

IV. THE RELATION OF THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF FARMERS TO THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN ORGANIZATIONS

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The data for this paper were taken from farmers in the cotton belt of Oklahoma, by the field survey method, during December, 1925, and the first half of 1926. Surveys were made in crop reporting districts 6, 7, and 8, as a basis for this study. Two samples were taken in each of these districts by the random sampling method. The data for one sample were taken from farmers who were members of the Oklahoma Cotton Growers' Association, and the data for the other sample were taken from farmers who were not members of this Association.

The data from these two samples have been treated under the following divisions:

1. Membership in Other Organizations.
2. Economic Progress.
3. Educational Advancement.
4. Standard of Living.

I. MEMBERSHIP IN OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Members of the Oklahoma Cotton Growers' Association, their wives and children were found to be greater joiners of other organizations than were farmers who were not members of the association, their wives and children.

Fifty-seven per cent of the members of the association were also members of the church, while only 42% of the farmers who were not members of the association were members of the church. Seventy-nine per cent of the wives of members of the association were members of the church, while 67% of the wives of the non-members of the association were church members. In other words, the church membership of members of the association was about 60 per cent greater than the church membership of farmers who were not members of the association and the church membership of the wives of members of the association was about 18 per cent greater than the church membership of the wives of the farmers who were not members of this association.

About 11 per cent of the members of the Association belonged to the Farmers' Union, while less than 5 per cent of the non-members of the association belonged to the Farmers' Union. Twenty-six per cent of the members of the Association were also members of lodges, while only 18 per cent of the non-members of the association were lodge members. From the above figures it was found that a member of the Association was almost two and one-half times as likely to be a member of the Farmers' Union, and almost one and one-half times as likely to be a member of a lodge as a farmer who was not a member of this association.

This greater tendency to join organizations is also reflected in the children of members of the association. About 15 per cent of the members of the association had boys and girls in club work, while only about 8 or 9 per cent of the non-members had boys and girls in club work.

Although it was found that farm owners, their wives and children were relatively greater supporters of economic, religious, social, and educational organizations, the relative support given by members and non-members of the association in each tenure class was similar to that outlined above for all farmers.

2. ECONOMIC PROGRESS

Members of the cooperative cotton marketing association were economically more progressive, as indicated by the size of the business operated, than were the farmers who were not members of this association. The average capital operated by members of the association was \$10,238 while the average amount of capital operated by farmers who were not members of this association was \$7,013. In other words, the average amount of capital operated by members of the association was 46 per cent greater than the average amount of capital operated by farmers who were not members of the association.

By using net wealth accumulated as a basis for comparing these two groups of farmers, it was found that members of the association were greater accumulators of wealth than were the non-members of the association. The average net wealth accumulated by members of the association was \$6,194; while the average net wealth accumulated by non-members was \$3,211. In other words, the average amount of net wealth accumulated by members of the association was about 93 per cent greater than the average amount of net wealth accumulated by farmers who were not members of the association.

The amount of net wealth accumulated means very little as a basis for comparison, unless the length of the period of

time during which this accumulation has been going on is taken into account. It was found that the members of the association were on the average, about five years older, and consequently had had on the average a longer period of time during which to accumulate wealth than the farmers who were not members of the association. Assuming that farmers on the average began earning for themselves at twenty-one years of age, by subtracting 21 from the average age of farmers, the average number of years the farmers had been earning for themselves was obtained. Then by dividing the average net wealth accumulated by the average number of years the farmers had been earning for themselves, the average number of net wealth accumulated annually was obtained.

The results show that the average amount of net wealth accumulated annually by members of the association was \$239; while the average amount of net wealth accumulated annually by farmers who were not members of the association was \$154. In other words, the average amount of net wealth accumulated annually was 55 per cent greater for members than for non-members of the association.

Although the average amount of capital operated, the average amount of net wealth accumulated and the average amount of net wealth accumulated annually were much greater for farm owners than for farm tenants, the relative amount of economic progress made by members and by non-members of the association in each tenure class was similar to the results given above for all farmers.

3. EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT

Figures from this survey show that members of the Oklahoma Cotton Growers' Association, their wives and children, were further advanced educationally than farmers who were not members of this association, their wives and children. About twenty-seven per cent of the farmers who were members of the association did not go beyond the 5th grade in school, 10.7 per cent went to high school and 2.2 per cent entered college; while about 41 per cent of the farmers who were not members of the association did not go beyond the 5th grade in school, 9.2 per cent went to high school and only .6 per cent attended college.

Figures for the wives of the farmers who were members of the association show that 24 per cent of them had a 5th grade education or less, 17.6% attended high school and 1.9 per cent went to college or university; while similar figures for the wives of farmers who were not members of the association show that 29.7 per cent of them had no more than a 5th grade education,

12.1 per cent attended high school and 3.5 per cent had gone to college or university.

Although the grown children of farmers interviewed were, on the average, much further advanced educationally than their parents, the children whose fathers were members of the association were more advanced on the average than the children whose fathers were not members of the association. Figures for the children who had quit school and whose fathers were members of the association show that 8.8 per cent had not advanced beyond the 5th grade in school, 31.8 per cent had gone to high school and 5.3 per cent had attended college or university; while similar figures for the children who had quit school and whose fathers were members of the Oklahoma Cotton Growers' Association show that 18.2 per cent had advanced beyond the 5th grade, 20.8 per cent had gone to high school and 3.5 per cent had attended college or university.

Children who were still in school at the time of this survey and whose fathers were members of the Oklahoma Cotton Growers' Association were not retarded educationally as much as the children who were still in school and whose fathers were not members of this association. The children who were still in school were divided into two age groups. The first group included all those children less than high school age (less than 15 years), and the second group included all those children of high school age and over (15 years and over). Of those children less than high school age and whose fathers were members of the Association, 53.5 per cent were retarded an average of 1.8 years, while those of the same age groups whose fathers were not members of the association, 68.1 per cent were retarded an average of 2 years.

Of the children of high school age whose fathers were members of the association, 42.3 per cent had not entered high school, while for the children of the same age group whose fathers were not members of this association 52.3 per cent had not entered high school. If the retarded children in high school were counted, the per cent of retarded children for both groups would be greater than was shown above.

While the educational advancement of tenants, their wives and children was found to be much less than that of farm owners, their wives and children, the proportional difference in educational advancement between members and non-members of the association for both tenure groups was found to be ap-

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proximately the same as shown above for all farmers combined.

4. STANDARD OF LIVING

Although the standard of living, as indicated by the proportional distribution of the total family living costs, for farmers in the cotton section of Oklahoma was found to be relatively low, the members of the association appeared to have a slightly higher standard than the farmers who were not members of the association.

Food accounted for 53.1 per cent of the total family living costs for members of the association and 54.8 per cent of the total family living costs for non-members of the association. Similar studies made in other parts of the country show that the proportion of the total cost of family living spent for food by farm families in selected counties in Kentucky, Tennessee and Texas in 1919 was 44.0 per cent; by farm families in Livingston County, N. Y., in 1921 was 39.5 per cent; and by families in 92 industrial centers in the United States in 1918 was 38.2 per cent.

The relatively large proportion of the total cost of family living spent for food by the farmers in the cotton section of Oklahoma indicates a relatively low standard of living, and that means that these farmers are spending a relatively small amount for health and means of advancement, such as education, recreation, travel, benevolence, religion, etc., all of which are vital to the happiness and welfare of any group of people.

The average amount spent during the year for education, including books, newspapers and magazines, and schools, in addition to taxes, by members of the Association was \$36.00; while the non-members spent during the same time an average of \$17.00 or less than half as much for the same purpose. The members spent, on the average, about \$27.00 for church and charity during the year, while the non-members spent on an average about \$17.00 or less than two-thirds as much for the same purpose.

The dwelling houses occupied by members of the association were valued, on the average about 30 per cent higher than the dwellings occupied by farmers who were not members of the association.

A larger percentage of the members of the association had modern equipment and convenience for lightening the burdens of farm life and for making life on the farm more satisfying to intelligent, progressive people than was found for non-members of the association. The percentage of farmers who had modern convenience and comforts of various kinds follows:

Screened doors and windows	79.5	77.6
Running water in the house	7.1	1.2
Gas or electric lights	19.1	13.7
Washing Machine	18.6	9.0
Telephone	42.2	26.6
Sewing Machine	92.4	77.8
Piano	15.6	10.7
Radio	7.3	5.1
Graphophone	29.2	28.9
Automobile	63.9	52.5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Although the farmers as a whole in the area surveyed had not been great joiners of organizations, had not made very rapid economic progress, had not on the average attained a very high grade in school, and had a relatively low standard of living as compared to farmers in other sections of the country and to people engaged in other industries, the data presented above appear to justify the conclusion that members of the Oklahoma Cotton Growers' Association were on the average greater supporters of other organizations, were economically more progressive, were educationally more advanced and maintained a higher standard of living than farmers who were not members of this association.