

Majority County's Farmers Tenants or Sharecroppers

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Families in Durham Must Depend on Others Who Are Landowners

By BEN SMITH

More than half of Durham county's 1,961 farm families are either share tenants or sharecroppers, County Farm Agent W. B. Pace reveals in his annual report.

Pace's survey lists 710 (36.2 percent) as share tenants, 358 (18.3 percent) as sharecroppers, 777 (39.6 percent) owners, 95 (4.8 percent) part owners, and 21 (1.1 percent) managers.

The farm population of the county in 1938 was placed at 9,743, or 12 percent of an estimated total population of 83,647 for the county. Another eight percent lives in rural sections, but not on farms, leaving 80 percent of the total for the city of Durham, Pace reported.

There are 1,446 white farm families, with a population of 6,363, or 4.4 persons to each family. Negro farm families, of which there are 515, have a total population of 3,380, averaging 6.6 people to each family.

Rural homes in Durham county are being equipped with modern conveniences in ever-growing numbers, the farm agent reports.

Last year water systems were installed in 65 country homes, and sewerage systems in nine. Through the cooperation of residents of Mangum township and a power company, 11 miles of electric lines were constructed in that community, serving 38 homes. A total of 106 homes about the city of Durham, without the city limits, were wired for current supplied by another power company. Two rural homes put in heating systems last year.

Among the modern farm buildings added in 1938, according to Pace's report, were the following: Dairy buildings, one; silos, four; hog houses, 15; poultry houses, four; storage structures, seven.

Many improvements in farms were made by the county soil conservation association last year, with a view to combating soil erosion, 845 1-2 acres of land on 55 farms

in the county were terraced by the association. These farms were situated in the various townships as follows: Mangum, 26; Durham, 13; Lebanon, four; Oak Grove, four; Patterson, three; Carr, three; and Cedar Fork, two.

More than 21 miles of roads were constructed by the terracing outfit, and 700 acres of lowlands, mostly on the Eno and Little rivers, were drained. A good deal of valuable work also was done in cutting open ditches and filling up gullies in other sections.

The government's program of soil conservation and crop control was carried out on 1,321 farms in the county in 1938, Pace stated. These included 1,088 farms growing tobacco and 135 farms raising cotton, he said.

Conservation payments made to farmers here totaled \$39,962.36, although Pace estimated that this figure would have reached \$100,000 if there had been 100 percent compliance with the program. Committeemen, field supervisors, and office workers received \$10,007.25 for their services and \$10,179.74 was paid out by the county agricultural conservation association for work and supplies for crop control and soil conservation.

A number of farmers cooperated during the year with the farm agent in conducting demonstrations in all the principal crops raised in the county, as well as in the various forms of livestock bred. Included were demonstrations in corn, silage corn, alfalfa, lespedeza, oats, barley, hay crops, poultry, dairy cattle, beef cattle, sheep, and hogs, among others.

Among the many interesting facts noted by Pace in connection with the demonstrations was that one sheep breeder made a profit of about \$100 by bleeding his sheep at intervals and selling the blood to Duke hospital for laboratory purposes.