

Online Appendix A: Acreage and Operator Trends, South and Non-South

One factor that is often mentioned to explain Black farmer decreases is the disproportionate effect that mechanization had on cotton, a crop that many Black farmers grew. While the 1959 Agricultural Census does not break down crops grown by race, it does break down acres and operators by the South and the US as a whole. The 1959 Agricultural Census defines “the South” as 16 states: Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. Since the Census measures non-white operators and acreage by tenure status for the South and the whole country, we obtain numbers for “Non-South” by taking the difference between these two totals for 1920 and 1959. This allows us to see whether non-white farmers fared differently outside the South, here a rough proxy for growing certain crops like cotton.

[Table 2 about here.]

Table 2 shows the same numbers as table 1 but broken down by South and Non-South. While there are fewer non-white farmers outside of the South, there are similar disparities across race both in and outside of the South. Non-white owners in either region lost about the same percentage of operators, 47-49%, while white owners decreased between 30 and 40%. While the South lost roughly the same percentage of tenants regardless of race, outside the South there were larger decreases in non-white tenants (-79%) than white tenants (-57%). Much like the rest of the country, the biggest disparities across race in either region were in acreage: non-white owners in either region lost about half of their acreage while white owners only lost at most 27% of their acreage. While cotton mechanization is one factor in Black farmer exit, large racial disparities in losses outside the South suggest it does not fully explain the decrease in those forty years.

Table 2: Operators and Acreage by Race, Non-South versus South

| | | <i>Non-South</i> | | | <i>South</i> | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------------|----------|----------|--------------|----------|----------|
| Operators (thousands) | | 1920 | 1959 | % Change | 1920 | 1959 | % Change |
| Owner | White | 1,947.47 | 1,159.94 | -40.44 | 1,227.20 | 856.86 | -30.18 |
| | Non-white | 14.57 | 7.64 | -47.56 | 178.56 | 89.75 | -49.74 |
| Part Owner | White | 365.39 | 507.00 | 38.76 | 152.43 | 285.42 | 87.24 |
| | Non-white | 1.86 | 3.20 | 72.27 | 39.03 | 37.53 | -3.84 |
| Tenant | White | 852.97 | 364.20 | -57.30 | 887.57 | 228.22 | -74.29 |
| | Non-white | 14.45 | 2.97 | -79.46 | 703.56 | 138.05 | -80.38 |
| | | <i>Non-South</i> | | | <i>South</i> | | |
| Acres (millions) | | 1920 | 1959 | % Change | 1920 | 1959 | % Change |
| Owner | White | 2,775.42 | 2,014.20 | -27.43 | 1,697.03 | 1,383.98 | -18.45 |
| | Non-white | 20.55 | 10.07 | -50.99 | 119.50 | 55.77 | -53.33 |
| Part Owner | White | 1,360.04 | 3,636.42 | 167.38 | 368.22 | 1,339.57 | 263.80 |
| | Non-white | 5.73 | 22.29 | 289.27 | 21.26 | 31.04 | 45.97 |
| Tenant | White | 1,570.10 | 1,119.32 | -28.71 | 802.05 | 457.09 | -43.01 |
| | Non-white | 8.91 | 6.74 | -24.35 | 268.74 | 48.69 | -81.88 |

Source: US Agricultural Census 1959, Chapter X, Tables 4-7