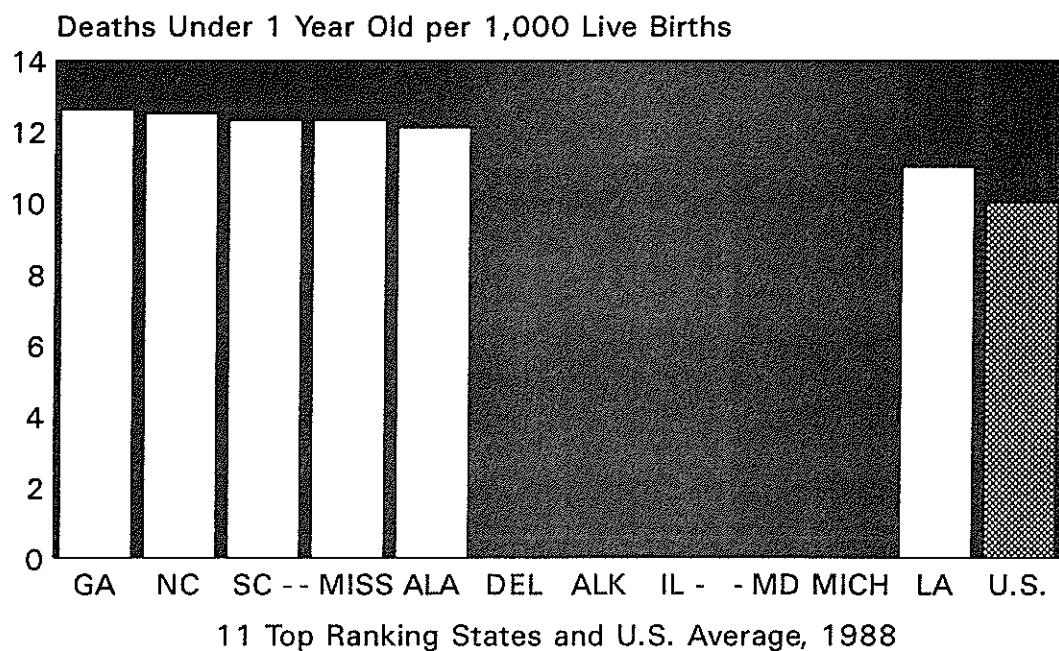
Source: Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1991

**Figure 1: Percent Black Population for Black Belt States and U.S., 1990**



Source: 1990 U. S. Census. See Wimberley, Morris, and Bachtel (1992).

**Map 1: The Southern Black Belt: Black Population as a Percent of Total Population, 1990.**



Source: Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1991

**Figure 2: State Rankings in Infant Mortality Rate**

Individually and collectively, the southern states continue to show poor life conditions on a number of measures. At one time, it may have been assumed that poor conditions of the South would disappear with outmigration and the emergence of social welfare programs for those left behind. However, a look at current data on several socioeconomic and life conditions and the southern states' rankings shows that, overall, the region continues to lag behind other states in quality of life.

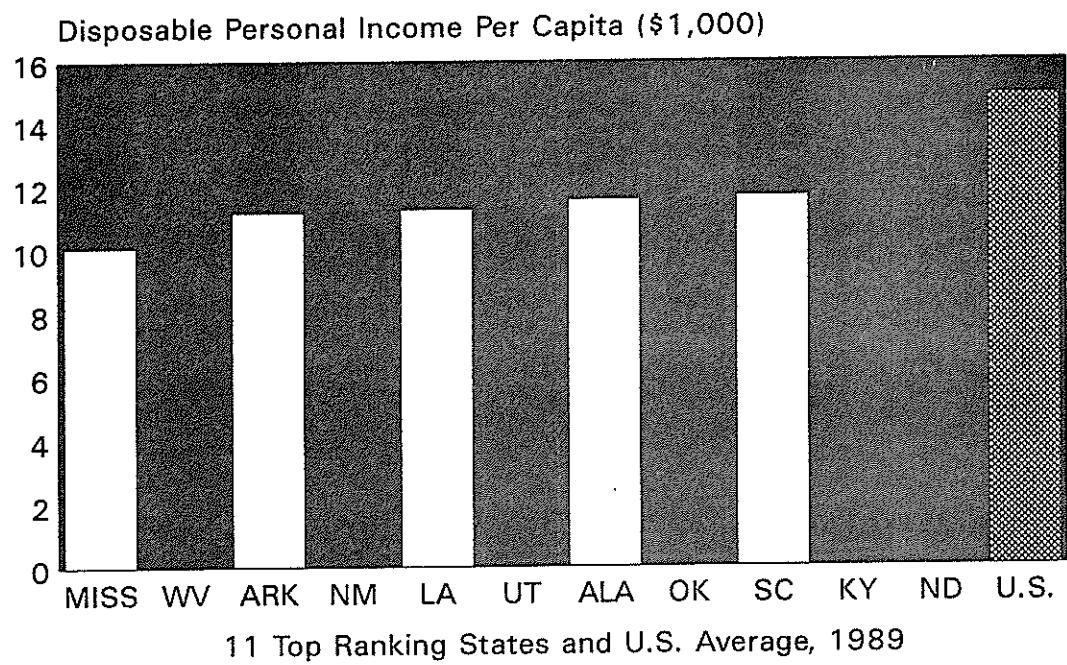
#### State Rankings in Quality of Life

Six southern states—Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana—rank in the top in infant mortality. Randomly, about two of the 11 Black Belt States--2.42 to be exact--may be expected to rank among the worst 11 in a given characteristic. The odds of six occurring among these particular 11 are one in 100.

As shown in Figure 2, Georgia has the highest infant mortality rate, North Carolina is second; South Carolina and Mississippi are tied for third and fourth, Alabama ranks fifth, and Louisiana is eleventh and tied with a nonsouthern state. Infant mortality is perhaps the most common indicator of poor life conditions. These southern states are well above the 10 deaths for infants less than one year old per 1,000 live births.

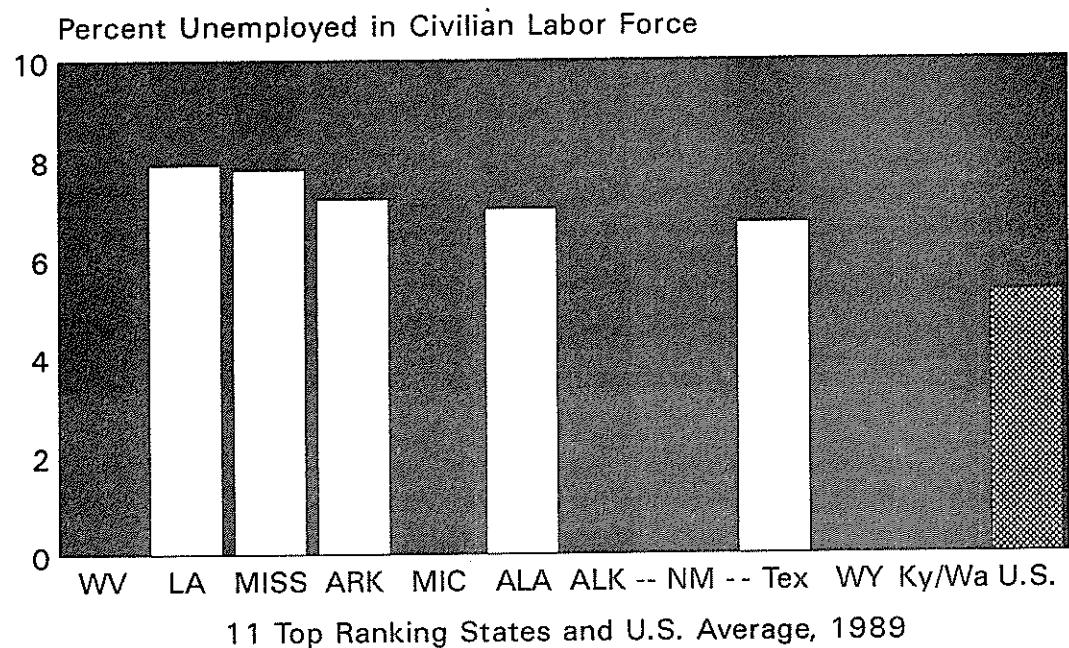
Using personal income as a socioeconomic indicator, five of these 11 southern states fall into the lowest 11 nationally (Figure 3). These are Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Alabama, and South Carolina. The odds of this occurring are one in 40.

For unemployment (Figure 4), the same holds true for Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Alabama, and Texas which rank in the worst 11 states.



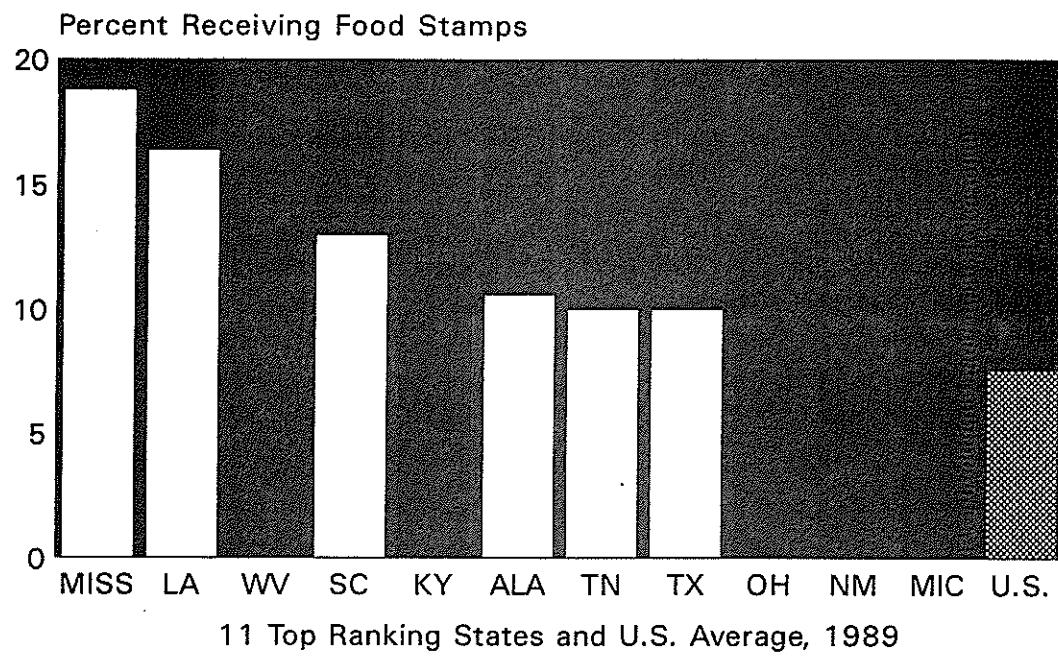
Source: Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1991

**Figure 3: State Rankings in Disposable Personal Income**



Source: Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1991

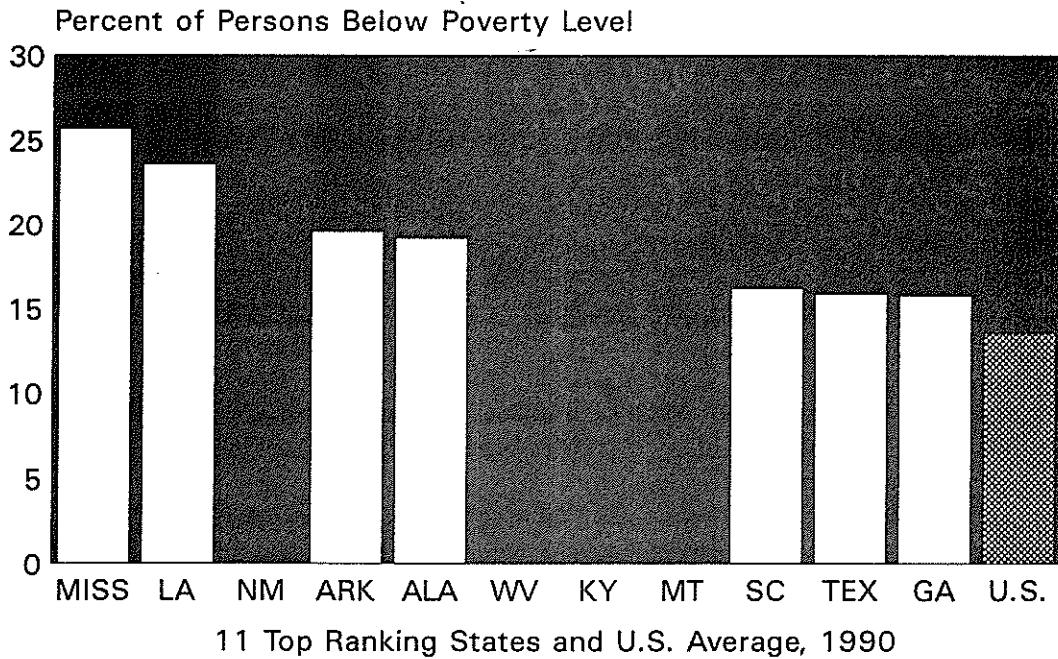
**Figure 4: State Rankings in Unemployment Rate**



Source: Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1991

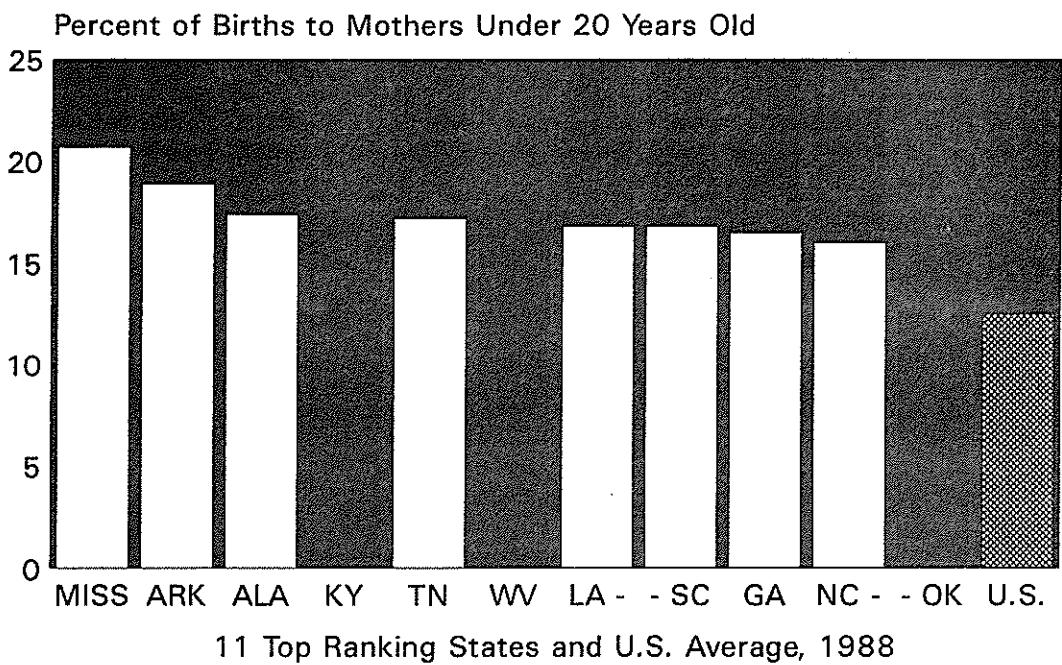
**Figure 5: State Rankings in Food Stamp Recipients**

Six states—Mississippi, Louisiana, South Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, and Texas—rank in the top 11 in food stamp recipients (Figure 5). By chance, this would occur one time out of 100 random samplings. Seven—Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama, South Carolina, Texas, and Georgia—receive top-11 ratings in poverty (Figure 6) for a probability of less than one in 1,000. And eight states—Mississippi,



Source: Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1992

**Figure 6: State Rankings in Percent of Population in Poverty**



Source: Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1991

**Figure 7: State Rankings in Percent of Births to Mothers Under 20**

Arkansas, Alabama, Tennessee, Louisiana, South Carolina, Georgia, and North Carolina—rank highest in percentages of births to women under 20 years of age (Figure 7). The probability that this set of rankings is accidental is far less than one of 1,000.

Based upon the data and graphs considered here, we conclude that the state rankings in these conditions are not simply accidental occurrences but are due to the social and economic history of the United States and the Black Belt region.

#### Future Directions

The Black Belt reveals several important features. First, it is a fairly distinct region across the South with a large number and proportion of black residents. Second, the regional characteristics of the Black Belt counties persist despite changes in agriculture and industry which have swept across the South. Third, the region spans states which collectively exhibit some of the lowest standings in quality of life. Finally, the region is basically rural. In fact, 93 percent of all rural Blacks live in the South. Over five million blacks live in the Black Belt's nonmetropolitan counties. This exceeds the total population of the nation's seven smallest states.

In examining quality of life indicators, within-state differences range widely. Images of suburban affluence and inner-city poverty across the nation readily come to mind. So do contrasts between counties inside and outside the Black Belt of the 11 states.

But what are the current characteristics of the Black Belt region within these states? Is the subregion below or above its 11 states in quality of life measures? Again, county maps of conditions from the 1970s (Ross et al., 1979; U.S. Department of Commerce 1977; 1980) show that places with the most impoverished conditions correspond remarkably with localities having the highest concentrations of black residents.

No one has systematically assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the contemporary Black Belt. A future direction of the research underway here is to examine both intrastate differences and interstate similarities across the Black Belt states and region. The problems indicated by the data at hand are not the problems of merely one community or state. They appear as regional problems with implications for our national well-being.

The Appalachian Regional Commission helps that rural region; the Tennessee Valley Authority aids that area. But there has never been a comprehensive Black Belt commission to deal with the problems of this unique region.

If the Appalachian poor of the 1970s were the people left behind, those of today's Black Belt are the people left out. The historic Black Belt and its people—black and white—deserve an effective, regional strategy for change.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>This analysis draws in part from earlier findings by the authors (Wimberley et al., 1991, 1992) and partly from a forthcoming analysis of life conditions in Black Belt counties (Wimberley and Morris, 1993). The research is a contribution to the Southern Rural Development Center grant, "The Black Belt of the Rural South: Dependence, Persistence, and Policy," and to Cooperative State Research Service Regional Project S-246, "The Transformation of Agriculture: Technology, Natural Resources, and Policy Implications."

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## **DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES IN THE BLACK BELT OF ALABAMA: 1880-1990**

**Selwyn Hollingsworth**  
**University of Alabama**

### **Introduction**

Population changes in any given area result from the interplay of three major factors: births, deaths, and migration. Most areas at any point in time are characterized by an excess of births over deaths, or what is referred to as a "natural increase." Migration, however, is often the chief determinant of population gains and losses.

This paper examines demographic change in the Black Belt region of Alabama during the last 11 decades, specifically that occurring from 1880 through 1990. Although the data analyzed for years prior to 1930 are limited to population counts of persons by race, those since that time include estimates of net migration. It is this component of population change, or an excess of those moving out over those moving in, that has been the key factor in the overall decline that has characterized the black sector of the region's population over the past 60 years<sup>1</sup>.

The term "Black Belt," when used in the South, evokes images of cotton fields, large plantations, slave labor, and darkly colored soil. Several Southern states—in addition to Alabama—contain areas which are a part of the Black Belt, including Georgia and Mississippi. When the initial research for this report was undertaken, the investigator possessed only a general idea about the location of Alabama's Black Belt. As a starting point, it was assumed that the area's boundaries began south of Tuscaloosa County and extended from east to west from one state line to the other. It was not clear, however, as to whether all counties in the southern portion of the state were included or only some. At the conclusion of the investigation, a much fuller, yet still somewhat imprecise notion had emerged concerning the meaning of the term.

The present dilemma in operationally defining the term Black Belt is simply a reflection of the problems that others have encountered in attempting to delineate the area. Two types of definitions have evolved over the years. The first, and to some the only genuine definition of the term, is governed totally by soil coloration. When this criterion is employed, the region encompasses an area of black soil (the remains of a prehistoric lake bed) extending in a band across the south-central section of the state. The Alabama Development Office (ADO) is an example of a state agency that utilizes this approach. According to the ADO, the Black Belt comprises 16 counties that span the southern section of the state from the Georgia-Alabama border to Mississippi (see Table 1)<sup>2</sup>. Bogue and Beale (1961), in a project sponsored jointly by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Bureau of the Census, have also used soil coloration as a basis for regional identification. In this delineation, the Black Belt basically corresponds to State Economic Area 6, a grouping of 10 counties that (like the ADO listing) are all located in south Alabama (see Table 1)<sup>3</sup>. If the definition of Black Belt is based simply on soil coloration, however, the question arises as to why one delineation includes 16 counties and the other only 10.

The other definition is based on the racial composition of the population. An early attempt to utilize this approach was that of V.O. Key, a Southern political scientist. Key, in his definition, included those Alabama counties wherein blacks totaled 50 percent or more of the total population in 1940<sup>4</sup>. The number of counties that met this criterion totaled 14, all of which were located in south Alabama (see Table 1). Later political scientists, sociologists, and demographers (e.g., Kline et al., 1986, and Lee, 1988) have employed similar approaches<sup>5</sup>.

Most previous researchers, therefore, have based their definitions of Black Belt on only one factor, that is, either soil coloration or a high concentration of Blacks. Bogie and Harrison provide a notable exception in which they combine physiographic criteria and majority black population in the development of their indicator<sup>6</sup>. Their delineation includes 11 counties that, like other configurations, stretch across the south-central portion of the state. The current paper adopts a similar strategy, yet places a third factor in the equation. Thus, "plantation agriculture" is added to "majority black" (i.e., 50 percent or more black in the 1880-1910 era) and "black soil coloration" as a criterion for inclusion in the Black Belt.

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**Table 1: Alabama's Black Belt Counties, Various Delineations**

ADO (N=16)	Bogue/Beale (N=10)	Key (N=14)	Cotton <sup>a</sup> (N=14)	Slaves <sup>b</sup> (N=21)
Barbour	Bullock	Barbour	Autauga	Autauga
Bullock	Dallas	Bullock	Barbour	Barbour
Butler	Greene	Choctaw	Chambers	Butler
Choctaw	Hale	Dallas	Dallas	Chambers
Dallas	Lowndes	Greene	Greene	Choctaw
Greene	Marengo	Hale	Lowndes	Clarke
Hale	Montgomery	Lowndes	Macon	Conecuh
Lowndes	Perry	Macon	Marengo	Dallas
Macon	Sumter	Marengo	Montgomery	Greene
Marengo	Wilcox	Monroe	Perry	Lowndes
Montgomery		Perry	Pickens	Marengo
Perry		Russell	Russell	Macon
Pickens		Sumter	Sumter	Monroe
Russell		Wilcox	Wilcox	Montgomery
Sumter				Perry
Wilcox				Pickens
				Russell
				Sumter
				Tallapoosa
				Wilcox

**Table 1 (Cont.): Alabama's Black Belt Counties, Various Delineations**

1880 <sup>c</sup> (N=22)	1890 <sup>c</sup> (N=20)	1900 & 1910 <sup>c</sup> (N=21)	1920 <sup>a</sup> (N=19)	1930 & 1940 <sup>c</sup> (N=18)
Autauga	Autauga	Autauga	Autauga	Autauga
Barbour	Barbour	Barbour	Barbour	Barbour
Butler	Bullock	Bullock	Bullock	Bullock
Chambers	Chambers	Butler	Choctaw	Choctaw
Choctaw	Choctaw	Chambers	Clarke	Clarke
Clarke	Clarke	Choctaw	Dallas	Dallas
Conecuh	Dallas	Clarke	Greene	Greene
Dallas	Greene	Dallas	Hale	Hale
Elmore	Hale	Greene	Lee	Lee
Greene	Lee	Hale	Lowndes	Lowndes
Hale	Lowndes	Lee	Macon	Macon
Lee	Macon	Lowndes	Marengo	Marengo
Lowndes	Marengo	Macon	Monroe	Monroe
Marengo	Monroe	Marengo	Montgomery	Montgomery
Macon	Montgomery	Monroe	Perry	Perry
Monroe	Perry	Montgomery	Pickens	Russell
Montgomery	Pickens	Perry	Russell	Sumter
Perry	Russell	Pickens	Sumter	Wilcox
Pickens	Sumter	Russell	Wilcox	
Russell	Wilcox	Sumter		
Sumter		Wilcox		
Wilcox				

<sup>a</sup>Counties with cotton production totaling 10,000 or more 400-pound bales in 1850. Bullock, Hale and Lee counties had not been created at that time.

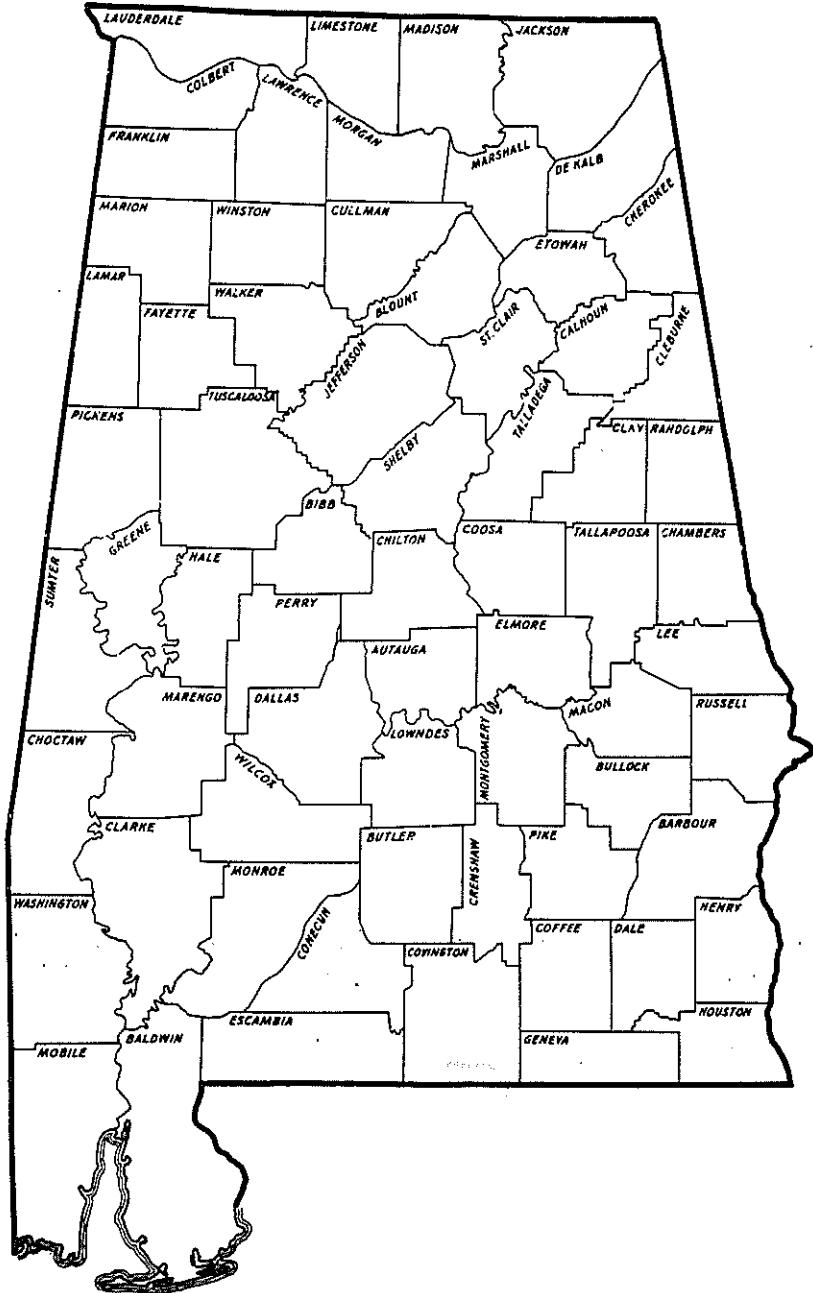
<sup>b</sup>Counties with 5,000 or more slaves in 1860. Bullock, Hale and Lee counties had not been created, while counties outside the general area of the Black Belt are excluded.

<sup>c</sup>Counties in which blacks comprised 50.0 percent or more of the population in the years specified, excluding those counties that have not traditionally been considered to be part of the Black Belt.

Sources: See Notes/References 2 (ADO), 3 (Bogue and Beale), 4 (Key) and 7 (references for all other columns).

Some counties that fit one or more of these criteria are excluded from consideration because they are located outside of the area that has traditionally been considered a part of the Black Belt. Madison County, for example, is situated in the extreme northern portion of the state but is not included even though it had a majority black population in 1880. Extensive plantation agriculture also existed in several of the other Tennessee River Valley counties (e.g., Lauderdale, Lawrence, and Limestone) during the last century, yet they are not included in the delineation. In addition, three counties with more than 5,000 slaves in 1860—Conecuh, Pike, and Tallapoosa—are excluded because they did not conform to either of the two other criteria (i.e., majority black and black soil coloration).

Alabama counties with a black majority numbered 22 in 1880, but the total had declined to only 10 in 1990. An analysis of these counties, by decade, reveals there was very little change in those appearing on the list between 1890 and 1920 (Table 1). A comparison of counties containing a black majority during this period with those also having plantation agriculture/black soil lead to the identification of the predominantly black Alabama counties in 1900 and 1910 (with the exception of Butler County, which did not meet other specifications) as those constituting the Black Belt. Altogether, there were 20 counties that generally fit the three major criteria: Autauga, Barbour, Bullock, Chambers, Choctaw, Clarke, Dallas, Greene, Hale, Lee, Lowndes, Macon, Marengo, Monroe, Montgomery, Perry, Pickens, Russell, Sumter, and Wilcox (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Counties of Alabama**

#### General Patterns of Population Change in Alabama

Before examining the demographic changes that have characterized the Black Belt, a brief overview of population growth for the state as a whole will be presented. The data begin with the 1880 census, by which time all but four major alterations in county configurations had occurred. The exceptions—all of which stem from the creation of Houston County in 1903 from portions of Dale, Geneva, and Henry counties—are not included in any of the Black Belt delineations. Thus, the changes that occurred in their boundaries do not have any bearing on the findings reported herein.

**Table 2: Population Totals and Percent Change in Population by Decade and Race, Alabama Black Belt Counties, 1880-1990**

Year	Whites		Blacks		All Races <sup>a</sup>		Blacks as % of Total
	Total	% Change	Total	% Change	Total	% Change	
1880	662,185	-	600,103	-	1,262,505	-	47.5
1890	833,718	25.9	678,489	13.1	1,513,017	19.8	44.8
1900	1,001,152	20.1	827,307	21.9	1,828,697	20.9	45.2
1910	1,228,832	22.7	908,282	9.8	2,138,093	16.9	42.5
1920	1,447,032	17.8	900,652	-0.8	2,348,174	9.8	38.4
1930	1,700,844	17.5	944,834	4.9	2,646,248	12.7	35.7
1940	1,849,097	8.7	983,290	4.1	2,832,961	7.1	34.7
1950	2,079,591	12.5	979,617	-0.4	3,061,743	8.1	32.0
1960	2,283,609	9.8	980,271	0.1	3,266,740	6.7	30.0
1970	2,533,831	11.0	903,467	-7.8	3,444,165	5.4	26.2
1980	2,872,621	13.4	996,335	10.3	3,893,888	13.1	25.6
1990	2,975,797	3.6	1,020,705	2.4	4,040,587	3.8	25.3
1880-1990	2,313,612	349.4	420,602	70.1	2,778,082	220.0	

<sup>a</sup> Includes whites, blacks, and persons of other races.

Source : U. S. Bureau of the Census, decennial census reports.

Alabama's population has increased during every decade since 1880, although the rate of growth has been sporadic (Table 2). The population counts for 1890, 1900, 1910, 1930, and 1980 reveal increases of greater than 10 percent over those recorded a decade earlier. The rest, therefore, represent single digit increments. The white segment of the population grew in excess of 10 percent during eight of the 11 periods. The pattern for the black component of the population, however, was quite different. Only with the census reports of 1890, 1900 and 1980 did their numbers increase by more than 10 percent from the totals registered 10 years earlier. It is notable that the percentage increase among blacks during the 1970s was their largest increment for any decade during the 20th century. This phenomenon can be traced in large measure to the high fertility rates among the black sector of the population during that period, alongside the reduced tendency for blacks to migrate to areas outside the state. During three decades, 1910 to 1920, the 1940s, and the 1960s, the black population actually declined (0.8, 0.4, and 7.8 percent, respectively). Out-migration, as will be indicated later, was the key factor in these declines. Overall, the white population increased more than threefold during the 1880-1990 period, while the number of blacks grew by just over 70 percent.

### Population Changes in Black Belt Counties

The pattern of population change in Black Belt counties presents a very different picture from that for the state as a whole during the last 110 years. While Alabama's total population increased by 220 percent during the period between 1880 and 1990, the increase for Black Belt counties was just 32 percent (see Tables 2 and 3). The censuses of 1920, 1950, and 1970 revealed absolute losses in the total population of Black Belt counties over the numbers recorded 10 years earlier. Other than the gain between 1890 and 1900, population growth in the Black Belt has lagged considerably behind that for the state as a whole.

The number of whites living in the area has grown with every census since 1880, registering an increase of 154 percent over the last 110 years. There were actually fewer blacks residing in the Black Belt in 1990, however, than there were in 1880 (i.e., 318,464 as opposed to 389,122). Thus, the decline in the black population over that period has totaled approximately 71,000 persons, or 18.2 percent.

The number of blacks living within the region increased during the decades between 1880 and 1900. A small increment was posted during the depression years and from 1970 to 1980 and from 1980 to 1990. Since

**Table 3: Population Totals and Percent Changes in Population by Decade and Race, Alabama Black Belt Counties, 1880-1990**

Year	Whites		Blacks		All Races <sup>a</sup>		Blacks as % of Total
	Total	% Change	Total	% Change	Total	% Change	
1880	154,186	-	389,122	-	543,806	-	71.6
1890	157,755	2.3	405,931	4.3	563,833	3.7	72.0
1900	175,465	11.2	474,107	16.8	650,581	15.4	72.9
1910	184,198	5.0	472,026	-0.4	657,278	1.0	71.8
1920	205,792	11.7	418,341	-11.4	624,203	-5.0	67.0
1930	229,996	11.8	410,723	-1.8	640,765	2.7	64.1
1940	253,351	10.2	420,067	2.3	673,496	5.1	62.4
1950	287,847	13.6	374,043	-11.0	662,025	-1.7	56.5
1960	319,562	11.0	342,985	-8.3	663,080	0.2	51.7
1970	349,669	9.4	295,532	-13.8	646,213	-2.5	45.7
1980	388,056	11.0	316,696	7.2	708,562	9.6	44.7
1990	391,166	0.8	318,464	0.6	715,525	1.0	44.5
1880-1990	236,980	153.7	-70,658	-18.2	171,719	31.6	

<sup>a</sup> Includes whites, blacks, and persons of other races.

Source : U. S. Bureau of the Census, decennial census reports.

the turn of the century, however, the number of blacks has dwindled by one-third, with population declines recorded for each decade from 1900 to 1930 and from 1940 to 1970. Likewise, the percentage of the total population comprised of blacks has dropped substantially. In 1880, 71.6 percent of the region's inhabitants were black. Although that proportion had increased to 72.9 percent in 1900, it has fallen in every subsequent census, to a low of 44.5 percent in 1990.

The decline in the black population is not evenly distributed among the various Black Belt counties. Bullock, Perry, and Wilcox counties show the greatest number of decades (9 out of 11) during which the population fell in the 1880-1990 period, while Montgomery County (with two decades of population loss) exhibits the fewest (see Table 4). In most counties, the number of blacks generally declined during more decades than did the number of whites. Macon County, in which Tuskegee University is located, is an exception to this pattern. There the white population has declined during nine of the last 11 decades, while decreases among blacks have been limited to just four decades. Another exception is Sumter, where the white population declined during eight decades but the black population fell during six.

The combined number of residents (i.e., adding together persons of all races) was actually less in 1990 than it was in 1880 in Barbour, Bullock, Dallas, Greene, Hale, Lowndes, Macon, Marengo, Perry, Pickens, Sumter, and Wilcox counties. Only three non-Black Belt counties (Coosa, Henry, and Lamar) experienced a similar loss in numbers over this period<sup>7</sup>.

Declines during the 1880-1990 period were characteristic for both races in Bullock, Greene, Lowndes, Perry, Sumter, and Wilcox counties. A black gain—but white loss—occurred in Macon County, while whites gained and blacks lost in Autauga, Barbour, Dallas, Hale, Marengo, and Pickens counties. In summary, only six of the 20 Black Belt counties—Chambers, Clarke, Lee, Macon, Monroe, and Montgomery—had more blacks in 1990 than they did in 1880<sup>8</sup>.

The only Black Belt county that has registered a significant population gain during the last century has been Montgomery County, where the population has tripled. As a metropolitan center, the seat of state government, and the site of two military bases, it has been able to maintain—and even enlarge—its population base.

**Table 4: Number of Decades of Absolute Population Decrease by Race, Alabama Black Belt Counties, 1880-1990**

County	Number of Decades with Population Decline		
	Whites	Blacks	Total
Autauga	1	6	2
Barbour	4	7	5
Bullock	10	9	9
Chambers	4	6	5
Choctaw	6	7	6
Clarke	3	6	6
Dallas	4	8	4
Greene	7	7	8
Hale	4	8	9
Lee	2	4	1
Lowndes	8	8	9
Macon	9	4	5
Marengo	3	6	7
Monroe	3	6	5
Montgomery	0	2	2
Perry	7	9	9
Pickens	5	7	5
Russell	2	7	4
Sumter	8	6	8
Wilcox	8	9	10

#### Net Migration: 1930-1990<sup>9</sup>

The Black Belt, as indicated previously, has been growing at a much slower pace than the state as a whole throughout most of the 20th Century. While whites have registered gains in each decennial census since 1880, blacks have generally posted only limited increases or actual declines. This pattern traces basically to the much larger net migration losses (i.e., the excess of persons moving out over those moving in) that have characterized the black sector of the population during most of the last 100 years.

This section of the paper documents the outflow of the Black Belt population over the last 60 years. Data are presented for both whites and blacks, along with comparative information for the entire state. It is not known precisely how many persons move into or out of a county at a specified time. However, through examining birth and death data relative to total population changes, it is possible to estimate the gross level of migration that has occurred within a given time frame.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the Black Belt, migration patterns on a statewide basis will be examined. Net migration data for Alabama for each decade since 1930 are summarized in Table 5. The data

**Table 5: Net Migration for Alabama since 1930**

Decade	Whites	Blacks	Total	White/Black Ratio
1930-40	-112,372	-72,242	-184,614	1/0.6
1940-50	-115,348	-186,028	-301,376	1/1.6
1950-60	-114,130	-224,201	-338,331	1/1.6
1960-70	-2,033	-227,648	-229,681	1/112.0
1970-80	+150,235	-35,222	+115,013	1/0.2
1980-90	-21,972	-69,663	-91,635	1/3.2
1930-90	-245,620	-815,004	-1,060,624	1/3.3

**Table 6: Net Migrations for the Black Belt since 1930**

Decade	Whites	Blacks	Total	White/Black Ratio
1930-40	-3,648	-45,707	-49,355	1/12.5
1949-50	-7,433	-120,298	-127,731	1/16.2
1950-60	-11,181	-115,688	-126,869	1/10.3
1960-70	-483	-101,147	-101,630	1/209.4
1970-80	+15,735	-24,333	-8,598	1/1.5
1980-90	-11,939	-32,188	-44,127	1/2.7
1930-90	-18,949	-439,361	-458,310	1/23.2

reveal that Alabama lost approximately 1.1 million more residents than it gained through migration between 1930 and 1990. The loss was much greater for blacks than for whites. An average of 3.3 blacks moved out of the state for every white who did so during the period, with particularly significant losses during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Employment opportunities in the Northeast and Midwest, along with the economic and political constraints that were characteristic of Alabama during that era, were major factors precipitating this movement. Overall, the 1970s was the only decade during which Alabama experienced net gains, and then only for whites.

Net migration patterns for the Black Belt during that same time span are reflected in Table 6. Like the rest of the state, the Black Belt has experienced significant out-migration during the last 60 years. Hence, a net migration loss of 458,310 was registered between 1930 and 1990, a number that accounted for almost half (i.e., 43.2 percent, but an area representing only 17.7 percent of the population in the state) of the out-migration for the entire state during that period. This represents a pro rata loss of 244 percent for the Black Belt's share of the population. Net losses were particularly heavy until the 1970s, a decade during which substantial in-migration occurred for Alabama as a whole (along with the southern part of the United States generally).

Losses through migration over the last 60 years involving the white segment of the Black Belt population have been small and not that significant. For blacks, however, the pattern is much different, with substantial losses occurring during every decade since the 1930s except for the reduced levels of out-migration during the 1970s. Approximately 54 percent of the net out-migration among the state's blacks during the 1930-1960 period, moreover, consisted of those residing in Black Belt counties. For the region as a whole, approximately 420,000 more blacks than whites have moved out during the past 60 years. Thus, the historical pattern of population change in these counties has been one of black out-migration in disproportionately large numbers.

The individual counties that are a part of the Black Belt have not fared equally well over the years with reference to net migration. Only two of the 20 counties experienced net in-migration (i.e., both whites and nonwhites combined) during the 1930-90 period: Lee (8,803) and Montgomery (1,020)<sup>10</sup>. Among whites, net migration gains were registered in only four counties: Autauga (9,158); Lee (24,584); Montgomery (23,339); and Russell (5,971) (see Table 7). The net gains in these four counties, therefore, were far short of the number needed to offset the losses that occurred in the other 16 counties.

Autauga County, as indicated above, is one of the counties posting net in-migration among whites over the last 60 years. This county lies northwest of Montgomery County, while the city of Montgomery is located just across the southeastern boundary of the county. Prattville, the county seat of Autauga County, is a relatively affluent satellite city of Montgomery and many people who live there work in Montgomery. There has been a tendency, therefore, for persons moving both from and to Montgomery (particularly more prosperous whites) to settle in surrounding counties such as Autauga and Elmore.

The white gains in Lee County, on the other hand, are largely explained by enrollment increases at Auburn University. An examination of the age patterns of those migrating into the county reveals that they are

**Table 7: Net Migration Totals for Whites by Decade, Alabama Black Belt Counties, 1930-1990**

County	1930-40	1940-50	1950-60	1960-70	1970-80	1980-90	1990
Autauga	-360	-1,505	-142	+5,228	+5,436	+501	+9,158
Barbour	-1,127	-3,321	-2,852	-450	+1,101	+288	-6,361
Bullock	-255	-613	-828	-24	-477	-327	-2,524
Chambers	+161	-2,641	-3,814	-1,433	+838	-1,492	-8,381
Choctaw	-1,501	-2,094	-1,208	-721	-506	-753	-6,783
Clarke	-924	-1,913	-2,164	+608	-280	-756	-5,429
Dallas	-679	+2,439	-697	-1,374	-4,969	-4,803	-10,083
Greene	-687	-546	-483	+10	-97	-385	-2,188
Hale	-583	-1,880	-1,052	-581	+470	+465	-3,224
Lee	-3,180	+7,323	-37	+7,853	+8,383	+4,242	+24,584
Lowndes	-44	-632	-536	-141	+245	-244	-1,352
Macon	-272	-725	-714	-26	-574	-558	-2,869
Marengo	-1,479	-1,960	+11	-794	+363	-787	-4,646
Monroe	-2,626	-3,483	-3,092	944	+656	+1,050	-8,139
Montgomery	+6,437	+10,263	+12,631	-6,810	+4,955	-4,137	+23,339
Perry	-865	-1,869	-1,311	+20	-470	-1,428	-5,923
Pickens	-596	-3,916	-2,119	-1,062	+242	-456	-7,907
Russel	+5,850	+1,636	-348	-1,747	+2,062	-1,482	+5,971
Sumter	-526	-573	-1,285	+751	-805	-471	-2,909
Wilcox	-392	-1,423	-1,141	+854	-775	-406	-3,283
Total	-3,648	-7,433	-11,181	-483	+15,735	-11,939	-18,949
Alabama	-112,372	-115,348	-144,130	-2,033	150,235	-21,972	-245,620

predominantly of college age<sup>11</sup>. In addition, the student population at Auburn University—which has increased significantly over the years, remains overwhelmingly white. Montgomery County has also attracted a substantial number of white migrants over the last half century. In addition to being the seat of state government and the location of two military bases, Montgomery has evolved as a major service center for the surrounding area. Russell County is a part of the Columbus, Georgia, Metropolitan Statistical Area and many people who reside there are employed in Columbus. Like Autauga County, it is mainly whites who have been attracted to this locale.

The net migration pattern for the region's blacks, however, varies significantly from that for whites (see Table 8). All 20 counties exhibit net migration losses for the period 1930 to 1990. In each 10-year period, except for 1960-70 and 1980-90, more than half of the total out-migration of blacks from Alabama originated in Black Belt counties. The county with the smallest net loss during that time span was Autauga (-12,602), followed closely by Choctaw County (-13,141) and Pickens County (-14,444). The greatest loss occurred in Dallas County, where nearly 47,000 more blacks left than entered.

An examination of each decade within the 1930-90 time span reveals only five instances in which net migration gains occurred among blacks: Bullock County by 38 persons between 1980 and 1990, Lee County by 306 during the 1980-90 decade, Macon County by 348 from 1970 to 1980, and Montgomery County by 1,075 from 1930 to 1940 and by 7,244 from 1970 to 1980.

## Discussion

The feelings that are associated with the Black Belt are often nostalgic in nature. The Black Belt of today, however, is far removed from the idealistic settings pictured in the romantic literature of the last century.

Agriculture is still predominant in Alabama's Black Belt, although its importance has declined dramatically. As it is now practiced in Alabama, farming is no longer a labor-intensive enterprise. Indeed, it is more

**Table 8: Net Migration Totals for Blacks by Decade, Alabama Black Belt Counties, 1930-1990**

County	1930-40	1940-50	1950-60	1960-70	1970-80	1980-90	1990
Autauga	-1,271	-4,588	-2,567	-2,351	-731	-1,094	-12,602
Barbour	-3,183	-6,505	-6,002	-4,322	-947	-1,095	-22,054
Bullock	-2,667	-6,306	-4,540	-2,901	-1,945	+38	-18,321
Chambers	-2,655	-6,465	-4,393	-3,601	-891	-1,986	-19,991
Choctaw	-2,037	-2,881	-3,384	-2,801	-1,153	-885	-13,141
Clarke	-1,120	-3,904	-4,326	-3,337	-2,238	-1,474	-16,399
Dallas	-4,805	-11,133	-11,949	-9,107	-4,400	-5,423	-46,817
Greene	-2,058	-5,036	-5,614	-4,399	-478	-1,199	-18,784
Hale	-3,305	-6,782	-4,269	-5,560	-2,206	-1,497	-23,619
Lee	-1,157	-6,222	-4,128	-4,145	-435	+306	-15,781
Lowndes	-3,484	-7,953	-5,776	-4,897	-1,971	-1,913	-25,994
Macon	-2,664	-977	-7,498	4,033	+348	-2,707	-17,531
Marengo	-3,353	-450	-7,561	6,208	-1,726	-2,642	-30,940
Monroe	-2,868	-5,641	-5,459	-3,984	-1,415	-1,391	-20,758
Montgomery	+1,075	5,664	-9,507	-14,414	+7,244	-1,053	-22,319
Perry	-3,070	-8,359	5,407	-3,917	-1,340	-1,680	-23,773
Pickens	-648	-3,871	-4,593	-2,963	-944	-1,425	-14,444
Russel	-1,753	-4,806	-3,867	-6,494	-4,941	-1,619	-23,480
Sumter	-2,780	-7,369	-6,754	-6,001	-1,088	-1,393	-25,385
Wilcox	-1,904	-6,386	-8,094	-5,712	-3,076	-2,056	-27,228
Total	-45,707	-12,293	-115,688	-101,147	-24,333	-32,188	-439,361
Alabama	-72,242	-186,028	-224,201	-227,648	-35,222	-69,663	-815,004

capital-intensive, employing machines and chemicals where a large number of unskilled workers, a majority of them black, were formerly necessary to accomplish needed tasks. In 1980, 56.6 percent of all whites in Alabama lived in urban areas, while the corresponding percentage for blacks was 69.7. Those who were classified as "rural farm" amounted to only 2.3 percent of the total population<sup>12</sup>. For whites, the farm population totaled 2.9 percent, while for blacks it was only 0.5<sup>13</sup>. Mechanized, chemical agriculture, along with the requirement of a large outlay of capital, have precipitated the urbanization (as well as out-migration) of Alabama's blacks.

The Black Belt region of the state has experienced a relatively slow pace of growth compared to the population growth rate of Alabama as a whole. Among blacks, the population within the region has actually fallen during most decades. The drop in the need for farm workers, together with the decline of agriculture in general, has resulted in economic stagnation in many Black Belt counties.

Since 1930, out-migration has resulted in the loss of over one million Alabama residents. The 20 Black Belt counties have experienced particularly heavy losses due to out-migration, especially when compared to the remainder of the state. While out-migration among the region's whites over the last half century has been almost inconsequential, this has not been the case for the black population. Practically every county in the region lost more blacks than were gained through migration during almost every decade between 1930 and 1990.

The reason why most persons move, unless it is forced migration or associated with retirement, is for monetary reasons. Before leaving an area, potential migrants consider both the advantages and disadvantages for staying, versus those for moving. When the reasons for moving outnumber those for staying, other things being equal, they are likely to move. The economic factor typically weighs heavily in this decision, and economic conditions in the Black Belt during a large part of the present century have not been conducive to retaining the less prosperous segment of its population.

## Notes/References

<sup>1</sup>The census terms for blacks have varied over the period covered in this report, changing from Negroes to nonwhites to blacks. The latter is the current form of reference. However, some of the data used in this report (for example, net migration estimates for the years 1950-60, 1960-70, and 1970-80) also include other nonwhites, a category that consists of American Indians, Eskimos, Aleuts, Asians, Pacific Islanders, and other persons who are neither white nor black. However, since the nonwhite population in Alabama is more than 99 percent black, the terms black and nonwhite are essentially synonymous.

<sup>2</sup>Alabama Development Office. Personal correspondence from Jack Clendenning. 1990.

<sup>3</sup>Bogue, Donald J., and Calvin L. Beale. Economic Areas of the United States. New York: Free Press. 1961.

<sup>4</sup>Key, V. O., Jr. Southern Politics. New York: Vintage Press. 1949.

<sup>5</sup>Kline, Harvey, Patrick Cotter, William Stewart, and Mylon Winn. "Political and Economic Change in Black Belt Alabama Since the Voting Rights Act of 1965: A Preliminary Report." Paper presented at the meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, 1986; and Anne S. Lee, "The Modern Black Belt." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southern Demographic Association, 1988.

<sup>6</sup>Bogie, Donald W., and Danny E. Harrison. "An Examination of Population Changes in Alabama's Black Belt Counties: 1960-1970 and 1970-1980." *Sociological Spectrum*, 2:351:65, 1982.

<sup>7</sup>Decennial census reports published by the U. S. Bureau of the Census, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.; and U. S. Bureau of the Census, The Miscellaneous Documents of the House of Representatives for the Second Session of the Forty-Seventh Congress. 1882-83. Volume 13. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>The data for 1930-50 and 1970-80 that are utilized in this section of the report were obtained through the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. The data for 1930-40 and 1940-50 were originally tabulated by John Gardner and William Cohen, while those for 1970-80 were prepared by Michael J. White, Peter Muesser, and Joseph P. Tierney. Neither the Consortium nor the collectors of the data bear any responsibility for the analyses or the interpretations presented herein. The author is indebted to Frank Howell, Mississippi State University, for his assistance in locating this source of information and for providing the 1970-80 data in a computerized format. Data for the 1950-60 decade are from Gladys K. Bowles and James D. Tarver, "Net Migration of the Population. 1950-60 by Age, Sex, and Color," Volume 1, Part 4. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office. 1965. Net migration estimates for 1960-70 are taken from Gladys K. Bowles, James D. Tarver, and Calvin Beale, "Net Migration of the Population. 1960-70. by Age, Sex, and Color," Volume 1, Part 2. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office. 1975. Net migration estimates for 1980-90 were prepared by the author.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>The rural farm population consists of persons who live on places of one acre or more from which the value of agricultural products sold during the year preceding the census exceeded \$1,000.

<sup>13</sup>U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, (1983). 1980 Census of Population, Vol. 1, Social and Economic Characteristics (Part 2, Chapter C). Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, Tables 62 and 73.

## PAST-PRESENT CONDITIONS AND FUTURE ISSUES IN THE BLACK BELT OF THE SOUTH

Ejigou Demissie  
University of Maryland-Eastern Shore

### Introduction

Since the beginning of this century, the number of farm operators and farmlands in the U.S. has substantially declined. The decline in number is generally true for both white and black farm operators, but it has been very significant for black farm operators. This is evidenced by the decline in the number of black farm operators from 746,717 in 1900 to 22,954 in 1987, representing a 97 percent decline for the period (Table 1). In 1920, one American farmer in seven was black. By 1964, the ratio was one black farmer for every 17 farmers, and by 1987, this ratio had reached one to 91.

Since 1900, the amount of farmland owned by black farm operators has also declined. For example, in 1959, of the 1,124 million acres of farmland in the country, blacks operated 51 million acres (Table 2). Between 1959 and 1987, this total had decreased to less than 3 million acres, representing a loss of 95 percent in just 28 years. As a result, the average farmland size owned by black farmers in the U.S. was, and continues to be, proportionately less than the average size of farmland owned by white operators. In fact, the average size of black-owned farms was smaller than the average size for the country.

A majority (95 percent) of the nation's black farmers live in the South and almost all of them are not only small-scale by any definition, but also in the lower sales class<sup>1</sup>. In fact, today, of the nation's 29,986,000 blacks, 53 percent live in Southern states having an 1890 land-grant institution, and about half of them live in rural areas with an estimated annual per-capita income of less than \$5,000<sup>2,3</sup>.

Table 1: Farms Operated by Blacks and Whites in the U.S., 1900 - 1987

Year	White	Operators		Percent Change
		Black	Percent Change	
1900	4,970,129	746,717		
1910	5,440,619	893,377 <sup>a</sup>	19.6	
1920	5,499,707	925,710	3.6	
1930	5,373,703	882,852	-4.6	
1940	5,378,913	681,790	-22.8	
1950	4,802,520	559,980	-17.9	
1954	4,298,766	467,656 <sup>b</sup>	-16.5	
1959	3,419,672	272,541	-41.7	
1964	2,957,905	184,004	-32.5	
1969	2,626,403	87,393	-52.5	
1974	2,254,642	45,594	-47.8	
1978	2,182,215	37,351	-18.1	
1982	2,170,426	33,250	-11.0	
1987	2,025,643	22,954	-31.0	

<sup>a</sup>Alaska not included.

<sup>b</sup>Alaska and Hawaii not included.

Source: Census of Agriculture for U.S., 1964, 1974, 1982 and 1987. United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C.

**Table 2: Land In Farms and Average Size of Farms by Race, 1959-1987**

Item	1959	1964	1969	1974	1978	1982	1987
<b>All Farms:</b>							
Number of farms (000)	3,711	3,158	2,730	2,314	2,258	2,241	2,088
Land in farms (million acres)	1,124	1,110	1,061	1,017	1,015	987	964
Average size (acres)	303	352	389	440	449	440	462
<b>White:</b>							
Number of farms (000)	3,420	2,958	2,626	2,255	2,182	2,171	2,026
Land in farms (million acres)	1,070	1,063	1,055	1,008	950	925	904
Average size (acres)	313	359	402	447	435	426	446
<b>Black:</b>							
Number of farms (000)	273	184	87	46	37	33	23
Land in farms (million acres)	51	10	8	9	4	3	2.6
Average size (acres)	187	57	87	194	108	105	115

Source: Various issues of the Census of Agriculture for U.S., United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C.

This paper will review past and present conditions of blacks in general, and black farmers and the 1890 institutions in particular, relative to the Black Belt of the South, as well as identify some future issues.

### Past Conditions

By the turn of the century, many of the black farm operators in the South managed to acquire farmland. Thereafter, however, black farm ownership and control of land, and other resources such as capital, have been severely limited due to systematic discrimination in land sales and farm credit, reported in both historical and contemporary sources. This was particularly the case in the lack of access to credit (which is most important to increase production, ownership of resources, and thus farm incomes) from the FmHA which was established in the 1930s to service the credit needs of farmers who failed to meet the lending criteria of other lending institutions. For example, according to a study, during the period 1964 to 1967, black farmers, who constituted about a third of all farms in the South, received only a fourth of all loans and only a seventh of the total funds from the FmHA<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, between 1966 and 1976, the percentage of FmHA farm ownership loans made to black farmers declined from 5.7 percent to 1.5 percent, suggesting discrimination on the part of FmHA. This agency is part of the local political machinery and has been the subject of many investigations by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

In addition to discrimination, other factors such as low income, poverty and illiteracy, the neglect and injustice of government programs and policies, technological advances and inadequate technical assistance from extension, small size of farm, and the failure of young blacks to enter farming (i.e., the problem of intergenerational transfer of property) contributed to this situation<sup>5, 6, 7</sup>.

### Legislation

Of the laws that were passed in the 1800's and 1900's which had and continue to have a strong, often negative impact on blacks and black farm operators, the following are the most important:

## **1. Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890**

- the Morrill Act of 1862 established the land-grant institutions, the initial step in democratizing higher education in the U.S. in each state. In the South where there was a high concentration of blacks, blacks were not permitted to attend these institutions.
- the Morrill Act of 1890 was passed to increase appropriation for the expansion of the already established 1862 land-grant colleges. In it, Congress also included the provision to establish “separate but equal” colleges for blacks in the Southern states that insisted on a separation of races. Thus, the black land-grant institutions are referred to as “1890 land-grant institutions.”
- both Morrill Acts (1862 and 1890) were efforts to give status to agriculture and to facilitate the expansion of opportunities for large numbers of farmers. For obvious reasons, these opportunities were not extended to blacks, a majority of whom lived (and do so today) in the 1890 states in the South.

## **2. Hatch Act of 1887**

- provided funds for the establishment of Experiment Stations (research).
- the Act, however, directed state legislatures in the sixteen states with 1862 and 1890 colleges to designate a college or colleges that would receive these federal funds. In all these states, the 1862 colleges have always been selected<sup>8</sup>.
- this Act was passed before 1890; thus discrimination in allocation of research funds began immediately.

## **3. Smith-Lever Act of 1914**

- the Act established the Cooperative Extension Service (CES).
- the Act stated that where a state had two land-grant colleges, the appropriation of extension funds “shall be administered by such college or colleges as the state legislature may direct”<sup>9</sup>.
- in each of the states with 1862 and 1890 colleges, state legislatures directed all federal extension funds to 1862 colleges.
- this Act was passed during the white-supremacy phase of the new South, and specifically subordinated black extension efforts to white (over the passionate objections of the NAACP).

### ***1890 Institutions***

As a result of these and other laws, the programs of the 1890 colleges and Tuskegee Institute (University) had been crippled. In fact, for many years, the CES of the various states were actively resisting integration of the programs. When “integration” occurred, the black farm programs were deliberately neglected<sup>10</sup>. For example, in 1970, 80 percent of the black farmers in Alabama were never visited by extension agents in the state<sup>10</sup>. In other words, government-supported national research and extension of the 1862 institutions did very little to help and discriminated against the survival and economic well-being of black farm operators. In addition, the 1890 institutions have never been accepted by the 1862 universities as equal partners, even though the 1890 institutions were intended to serve as counterparts to these universities.

Over the years, the 1890 land-grant institutions, with all their difficulties, have made available educational opportunities, services of research and extension to all races, but particularly to blacks, for improving their welfare and survival. In addition, the work done by researchers, extension specialists and educators of the 1890 institutions helped developing countries to work toward achieving self-sufficiency in food production. The exchange of scientific information with the developing countries dates back to the early 1900s when Dr. George Washington Carver sent agricultural experts to Togo in West Africa.

With all these efforts of the 1890 institutions, however, many black-owned farm businesses failed. The result is that black farm operators have left agriculture at a faster rate than whites. Those who survived and remain

**Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Persons 25 Years and Older by Years of School Completed and Race, U.S., 1970-1990**

School Years	Black	1970		Black	1990	
		(%)	White		(%)	White
<b>Male</b>						
0-8 Years	44	25		17	10	
1-3 Years of HS	22	15		16	10	
4 Years of HS	23	32		38	36	
1-3 Years of COL	6	12		17	18	
4 Years of COL	5	16		8	14	
5+ Years of COL	5	16		4	11	
Med.	10	12		12	13	
<b>Female</b>						
0-8 Years	39	24		14	9	
1-3 Years of HS	25	17		19	10	
4 Years of HS	25	39		37	42	
1-3 Years of COL	6	11		18	19	
4 Years of COL	4	9		8	12	
5+ Years of COL	4	9		4	7	
Med.	10	12		12	13	

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Money Income of Households, Family, and Persons in the U.S. in 1990, September 1991, Series P-60, No. 174, Table 29.

older (prime working age population) had no high school education compared to 25 percent for whites. Two decades later, in 1990, the percentage distribution for black males as well as for whites improved significantly to 17 percent and 10 percent, respectively.

Although both have improved, the relative gaps have declined very little. In fact, in most cases, the relative disparity had actually increased. For example, in 1970, 64 percent of black females and 41 percent of white females had less than four years of high school education. By 1990, the percentage had decreased to 33 percent for black females and 19 percent for white females (Table 3).

Even though the absolute gaps had declined in relative terms, black females were 74 percent more likely not to have finished high school in 1990 than whites, compared to 56 percent in 1970. For males, the relative disparity at 65 percent was the same in both 1970 and 1990. These large educational disparities, therefore, contributed directly and indirectly to the continued economic inequality experienced by blacks today.

#### ***Labor Force Participation***

The effect of low educational attainment and employment discrimination has been a lower rate of labor force participation of blacks in the country and in the South. For example, in the U.S. Government, blacks make up about 10 percent of all permanent, full-time USDA employees. In the South, the percentage of black USDA employees in proportion to black population was very small. In 1975, in Mississippi and North Carolina blacks represented only 5.1 percent and 7.2 percent of the states' USDA employees, respectively. Yet, blacks represented 31.5 percent of the rural population of Mississippi and 19.8 percent of North Carolina<sup>16</sup>. Furthermore, only 11 of the 9,097 ASCS county committee members in the nation were black in 1977. Among the possible 3,857 ASCS county committee members in the South, only 3 were black<sup>17</sup>. Such under-representation of blacks on the staff and decision-making bodies of USDA no doubt has prevented black farmers from receiving the same assistance that other farmers of the same size have received.

**Table 4: Unemployment Rate by Race and Region, U.S., 1970-1990**

Years	Black	White	Black/White
1970	10.4%	5.1%	2.0
1978	12.8	5.2	2.5
1982	18.9	8.6	2.2
1987	13.0	5.3	2.4
1988	11.7	4.7	2.5
1989	11.4	4.5	2.5
1990	11.3	4.7	2.4
1991*	12.4	6.0	2.1
<b>Unemployment Rates by Region, 1990</b>			
Northeast	9.8%	4.9%	2.0
Midwest	15.1	4.6	3.3
South	10.8	4.5	2.4
West	9.6	5.1	1.9

\* Data for 1991 represents the first three quarters average only.

Source: U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Handbook of Labor Statistics, June 1985, Employment and Earnings, October 1991, and Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment: 1990, July 1991.

The official unemployment rates reported by the Labor Department for the past 20 years for both blacks and whites are given in Table 4. The data in this table show that for the past two decades, inequality in unemployment rates between blacks and whites has been a permanent feature of the American economy. Black unemployment rates in the nation have been high with rates above 11 percent for blacks for every year since 1978, compared to over 4 percent for whites.

The data for the first three quarters of 1991 also shows a black unemployment rate of 12.4 percent, compared with only 6 percent for whites. This continuing disparity in unemployment is also reflected in the black/white ratio, which has continuously increased during the period. There were also nearly 1.25 million more blacks who were not counted in the labor force or unemployment statistics, but classified as "discouraged workers"—people not actively looking for jobs because they believe no work is available<sup>18</sup>. On the other hand, the National Urban League's Hidden Unemployment Index, which adds discouraged workers and involuntary part-time workers to the official definition of the unemployed, stood at 22.2 percent for black workers at the end of the third quarter, while for white workers the figure was 11.3 percent<sup>19</sup>.

The second half of Table 4 provides information on unemployment rates by region. The South has the second highest unemployment rate in 1990 at 10.8 percent, with their worst unemployment rate being in the Midwest at 15.1 percent. Although inequality, measured by the black/white ratio data is larger in all regions, it was once again worst in South and the Midwest. Compared to whites, blacks were more than two times as likely to be unemployed in the South, and over three times in the Midwest.

#### **Income**

The combined effect of low levels of education and high unemployment rates over the years has been lower levels of income for blacks. Table 5 contains data on the per capita income of blacks and whites since 1970. Between 1970 and 1990, the per capita income of both blacks and whites increased. However, blacks had only 55.7 percent in 1970 and 59.1 percent in 1990 as much income per capita as whites. This amounted to an income deficit of \$5,002 and \$6,248 per person, respectively. As clearly shown in this table, there has been no reduction in the per capita income disparity for the past 20 years.

The trend in income from the perspective of families was not much better. Since 1970, black family incomes were stagnant and were generally lower during the 1980s than the 1970s (Table 6). In 1990, black

**Table 5: Per Capita Income, and Income Difference (Gap) by Race, U.S., 1970-1990 (1990 Dollars)**

Years	Per Capita Income		Per Capita Income	
	Black	White	Black/White	Difference (Gap)
1970	\$6,296	\$11,298	55.7%	\$5,002
1972	7,470	12,407	60.2	4,937
1974	7,636	2,399	61.6	4,763
1978	8,087	13,625	59.4	5,538
1980	7,620	13,059	58.4	5,439
1982	7,260	12,903	56.2	5,643
1986	8,594	14,730	58.3	6,136
1987	8,796	15,121	58.2	6,325
1988	9,138	15,353	59.5	6,215
1989	9,220	15,701	58.7	6,481
1990	9,017	15,265	59.1	6,248

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Money Income of Households, Family, and Persons in the U.S. in 1990, September 1991, Series P-60, No. 174, Table B-8.

families had a median income of \$21,423 which was a slight increase from the median income of 1989. Although the 1990 median income was a slight improvement over the previous year, it was below the level in 1972.

Even as such, a national problem masks the deteriorating position of blacks in general, and in a region such as the South in particular. Table 7 shows family household income by region of residence. In general, family median incomes in the past 20 years were worse in the South and the Midwest, while they were better in the Northeast and the West. With a median income of \$27,947 in 1990, for example, blacks fared absolutely best in the West, while they had their absolute lowest levels in the Midwest and the South with median incomes of \$20,512 and \$20,805, respectively.

**Table 6: Median Family Income, and Income Difference (Gap) by Race, U.S., 1970-1990 (1990 Dollars)**

Years	Median Family Income		Black/ White	Median Family Income Difference (Gap)
	Black	White		
1970	\$21,151	\$34,481	61.3%	\$13,330
1972	21,462	34,757	61.7	13,295
1974	21,225	35,546	59.7	14,321
1978	21,808	36,821	59.2	15,013
1980	20,103	34,743	57.9	14,640
1982	18,417	33,322	55.3	14,905
1986	20,993	36,740	57.1	15,747
1987	21,177	37,260	56.8	16,083
1988	21,355	37,470	57.0	16,115
1989	21,301	37,919	56.2	16,618
1990	21,423	36,915	58.0	15,492

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Money Income of Households, Family, and Persons in the U.S. in 1990, September 1991, Series P-60, No. 174, Table 13, B-4, and B-11.

**Table 7: Median Family Income by Race and Region, U.S., 1970-1990 (1990 Dollars)**

Years	<u>Northeast</u>			<u>Midwest</u>		
	Black	White	Black/ White	Black	White	Black/ White
1970	\$26,213	\$36,806	71.1%	\$26,024	35,432	73.4%
1978	23,181	37,264	62.2	27,195	37,818	71.9
1982	19,801	34,692	57.1	16,628	33,278	50.0
1986	24,938	39,822	62.6	20,732	36,435	56.9
1987	23,833	40,697	58.6	19,311	37,053	52.1
1988	27,108	41,599	65.2	19,333	37,901	51.0
1989	26,763	43,205	61.9	19,290	37,723	51.1
1990	24,881	41,092	60.5	20,512	37,370	54.9
	<u>South</u>			<u>West</u>		
1970	\$17,621	\$31,157	56.6%	\$26,979	35,009	77.1%
1978	19,566	34,055	57.5	21,476	37,450	57.3
1982	18,478	32,781	56.4	27,227	35,934	75.8
1986	17,531	31,030	56.5	26,449	37,470	70.6
1987	19,388	34,788	55.7	23,774	37,470	63.4
1988	20,011	35,417	56.5	28,598	37,051	77.2
1989	20,057	34,719	57.8	26,763	38,097	70.2
1990	20,805	34,242	60.8	27,947	36,837	75.9

Source: David Swinton, "The Economic Status of Blacks," in Janet Dewart (ed.), *The State of Black America 1991*, New York: National Urban League, 1991, and Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Money Income of Households, Family, and Persons in the U.S. in 1990*, September 1991, Series P-60, No. 174, Table 13.

### *Poverty*

The results of income and other disadvantages of blacks over the years have been higher rates of poverty for this group of people. Table 8 shows the poverty trends of blacks in the past 20 years. Out of some 33.6 million Americans reported living in poverty in 1990, blacks accounted for 32 percent, which was about three times more than for whites at 11 percent.

Since 1970, the number of poor people for both blacks and whites have increased. For example, there were 7.5 million blacks that were in poverty in 1970 and 9.8 million in 1990. For whites, the number was 17.4 million in 1970 and 22.3 million in 1990. The 1990 figures represented an increase of 30 percent for blacks and 28 percent for whites over what they were in 1970. As it can be observed from the table, the poverty rate for blacks has fluctuated between 30 percent and 36 percent since 1970, while it has fluctuated between 8.7 percent and 12 percent for whites. The poverty rate, therefore, is clearly much lower for whites than for blacks.

**Table 8: Poverty Numbers and Rates by Race, U.S., 1970-1990**

Years	Number (000)		Black	Percent White	Black/White
	Black	White			
1970	7,548	17,484	33.5%	9.9	3.38%
1978	7,625	16,259	30.6	8.7	3.52
1982	9,697	23,517	35.6	12.0	2.97
1986	8,983	22,183	31.1	11.0	2.83
1987	9,520	21,195	32.4	10.4	3.12
1988	9,356	20,715	31.3	10.1	3.10
1989	9,302	20,785	30.7	10.0	3.07
1990	9,837	22,326	31.9	10.7	2.98

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Poverty in the United States: 1990*, September 1991, Table 2.

**Table 9: Poverty Rates by Race and Region, U.S., 1970-1990**

Years	Black	<u>Northeast</u>		Black	<u>Midwest</u>	
		White	Black/White		White	Black/White
1970	20.0%	7.7%	2.6	25.7%	8.9%	2.9
1978	29.1	8.2	3.5	24.8	7.4	3.4
1982	32.2	10.7	3.0	37.9	11.5	3.3
1986	24.0	8.9	2.7	34.5	10.6	3.3
1987	28.8	8.9	3.2	36.6	9.9	3.7
1988	22.9	8.4	2.7	34.8	8.7	4.0
1989	24.7	8.0	3.1	36.4	9.0	4.0
1990	28.9	9.2	3.1	36.0	9.5	3.8
		<u>South</u>			<u>West</u>	
1970	42.6	12.4	3.4	20.4	10.6	1.9
1978	34.1	10.2	3.3	26.1	8.9	2.9
1982	33.6	12.0	2.6	26.6	11.8	2.3
1986	33.6	11.8	2.8	21.7	12.3	1.8
1987	34.5	11.5	3.0	24.3	11.5	2.1
1988	34.3	11.6	3.0	23.6	11.3	2.1
1989	31.6	11.4	2.8	23.5	11.3	2.1
1990	32.6	11.6	2.8	23.7	12.2	1.9

Source: Swinton, D. "The Economic Status of Blacks." in Janet Dewart (ed.), *The State of Black America 1991*, New York: National Urban League, 1990, and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Poverty in the United States: 1990*, September 1991, Table 9.

Data for poverty rates by region are given in Table 9. In general, poverty had been fluctuating in all regions of the country between 1970 and 1990. However, the rates were higher for blacks in the 1980s than they were in the 1970s. In 1990, the rates were again higher for blacks in the South and the Midwest than in the Northeast or in the West. For most of the 20 years, poverty rates for blacks in the South were lower than what they were in 1970, although they have been relatively stagnant since the late 1970s.

Inequality as measured by a black/white ratio was highest in the Midwest region than any other region with the ratio of black-to-white poverty nearly 4 to 1 (Table 9). In the South and in the Northeast the ratio has been 3 to 1. In the West, the ratio of black-to-white poverty has generally been around 2 to 1.

### Future Issues

The 1890 mandate of education, research and extension has been important to blacks in or outside of agriculture and continues to be valuable despite the virtual extinction of the black farmer and black agricultural professionals. Throughout the years, increased funding from state and federal governments has been a fair and reasonable request by these institutions. Advancing the importance as well as the existence of the 1890 institutions as an insurance against present and future barriers which would prevent many blacks from attaining a college education is very appropriate. Demanding action to correct inequalities in state or federal legislation and against discrimination is indeed necessary by blacks.

But, this 50th anniversary of the PAWC is an excellent opportunity for sober reflection as to the goals and achievements of the 1890 institutions, as well as the responsibilities of society in the face of fewer black (and for that matter white) farmers and black agricultural and other professionals. This reassessment should in itself be an issue or a subject for study in the coming years. Such reassessment may yield new insights and information regarding the following questions:

- (1) Has a real attempt been made to answer in detail why black farmers decreased at faster rates than whites in the South?
- (2) How might better funding for the 1890s help prevent the loss of black farmers?
- (3) Is there any significant difference between the failure of the 1890 schools to prevent the loss of small-scale black farmers and 1862 schools of whites?
- (4) What are the human ramifications (black or white) of the changing composition of U.S. agriculture, particularly in the South? For example, how does one devise a land program to keep farmers from being driven off the land by soaring real estate prices and by metropolitan growth in areas where development poses the greatest single threat to agriculture in general and black farmers in particular?
- (5) Given that 50 percent of blacks in the South live in rural areas, what are the implications of today's general trend in rural development which seems to be moving away from dependency on agriculture?
- (6) What is the mission of the 1890 institutions to be, now that black farmers and black agricultural, and other professionals as well are disappearing? In other words, what should the future mission of these institutions be in general, and in agriculture in particular?
- (7) What role should the 1890 colleges and universities play in keeping blacks in farming if most young blacks want to go into more "prestigious" fields?
- (8) What are the responsibilities of the 1890 college Presidents, many of whom are de-emphasizing their agricultural programs?
- (9) What is our responsibility to the 1890 institutions as a nation well aware of their historic contribution to domestic and overseas development?
- (10) In a market-driven free enterprise economy, not only Civil Rights, but parity in ownership is required to insure parity in economic outcomes. What are the responsibilities of society and the 1890 institutions to insure such an outcome?

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## **NEW PERSPECTIVES: FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR LIMITED RESOURCE FARMERS**

**Samuel Scott, Magid A. Dagher, Dennis O. Balogu**  
**University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff**

### **Introduction**

In comparing the success of traditional farmers to the low success of limited resource farmers (LRFs) since the 1950s, there is one factor that seems to have made a difference. Traditional farmers have been able to access government programs and government continued support via policies developed to assist those enterprises. For example, for the production of row crops in the Lower Mississippi Delta region, namely rice, soybean, cotton and wheat, there are some five titled programs covering ten provisions put forward in the 1990 Farm Bill to foster and support the growth of these enterprises (Agricultural Outlook, 1990). This is supported further by well established and organized groups, agencies, organizations and private companies that are able to: (a) lobby the government to design and implement policies that will support their operations, (b) provide information, training, research, extension, management, capital and infrastructure which enabled the expansion of their operations, and (c) provide the general framework for successful production and marketing of farm output. Success, therefore, was almost guaranteed barring weather, pests and diseases.

Assistance in the past consisted of implementation of market orders, implementation of price support schemes, inventory management, income support/deficiency payments, acreage reduction programs, cross compliance, advance deficiency and diversion payments, quotas and market allotment. These programs are estimated to have cost the government \$13 billion in 1992 (Stall, 1992). However, the factor which is most germane to the existence and survival of this farming group is the establishment and support of national organizations, e.g., Farm Bureau, Milk Producers and various Commodity Boards. At the state and regional levels, there are some organizations that have been successful, for example, the Florida Tomato Committee and the California Avocado Growers Association. For limited resource farmers and minority farmers to survive, similar programs and institutions must be implemented to address issues that affect these groups.

Even in the current 1990 Farm Bill, there is no titled program designed to facilitate the growth and expansion of alternative enterprises for LRFs, and especially minority farmers. This is one of the reasons leading to the attrition of LRFs in general, and the successive decline of minority farmers in particular. With the average farm size increasing from 390 acres in 1964 to 457 acres in 1990 (Gladwin, 1990), the number of black owned farms has declined from 184,004 to 22,954 over the same period (Demissie, 1990). Over the same period, large-scale farms increased by 308 percent. The 1987 Census of Agriculture showed that for the 14 Southern States surveyed, there were less than 1,000 farms in each State owned by minority farmers. What is most interesting to note is that although there was a tendency to have consolidation of small farms into larger farms over the last 50 years in the U.S., 72 percent of all farms in the U.S. are still considered as small scale farms accounting for 17 percent share of marketed produce (Cochrane, 1986; Demissie, 1990).

Brown et al. (1992) approached the problem by looking at those farmers who, despite the odds, wanted to develop the farm into a more profitable business venture. Among the factors identified as constraints to this exercise, the lack of knowledge and information about feasible alternative enterprises coupled with lack of financial resources and inept production and marketing practices, were very critical.

Some of the most restricting factors were also summarized as difficulty in acquiring land, tax problems, continual investment demands of new technology, increasing costs of production and indebtedness. While these were identified almost a decade ago (Gladwin, 1981), they continue to remain central to the problem.

This paper attempts to focus on new perspectives in this subsector with the main focus on possible solutions to the problems that LRFs are facing. The arguments that will be presented are constrained by the need to address market-oriented issues which we think are key to the success and survival of the LRFs.

### Opportunities Identified

To reduce the level of attrition and to attract new operators in this subsector comprising of LRFs, a number of categories of constraints must be addressed. These categories are related to physical, institutional, coordination and policy aspects (Dagher, 1990). Having identified these groups of constraints, they provide the backdrop for areas of opportunities that may be available to LRFs, given that they can receive the desired support.

The first area of opportunity is the development or extension of the existing credit system to promote a scheme to address the investment/venture capital and credit needs of LRFs. This will likely provide the much needed equity and capital that are lacking in the LRF sector. These funds can be used to overcome physical constraints, especially those associated with acquisition and availability of land, production technologies, storage, transportation, refrigeration, quality assurance and handling. These funds should be used to assist "beginning" as well as existing farmers to acquire land, purchase vital infrastructure necessary to support organized production and marketing of farm output, and to invest in new and appropriate technologies associated with profitable enterprises.

The second area of opportunity deals with the development of linkages between growers and food brokers/food distributors. Forward contract farming or shared production is a possibility. These arrangements could successfully overcome some of the institutional constraints that affect LRFs. Examples of these arrangements that have worked for the last 50 years include the production of winter vegetables in Mexico and Latin America.

Perhaps the areas that present the greatest opportunities to assist LRFs are those related to overcoming those problems associated with coordination and networking. Here, the private sector (both traders and consulting groups), HBCUs, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), cooperatives, Producers Marketing Organizations (PMOs), and state and federal agencies can play vital roles in reducing this category of constraints. In most instances, through the services provided, organizations can operate a profitable concern, e.g., private sector, PMOs, NGOs and cooperatives. Through the provision of appropriate communications systems (for example market intelligence network), on-farm management expertise, sales, collection and shipping logistical support, i.e., those constraints related to coordination, can be minimized.

As mentioned earlier, overcoming policy constraints is by far the most critical area that will ensure any sustainable results in this agricultural subsector. The initiative must be taken to create opportunities to reduce these constraints. This area is the most likely area in which HBCUs can collaborate with NGOs (e.g., local development groups), PMOs and cooperatives in getting the state and federal governments to develop policies that will promote and foster the growth and development of LRFs. There is the need for new legislation to be enacted to support these policy measures, particularly those related to finance and credit, commodity insurance and disaster payments, price support, income support and others. Clear examples of how these programs have helped to change farmers' attitudes toward production risks and to adopt new technologies can be seen in the literature covering the production of traditional row crops for the past 70 years.

### Methodologies

This section deals with who will be involved, what will be done and how it should be done. It outlines the procedures that are involved in capitalizing on those opportunities identified.

With respect to satisfying investment/venture capital and credit needs, we see the formation of a distinct coalition between HBCUs, local cooperatives, NGOs and private sector banks. This coalition will lobby existing organizations (for example FmHA) or lay the foundation of a new organization (e.g., Minority Coalition of Investment Bankers) to generate funds to achieve this objective. Funds generated through this method should be matched by the state and federal governments. This pool of funds should be administered by the private banks in conjunction with the HBCUs, cooperatives and NGOs.

The implementation should be done on a cluster basis, whereby the local cooperatives and NGOs will select the farmers and "beginning" farmers, who would then meet with representatives of the HBCUs to develop farm business plans and design record keeping systems. The farmer would then submit through the local cooperative or NGO his/her application for assistance to the bank. Disbursements upon approval should be made based on accomplishment of activities on the farms. Therefore, it will be the responsibility of the local cooperatives and NGOs to monitor these activities. The HBCUs would be responsible for designing and implementing the evaluation program.

Purchasing production technologies, storage facilities, packing houses and postharvest systems should be done by local cooperatives, NGOs and PMOs. These entities would be responsible for the management of operational structures, while the HBCUs and other agencies from the private sector and government (state and federal) coordinate the training component.

The opportunity dealing with developing linkages between growers and food brokers/food distributors, should be a private sector initiative. The initiative is very profit oriented. The management has to be more hands-on and include more entrepreneurial activities. Such elements as forward contract farming and shared production has to be worked out between the farmers, local cooperatives, NGOs, PMOs and the food brokers. Given that the infrastructure is in place, the production and marketing of specific commodities can be easily worked out. These logistics must be done during the development of the farm business plans and the actual execution of activities. For example, collection, grading, sales, delivery and point of sale display must be done in an integrated fashion by the farmer, cooperatives, NGOs, PMOs and private traders. This integrated process will ensure that commodities are produced and delivered in a timely manner, in appropriate volume and of a high and consistent quality to the market.

Again, the opportunities associated with coordination must be done in an integrated fashion (Scott, 1991). These areas which involve implementation of appropriate communication systems such as market intelligence network, on-farm management expertise, sales, collection and shipping logistics can be handled by different agencies. For example, the setting up of a market intelligence network system can be developed through a joint collaboration between HBCUs and local cooperatives, and NGOs and PMOs. Supply and demand information and data can be processed by the HBCUs which will develop newsletters and bulletins, to be disseminated to local cooperatives, NGOs and PMOs, which in turn would then circulate the information to farmers.

The development of on-farm management expertise should be done through a coordinated effort between HBCUs, local cooperatives, NGOs and PMOs, state and federal agencies. Suggested vehicles for implementation should include workshops, on-farm demonstration and field days. Private sector involvement is expected in the coordination efforts with respect to activities involving collection and shipping logistics.

Opportunities that are related to policy can be expedited through joint efforts between the HBCUs, advocacy groups, local cooperatives, NGOs and PMOs. For example, in order to get state and federal governments to enact legislation that provides support policies, strategies should be worked out at the grassroots level and then promoted to the local congressional delegation. A case in point that merits some exploration is the Integrated Farm Management Program (IFMP) in the 1990 Farm Bill. This program has

two components. The first one deals with environmental easement, where for environmentally sensitive lands, the program will share up to 100% of the costs to carry out conservation measures. An example of this consists of tree farming of lands prone to erosion or lands to be retained as wet lands. Perhaps the second component has the greatest possibilities for LRFs. This is designed to assist producers in adopting resource-conserving crop rotation by protecting participants' base acreage, payment yields and program payments. It is said that the program has an established goal of enrolling 3 to 5 million acres over a 5-year period. This component has potential for farmers growing row crops in the Delta region.

### Implications

The foregoing opportunities, if explored, have implications for the different entities to be involved in providing services to limited resource farmers. Limited resource farmers should realize that in order to operate successful enterprises, their attitude must change over time and they must possess the will to try new things. They need to understand that access to, and the management of, information determine power. The explanation by most government agencies as to why they do not service LRFs more is that they (LRFs) do not seek out their assistance. LRFs should understand the importance of group participation. En bloc, they will be able to command support from policymakers. By operating in an insular fashion, they are prone to the vagaries of the marketplace. These two areas must be improved in the case of LRFs in order for them to benefit from the opportunities which will ultimately guarantee their survival.

There is no doubt that HBCUs have a role to play in the development of LRFs. HBCUs need to refer back to their mission now, refocus their energies on serving these clients who are not serviced by the 1862 institutions. They must seek to be more flexible and innovative in order to serve this group. They must also emphasize more work in extension and focus more on regional projects and programs.

Although local cooperatives, NGOs and PMOs, are numerous in the region, those that are associated with LRFs are fledgling and others have not developed even past the nascent stage. For instance, in the Lower Mississippi Delta Region, there are over 300 cooperatives of which over 85 percent are classified as supply cooperatives and deal with traditional row crop farmers. Those that are classified as servicing farmers producing non-traditional commodities are few and have small memberships. There is a need for the development of more of these organizations. On the other hand, those that exist need to be more aggressive. As for the NGOs, more advocacy work is needed. Also, they need to do more in terms of institutional strengthening and capacity building.

There is a distinct void in the area of minority consulting and trading as part of the private sector group assisting LRFs. There are opportunities that can only be harnessed by for-profit organizations. In order to assist LRFs, expertise that is owned by minority groups and individuals must be brought to bear on the system so that problems related to cultural ignorance as seen in the delivery of technical assistance to LRFs can be minimized.

State and federal agencies must not be given the opportunity to evade the moral commitments that such agencies are entrusted with in servicing a group of deserving clients. However, it may be argued that it is our complacency that allows such agencies to ignore their charter. The opportunities identified may not be forthcoming if HBCUs and the agencies that service LRFs do not make them aware of the need for their assistance and how they can participate in such programs.

### Case Study: The Carpenter Family<sup>1</sup>

This case attempts to show that what is advocated above can work. Most people in Grady, a small community in southeastern Arkansas with a population of about 400, often boast about a unique farm family

in their community. This family has survived, living on the farm and growing vegetables and small fruits for the past 17 years, while many farmers around them have failed. What is it that makes this family so special and so successful? Why have they succeeded at farming while others have not?

Abraham Carpenter, Sr., his wife Katie, and members of their family were close to losing their farm during the early 1970s while attempting to grow cotton and soybeans as a means of survival. They managed to secure a few dollars to keep their heads above water by selling peas grown on a quarter-acre plot adjacent to the family home. Then the Carpenters bought a small tractor and expanded the garden plot to 3 acres.

"In 1973, we were selling our produce out of our old car on a department store parking lot in Pine Bluff," Katie recalls. "We sold peas to roadside markets, but at that time we could only get about \$1.75 per bushel." Today, peas bring between \$10 and \$15 per bushel, depending on the variety and time of year.

Times would get better for the Carpenters, as people at the Cooperative Extension Program at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) played a vital role in helping them toward upward mobility. More important, Extension helped them keep their dream alive, that of staying on the family farm. "Everybody in the family wants to stay on the farm", says Katie. "The kids enjoy it, and they make a living!"

Abraham, Sr., who started this operation some 17 years ago, has turned the day-to-day marketing and other managerial aspects of the family business over to Abraham, Jr., who joined the business full time 10 years ago. But in this family everybody knows that Abraham, Sr., is still the boss. He presides over operations on the farm. "I decide who works in the fields and who goes to market in Pine Bluff and Little Rock," he says. "I usually stay in the field and monitor the irrigation of produce, along with other duties."

Over the years, the UAPB Extension Program has helped the Carpenters stay on the farm by assisting them in expanding and diversifying their meager 3-acre farm into a thriving 900-acre operation. Extension specialists and agents advised them on which vegetables to plant, when to plant, how to fertilize, as well as the latest irrigation techniques, how to keep records, and the importance of soil testing. They also helped the Carpenters select the best land to buy when the family made the decision to expand the operation.

Today, the Carpenters produce and market an impressive array of high quality vegetables and small fruits—including turnip greens, peas, okra, squash, Irish potatoes, sweetpotatoes, blackberries, muscadines, spinach, broccoli, carrots, peppers, cucumbers, onions, peanuts, radishes, and mustard greens—to various markets throughout the State of Arkansas.

"We secure most of our own markets, which include the Pine Bluff and Little Rock farmers' markets, supermarkets, local restaurants, and some out-of-State outlets," says Abraham, Jr. The supermarket connections provide the volume and cash flow the Carpenters need to support an operation of this magnitude. Even though they have established themselves with larger buyers, they remain loyal to the farmers' markets, which accounts for more than 55 percent of their income.

The Carpenters are an exception rather than the rule among vegetable farmers. Although many vegetable operations are family oriented, the Carpenters are probably in a class by themselves, as they involve all family members in cultivating, harvesting, and marketing vegetables and small fruits from their 900-acre operation.

With the help of UAPB's Extension Service, the Carpenters have been able to grow in an organized manner. They have purchased a state-of-the-art vegetable washing and cleaning machine and four late-model refrigerated vans to carry their produce to market. They have devised an innovative method of cooling their vegetables, using an ice machine prior to going to market, and have had their land leveled using a precision laser technique that has reduced runoff and thus improved their irrigation system. Their watering system —

a 160-foot well and tractor-powered pump, pipe for furrow irrigation, and a sprinkler system for spot irrigation —paid for itself in 7 years.

The Carpenters are a close-knit family and are dedicated to the family business. This dedication is evident as it takes 16 hour days on the part of most family members to keep their large operation going. Most work days begin at 2:00 a.m. for the working crew, which numbers about 25. Abraham, Jr., his seven brothers and sisters, and other relatives by marriage make up this unique group. Katie prepares the meals while one or two of the younger daughters babysit the young.

The Carpenters' success can be traced to the family's work ethic, togetherness, a willingness to listen to recommendations from the Extension Service, and the insight to update their production and marketing techniques as new technologies become available.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The exploration of future directions for limited resource farmers and the agencies that serve these clients, including HBCUs, must be seen as a challenge. However, all parties that are involved must be creative, aggressive and innovative.

The strategy that is employed should be integrated structurally and functionally and should be done on a regional basis. Here, collaborators should be grouped in clusters and develop site specific projects and programs suitable to the needs of LRFs.

We recommend the following:

- (a) Lobbying of existing state and federal agencies to provide investment/venture capital specifically for farmers who are interested in alternative enterprises.
- (b) Joint fundraising activities between HBCUs, local cooperatives, NGOs and PMOs to solicit private funds—e.g., foundations, churches and private voluntary organizations.
- (c) Negotiation between food brokers/distributors and local cooperatives, NGOs, PMOs and farmers to do contract farming and shared production. Also design and implement systems for collection and shipping of farm output.
- (d) Design and implementation of training programs geared toward improved production techniques, on-farm agribusiness management, postharvest technology and food merchandising by HBCUs, state and federal agencies as well as private consulting groups. There should be a significant increase in outreach efforts.
- (e) Development of market intelligence network systems by HBCUs, local cooperatives and NGOs. This should be complemented by a general agricultural information system and database.
- (g) HBCUs, cooperatives and NGO's lobbying for exploratory policies that will assist in the growth and development of LRFs such as the area of the Integrated Farm Management Program.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from USDA 1990 Yearbook of Agriculture, pp. 53-54.

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## THE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE IN ALABAMA'S BLACK BELT

**Melise D. Huggins, Stephen H. Kolison, and Ntam Baharanyi**  
**Tuskegee University**

### **Introduction**

The Black Belt Counties of Alabama are still rural and underdeveloped. Among the indicators used for such assessments are the types and levels of employment available, income levels and growth rates, population growth and loss, levels and rates of poverty, social and physical infrastructure, and the rate and level of economic expansion (Christy and Figueroa, 1990; Hoppe and Bluestone, 1987; Wimberley et al., 1990, 1991). These rural communities struggle to survive in a changing economic and structural environment.

While structural transformation of agriculture has been the focus of numerous studies, rarely has the phenomenon been investigated in the South, and more specifically in Black Belt counties of the South. Sarma and Ram (1989) used input-output methodology to identify the amount of income, output, and employment generated by manufacturing industries in India. Baum et al. (1990) focused on economic linkages to identify industrial structure and regional economic development trends. Both Kolison (1990) and Trenchi (1979) used this methodology and its resulting multipliers to detail the economic contributions of the timber-based, and forest industries in Iowa and Alabama, respectively.

For the Black Belt counties of Alabama, the structure of farming has changed, and according to the U.S. Census of Agriculture, traditional agriculture, particularly for those of African-American descent, has all but vanished (Huggins, 1992; Wimberley et al., 1990, 1991; Zabawa, 1990, 1991; Zabawa and Baharanyi, 1992). There is a need to revitalize these economies which are often described as economically depressed. Information that describes and assesses the importance of agriculture and other industries is needed to show the limitations and potential for many existing programs and policies in Alabama's Black Belt counties, as well as for future program and policy initiatives in the region. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to use input-output analysis to describe the importance of agriculture vis à vis other key industries in Alabama's Black Belt.

### **Input-Output Analysis**

Input-output analysis is based on the fact that in a typical economy where the production of one good requires the input of many other goods as intermediate goods in the production process, total demand  $x$  for product  $i$  will be the summation of all intermediate demand for the product plus the final demand  $b$  for the product arising from consumers, investors, the government, and exporters as ultimate users. If  $a_{ij}$  is a technical coefficient expressing the value of input  $j$  required to produce one dollar's worth of product  $i$ , the total demand for product  $i$  can be expressed as

$$x_i = a_{i1}x_1 + a_{i2}x_2 \dots + a_{in}x_n + b_i \quad \text{for } i = 1, 2, \dots,$$

in matrix form this can be expressed as

$$X = AX + B$$

where  $X$  is total output;  $A$ , the matrix of technical coefficients; and  $B$ , the final demand in an economy. The level of total output needed to satisfy final demand can be obtained by solving for  $X$  as follows:

$$X = (I - A)^{-1} B$$

where the  $(I - A)$  matrix is called the Leontief Matrix.

Input-output analysis has the capability of identifying overall economic effects and impacts on a whole economy due to activity within one sector. This is accomplished through the use of multipliers that are derived from the technical coefficients. Multipliers indicate the degree of interrelationship between a sector and the rest of the economy. They indicate what amounts of income or output are generated by individual sectors within an economy (Mierynk, 1957, 1965; Miller and Blair, 1985). They are typically calculated in terms of output, income, and employment generation for a particular sector.

An input-output model has three main tables. These are the transactions, the direct requirements, and the total requirements tables. An input-output transactions table illustrates the way in which various sectors of an economy interact with each other. The direct requirements table can be considered as a set of production functions (industrial production recipes) for a region's economy. These functions are assumed to remain fixed regardless of input prices or how much is being produced. The total requirements table is the Leontief inverse for the producing sectors of the direct requirements table.

Various kinds of multipliers can be generated using input-output analysis. The most frequently used multipliers are the employment, income, output, and value-added multipliers. They estimate the effects of exogenous changes in final demand on these macroeconomic indicators. Multipliers generated from an open model, where the household sector is exogenous to the model, are referred to as Type I multipliers. Type I multipliers measure the direct and indirect effect of a change in final demand. Multipliers generated from a closed model where the household sector is endogenous to the model are referred to as Type II multipliers. Type II multipliers measure direct, indirect, and induced effects of a change in final demand, assuming that the household sector is an endogenously producing sector (Hastings and Brucker, 1993; Kolison, 1990). Because of this assumption, Type III open model multipliers are also used and are calculated differently than Type II multipliers. They are typically 5 to 15 percent smaller (Alward et al., 1991; Kolison, 1990).

IMPLAN, a computer based system developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, was used to estimate the input-output model for Alabama's Black Belt. The system's most common usage is as an impact assessment tool for local and regional economies (Kasal and Magleby, 1988). IMPLAN's data base is set up by county, thereby allowing analysts to construct a model and a set of regional accounts for any county or group of counties within the United States. The regional accounts describe the structure of a regional economy, identify which industries exist, and quantify industrial relationships. The model also provides information on how producing sectors are linked to consuming sectors.

## Data Analysis

The IMPLAN program identifies 527 industries or sub-industries operating in the state of Alabama. Counties included in the study as part of Alabama's Black Belt consist of Barbour, Bullock, Chambers, Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Butler, Dallas, Greene, Hale, Lowndes, Macon, Marengo, Monroe, Perry, Pickens, Russell, Sumter, and Wilcox. The selection was based on: (1) 35 percent or more African American population; (2) unemployment rates above 7.0 percent; (3) infant mortality rates above 10 percent; and (4) county per capita income below the state average level of \$13,669. Most of these counties have been included in past Black Belt County delineations and the area serviced by the Tuskegee University Extension Program.

Specific IMPLAN reports that were used to achieve the objectives of this study are: (1) the Interindustry Transactions Table; (2) the Regional Consumption Demand Table; (3) the Final Factor Payments Table; (4) the Output Multipliers; (5) the Personal Income Multipliers; (6) the Total Income Multipliers; (7) the Value-Added Multipliers; and (8) the Employment Multipliers.

From these reports an assessment can be made based on the amount of interindustry linkages observed in the region. Since multipliers measure the impact exogenous economic changes have on the rest of the

economy, much of the final analysis will rest on the use of multipliers. Multipliers will be used to assess the economic importance of selected industries, and to identify those industries that have the highest potential for revitalizing the economy of the Black Belt counties. This is done by ranking the multiplier values for each industry and sub-industry operating in the Black Belt region.

### **Empirical Results and Discussion**

Table 1 shows a comparison of multipliers for agriculture and other benchmark industries. The highest agricultural contributions to regional output are made by commercial agriculture, as indicated by a 1.6679 multiplier. Value-added contributions are made by crops and commercial agriculture, with multipliers of 1.7221 and 1.7288, respectively. These multipliers are on par with the size of the manufacturing output and value-added Type III multipliers. Manufacturing's output multipliers range from 1.2458 to 1.6263, while its value-added multipliers range from 1.3260 to 2.3275.

Type III agricultural employment multipliers 1.7352 and 1.6782, for forestry and greenhouse, and livestock, respectively. These multipliers are lower than manufacturing sub-industry employment multipliers that range from 1.8380 to 2.4385.

Type III personal income multipliers list three contributions from the agricultural industry, ranked as numbers 1, 2, and 3. They are livestock, crops, and forestry and greenhouse, with multipliers of 6.3897, 6.2246, and 3.1571, respectively. These multipliers are vastly greater than the manufacturing industries' personal income multipliers that ranged from 1.6465 to 2.0697. Total agricultural income multipliers, however, were not commensurate with the personal income multipliers for that industry. Two agricultural sub-industries were included with multipliers of 1.7092, and 1.6655, for crops and commercial agriculture, respectively. For total income, manufacturing provided multipliers that ranged between 1.6726 and 2.8338.

The service and retail trade industries did not appear consistently or significantly in the top 10 multiplier list. For total income, neither the service nor trade sub-industries were found within the top 10 multipliers. Personal income showed a contribution by the auto repair service sub-industry with a 1.9300 multiplier, but no contributions were made from the trade industry. Employment multipliers showed a contribution from the communications and utility services sub-industry with a 1.6839 multiplier, but no trade contributions were made within the top 10 listing for this indicator. Output multiplier reports showed personal repair services, and retail trade, with multipliers of 1.6724 and 1.5476, respectively. Value-added reports showed no service or trade industry contributions within the top 10. Based on the IMPLAN reports, the service and trade industries are not the large economic contributors they were expected to be.

Though agriculture contributed to all the indicators in varying magnitude and in the number of sub-industries, the reports were inconsistent. Inconsistency was observed between the personal income and total income multipliers. This could indicate that there is a disassociation of individuals from the economic machinery of the region. Apparently, people are still participating in farming and other traditional agricultural activities, but at levels that are insignificant, and not extensively integrated within the region's economy.

Inconsistent agricultural contributions could also indicate a fragmented economy, with a large under-employed population. This population is still involved in small-scale, limited-effect agricultural production, while surrounding areas and other rural counties have phased out of non-commercial agriculture and are moving into service-oriented activities.

Observing the performance of other industries from the various multiplier reports, the greatest overall contributor to the region's economy is manufacturing. Manufacturing multipliers showed strongly in terms of moderate sized multipliers and in the number of sub-industries represented in the top 10 reports. This result

**Table 1: Comparison of Benchmark Industries' Multipliers**

Industry	IMPLAN Code	Type I	IMPLAN Code	Type III
Output				
Manufacturing	82	1.6263	82	1.7931
	131	1.4641	131	1.7500
	160	1.3662	160	1.5424
	244	1.3200	431	1.5347
	225	1.2608		
	215	1.2519		
	248	1.2458		
Service			472	1.6724
Trade			462	1.5467
Agriculture			25	1.6679
Value Added				
Manufacturing	82	2.3275	82	2.8643
	131	1.6255	131	2.4255
	225	1.5671	225	1.8292
	215	1.5200	160	1.7818
	160	1.4830	215	1.7280
	244	1.3579	387	1.6857
	248	1.3260		
Service				
Trade				
Agriculture	10	1.3385	10	1.7221
	-	-	25	1.7288
Employment				
Manufacturing	82	1.9323	82	2.4585
	215	1.7160	215	2.1655
	225	1.5897	225	2.0054
	131	1.4646	131	1.8484
	160	1.4564	160	1.8380
	284	1.3250	284	1.6721
Service	454	1.3343	454	1.6839
Trade				
Agriculture	23	1.3750	23	1.7352
	1	1.3298	1	1.6782
Personal Income				
Manufacturing	82	1.5149	82	1.9618
	131	1.5061	131	1.9040
	215	1.4385	160	1.6465
	160	1.4098		
	225	1.3505		
Agriculture	1	3.3963	1	6.3897
	10	2.9355	10	6.2246
	23	2.0521	23	3.1571
Service	492	1.4334	492	1.9300
Trade				
Total Income				
Manufacturing	82	2.3253	82	2.8338
	131	1.5891	131	2.1533
	225	1.5193	225	1.7638
	215	1.4781	160	1.7297
	244	1.3266	387	1.6256
	248	1.3074		
Service				
Trade				
Agriculture	10	1.3127	10	1.7092

supports Falk and Lyson's (1988) county-based study. Service and trade sub-industries did not report as high or as consistently as expected.

The employment multipliers, in particular, highlighted the non-diverse nature of the region's top employers. The same industries are reported for both multiplier types, holding the same ranks in both listings. This lack of diversity among the top employers of the region supports the tenet that Black Belt counties have a narrow economic base.

The results also support past findings that labor intensive, natural resource-based industries are predominant in Black Belt counties. This was determined by the number of industries reporting high levels of direct effects. Labor intensive industries were not concentrated in manufacturing, but included such industries as government enterprises, trade, and service.

The region also showed weak economic stability based on the Interindustry Transactions table, which showed direct and indirect production requirements. The larger the industrial purchase or sale, the more dependent the industries are on each other for production.

## Conclusion

While the manufacturing industry is the Black Belt region's greatest economic contributor, the agricultural industry showed notable contributions to the macroeconomic indicator multipliers. The study confirmed, however, that the economic role of agriculture is not significant. While agriculture had high personal income multipliers, other macroeconomic indicators did not show the same level of contribution from agriculture. The agricultural industry still contributes to the Black Belt regional economy, in terms of output, value-added, employment, and income, but the manufacturing industry consistently contributes higher value to the regional economy.

The results indicated that relatively low tech, low income, primary level industries were among the top 10 multiplier values for the region. If personal income is the primary focus, it is possible to develop programs that would assist limited resource production units such as small scale farms of the region to increase productivity and output of their activities. But given the conditions surrounding small-scale agriculture, the overall economic climate, and the general well-being of the inhabitants of the region, there are still unanswered questions surrounding this option.

Further considerations are necessary to identify high potential industries regarding the level of interdependency and linkages among the industries in the region. There is a need, for example, for comparative costs of production among regional industries. The input-output analysis does not provide direct information concerning production costs, another handicap in efficiently identifying industries with high economic potential.

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## **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE: MOBILIZATION OF A SOCIAL MOVEMENT**

**Conner Bailey & Charles E. Faupel  
Auburn University**

### **Introduction**

Over the past three decades, the civil rights and environmental movements have profoundly affected American society. Only recently, however, have key actors in these two movements begun to identify common cause. The purpose of this paper is to explore the potential for—and the constraints to the formation of—an alliance between the civil rights and environmental movements.

The paper begins with a brief background discussion of the civil rights and environmental movements. This is followed by a brief review of the evidence behind claims of environmental racism associated with the disproportionately high exposure to environmental risks found in minority communities due to siting of solid and hazardous waste facilities or other environmentally risky installations. The third section of the paper examines the emergence of an alliance between civil rights and environmental organizations. This alliance is found to be strongest at the grassroots level. Case study materials from Mississippi and Alabama are presented to illustrate the dynamics of this alliance in the Deep South. The paper concludes by arguing that a new social movement focused on environmental justice is in the process of formation. To date, neither the civil rights nor the environmental movements have been able to effectively address the linkage between social justice and environmental protection. This failure has created space for the emergence of a new movement.

### **Social Movements**

Contemporary environmentalism has been understood by most social scientists as a social movement, a form of collective behavior that emerges in response to a perceived social problem (Schnaiberg, 1980). Environmentalism is but the most recent of a series of broadly based social movements that seek to promote social change in the United States; the civil rights and equal rights movements are other contemporary examples of this phenomenon (Kreisberg, 1981). Such social movements have a long tradition in this nation's history, often springing from agrarian roots (Cochrane, 1979). The formation of social movements and societal response to these movements is a primary source of social change in the United States.

Social movements can be seen as having a "natural history" with predictable stages of development (Turner and Killian, 1972). Initially, social movements form when increasing numbers of people become frustrated with certain conditions, recognize their common discontent, and agree on a plan to change these conditions. The preliminary stage of a social movement is marked by vaguely defined discontent. As the discontented become aware that others share their views, a second "popular" stage ensues as individuals come to see that united action will be more effective in addressing the problem. Successful social movements then begin to organize more formally, clarifying their goals and developing ideologies. Finally, with the "institutional" stage, the social movement becomes accepted and institutionalized as part of the larger society. When this happens, the original enthusiasm and idealism of the early advocates tends to give way to bureaucratic decision making.

An alternative perspective on social movements focuses on processes of resource mobilization (McCarthy and Zald, 1973, 1977; Turner, 1981). Rather than focusing on the manner in which problem-issues generate widespread public dissatisfaction and collective response, this model seeks to understand social movements from the perspective of how organizations obtain resources they need to promote their cause. The resource

mobilization perspective draws attention to the individuals and organizations that mobilize and commit resources to the cause and serve as the core of the movement. Most of the recent work by sociologists who have studied the environmental social movement has used this model (e.g., Buttell and Taylor, 1992; Field and Burch, 1991; Gale, 1986; Mitchell, Mertig and Dunlap, 1992; Scarce, 1990).

Both the civil rights and the environmental movements have long histories. One can easily look to the abolitionists of the mid-19th century as an early manifestation of the civil rights movement, though the modern movement dates from the late 1950s. Similarly, the environmental movement can be traced to the preservationists of the 19th century, taking its modern form around 1970 with the celebration of Earth Day. The civil rights movement came to dominate domestic politics in the United States during much of the 1960s, leaving a legacy of legislation and organization at the local and national levels. The movement as a whole has followed the predictable course towards institutionalization where movement leaders have shifted away from active involvement in grassroots mobilization and towards lobbying in Washington's corridors of power; the Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People have become part of the establishment.

A similar evolutionary process overtook the environmental movement. During the early 1970s, the environmental movement shifted away from issues of wildlife conservation and preservation to broader concerns associated with environmental pollution from industry, agriculture and nuclear power. Existing environmental organizations such as the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club expanded their memberships and the range of issues they addressed. During the 1970s, an alphabet soup of new environmental organizations were formed. During the early 1980s, a set of major environmental organizations in the U.S. formed a coalition known as the "Group of Ten" (Borrelli, 1987)<sup>1</sup>. These organizations grew in size and influence when the Reagan Administration adopted an anti-environmentalist posture (Henkels, 1988). These organizations can be characterized as reformist, bureaucratically structured, technically competent, and proficient in raising money through direct mail campaigns. In a word, these organizations represent the institutionalization of the environmental movement.

Borrelli (1987) notes that membership in national environmental groups nearly doubled between 1980 and 1987, reaching 10-15 million people (discounting memberships in multiple organizations). Even more striking growth occurred during the 1980s among local and regional organizations, with an estimated total membership of 25 million (Borrelli, 1987:29). Citizen's Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes (CCHW) and the National Toxics Campaign were two national organizations that gave guidance, technical support and provided networking services to local groups. By the mid-1980s, CCHW was reported to be working with 1,300 local groups, most of which did not exist three years previously (Borrelli, 1987).

This growth in locally based environmental organizations can be explained in part as a backlash against the major national organizations (Sale, 1986). During the 1980s, the major national organizations focused their energies on litigation, political lobbying, and technical evaluation rather than on mobilization of citizens to address local issues of concern (Schnaiberg, 1980; Turner, 1987). The Group of Ten has had a major impact at the state and national levels in shaping policy. However, this more formally organized approach has not satisfied everyone concerned with environmental issues. Dissatisfaction with the Group of Ten has grown due to the perception that these organizations are not responsive to citizen concerns. As a result, independent community-based organizations have sprouted like mushrooms across the nation. Many of these groups have emerged in response to particular concerns (a hazardous waste facility, a solid waste landfill, etc.).

These community groups differ from Group of Ten organizations in their willingness to use confrontational tactics and their unwillingness to compromise with industry interests or regulatory agencies on matters which they feel threaten local public and environmental health (Commoner, 1987; Rauber, 1986; Sale, 1986). They have found national support among more radically inclined organizations ranging from Earth First! to

Greenpeace and the Citizen's Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes. The effect has been to splinter the environmental movement into an establishment of a few large reformist organizations working at the national level, and thousands of smaller groups disinclined to compromise. The net result of this process of social ferment is the renewal and decentralization of the contemporary environmental movement in the United States.

The civil rights movement also can be seen to have given rise to a diversity of local organizations struggling to consolidate the gains of the 1960s through legal, political and economic means. The Southern Poverty Law Center has brought considerable pressure to bear on the Ku Klux Klan and other groups formed on the basis of racial hatreds. The Federation of Southern Cooperatives has sought to organize and support African-American farmers, and the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice has worked on issues of community development and social justice. In countless communities across the United States, local chapters of the NAACP and other organizations representing minority communities exist. Most of the attention of these groups has been focused on eradicating discriminatory behavior by local political authorities and private sector employers. A major focus of this struggle has been on political empowerment. But while these struggles have gone on, a pattern of environmental abuse in minority communities continued. Until the early 1990s, neither the environmental movement nor the civil rights movement paid much attention to what was a clear pattern of targeting minority communities for solid and hazardous waste facilities or other polluting industries.

### **Environmental Racism**

The term environmental racism has come to be applied to the conscious targeting of minority communities for solid or hazardous waste landfills and incinerators, nuclear waste facilities, and other sources of environmental pollution. Public attention was first drawn to this issue in 1982 when African-American residents of Warren County, North Carolina organized demonstrations in an effort to stop the state from dumping PCB-contaminated dirt in an African-American community. Warren County at that time had the highest percentage of African-Americans of any county in North Carolina (64%), and the township where the dump was to be located had an even higher minority percentage (75%) (Labalme, 1988).

Prominent among the demonstrators in Warren County was Benjamin Chavis, recently selected to lead the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Arrested along with over 500 demonstrators in Warren County, Chavis continued to direct attention to issues of environmental racism during the 1980s. As Executive Director of the Commission for Racial Justice, United Church of Christ, he commissioned a comprehensive study on "Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States" that clearly showed that, more than income or any other variable, race was the factor that best explained the distribution of toxic waste facilities in the U.S. (United Church of Christ, 1987). This study showed that three of the four (and six out of nine) of the largest hazardous waste facilities are located in minority communities<sup>2</sup>.

Robert Bullard (1983) was the first sociologist in the academic literature to have identified racism as a factor in environmental decisions. Bullard has written extensively and persuasively on this topic. His book Dumping in Dixie (1990) is widely read and he recently has come out with a new book entitled Confronting Environmental Racism. Other scholars also have been drawn to this theme. In 1990, Bunyan Bryant and Paul Mohai of the University of Michigan organized a seminal conference on this theme which brought together scholars, activists and regulatory agency staff. This meeting had two outcomes: an edited volume (Bryant and Mohai, 1992), and the attention of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Spurred on by members of the "Michigan Coalition," the EPA launched an in-house study of what they called "environmental equity" (EPA, 1992) and created an Office of Environmental Equity within the agency. EPA Administrator Carol Browner recently identified environmental equity as being one of the four priority areas during her term of office (Browner, 1993).

## **Emergence of an Alliance**

Increasing attention on environmental racism has spurred a number of national environmental organizations to recognize what had been a major blind spot in their campaigns. Until recently, the major environmental organizations have had little minority representation on their boards or on their staffs, and have not included issues of social justice in their programs. This issue has featured prominently in recent articles published in magazines of various environmental groups, including the Natural Resources Defense Council (Johnson, 1993; Russell, 1989), Environmental Action (Anonymous, 1990; Anonymous, 1991; Easton, 1993), the Audubon Society (Meyer, 1992), Nature Conservancy (Chavis, 1992) and the Sierra Club (Anonymous, 1993a).

A number of environmental organizations have made serious efforts to recruit minorities. However, a report by the Environmental Careers Organization (quoted in Anonymous, 1993b) indicates that one-third of the 95 environmental groups they surveyed had no minority staff and over 20% had no minority people on their boards. The traditional conservationist interest of mainstream environmental groups such as the Isaak Walton League, the Nature Conservancy and the National Wildlife Federation has little in common with concerns for dump sites, inner city air, or pesticide exposures for minority farm workers. Fundamentally, most of the major environmental organizations have not drawn the connection between environmental and social justice. By the same token, civil rights leaders do not see that the concerns of most environmental organizations address the most pressing problems of African-Americans, which include poverty, unemployment, and sub-standard housing. This may change dramatically with the appointment of Chavis to head the NAACP. But until now, most efforts towards creating an alliance between the civil rights and environmental movement have been taking place at the grassroots level, where social movements normally emerge.

### ***Environmental Justice at the Grassroots***

The year 1991 can be seen as a turning point in the emergence of a social movement focused on environmental justice. In October of that year, the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit was held. This meeting brought together 650 grassroots and national leaders of civil rights and environmental organizations from around the U.S. Academicians and representatives of the mainstream environmental organizations were invited as observers. A set of "Principles of Environmental Justice" and a "Call for Action" were adopted at this meeting (*Race, Poverty & the Environment 1991/1992*). This meeting seems to have sensitized many mainstream and grassroots environmental groups to the issue of race in the environmental equation.

Efforts to build alliances between environmental and civil rights groups are becoming central elements on the grassroots side of the environmental movement. The Citizen's Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes (CCHW) was founded by Lois Gibbs, the woman who organized the Love Canal Homeowners Association in the early 1980s. As the CCHW took form, however, it became clear that many of the local battles that needed to be fought involved minority communities. Like most other environmental organizations, the CCHW did not start out with a focus on environmental racism. Since 1991, however, CCHW's newsletter has featured stories on environmental racism in roughly half of its quarterly newsletter (*Everyone's Backyard*)<sup>3</sup>.

In addition to CCHW, at least three newsletters focusing specifically on issues of environment and race have emerged. The Earth Island Institute began publishing *Race, Poverty & the Environment* as "a newsletter for social and environmental justice" in 1990. The Toxic Communications and Assistance Project at Albany State College in Georgia began publishing a newsletter called *Southern Action* in 1989. And a group called Global Environmental Forum recently began publishing a newsletter called *Afrotech Environmentalist* in 1993.

Regional networks of grassroots organizations also have become increasingly active participants in the formation of the environmental justice movement. In the southeastern U.S., the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic & Social Justice (SOC) has played a key leadership role in organizing and

supporting the efforts of local grassroots organizations. In September 1992, community activists associated with SOC essentially took over a meeting sponsored by EPA Region IV (southeast) and Clark-Atlanta University (an historically black university in Atlanta) that was designed to bring together academicians, regulatory agency personnel and community organizers. SOC's goal was to use the meeting to strengthen connections between the groups. Rather than passively listening to academicians and regulators, as called for in the program, the community activists associated with SOC wanted those audiences to listen to their views. A list of "hot-spots" and action demands was formulated at the meeting (SOC, 1992).

SOC has been involved in a series of other meetings in the Southeast. Approximately 2,000 participants from grassroots organizations attended a meeting at Xavier University in New Orleans in December 1992. Two follow-up meetings sponsored by SOC were held in Mississippi during March and April 1993. In April, SOC sponsored a rally in support of a group in Columbia named Jesus People Against Pollution who have been fighting the EPA over handling of a Superfund cleanup associated with a closed chemical facility. Two weeks later, SOC helped organize a rally in Noxubee County, which has been targeted for two hazardous waste facilities (a landfill and an incinerator). In Noxubee County, SOC worked with Protect the Environment of Noxubee (PEON, a largely white group) and African-Americans for Environmental Justice (AAEJ, an African-American group). In July 1993, SOC helped an African-American Group organize a rally and demonstration in the Birmingham, Alabama community of Titusville in opposition to plans by Browning-Ferris Industries to locate a garbage transfer station in their neighborhood.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Examples From Alabama and Mississippi*

Elsewhere we have discussed the problems that impede the formation of an effective alliance between environmental and civil rights organizations in the Deep South (Bailey and Faupel, 1992; Bailey, et al., 1993). Most grassroots environmental groups in this region start and continue to be lily white in composition. Despite sincere efforts favoring inclusiveness on the part of such groups, the history of racial tension and distrust in this part of the country is so strong that it is very difficult for African-American citizens to feel comfortable in joining white organizations. Of equal importance, environmental organizations have tended to focus on single issues (e.g., a landfill) and have ignored the larger set of concerns associated with poverty and social justice that are part of the African-American experience in this region. As a result, few African-Americans have joined environmental organizations.

Sumter County is home to the nation's largest hazardous waste landfill, owned and operated by Chemical Waste Management. Sumter County also is home to a grassroots environmental group known as Alabamians for a Clean Environment (ACE). ACE was formed in 1983 and during the 1980s came to play a prominent role in regional environmental meetings. Leaders of ACE have been prominently featured in local and statewide media as well as in national magazines from McCall's and Sierra (Faupel, et al., 1991). ACE leaders also have held leadership positions in the National Toxics Campaign, a Boston-based organization that supports grassroots groups fighting toxic pollution. In 1990, a door-to-door survey of 366 households whose children were receiving free or subsidized food at public schools was conducted in Sumter County (Alabama Coalition Against Hunger 1991). Included on the survey were a number of questions concerning environmental issues. Over 99% of survey respondents were African-American and by definition poor; Sumter County itself is 70% African-American (Bailey, et al., 1992). Over two-thirds of the survey respondents said there were no local organizations in Sumter County that were opposed to the landfill. Less than 7% of those surveyed were able to name ACE as such an organization (Bailey, Faupel and Gundlach 1993). These responses indicate to us that ACE, widely known outside Sumter County, was not known by the majority of the local population.

Over the past two years, ACE has fallen on hard times and ceased to function due to a variety of factors. In its stead, another local organization—the Federation of Southern Cooperatives—has emerged as the leading opposition to the Sumter County landfill. The Federation was formed in 1967 to assist limited resource farmers, especially African-American farmers, in the southeast. A training center and demonstration farm was

established in Sumter County, not far from the landfill. The Minority People's Council (made up of African-Americans in Sumter County who were associated with the Federation) were among the first who spoke out against the landfill in 1981 (Bailey and Faupel, 1993). During most of the 1980s, however, the white members of ACE served as the main vocal opposition to the landfill. For Sumter County's African-American population, the most pressing political issue of the decade was the struggle against an entrenched white establishment. Once African-American leaders were voted into office, they found that their budgets were tied to tax revenues generated by the hazardous waste landfill. By the beginning of the 1990s, however, there were signs of renewed interest in issues of environmental justice. In the past two years, an African-American leader of the Federation has played an increasingly prominent role at meetings and demonstrations in the Southeast, speaking out against the "environmental blackmail" used by large corporations to gain access to small rural communities desperate for jobs.

Across the border in Noxubee County, Mississippi, PEON has been fighting against a series of corporate investors wanting to locate hazardous waste facilities in their area. Like ACE, PEON can be characterized as having a largely white makeup. Local African-Americans have supported PEON but have not played an active role in this organization. In the past year, a separate organization known as African-Americans for Environmental Justice has been formed. With their own organization, the African-American population of Noxubee County appears better able to speak out in tandem with their white neighbors and counterparts. The two groups jointly sponsored a rally in April 1993 in Noxubee County where whites and African-Americans both marched and demonstrated against plans to site two hazardous waste facilities in their county.

In Talladega County, Alabama, a local white environmental organization known as Citizens Against Pollution in Talladega (CAPIT) have found it difficult to get African-American citizens who live near a solid waste landfill involved in their fight to close the facility. This group has enlisted the support of a local African-American organization known as Community Resource Development (CRD). CRD had been formed to address a number of outstanding issues in the unincorporated community of Odena, including buying land to establish a park and baseball field. Recently, CAPIT and CRD have established an alliance to fight plans to issue a new permit to expand the landfill. Leaders of both groups agreed that it was easier to get African-Americans involved in this issue through their own organization rather than by joining an organization that has come to be identified as a white group. The bottom line here, as in Noxubee County, is that both groups realize the need for interracial cooperation if they are to successfully fight the targeting of minority communities for solid and hazardous waste facilities.

A final illustrative case involves another solid waste facility in Alabama. Browning-Ferris Industries has obtained a permit to establish a large landfill in Walker County, approximately 45 minutes drive northwest from downtown Birmingham. Walker County is over 90% white, but the landfill itself has been sited near an African-American community known as Yerkwood. Yerkwood is located to the west of and down-slope from the landfill. The community of Bryan, a largely white community, is located around the eastern border of the landfill site at the top of the slope. People in the Bryan area will have to contend with truck traffic, but it will be the people of Yerkwood who will bear the brunt of any surface or groundwater contamination from this landfill. A local group known as Concerned Citizens for a Better Environment (CCBE) has formed in opposition to the BFI landfill. The group is largely white in composition. One of the few African-Americans who has joined the group said of his neighbors in Yerkwood, "The people here don't want it, but they figure those 'big guys' are going to make it happen." More than fatalism is involved in keeping the people of Yerkwood from taking an active part in joining CCBE. The leaders of that group are white and it is seen as a white group. The fact of the matter is that African-Americans and whites in this part of the country do not customarily belong to the same social, political or religious organizations.

While no group representing African-Americans from Yerkwood has emerged to join forces with CCBE, this group has forged an alliance with an African-American group known as Total Awareness Group (TAG)

in the Titusville neighborhood of Birmingham. The BFI landfill is designed to take all of Birmingham's solid waste. The waste first has to be collected at a transfer station, where it will be loaded onto large trucks for the trip to Walker County. The community of Titusville has been selected as the location for this transfer station. TAG has formed to oppose this selection, which will route large numbers of trucks through their neighborhood. TAG and CCBE have been holding joint meetings throughout the Spring and Summer of 1993. Geographic distance is not the only divide to be overcome. Titusville is a poor, urban African-American community while the members of CCBE are drawn from white rural backgrounds. What has happened in this case is a remarkable union of truly disparate groups brought together by a common struggle.

### Prospects

No attempt has been made here to review all efforts that have been made in recent years towards the formation of a new social movement focused on environmental justice. Evidence has been provided that demonstrates the existence a groundswell of public concern expressed in a variety of ways. Strong grassroots organizations have formed and are working collaboratively in a common struggle. These groups have sponsored local, regional and national meetings that have been used to strengthen common bonds and energize the movement. A diversity of publications has emerged to serve the informational needs of this movement. These include specialized newsletters as well as newsletters of grassroots environmental organizations which devote increasing attention to issues of race and the environment. In addition, academicians such as Bullard have provided scholarly legitimacy to the claims of grassroots organizers. An early leader in this struggle has advanced to the leadership of a major civil rights organization. And finally the EPA Administrator herself has identified environmental justice as a priority issue for her Agency. In terms of organizational evolution, the environmental justice movement has not yet reached the institutional stage, but it is rapidly gaining organizational strength.

Are we witnessing the birth of a new social movement? We would argue that such is indeed the case. The environmental justice movement is sufficiently distinct from the environmental and civil rights movements as to be identified as a separate phenomenon in its own right. Connections between this new movement and its progenitors will remain, but the environmental movement remains too firmly wedded to its preservationist past to embrace the notion that environmental quality and social justice are related. Similarly, the civil rights movement has ignored environmental issues as it has struggled for political empowerment and economic opportunity. These two established movements have built their bases of support around their core concerns. Both have come to recognize that environmental racism is a serious matter of concern, but have seen this as peripheral to their central focus. Thus a space has been opened for the emergence of a new social movement focusing on environmental justice. The movement at this time has its national figures but is largely a local phenomenon based on grassroots groups all over the country. We are in the early days of the movement's emergence, a period characterized by rhetoric, passion and anger.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Membership of this group included the Environmental Defense Fund, Environmental Policy Institute, Friends of the Earth, Izaak Walton League of America, Natural Resources Defense Council, National Audubon Society, National Parks and Conservation Association, National Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society.

<sup>2</sup>The present authors have been involved over the past seven years in studying the largest of these, located in Sumter County, Alabama (Bailey and Faupel 1992; Bailey, Faupel and Holland 1992; Bailey and Faupel 1993; Bailey, Faupel and Gundlach 1993).

<sup>3</sup>In contrast, during the period 1987-1990, minorities issues received attention three times, twice in the context of African-Americans and whites working together in fighting an environmental threat. Only once, in dealing with the

proposed hazardous waste facility in Hancock County, Georgia, was the disproportionate impact on minority communities raised (Stults 1988).

<sup>4</sup>One of the authors (Bailey) was an invited speaker in this rally, as well as at the April 1993 rally in Noxubee County.

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## **FROM COTTON PLANTATION TO PINE PLANTATION: FOREST DEPENDENCE IN ALABAMA'S BLACK BELT**

**John C. Bliss and Glenn R. Howze  
Auburn University**

In the Heart of Dixie, where fields of white cotton once spread to the horizon on all sides, plantations of a different hue now dominate the landscape. The Black Belt, a band of counties stretching across the South, named for both the color of its rich, cotton-supporting soils and the color of the laborers who once tended the crop, is now, to a great extent, a Green Belt of forests. Former cotton plantations are now pine plantations, and abandoned agricultural fields support stands of "boll weevil pine" and hardwoods.

Timber has replaced cotton in Alabama's Black Belt, changing the appearance of the landscape dramatically, and undoubtedly influencing the social landscape as well. The changes in acreage of the two crops can be easily measured, but to what extent and in what ways has the replacement of cotton by timber affected the region's social and economic relations? Has timber dependency radically changed long-existing social and land relations, or has it served to maintain them? In this paper, we briefly review the historical transition from dependency on cotton to dependency on timber, and present contemporary relationships between forest resources and community welfare. We then discuss constraints to and possibilities for forest-based economic development in the region.

### **The Black Belt**

The term "Black Belt" has historically had two meanings, one referring to the trans-South band of rich soils upon which cotton plantations were based, and the other referring to the concentration of African-Americans still living in those former cotton counties (Molnar and Adrian, 1980). In Alabama, the meanings overlap. The Black Belt counties average 58 percent African-American populations, while non-Black Belt rural counties average 13 percent (U.S. Dept. Commerce, 1992a). Our focus is on the 16 Alabama counties which are more than 35 percent African-American and at least 50 percent rural as defined by the Bureau of the Census. These counties lie in a band which closely approximates the physiographic Black Belt, with the addition of adjacent counties in which cotton cultivation was formerly dominant, and the exclusion of largely urban counties (Figure 1). Urban counties are sufficiently different from rural counties in terms of economic diversification and other characteristics to warrant their exclusion from this analysis.

### **From Cotton to Timber in the Black Belt**

In 1866 just under one million acres were planted to cotton in Alabama. The acreage in cotton peaked at 3.8 million acres in 1911, and after a fall in the 1920s, reached a second peak at 3.58 million acres in 1930. Then it began its descent (Figure 2). By 1966 cotton acreage had dwindled to just over one half million acres (Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, 1966). The most current statistics indicate that cotton was harvested from about 378,000 acres in 1991, less than ten percent of the area harvested at its historical peak (Alabama Agricultural Statistics Service, 1992). This shift away from cotton production in the Black Belt was accompanied by out-migration.

Since the peak of King Cotton in 1914, abandonment of agricultural fields, combined with growing investment in reforestation, has led to an immense boom in forest acreage (Figure 2). Alabama's forests increased over one million acres from 1952 to 1962 alone and is projected to continue growing until the turn of the century (U.S.D.A. Forest Service, 1988). Some of this increased forest acreage is attributable to tree planting on industrial and nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) lands. From 1928 through 1985, some 4.5 million acres of plantations, almost entirely pine, were planted in the state (U.S.D.A. Forest Service, 1986). Tree planting has been



**Figure 1: Rural Black Belt Counties in Alabama, 1990 (U.S. Dept. of Commerce 1992a).**

subsidized by the U.S.D.A. since 1936. From 1956 through 1963, almost one quarter of a million acres of plantations were subsidized by the Conservation Reserve Soil Bank Program. Currently, some 1.4 million acres in the Black Belt are occupied by pine plantations (Vissage and Miller, 1991). The Forest Service's 1990 inventory

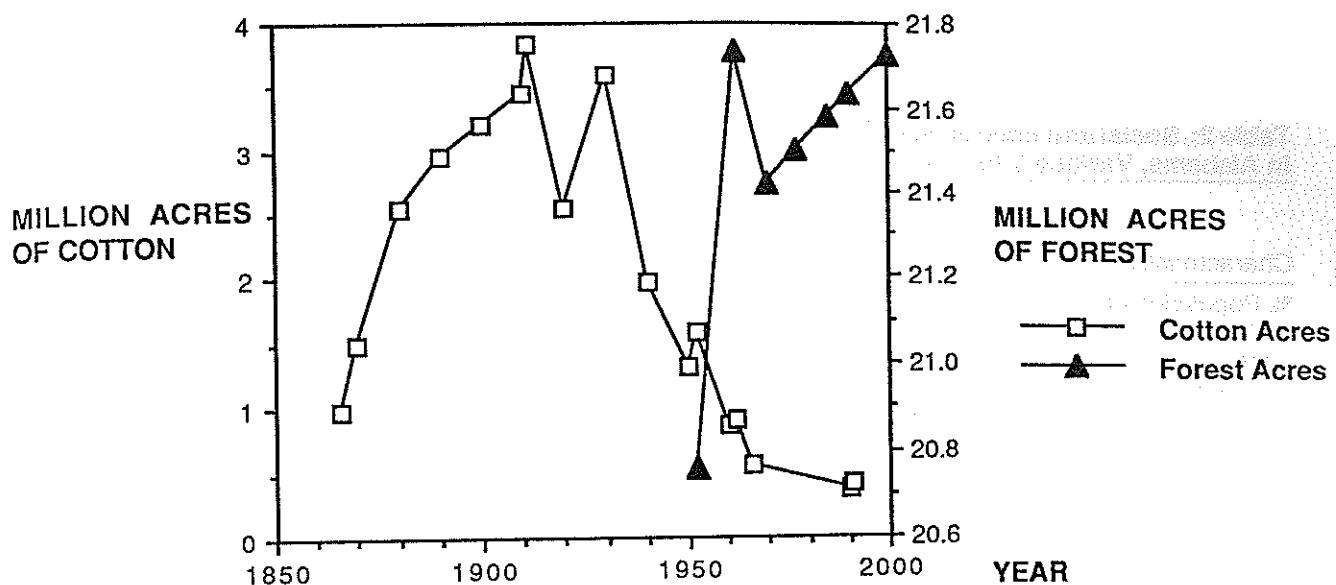


Figure 2: Area of Cotton Harvested, Area of Forest, Alabama, 1866-2000 (AAES, 1968, AASS, 1992)

indicates that nearly 22 million acres, almost 68 percent of the state, is forested (Vissage and Miller, 1991). The forest products industry is the largest manufacturing industry in the state, as measured by value added and value of shipments, and second only to textiles in number of employees and size of payroll (Bliss and Muehlenfeld, 1991).

Whereas 68 percent of Alabama is covered by forests, the 16 Black Belt counties average 74 percent forest cover (Table 1) (Vissage and Miller, 1991). On average, forest-based employment accounts for about 17 percent of total employment in these counties, and 38 percent of manufacturing employment (U.S. Dept. Commerce, 1988). In contrast, forest-based employment accounts for only 20 percent of manufacturing employment in the other rural counties in the state. By these measures, the economy of the Black Belt is more forest-dependent than that of the rest of rural Alabama. In a recent review of the literature, Humphrey (1990:36) defined timber dependency as follows: classic timber dependence occurs when most workers in a community depend upon a forest products industry or its supporting services for employment, and the community is located in a remote place, without alternative means of earning income.

Forest-dependent communities elsewhere in the United States and Canada have been studied extensively and found to be characterized by cycles of economic boom and bust, high labor turnover, lack of economic diversification (leading to dependence upon external market forces), small size, physical and psychological isolation, inadequate physical and social infrastructure, lack of community planning, and weak governance (Robinson, 1984:6-10).

Table 1: Measures of forest dependency, rural Black Belt and rural non-Black Belt Counties, Alabama, 1990 (Vissage and Miller, 1991, U.S. Dept. Commerce, 1992b).

Measure	Mean (Standard Deviation)		t-test	One-tail level significance		
	Black Belt (n = 16)	Non-Black Belt (n = 31)				
% County forested	74.26	(9.72)	68.34	(16.05)	1.35	0.10
Forest-based employment/total employment	16.98	(12.01)	10.38	(11.72)	1.81	0.05
Forest-based employment/manufacturing employment	37.71	(24.86)	19.77	(19.75)	2.7	0.005

**Table 2: Social and Economic Characteristics of Rural Black Belt and Rural non-Black Belt Counties In Alabama, Various Years, 1990 U.S. Dept. Commerce, 1988, 1992a).**

Characteristics	Mean (Standard Deviation)		t-test	One-tail level significance
	Black Belt (n = 16)	Non-Black Belt (n = 31)		
% Population change 1950 - 1990	-24.04 (12.44)	24.48 (50.42)	-3.77	0.005
Rate of natural increase, 1990	5.57 (2.41)	3.82 (2.49)	2.31	0.02
Sex ratio, 1990 (F/M)	88.59 (2.67)	94.38 (3.23)	-6.16	0.0005
% Children in single- parent families, 1990	37.00 (9.04)	17.91 (3.96)	10.10	0.0005
% Population 18 years or under, 1990	30.54 (2.11)	25.94 (1.32)	9.22	0.0005
% Population 65 years or older, 1990	15.12 (1.37)	14.28 (2.21)	1.39	0.10
Infant mortality (rate per 1000), 1984	14.91 (9.00)	10.17 (6.16)	2.13	0.05
Median family income, 1985	\$11,805 1,563)	\$14,727 (1,696)	-5.74	0.0005
% Households below poverty, 1986	27.79 (5.84)	15.66 (2.83)	9.63	0.0005
Average unemployment, 1990	9.92 (2.05)	7.86 (1.94)	3.37	0.005
% Households on food stamps, 1990	25.55 (7.48)	9.88 (2.94)	10.30	0.0005

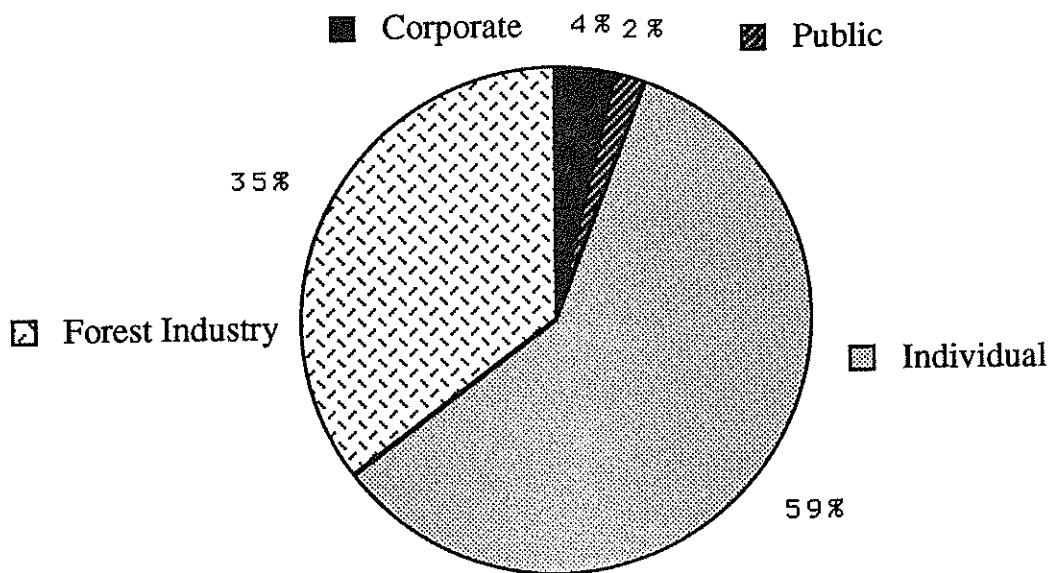
### Social and Economic Conditions in Alabama's Black Belt

Alabama's Black Belt counties are among the poorest in the United States and suffer from the social ills associated with poverty to a greater degree than do rural counties outside the Black Belt (Table 2). Demographically, Black Belt counties are characterized by high rates of out-migration, high ratios of women to men, and high rates of unemployment (U.S. Dept. Commerce, 1992a). These indicators suggest an out-migration of males looking for employment. As might be expected in this situation, a high proportion of children are raised in single parent homes, and the percentage of households receiving food stamps is greater than found in other rural Alabama counties. Like other poor regions of the world, the Black Belt is characterized by a high rate of natural increase (birth rate minus death rate), a high dependency ratio, and a high rate of infant mortality. By any measure, per-capita income, median family income, or the percentage of households below the poverty level, Black Belt residents are poorer than other rural Alabamians (U.S. Dept. Commerce, 1988).

### Constraints to Forest-Based Economic Development

The Black Belt is arguably forest-dependent and definitely poor. What is the relationship between these two observations? Does forest-dependence contribute to the region's poverty? Does it ameliorate it? Or is it an indication of poverty? Can the forest be expected to contribute to economic development, and if so, how? What are the constraints to forest-based economic development in the Black Belt? A preliminary look at these questions suggests several constraints, and a few possible solutions.

Wealth is created at several points in the process of transforming raw forest materials into consumer products. One can view these points as opportunities for economic development. The first point is timber



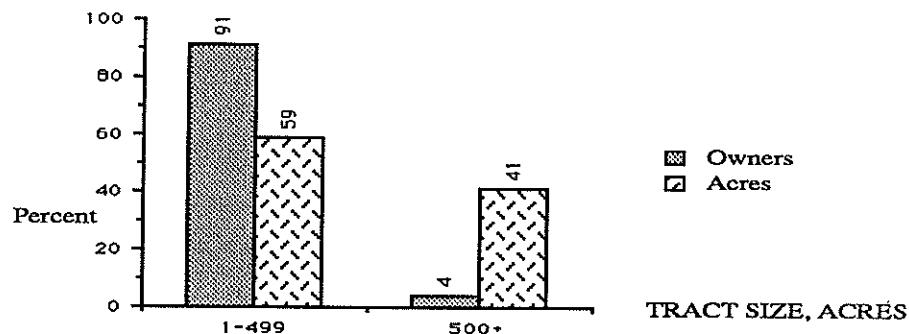
**Figure 3: Forest Ownership in the Black Belt, 1990 (Vissage and Miller, 1991)**

growing. Landowners grow crops of trees and sell them to others who use them to produce products. It is axiomatic that, in order to directly benefit financially from the growing and selling of trees, one must first own the trees. Statewide, nonindustrial private owners (farmers, miscellaneous individuals, and corporations other than forest industry) own or control about 70 percent of all forest acres. Forest industries control another 25 percent, and the remaining 5 percent is publicly owned (Vissage and Miller, 1991). An estimated one half of all private forest land in the state is owned or controlled by about one percent of the owners in tracts larger than 500 acres (Rosson and Doolittle, 1987).

In the Black Belt counties, the forest industry owns or leases about 35 percent of the forest, non-forest industry corporations such as real estate companies, banks and pension funds hold another 4 percent, and public lands account for additional 6 percent of the forest (Figure 3). The remainder is owned by nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) owners. Just under four percent of the NIPF owners in the region own tracts larger than 500 acres. These 1,300 owners together own about 41 percent of the NIPF acreage. The other 96 percent of the owners, some 36,536 individuals, own the remaining 59 percent of the NIPF acreage (see Figure 4; Alabama Forestry Commission, 1990). This distribution of forest acres among NIPF owners is more skewed than that found in the other rural counties of Alabama, where 99 percent of the owners own 76 percent of the NIPF land in tracts of less than 500 acres. African Americans own only four percent of the privately-owned forest acres in the state (Rosson and Doolittle, 1987). The distribution of land naturally results in a corresponding distribution of the benefits of land ownership, including profiting from timber sales.

Examination of the characteristics of small forest tract owners in the Black Belt and the economic uses of their forests is warranted. Targeted incentives, technical assistance, and alternative timber management and marketing arrangements could assist small tract owners to profitably and sustainably manage their forests.

A second opportunity to extract wealth from the forest occurs in the harvesting and transporting of cut trees to the mill. This was formerly an important source of employment for the region's rural poor (Flynt, 1990). Starting in the 1920s when the pulp and paper industry began to migrate from the Northeast to the South, thousands of rural Alabamians with limited education and capital bought chainsaws and trucks (frequently on credit) and cut and hauled pulpwood to the mills (Bliss and Flick, 1994).



**Figure 4: NIPF Ownership Distribution in the Black Belt, 1990 (Alabama Forestry Commission, 1992)**

Since the 1960s, the development and adoption of highly mechanized logging equipment has completely changed the composition of the logging work force, putting small, unmechanized, uncapitalized businesses at competitive disadvantage. At present, almost one half of the pulpwood contractors in the South run small operations, producing fewer than 100 cords of pulpwood per week. But these small businesses account for only 10 percent of the total wood production in the region (Watson et al., 1989). Clearly, large, well capitalized, highly mechanized operations are on the rise, and the "pulpwooder" is almost a thing of the past.

Limited niche markets exist for small, manual pulpwooding operations, such as in harvesting trees near homes, harvesting small volumes of insect and disease-killed timber, and clearing power line right of ways. Additional markets could be developed to take advantage of the perception that unmechanized logging operations cause less environmental damage than today's large, heavy logging machines. Still, pulpwooding is unlikely to ever again provide the employment it formerly did to those with limited financial resources and training.

Manufacturing useful products from raw forest materials provides a third opportunity for rural development by providing employment. The Black Belt is home to a large share of the state's forest products manufacturing facilities, including five of the state's 13 pulp or paper mills, six of 13 particle board or plywood mills, five wood treatment plants, eight chip mills, 45 saw mills, 20 specialty mills, and 5 veneer mills (Alabama Forestry Association, 1992).

Development of secondary manufacturing capability for forest products has lagged behind that of primary manufacturing throughout the state (Muehlenfeld, 1992). Development of businesses producing wooden furniture, fine papers, cabinets, boxes, and other forest product-based products would increase the value of the state's forests while providing employment for Black Belt citizens.

#### **Implications for Economic Development and Opportunities for Cooperation**

Poverty in the Black Belt will not be alleviated through forest-based economic development alone. Its causes are too varied and complex for any single solution. Moreover, the structure of forest ownership in the region, the nature of the wood harvesting and transportation business, and the lack of secondary manufacturing are all constraints to the potential contribution of forest-based development.

Forest-based economic development may, however, hold some promise for making a greater contribution to the well-being of Black Belt communities. Cooperative research and development efforts might profitably be focused upon the three areas of opportunity discussed above. First, little technical assistance and few incentives have been targeted at low income owners of small forest tracts in the region. The capability exists to deliver forestry technical assistance, management incentives, and extension education to this population. The vast majority of existing program benefits are captured by the well-educated, financially comfortable owners of large forest tracts. Another forestland-based solution which has received much discussion—property tax reform—is beyond the scope of this paper, but warrants attention in the context of rural development.

Entrepreneurs and laborers left in the wake of recent technological changes in wood production and transportation also deserve focused attention. Little is known about their numbers or economic condition. If they are to continue to participate in the forest products sector, they will require training and access to financing.

Finally, opportunities for expanded secondary manufacturing capability have not been fully explored. It might well be this activity which holds the greatest promise for contributing to community well-being in the Black Belt.

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## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE 1890s IN A TIME OF QUALITATIVE CHANGE<sup>1</sup>**

**Rosalind P. Harris and Louis Swanson**  
**University of Kentucky**

### **Introduction**

The institutional changes that continue to sweep central and eastern Europe seem to be distant. The media is replete with analyses of why such upheavals are occurring, of the failures of former institutions and ideologies to be responsive to the needs of a changing society. However, we don't need to watch reports from far off places to observe qualitative institutional changes. They are underway here, and indeed are underway among the Land Grant Universities (LGUs). We are on the eve of qualitative changes in the missions and structure of 1862 and 1890 LGUs. At this time, the crystal ball is extremely foggy as to how the LGUs will respond. There is the danger that the LGUs will not respond to our own changes and go the way of the landed aristocracy and buggy whips. But there are also impressive opportunities. In this period of uncertainty where might the pitfalls be? Where might unexpected opportunities emerge? Who will form the new clientele to politically and socially support the new missions—the new emphases of America's historic people's universities?

### **The Internal Dilemmas of Social Institutions**

Social institutions are by their very nature conservative. While they usually emerge or change during periods of qualitative change, they also tend to quickly settle into routines that form the basis of extended periods of stasis—or a new status-quo. A clientele is nourished, programs are developed to meet the clients' needs, and bureaucratic structures are created that eventually take on a life and meaning of their own. Government bureaucracies and institutions of higher education are no different. Their bureaucracies develop strategies for cultivating their clients and in reproducing their own programs from one generation to the next. The legitimacy of these bureaucracies rests upon widely accepted assumptions concerning their missions and the worthiness of their efforts. That is, their existence and persistence rest upon the appearance of contributing to the well-being of key segments of society—that their efforts make a difference in articulating society's values and aspirations.

The LGUs came into existence during the nation's greatest conflict, the Civil War (the 1862s), and in response to one of the nation's greatest cultural rifts—racism (the 1890s). They were linked to industrial modernization strategies to improve the productivity and thereby the well-being of agriculture via teaching, applied research (the experiment stations), and extension (cooperative extension services). Their mission was to assist in creating wealth by transferring knowledge to those who had the productive capacity to transform farming systems into profitable enterprises. In the 19th century, serving the needs of agriculture meant the LGUs had a majority of the nation's citizens as their clients. It meant that most of their clientele represented those persons occupying the lower 80 percent of the nation's income categories.

### **Current Legitimacy Dilemma of the LGUs**

The very 19th century dates that are used to identify the LGUs—1862 and 1890—should indicate the possibility that these late 19th and early 20th century institutions may be in need of mission adjustments. Today, the standard of living of mid-sized and large-scale farm operators (farms with gross sales of \$100,000 and more) is well above the median income level of the counties in which they live (in 1988 the total net family income of farms \$100,000 to \$500,000 was over \$100,000). Presently, less than 323,000 farms account for over 76 percent of all cash receipts in farming.

If the clientele of the LGUs are commercial farmers, then they are serving a group of people that are considerably better off than the great majority of rural people. Historically, this has not been the case. During the past century, the transformation of American agriculture has been profound. In 1920, slightly less than 50 percent of the nation's population lived in rural areas, and almost two-thirds of this population was engaged in farming. Today, most of the approximately 19 percent of the nation's workforce engaged in agricultural occupations are not located in farming. They are in support industries supplying farm inputs or in the processing and marketing of agricultural commodities. Over 80 percent of these people work in metropolitan counties. Moreover, farming and other agricultural jobs account for less than a quarter of all jobs in nonmetropolitan areas. Rural people who earn a living from farming make up less than 10 percent of the workforce. Rural America has witnessed a dramatic transformation of its economic base from a dependence on extractive industries (farming, mining, forestry, and fishing) to service sector and manufacturing enterprises. This transformation also has been one of social class as more people work for someone else rather than for themselves.

This transformation has been characterized by the continued degradation of the environment and by increasing marginalization of rural non-farm working people relative to the best-paying jobs of the national economy. At the beginning of the 1980s, Don Paarlberg predicted the rise of powerful new agendas in the arena of agricultural policy. New agendas have emerged. Issues previously outside of the LGUs interest domain—off-farm environmental concerns—as well as once marginal groups within their mission domain—consumer/food safety, and rural development groups—have gained high visibility in recent years. These new agendas represent new opportunities for all LGUs. But these opportunities will require institutional reorganization.

The LGUs' problem is to convert some of the considerable talent of their current bureaucracies to these new missions and new clients. The persistence of these institutions rests on the success of this conversion without abandoning traditional agricultural supporters. It is both unnecessary and would in fact be folly to renounce this important base of support to farmers as they covert some resources to serving environmentalists, consumer groups, and the rural non-farm population.

The decline in the numbers of commercial farmers, the rise of agribusiness as an alternative source of information, and an inability to take on challenges of the new agendas has left the 1862s facing a profound crisis of political and social legitimacy. Recently, there have been signs of change. This is evident in the Cooperative Extension Services' extraordinary efforts to alter their priorities to better reflect grass-roots demands for greater emphasis on social and environmental issues. A recent futuring conference sponsored by the Experiment Station Committee on Policy (ESCOPE) emphasized the importance of enhancing research on sustainable agriculture, food safety, and rural development issues. The 1862s are finding that their current scales of operation (the size of their faculties and infrastructure base) cannot be limited to the continuing shrinking number of commercial farms. Outside criticisms of the 1862 LGUs from environmental and rural development interests have gained considerable sway in the Congress as well as within the Clinton Administration in the White House. The powerful Farm Bloc—a 20th century bipartisan coalition within Congress—is showing signs of strain as pressure to cut all entitlements to balance the budget gains strength. Recent criticism of farm policy (see Browne et al., 1992) has called for a fundamental rethinking of the framing assumptions on which agricultural policy is legitimated.

The list of complaints is impressive. Environmental groups point to myriad ecosystems under stress from environmentally unsustainable farming practices. Evidence not only includes presently high levels of soil erosion, but also the pollution of both surface and ground water supplies, the loss of biodiversity and genetic diversity, and enhanced pest problems associated with concentrated monoculture. Food safety groups point to major health problems due to poor meat inspection, pesticide residues on fresh and processed food products, and natural carcinogens in the food supply. Rural development interests point to the further falling behind

of the non-metropolitan population in virtually all measures of quality of life. This preconference is focusing on the historic marginality of the Black Belt as a region and the consequences for African Americans.

Leadership is a problem that often confronts institutions needing to qualitatively change their missions and structures. Most people occupying leadership roles at the time of crisis have achieved their positions by successfully working within the power structures of the status-quo. Their very success may prejudice them in assessing not only the directions for change but even the need for change. This does not mean that the LGU leadership cannot adjust to change, but that taking their institutions in new directions will require broad changes in their own understanding of the threats challenging their institutions.

### **What Do These Crises Mean for the 1890 LGUs?**

The crises facing the 1862 LGUs have serious negative and positive connotations for the 1890 LGUs. There are positive signs that some of the 1862 LGUs and the USDA are assigning higher priority to and applying greater resources to environmental, food safety, and rural development issues. Should the 1862s move toward these new missions with greater alacrity, they are still unlikely to cast a favorable glance toward the 1890 LGUs. Such mission changes do not require similar shifts in their historic relationships with the 1890 LGUs. But, the 1862s will not have an infinite resource base with which to conduct their new missions. The national trend for downsizing institutions will seriously reduce the 1862 LGU resource base. At this time, only a small proportion of the existing 1862 LGU faculty are ready to address the new agendas, and they are training only a few students. Assuming that the 1862 LGUs will not see an enhancement of existing resources, they will have to retain existing faculty and staff. This will include convincing their personnel of the worthiness and importance of these new institutional missions. The 1862 LGUs also are likely to continue to cultivate a fairly wealthy clientele—including well-heeled representatives of the new agendas. Moreover, it is doubtful that southern 1862 LGUs will develop an interest in the social issues associated with the Black Belt, or for that matter, the Carolina Piedmont and coastal plains, the Virginia tide water, the Appalachian mountains, the Louisiana bayou, or the Mississippi and Tennessee river valleys. The people of these regions are no more likely to be better served in the future than they were in the past. They will continue to be left behind.

If so, this means that the majority of the South's nonmetro population, whether they are black, white, Hispanic, or native American, will be served by only a few of the 1862 LGU and 1890 LGU programs. It also means that those Southerners, urban and rural, who are not in the upper 20 percent of the income groups (which is most of the middle class), represent a new clientele for either the 1862 LGUs or the 1890 LGUs. The 1890 LGUs are in a unique position to acquire and foster this clientele.

The 1890 LGUs' historic legacy is associated with the struggle of southern African Americans to break the cultural and material bonds of slavery. This struggle has not always been successful. But even the failures have provided insights and have intensified commitments to change the status quo. This legacy provides the 1890 LGUs with a realistic appraisal of the costs and benefits in changing the status-quo. However, in order to fully take advantage of this opportunity, the 1890 LGUs will have to broaden their own clientele to include middle and working class whites, Hispanics, and native Americans. This need not and should not be an abandonment of their African American identity. Rather, it should be the application of the lessons learned advancing the rights and material well-being of African Americans of the South's working and middle classes. The knowledge gained by a hundred years of struggle needs to be applied to the aspirations of an even larger population.

### **What Might Be Some of the New Missions?**

The 1890 LGUs will have the same opportunities for developing programs for the new agendas as the 1862 LGUs. The difference will be the clientele. Environmental issues associated with the development of

sustainable farming systems will require local solutions. Given the uniqueness of local ecologies and political economies, sustainable farming systems will have to be tailored to specific needs. This is as it was prior to the movement toward commodity production specialization, the adoption of capital intensive farming systems, and monoculture after World War II.

The greatest adjustment will come in addressing rural social and economic development. An often overlooked dimension of rural development is the equal status of improving social infrastructures. Social infrastructure refers to the capacity and will of local populations to effectively mobilize scarce development resources for the improvement of the entire community. This will include improving the education of rural youth so that they are competitive in attaining high-pay positions, to retain workers who have been displaced by technological changes in the workplace, and to help local businesses anticipate changes and to develop more cooperative and efficient workplaces. This will require a commitment to serving people who by an accident of birth (social class, ethnicity, gender, handicap, etc.) have been disenfranchised—who have never had a level playing field in the development of their talents.

The development of social infrastructure also requires outreach to rural communities. Such communities are in great need of assistance in the development of strategic plans for improving their well-being. They need the resources of institutions of higher education to assess their opportunities and their barriers to development. They need advice on how to make their communities and their workplaces consistent with the goals of sustainable environment. The extension services of the 1890 LGUs can provide this type of assistance. The undergraduate curriculums of these institutions can create programs that will give students who want to make a difference in and for their communities the requisite analytic and planning tools.

The focus of these teaching, extension, and research programs will be the non-farm population. It will include efforts to organize those traditionally excluded from local decision-making processes. It has long been recognized that political desegregation did not lead to economic empowerment. An identified barrier to rural development is the poor quality of the skills of cooperative or collective decision-making. If we are to champion pluralism and democracy, then it will be necessary to challenge authoritarian power structures. This will likely include lending support to extension efforts to confront those local powers who would otherwise willingly exclude the rural working population from decisions that directly affect their quality of life. The emphasis should be on “cooperative” but such efforts should not shrink from confrontation. It is likely that the rural development efforts of the 1862 LGUs will face the same challenge.

### **Shift in Consciousness**

The move toward these and other new missions will require a shift in consciousness. The 1890 LGU legacies are assets rather than millstones. But, if these legacies are to be transformed into a broader agenda, there must be a willingness to address the struggles of non-black Southerners. This window of opportunity will not be indefinite. There are numerous other public and private institutions quite willing to fill the current void once they perceive the opportunity.

This challenge, coming as it does from two 1862 LGU professors, may seem disingenuous. It might be (and has been) said that we are asking the 1890 LGUs to accept their traditional lesser role in the pecking order of institutions of higher education—of telling the 1890 LGUs not to be all that they can be. But, this is only true if the vast majority of Southerners are lesser people. They are not lesser people. Our frustration is that the 1862 LGUs will adopt new missions but retain the same class of clients.

If the 1890 LGUs assist Southerners to achieve their aspirations, to identify personal and community goals, and to improve their quality of life, they will in return provide much needed political and social support. They will prove to be worthy clients. But there are clear risks and costs to be considered in pursuing these

opportunities. There will be pressures to forsake the African American character and heritage. This pressure needs to be resisted, lest the cultural advantages gained in this struggle be lost. The 1890s were born in the cultural milieu of racism and segregation. For racism to be overcome and for segregation of life opportunities due to social class, gender, ethnicity, or handicap to be overcome, our society must produce social institutions to realize the goals of helping people to do what they already want to do and are capable of doing by empowering them to be a part of the decision-making in their communities and in taking greater control of their own lives. The 1890 LGUs are equipped to provide this institutional support. But this opportunity will require the 1890 LGUs to provide the leadership and to take the initiative.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> A version of this paper was presented by Louis Swanson at the Preconference of the Professional Agricultural Workers Conference at Tuskegee University in December, 1992. We were asked to make a thoughtful presentation that would challenge the participants to see not only the problems confronting the 1890 land-grants differently, but to identify new opportunities. The authors were explicitly asked to avoid making the usual academic presentation. We would like to thank Lionell Williamson for his helpful suggestions.

## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Work Group Report**

In terms of assisting in the development of the Southern Black Belt Region, the questions that the groups were originally to discuss were as follows:

- (1) What role does agriculture (and non-agriculture-related enterprises) and rural entrepreneurship have to play?
- (2) What is the role of the 1890 system and the land-grant system in general?
- (3) What is the role of community-based leadership and initiatives?

Through group interactions, adjustments, and flexibility, the reports brought to the larger group discussion consisted of emphasizing production agriculture, social and economic development, and initiating an effort to reach the Council of 1890 Presidents and request their intervention for attention on behalf of the Black Belt region.

#### **Production Agriculture**

Don't assume agriculture will become extinct in the Black Belt; agriculture is diverse and could include increased roles for:

- The concept of value added and its application to agriculture
- Small entrepreneurs
- The links to the resource base
- The importance and impact of decreasing numbers in black farmers
- Best strategies for small, part-time, limited resource farmers
- Extensive vs intensive vs integrated cultural practices
- Self-sufficiency - Marketing
- Efficient use of resources
- Cooperatives
- Specialization
- Labor intensiveness
- Sustainability
- Specialty crops (finding niches)
- Trust and confidence in local agricultural communities
- Empowerment
- Attitudes - Self image - Image of farming
- Profitability
- Link with non-farm economic activity
- The legal system
- Business planning
- Integrated farm management
- Finance, credit
- Education
- Research and technology
- Market information
- Suppliers - Markets

- Risk taking
- Innovation
- Leadership
- Public policy - Government support, USDA tracking and focusing resources on specific target clients
- Equity in services provided
- Becoming advocates, participants and owners of/in the “system”.

## **Social and Economic Development**

Strategies for non-agriculture based development in the Black Belt would require the following actions:

- Build new clientele
  - . low income whites
  - . women
  - . others who could be nurtured by the 1890's legacy
  - . traditional white “allies”
- Strengthen joint efforts with the 1862s, federal partners (USDA, other agencies), state government, etc.
- Help and learn networking skills
  - . Priorities - compromise - strategy (short and long run) so as to be able to build the networks, communications and collaborations needed
- Ask “us,” the clientele and 1890 institutions
  - . continue more thinking on how to truly involve local communities
  - . bring the matter to the attention of land-grant presidents, USDA, and other key players
  - . communicate (through appropriate channels) to the Clinton Administration
- Ask USDA to influence mission of USDA’s Rural Development Administration
- Ask research experiment station directors to continue to think innovatively
- Ask land-grant presidents to continue this thinking with people from USDA and RDA’s administrators

Therefore, strategies for agricultural development in the Black Belt must:

- Adopt innovation in agriculture
- Be based on economics, i.e., to include aspects of

Marketing  
 Finance  
 Profit  
 Business planning  
 Agricultural policies

- Be focused on cooperation in order to achieve:

Empowerment of Black Belt residents  
Improved cost/benefit

- Utilize existing resources, both human (requiring institutional assistance, government help, the old, disadvantaged, and attitudinal changes) and non-human (forestry, hunting, small holdings, etc.)
- Emphasize diversity and integration (specialization) to include areas such as
  - ornamentals/landscaping
  - vegetable crops
  - aquaculture
  - livestock
  - forestry-related amenities
- Be education/demonstration based
- Make use of requirements to implement the ideas above (need demonstrations)
- Educate in terms of technical assistance
- Start-up funds
- Continue support of programs
- Put emphasis on technology transfer

These actions for social and economic development assume the ability to put the puzzle together<sup>1</sup> on the part of agricultural workers and other scientists:

- Coordination of three kinds of work:

Problems  
Current issues  
Academic disciplines

- to Attain:

**Balanced Improvements in Four Areas of Progress**

Institutional Improvements  
Human Development  
Technology and  
Conservation of Natural and Manmade Resources

- to Serve:

**Clientele groups:**

Farmers and farm and urban families  
Rural societies and nonfarm rural groups  
Food fiber and Natural Resource Users  
Agribusinesses

- Through

Research  
Teaching  
Extension  
International Efforts  
Advising  
Administering  
Consulting  
Business  
Government  
Organizations  
Other Ways

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Source: *Social Science Agricultural Agendas and Strategies*, Edited by Glenn Johnson and James T. Bonnen with Darrell Fienup, C. Leroy Quance and Neill Schaller, East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 1991.

## APPENDIX B

### Letter from Preconference Participants

December 5, 1992

To: The Council of 1890 Presidents  
Attention: Dr. Delores Spikes  
From: Participants of the 50th Anniversary PAWC Preconference on  
"Focus on the Black Belt: Life Conditions and Opportunities"

The 50th Anniversary PAWC Preconference participants once again focused on the needs of the rural Black Belt of the South at its meeting on December 5-6, 1992. Our strongest statement is that the resources of the land-grant institutions and those of federal and other agencies must be brought to bear upon this region of the country to bring the changes that are needed.

The southern region is especially deserving of particular attention. It is the region where the greatest proportion of the nation's rural population lives and where a disproportionate number of the rural economic and social problems occur. Over 90 percent of all persistently poor counties are in the rural South. The greatest institutional challenge to rural viability exists in the rural South.

One USDA agency—the Rural Development Administration (RDA)—is now in its formative stages. It is defining its mission and setting up its operations. We request that as a first step the Presidents of the 1890 land-grant institutions meet as soon as possible with the incoming Secretary of Agriculture and the administrators and staff of the RDA to propose a new initiative that addresses the critical needs of the Black Belt—needs that have been too long neglected. The Preconference participants stand ready to provide specific information documenting the conditions that exist in the Black Belt.

Principles that should undergird any such initiative relative to the Black Belt include the following:

1. Rural development is the enhancement of social infrastructure as much as that of developing the rural economy. Therefore, the RDA needs to facilitate both kinds of development. Part of a commitment to development should include hiring minorities and others from the region at all levels within the agency.
2. The land-grant institutions, as defined by their mission, and in cooperation with the RDA, provide a partnership to make available to rural people considerable professional expertise to assist them in making their own development decisions.
3. As rural programs are developed, it is important that there be rural policies in addition to farm policies.

Secondly, we request that the Work Group Report of the PAWC Preconference be forwarded to the incoming administration.

Third, we request that research, extension, and teaching efforts should be directed toward Black Belt problems by the 1890 and 1862 land-grant institutions via NASULGC.

## APPENDIX C

### PRECONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

Baharanyi, Ntam, Tuskegee University  
Baldwin, Walter, Tuskegee University  
Blackwell, Velma, Tuskegee University  
Blankenship, Glenn, USDA /Forest Service, Washington, D.C.  
Bliss, John, Auburn University  
Bogie, Don, Auburn University at Montgomery  
Bonsi, Eunice, Tuskegee University  
Calhoun, Samuel, USDA/Economic Research Service, Washington, D.C.  
Carnette, Eugene, USDA/1890 Liaison, Virginia State University  
Dale, Duane, Consultant/Boston, Massachussets  
Demissie, E., University of Maryland-Eastern Shore  
Diabate, Youssouf, Tuskegee University  
Drain, Alphonso, USDA/National Agricultural Statistics Service,  
English, Henry, University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff  
Essono, Gerard, Tuskegee University  
Hill, Walter A., Tuskegee University  
Howze, Glenn, Auburn University  
Huggins, Melise D., Tuskegee University  
Larry, Samuel, USDA/Forest Service, Oklahoma  
Lents, Robert, USDA Forest Service, Georgia  
Lleweno, Dave, USDA/Alabama Agricultural Statistics Service, Alabama  
Lyles, Gladys, Tuskegee University  
Mayberry, B. D., Tuskegee University  
Mayes, McKinley, USDA/Cooperative State and Research Service, Washington, D.C.  
Mbedja, Amougou, Tuskegee University  
Morgan, Sherwood, USDA/Soil Conservation Service, South Carolina  
Ngandu, Mudiayi, Tuskegee University  
Ngayap, Martial, Tuskegee University  
Ofori, Wil, Tuskegee University  
Ouli, Monique, Tuskegee University  
Penn, Renata, USDA/Economic Research Service, Washington, D.C.  
Scarfe, David, Tuskegee University  
Scott, Samuel, University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff  
Selwyn, J., University of Alabama  
Sneed, Marcia, USDA/Forest Service, Mississippi  
Swanson, Lou, University of Kentucky  
Vaughnes, Rick, Tuskegee University  
Wimberley, Ronald, North Carolina State University  
Yancy, John, USDA/Forest Service, Alabama  
Yankam, Sophonie, Tuskegee University  
Young, Paul B., Tuskegee University  
Zabawa, Robert, Tuskegee University