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## **Industrialization in Chickasaw County, Mississippi : a study of rural residents**

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**Industrialization in Chickasaw County, Mississippi:**

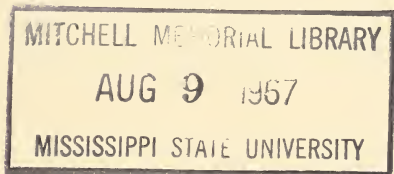
# **A Study Of Rural Residents**

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**In Cooperation with Economic Research Service,  
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## SUMMARY

This study is one of a series attempting to find out what happens in a low-income rural community when a new industrial plant moves in. Evidence was obtained from two sets of interviews, with workers in a furniture factory and with a sample of household heads in the open-country area around the community of Houston, Mississippi. In this report attention is focused on comparisons of open-country folks and plant workers. Specifically, an attempt is made to shed light on (1) the nature of the process of selection of rural people for industrial employment, (2) the influence of a new factory on socio-economic status and levels of living, (3) certain influences of industrial employment on farmers and farm operation, (4) changes in social participation, and (5) effects of the new factory on opinions about the community.

Young white, males with better than average education who were married and rearing a family made up the largest part of the plant work force. Since all plant workers were white and all but one was under 50 years of age, most of the comparisons between plant workers and open-country residents are restricted to the "young" whites.

Because of the predominance of young males, plant workers also tended to be either single persons or heads of newly formed families. Factory workers also had more schooling than their open-country counterparts.

Plant workers showed a greater tendency to change jobs and residences than the average rural household head in the community.

All of the evidence here points strongly to processes of selection in industrial employment. While this means that many open-country residents are unlikely to be employed in industry because of their age, sex, color, education, and so on, it also means that the type of person most likely to migrate to another area in search of a job—the young man—is

provided with industrial employment at home. Plant workers received higher incomes than the open-country people, but this difference is explained in part by the contrasts in age and color of the two groups. White open-country heads of households under 35 years of age had incomes comparable to those of the plant workers. Differences in socio-economic status and levels of living also tended to disappear as other differences are accounted for. Open-country residents of the community had improved their level of living at a lesser rate than the plant workers in the period since the plant opened.

There were 27 part-time farmers. The part-time farmer was typically younger than the full-time farmer. Full-time farmers more commonly operated commercial types farms. Farmers whether they work at the factory or not, were a generally stable residential group, a majority having operated a farm for at least 10 years.

Social participation, measured by the number of formal group memberships, was essentially the same for plant workers and for open-country household heads. Nonfarm residents were slightly less inclined toward membership than those living on farms in both the open-country sample and the plant worker group. The stage in the life cycle of the family had little connection with social participation of open-country folks, but among plant workers those with children ranging from pre-school to post-school ages showed a tendency to report no organizational membership. Higher income was more conducive to social participation among plant workers than it was among open-country people.

Respondents generally felt that various community institutions had improved since the furniture factory had opened, with plant workers more favorable in their reactions. Both plant workers and open-country whites aged 35 to 49 years more often said that schools had improved than either younger or older persons.



# Industrialization in Chickasaw County, Mississippi: A Study of Rural Residents

By GEORGE L. WILBER and SHERIDAN T. MAITLAND

## INTRODUCTION

Many rural communities of the South have become increasingly aware of the significance of industrial opportunities as industry has continued to develop throughout the region. Industrialization brings with it employment, income and a chance to broaden and strengthen the economy from within the local community. In addition, industrial development in a rural area is likely to bring various other changes — departures from agriculture, urban growth, increased employment of workers and so on. It is with some of these changes that take place as a new industrial plant is established in a community that this study is concerned. Findings in an earlier report were concerned primarily with the effects on rural area residents who had taken jobs in a new factory, especially the influence on levels of living, scale of farming operations, participation in community affairs and attitudes toward the community.<sup>1</sup> In this report attention is focused on rural area residents—including a few who took jobs in the new factory—primarily to determine the selective nature of such employment and its effect on levels of living, socio-economic status, social participation and attitudes toward the community.

### Need for the Study

It is generally conceded that industrialization is beneficial in providing employ-

ment and income to local residents, but relatively little is known at this point about the effects of industrialization on attitudes and behavior patterns. What happens to people's attitudes toward their community, its churches and schools? Do they participate in different groups or to a different extent? Are workers employed in the new industry typical of people in the community or do they represent a special group? Do workers recruited from farms continue farming on a part-time basis? These are some of the questions on which it is hoped the present study will supply information. Other rural communities, faced with a similar experience of industrial development may benefit from such information.

For many decades there has been a general exodus of people from farms and from the State.<sup>2</sup> The number of persons living on farms has declined drastically for the last 20 years. While Mississippi's population has remained relatively stable for several decades, fluctuating around the two million mark, about 40,000 persons are lost each year as a result of migration from the state. High levels of industrial employment around the country combined with under-employment on farms have encouraged these movements from farms and from the State. The State of Mississippi has conducted a program for over two decades designed to encourage industrial development (Balance Agriculture With Industry). At-

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<sup>1</sup>Sheridan T. Maitland and George L. Wilber, *Industrialization in Chickasaw County, Mississippi: A Study of Plant Workers*, Bulletin 566 (Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station, 1958).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. H. A. Pedersen, *Migration from Mississippi*. State College, Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station Information Sheet, No. 536, May 1956; and E. S. Bryant and G. L. Wilber, *Net Migration in Mississippi, 1950 to 1960* Bulletin 632, Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station, December 1961.

tempts to encourage new industry have had remarkable success, but in 1950 only 13 percent of those employed in Mississippi were engaged in manufacturing (the comparable figure for the U.S. was 26 percent).

The State's program to attract new industry was augmented in 1954, when the United States Department of Agriculture initiated the Rural Development Program. This effort was strengthened and broadened through the creation of the Rural Areas Development Office in the Department of Agriculture to co-ordinate the Department's responsibilities under the Area Redevelopment Act of 1961. One of the objectives of this program is to help State and local programs in their efforts to raise rural incomes by encouraging location of industrial plants in rural areas. It is felt that industrial employment will strengthen the economic foundations of the community and provide jobs for local residents who would otherwise seek employment elsewhere.

### Objectives of the Study

The most general objective of this study is to find out what happens in a low-income rural community when a new industry is established. As a focus for the following discussion, these specific objectives have been set.

1. Examine some of the characteristics of workers recruited for industrial employment in comparison with those of rural residents in an effort to determine whether there is any selection of certain types of persons for industrial employment.

2. Assess the influence of industrial employment on socio-economic status, income and level of living by comparing factory workers with other rural residents.

3. Explore effects of industrialization on farmers, especially the influence of industrial employment on tenure, mobility, social participation and socio-economic status.

4. Seek to discover what changes, if any, have occurred in social participation as a result of industrial employment.

5. Determine whether a new factory may influence attitudes toward community organizations and institutions.

### The Sample and Interviews

Chickasaw County, in northeast Mississippi, was selected as the survey area. Although a number of rural communities in Mississippi had some of the characteristics sought, the area chosen came closest to approximating the conditions set forth for this study of the impact of industrialization on a rural community. The county was predominantly rural, with almost two-thirds of its residents classed as rural farm in 1950. Median family income for 1949 was \$999, about \$200 less than the average for the state and \$2,000 less than the national average. Most important was the fact that a new factory had recently located in Houston, the county seat, and it was anticipated that the social and economic effects of this new industry would be important in the community. The Jackson Manufacturing Company, a furniture factory, established in 1954 employed about 130 persons at the time of the survey.

Interview schedules were prepared to obtain pertinent information on personal and family characteristics, work experience, income, level of living, social participation, farm operations and attitudes toward the factory and the community. A basic family schedule was administered to all respondents, and supplementary schedules were used for farm residents, former farm residents and for nonfarm workers. Two groups of respondents were chosen for the survey: (1) all the workers on the hourly payroll of the furniture factory, and (2) a sample of rural household heads living in the area surrounding Houston and representing the residents of the western two-thirds of Chickasaw County.

Table 1.—Major components of the samples Chickasaw County, 1957.

	Plant sample <sup>1</sup>	Open-country sample <sup>2</sup>
Respondents	106	317
Household heads	79	317
Adult family members	273	781
Furniture plant workers	106	9
All other nonfarm workers		161
Wage and salary	—	88
Self-employed	—	18
Not reported	—	55
Farm operators	27	202
Farm wage workers	—	2

<sup>1</sup>Includes nine furniture plant workers who also were selected in the open-country sample.

<sup>2</sup>Includes nine open-country residents who also were employees of the furniture plant.

Altogether, 414 persons were interviewed, 106 worked in the furniture factory and 308 heads of rural households. Nine of the plant workers also were rural residents drawn in the rural sample, so the total number of rural households was 317. Interviews were conducted over a period of about two weeks in the Spring of 1957. Major segments of the samples are shown in Table 1.

### The Study Area

Chickasaw County is located in north central Mississippi on the edge of the Black Prairie. Agriculture in the area has developed from the old plantation economy to mixed cotton, dairy and cattle production. Farms are generally of modest size, averaging 130 acres in 1959. There has been a slight tendency in recent years for farmers to engage in off-farm work, and fewer farmers now live on the farm which they operate. The number of farm operators decreased by 37 percent from 1950 to 1959 (including a 5 percent loss due to change in definition) the greatest decline being among tenant farmers where the drop was 60 percent. More than half of the farm operators in 1959 were white. Farm land including buildings were valued at \$83 per acre in the 1959 Census of Agriculture.

Chickasaw County's population declin-

ed during the 1950's by 11 percent to 16,891 in 1960. Net migration losses for the decade ran an estimated 5,000 persons, or more than enough to offset the natural increase of population in the county. Median age in the county was 25.8 years in 1960, and the aging of the population is reflected in the increase in persons 65 years of age and over—up to 11 percent of the population in 1960 as compared with 8 percent in 1950.

Nearly 4,000, or over 70 percent, of the males 14 years of age and over were in the labor force in 1960. Employed men had a median income of \$1,422 in 1959, as compared to a median family income of \$2,484. About 1 in 4 employed persons were in agriculture and an equal number in manufacturing industries. Men who were farmers had a median cash income in 1959 of only \$842, while craftsmen averaged \$2,862, operatives \$2,062, and laborers \$1,137.

Houston, the site of the furniture factory, grew by 55 percent during the decade to reach a population of 2,577 by 1960. Three-fourths of the city's population was white. Not only had the city's residents completed more schooling than for the county as a whole, but median family income was higher (\$3,827). Employment was concentrated mainly in manufacturing, trade and services,



## SELECTIVITY FOR INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT

On the assumption that recruitment for industrial employment in a rural community will be selective — that is, some persons are more likely to be employed than others — the immediate objective in this section is to point out some of the characteristics on which plant employees differ from other residents in the community. Specifically, such things as age, sex, race, marital status, family stage, education, and employment and residential mobility are considered to be part of the more general selective processes. With the evidence in this study alone, it is impossible to determine how generalized the various criteria of selectivity may be. Nevertheless, one may expect to find essentially the same selective factors at work in other low-income rural areas.

**Age, Sex and Race**

In general, industrial hiring practices place a high premium on manual dexterity, stamina, and mechanical skills. When a new plant is opened, experience and skill specifications may need to be lowered in order that the plant work force can be obtained and production

started in a reasonable length of time. The most accessible and readily employable part of the labor force are the younger males. Hence, workers tend to be recruited from among younger males who have had previous industrial experience.

In this study young adult white males predominate among the plant workers. Although 29 percent of the rural area household heads were nonwhite, none were employed in the furniture factory. Only about one in fifteen of the nonwhites in the rural area sample had nonfarm employment, indicating that industrial employment in this county was largely confined to the white population. For this reason most of the comparisons throughout this report are made between the plant workers and the white heads of households in the rural area sample.

Employees in the furniture factory were younger than their open-country counterparts by about 26 years. Plant workers averaged 28 years of age and white open-country household heads 54 years, as shown in Table 2. With three in five open-country respondents at least

Table 2.—Age Distribution of Plant Workers and Open-country Household Heads, by Color.

Age	Plant workers (106)*	Open-country household heads		
		Total (317)*	White (224)* Percent:	Nonwhite (93)*
All cases	100	100	100	100
Under 25	38	4	5	2
25-29	16	6	5	10
30-34	22	8	9	5
35-39	13	7	7	6
40-44	6	10	9	13
45-49	4	9	6	15
50-54	—	12	11	13
55-64	1	18	19	14
65 & over	—	26	29	22
Median age:	28	52	54	50

\*Figures in parentheses in this and following tables show the number of respondents upon which percentages were calculated. Base figures vary from table to table due to variations in completeness of responses as well as to differences in the content of tables.

Differences in this and all subsequent tables are statistically significant at the .05 level unless otherwise indicated.

fifty years of age and a majority of the plant workers under 30 years, there is not only a high degree of age selectivity in industrial recruitment but many residents of the area would seem to be disqualified for industrial employment by virtue of age alone.

Males were represented in approximately the same proportions among plant workers and white household heads in the rural sample. A large majority of plant workers were men, 84 percent, as were white household heads, 90 percent. Because the area sample was limited to household heads, it is not possible to determine the extent of sex selectivity among plant workers. However, because the distribution of men and women in the two groups is so similar, other contrasts to be noted are not materially affected by sex differences.

#### Marital Status and Family Stage

The relatively high proportion of unmarried persons employed in the plant is largely a function of age. With nearly 40 percent of the plant workers under 25 years of age, it is not too surprising

that about one out of five workers were single. The higher proportion of widowed persons in the rural sample is also a reflection of the age distribution (see Table 3).

Age differences also help explain the differences between the two groups with respect to family stage — the point in the life cycle of the family. Table 4 shows that half of the open-country families were composed of all adults, and one quarter had a household head of at least 65 years of age. One-third of the rural households had children at the pre-school and school levels.

#### Education

In view of the predominance of relatively better educated persons employed by the plant, it might be concluded that education is important in the selective process. But plant workers are younger and younger adults usually have more education. Schooling is often a consideration in employing personnel for industry, but usually it is not crucial for less than the most highly skilled jobs. A majority

Table 3.—Marital Status of Plant Workers and Open-Country White Household Heads.

Marital status	Plant workers	Percent	Open-Country White household heads
	(106)		(224)
All cases	100		100
Married	78		86
Separated or divorced	1		2
Widowed	3		10
Single	18		2

Table 4.—Family Stage of Plant Workers and Open-Country White Families.

Family stage	Plant Workers	Percent	Open-Country White household heads
	(106)		(224)
All cases	100		100
All adult family			
Young (head less than 40)	16		5
Middle aged (head 40-64)	2		19
Old (head 65 or over)	—		25
Preschool family	28		9
School and preschool	37		33
Preschool, school and post-school	11		5
Post-school	6		4

of the plant workers had more than eight years of schooling as compared with fewer than half in the open-country group (see Table 5), Nonwhites were in sharp contrast as 35 percent had fewer than five years of schooling and 84 percent fewer than nine years.

### Job Mobility

Plant workers were the more mobile group, as shown in Table 6. Respondents were asked how many different jobs they had had since 1947, or over a ten-year period. Whereas over half of the open-country resident had not changed jobs, about half of the plant workers had four or more jobs. Only 8 percent of the rural sample had four or more jobs during the decade 1947-1957.

Age is one of the factors, of course, that is related to job mobility. While younger workers have had less time to move from job to job, they generally move about more frequently. Hence, when the open-country residents under 50 years of age—a group that is more nearly comparable to the factory em-

ployees—are compared to the plant workers, the mobility pattern is more similar. Even so, the plant workers are still slightly more job-mobile.

Older workers generally show greater employment stability. In Table 7 the age distribution of open-country residents who had not changed jobs is compared with those who had two or more jobs. Since two-thirds of the stable employment group were 55 years of age or older, it is apparent that age is an important factor. Among those who reported multiple jobs there was but slight difference by age.

### Residential Mobility

Plant workers more often moved from one house to another. Three out of five open-country residents had remained for ten years in the same place of residence as compared with less than one-third of the plant workers. Nearly half the plant workers but less than a quarter of the open-country residents had moved at least three times.

Age needs to be taken into account, since open-country residents over 50

Table 5.—Education of Plant Workers and Open-Country Household Heads, by Color.

Years of schooling completed	Plant workers (106)	Open-country		
		Total (315)	White open-country (224)	Nonwhite (91)
All cases	100	100	100	100
Under 5	4	16	9	35
5-8	23	49	48	49
9-12	70	32	39	15
13 or more	3	3	4	1

Table 6.—Employment Stability of Plant Workers and Open-Country Household Heads.\*

Number of employment changes since 1947	Plant workers (106)	Open-Country White household heads	
		Total (220)	Those under 50 years of age (90)
All cases	100	100	100
One	16	55	32
Two	32	23	27
Three	22	12	23
Four	15	5	10
Five or more	14	3	7
No answer	1	2	1

\*Difference between plant workers and white open-country group under 50 are not significant at .05 level.

Table 7.—Age distribution of Open-Country White Household Heads by Employment Stability.

Age	Number of jobs since 1947	
	One or none (121)	Two or more (94)
	Percent	
All cases	100	100
Under 25	3	8
25-34	5	24
35-44	10	24
45-54	15	20
55-64	27	11
65 and over	40	13

years of age were less inclined to move than the younger ones. Among plant workers who had not moved for ten years, an intriguing pattern is shown. Half of the "non-mobile" plant workers were under 25 years of age, and an additional 21 percent were between the ages of 25 and 35. Whether the younger plant workers were too young to have made residential moves, whether they were located where they wanted to be, or whether for some reason they were unable to move is a matter of speculation.

In any event it appears that young

plant workers did not have to change residence to obtain industrial employment. Open-country residents were about as mobile residentially as plant workers of the same ages (Table 9). And residential mobility decreased with age for the open-country sample, whereas mobility may increase up to age 40 and then decline for the plant workers. Here, as so often throughout this analysis, the small number of cases, especially among plant workers, casts some doubt on patterns observed. Cross-classification resulted in only 10 plant workers between 40 and 49

Table 8.—Residential Stability of Plant Workers and Open-Country White Household Heads.

Number of residences since 1947	Plant workers	Open-Country White household heads
	(106)	(224)
	Percent	
All cases	100	100
One	31	58
Two	22	20
Three	19	10
Four	17	5
Five	7	4
Six or more	4	3

Table 9.—Residential Stability of Plant Workers and Open-Country White Household Heads by Age for Those Under 50 Years of Age\*

Number of residences since 1947	Age (in years)			
	All cases	Under 30	30-39	40-49
Plant workers	(105)	(58)	(37)	(10)
	Percent			
One	100	100	100	100
Two or more	30	32	22	50
Open-country white household heads	(93)	(24)	(35)	(34)
	Percent			
One	100	100	100	100
Two or more	38	25	29	56
	62	75	71	44

\*Differences between plant workers and open-country not significant at .05 level.

years of age, or too few to be certain about the observations.

In brief, the foregoing evidence generally supports the proposition that workers recruited in rural areas for industrial employment are not representative of res-

idents in the area. Workers employed in the furniture factory were selected to varying degrees according to age, race, marital status, family stage, education and employment and residential mobility.

### INCOME AND LEVEL OF LIVING

A second major objective of this study was to assess the influence of industrialization on socio-economic status and levels of living throughout the community. Having already detected certain selective processes operating in the employment of workers in the plant, pursuit of this objective must proceed with utmost caution. In other words, it is possible that differences in socio-economic status, income and levels of living may be due as much to selectivity based on other factors as to any real influence stemming from the fact that the furniture factory was located in the community.

**Income**

On the average, heads of households in the rural sample earned less in 1956 than the plant workers.<sup>3</sup> Half of the plant workers earned at least \$3,000 from all sources, while only 13 percent of the open-country group received as much.

Ideally perhaps we should take account of all relevant differences between plant workers and rural residents before comparing the two groups to see whether one is better off economically than the other. This was not possible in the present study, although some of the differences between the two were controlled.

As already indicated, nonwhites were eliminated from the rural area sample for most comparisons of plant workers and rural residents. Reducing the group to whites alone has the effect of raising incomes. Table 10 shows that 21 percent of the white open-country heads of households had incomes of \$3,000 or more, still far short of the 50 percent of plant work-

ers with incomes this high. Nearly four in ten rural whites, in contrast, with only one in ten plant workers, had incomes of less than \$1,000.

The two groups become even more similar by reducing age differences. The difference of 26 years in the average ages of the two groups might well account for some of the income differences. Since all but one of the plant workers were under 50 years of age, comparison of plant workers with open-country whites under 50 years of age provides a still rough but nearly equated pair of groups. As the righthand column in Table 10 shows, with age and color comparable, 35 percent of the open-country group had incomes of \$3,000 or more. This is better than the 13 percent for all open-country heads and the 21 percent for whites. Improvement is noted also in lower income brackets, where the proportion with incomes under \$1,000 drops from four in ten to two in ten.

Income earned ordinarily is related to age, and it is usually expected that older workers will have higher incomes than the younger ones. However, Table 11 shows the opposite of this. Half of those under 35 years of age reported incomes of \$3,000 or more, while only 24 percent in the age group 35 to 49 and 14 percent between 50 and 64 years did as well. Also, about one out of ten in the younger group earned under \$1,000, but four out of ten were under this point in the 50 to 64 age group. As expected, those 65 years of age and over averaged the lowest incomes. Most interesting, however, is the

<sup>3</sup>Maitland and Wilber, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

**Table 10.—Total Family Income of Plant Workers and Open-Country White Household Heads, 1956.**

Total family income	Plant worker	Open-Country Total	White household heads Under 50 years of age
	(106)	(220)	(91)
	Percent		
All cases	100	100	100
Less than \$500	2	18	13
\$500-999	8	19	8
\$1,000-1,999	15	24	22
\$2,000-2,999	25	18	22
\$3,000-3,999	18	13	20
\$4,000-4,999	19	4	11
\$5,000 and over	13	4	4

observation that white open-country heads of households under 35 years of age show an income distribution very nearly like that for all plant workers. For both of these groups, about one-tenth reported incomes under \$1,000, four-tenths between \$1,000 and \$2,999, and half \$3,000 or over.

Thus by controlling certain differences between plant workers and open-country residents, differences in incomes tend to diminish. Further evidence of this is shown in Table 12, where open-country whites with nonfarm work have incomes more comparable to plant workers than those with farm work. Half of the plant workers and 45 percent of nonfarm workers in the open-country sample had incomes of \$3,000 or more.

#### Socio-Economic Status

In addition to comparisons by income,

the relative well-being of the two groups was measured by a socio-economic status scale.<sup>4</sup> In brief, the Belcher scale used here is constructed by assigning scores to households on the basis of standard items in and about the house, such as type of construction of the house, possession of furniture and appliances, and so on. High scores are treated as high socio-economic status and vice versa.

If factory wage earnings are generally higher than other income opportunities in the area, the new industry should help increase socio-economic status. Plant

<sup>4</sup>See W. H. Sewell, "A Short Form of the Family Socio-Economic Status Scale," *Rural Sociology*, VIII (1943), 161-169; and J. C. Belcher, "Evaluation and Restandardization of Sewell's Socio-Economic Scale," *Rural Sociology*, XVI (1951), 246-255.

**Table 11.—Total Family Income of Open-Country White Households by Age of Head, 1956.**

Total family income	Age of head				
	All households	Under 35	35-49	50-64	65 & over
	(220)	(41)	(50)	(66)	(63)
	Percent				
All cases	100	100	100	100	100
Under \$1,000	37	12	28	41	54
\$1,000-\$2,999	42	39	48	45	36
\$3,000 & over	21	49	24	14	10

**Table 12.—Total Family Income of Open-Country White Household Heads by Farm and Nonfarm Work, 1956.<sup>1</sup>**

Total family income	All cases	Farm work	Nonfarm work
	(183)	(128)	(59)
	Percent		
All cases	100	100	100
Less than \$1,000	32	44	6
\$1,000-2,999	45	43	49
\$3,000 and over	23	13	45

<sup>1</sup>Retired persons and nonfarm business owners not included.

Table 13.—Socio-Economic Status of Plant Workers and Open-Country Household Heads.\*

Socio-economic status score (Belcher)	Plant workers (106)	Open-country household heads		
		White		
		total (317)	total (224) Percent	Under 50 years of age (91)
All cases	100	100	100	100
Under 25	2	18	3	1
25-34	24	33	30	26
35-44	61	32	43	48
45 and over	13	17	24	25

\*Differences between plant workers and white open-country group under 50 years of age not significant at .05 level.

employees did in fact rank higher on the socio-economic scale than the total open-country sample.<sup>5</sup> However, the selective nature of employment in the new industry suggests that age, sex, color and similar differences should be taken into account in making comparisons. When the socio-economic status scores of open-country whites are compared to those of plant workers the differences are much less than when the entire open-country sample is used. Hence, the differences in socio-economic status scores are partly the result of differences related to color.

Differences in socio-economic status scores diminish further with the reduction of age and color contrasts. When the plant workers and open-country whites under 50 years of age are compared, one in four scored under 35 in both groups and three in four 35 or higher. However, nearly twice as many from the younger open-country group scored 45 or higher than did the plant workers.

#### Level of Living

New industry and industrial expansion are expected to elevate levels of living. The Rural Areas Development Program of the United States Department of Agriculture aims at attainment of higher levels of living in rural areas through programs organized and carried out by local communities with Federal assistance. In

a previous report on this survey<sup>6</sup> it appeared that plant workers not only had a higher level of living but had moved ahead more rapidly than rural residents. As a measure of level-of-living, evidence was obtained in this study on the number of household items out of a list of eight possessed by the respondents. Items included were electric lights, running water, refrigerator, washing machine, radio, television, telephone and automobile.

Plant workers fared somewhat better than the white open-country residents in improving their level of living, as shown in Table 14. In 1950 about two out of five among both groups had fewer than three items on the list. The average (mean) number of items possessed in 1950 was 3.4 for plant workers and 3.7 for open-country folks. By 1957 all but 10 percent of the plant workers had four items or more while only about three-fourths of the open-country group had as many. The average items possessed increased to 6.4 for the plant workers and to 6.0 for the open-country residents by 1957. Thus, while both groups improved their level-of-living during this period, plant workers advanced at a somewhat faster rate.

<sup>5</sup>Maitland and Wilber, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pp 12-13.

### CHANGES AMONG FARMERS

Industrialization in a low income rural area should leave its mark among the farm residents as well as among those who live in town and work in the factory.

In an effort to assess this aspect of the changes wrought by industrialization, open-country residents engaged in farming and the plant workers who live and

Table 14.—Levels of Living Among Plant Workers and Open-Country White Household Heads, 1950 and 1957.

Number of items owned	Plant workers		Percent	Open-Country white household heads	
	1950	1957		1950	1957
	(106)			(224)	
All cases	100	100		100	100
None	14	—		10	1
One	16	—		18	1
Two	12	1		13	3
Three	15	3		12	7
Four	24	6		13	13
Five	11	27		21	20
Six	5	27		9	26
Seven	1	21		4	16
Eight	2	15		—	13
Mean number of items	3.4	6.4		3.7	6.0

also work on a farm may be compared with respect to residential and occupational stability, tenure status, level of living, and social participation. As a matter of convenience, we will refer to the plant workers engaged in farming as **part-time farmers** and the open-country residents engaged in farming as **full-time farmers**.

There were 27 plant workers who were part-time farmers and 118 white full-time farmers. Table 15 shows that the part-time farmers were much younger on the average than full-time farmers. Half of the full-time farmers were 55 years of age or over, but none of the part-time farmers were this old. Even the farm residents who had nonfarm employment tended to be older than the part-time (plant worker)-farmers.

Such age differences are reflected in many ways. Nearly half of the full-time farmers, for instance, and only about a fourth of the part-time farmers had no children present in their families. Children of school age were more often present among the part-time farm families.

#### Farms and Tenure

Our part-time and full-time farmers differ with respect to type of farm and tenure status, much in the way that might be expected because of the definitions of these two groups. Once again it is important to control for age between the two groups. Thus the 27 part-time farmers, all under 50 years of age, are compared to the 49 full-time farmers. The "part-time" farmers among our plant workers were predominantly owners of part-time

Table 15.—Age Distribution of Plant Workers and White Household Heads Who Were Farm Residents.\*

Age	Plant workers (27)	Open-country white household heads who were farm residents		
		Total (133)	Farm employed (118)	Nonfarm employed (15)
		Percent		
All cases	100	100	100	100
Under 25	34	2	2	—
25-34	41	11	9	27
35-44	18	18	14	47
45-54	7	19	19	20
55-64	—	25	28	6
65 and over	—	25	28	—

\*Differences between plant workers and farm residents with non-farm employment not significant at .05 level.



Table 16.—Type of Farm and Tenure, by Age for Household Heads Who Were Under 50 Years of Age and Residing on Farms.<sup>1</sup>

Type of farm and tenure	Age					
	Plant workers			Open-country White household heads		
	All cases	Under 35	35-49	All cases	Under 35	35-49
	(27)	(20)	(7)*	(49)	(18)	(31)
	Percent					
Type of farm	100	100	—	100	100	100
Commercial	26	25	—	59	50	64
Part-time	59	65	—	29	39	23
Residential	15	10	—	12	11	13
Tenure	100	100	—	100	100	100
Full owner	78	75	—	55	67	48
Part owner	—	—	—	8	11	7
Renter	22	25	—	37	22	45

<sup>1</sup>Differences between plant workers and open-country by age not significant at .05 level for type of farm and tenure. \*Percentage not shown because of small number of cases.

farms, and the full-time farmers were more typically owners of commercial scale farms. Table 16 shows that six out of ten part-time farmers and three out of ten full-time farmers operated part-time farms. Also, three-fourths of the part-time farmers were classed as full owners as compared with 55 percent of the full-time farmers.

A majority of both the part-time and full-time farmers had operated a farm for at least 10 years. Among the full owners, white full-time farmers more often reflected a long-time stability of farm operation than part-time farmers, as shown in Table 17. Part of the difference between part- and full-time farmers is probably the result of the younger ages and the relative preponderance of part-time farms among plant workers. A majority of renters had operated farms for less than five years.

**Mobility of Farm Residents**

Plant workers living on farms were more mobile than open-country farmers,

a pattern similar to that of all plant workers and open-country residents. Half of the plant workers and two-thirds of the open-country farmers had lived in the same house during the ten-year period beginning in 1947. While farmers in the rural area sample were stable in both residence and employment, part-time farmers were much more mobile in employment than they were residentially. Table 18 shows that nine out of ten part-time farmers had two or more periods of employment since 1947 in contrast with only one in three among the open-country farmers. Mobility of both kinds is relatively prevalent among renters and stability characterizes owners of commercial type farms.

**Socio-Economic Status and Level of Living**

Full-time farmers scored higher on the socio-economic status scale than part-time farmers. None of the plant group scored higher than 44, as shown in Table 19, but one quarter of the open-country

Table 17.—Years of farm operation for farm residents who were full owners.

Years of farm operation	Plant workers	Open-Country White household heads
	(20)	(94)
	Percent	
All cases	100	100
Under 5	25	7
5-9	15	9
10 and over	60	84

Table 18.—Residential and employment stability of farm residents who have nonfarm jobs.\*

Number of residences and jobs since 1947	(27)	Open-country White household heads
		(130)
	Percent	
Number of residences	100	100
One	52	68
Two or more	48	32
Number of jobs	100	100
One	11	66
Two or more	89	34

\*Differences by residences not significant at .05 level.

Table 19.—Socio-Economic Status of Plant Workers and White Household Heads Who Were Farm Residents.

Socio-economic status score (Belcher)	Farm residents	
	Plant workers	Open-Country White household heads
	(27)	(133)
	Percent	
All cases	100	100
Under 25	4	4
25-34	29	25
35-44	67	46
45 and over	—	25

Table 20.—Value of farm products sold by farm residents in 1956.\*

Value of products sold	Plant worker households	Open-country White households
	(27)	(129)
	Percent	
All cases	100	100
Under \$250	15	15
\$250-1,199	48	33
\$1,200-2,499	29	37
\$2,500 and over	8	14

\*Differences not significant at .05 level.

group were above this point. Looking back at Table 13, it appears that farmers among plant workers tend to hold down the socio-economic status of plant workers as a whole, while farmers in the open country area score about the same as all open-country residents. Though none of the plant-worker-farmers scored higher than 44, 13 percent of all plant workers scored above this point.

Partial support for socio-economic differences between plant workers and open-country farmers is found in Table 20

which shows the value of farm products sold in 1956 for both groups of farmers. Nearly two-thirds of the part-time farmers sold products valued at less than \$1,200. Only half of the open-country farmers had sales of sales of \$1,200 or less

The striking advance in level of living on the part of farmers in the plant labor force, from an average of 2.8 in 1950 to 5.7 items owned in 1957, is shown in Table 21. By 1957 all of the plant-worker-farmers had four or more of the items. In 1950 more than half, 56 percent, did not have as many as four of these items.

## SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

A new industrial plant may introduce changes in the social life of plant em-

ployees recruited from the nearby rural community just as employment in an

industrial plant is expected to increase levels of living and income of workers from low-income rural areas. Respondents were asked about their past and present memberships in organizations such as churches, social clubs, fraternal organizations, school and other groups. These responses provide an indication of participation in formal group activities, although they are inadequate for a thorough examination of social participation. A social participation score was determined by counting the number of organizational memberships for each individual. Table 22 shows the number of memberships held by plant workers and the white open-country residents.

Differences in social participation between plant workers and open country whites were slight, with both plant workers and open-country residents averaging

2.3 memberships. Previously<sup>7</sup> it was pointed out that neither plant workers nor open-country residents increased or decreased their participation in organizations very greatly after the plant was established. About one in five stated they were taking greater part in organizations after the new plant came in.

Despite the absence of great differences in social participation between the two groups, differences in social participation do appear to bear some relation to residence. From Table 23, farm residence is related only slightly to membership in organizations for plant workers and open-country heads. But plant workers belonged to at least two organizations more often than open-country heads, regardless of whether they lived on a farm or not. Furthermore, residence made little difference for organizational membership of plant workers, whereas in the open country sample farm residents were likely

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 14-15.

Table 21.—Change in level of living for plant workers living on farms, 1950 to 1957.

Number of items possessed	Plant workers	
	1950 (27)	1957 (27)
	Percent	
All cases	100	100
None	11	—
One	26	—
Two	4	—
Three	15	—
Four	26	11
Five	11	37
Six	7	26
Eight	—	—
Seven	—	26
Mean number of items	2.8	5.7

Table 22.—Number of Organizational Memberships of All Plant Workers and Open-Country White Household Heads and of Those Living on Farms.\*

Number of memberships	Plant workers (103)	Open-Country White (214)	Farm residents	
			Plant workers (27)	Open-Country White (126)
	Percent			
All cases	100	100	100	100
None	21	21	15	17
1-2	20	27	30	22
3-4	51	38	47	42
5-6	8	14	8	19
Mean number	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3

\*Difference not significant at the .05 level.

Table 23.—Social Participation of Plant Workers and Open-Country White Household Heads by Residences.\*

Number of memberships	Plant workers			Open-Country White household heads <sup>1</sup>		
	Residence			Residence		
	Total	Farm	Nonfarm	Total	Farm	Nonfarm
	(103)	(27)	(76)	(187)	(138)	(49)
	Percent					
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Under 2	33	30	34	42	38	53
2 or more	67	70	66	58	62	47

<sup>1</sup>Excludes retired persons.

\*Only the differences between the nonfarm groups are significant at the .05 level.

Table 24.—Social Participation of Plant Workers and Open-Country White Household Heads By Family Stage.\*

Number of memberships	Family Stage							
	Plant workers				Open-Country White household heads			
	All adult		Children present		All adult		Children present	
	Young	Old	Preschool and school age only	One or more post-school age	Young	Old	Preschool and school age only	One or more post-school age
	(18)	(0)	(68)	(17)	(50)	(53)	(90)	(20)
	Per cent							
Total	100	—	100	100	100	100	100	100
Under 2	22	—	35	35	34	49	43	60
2 or more	78	—	65	65	66	51	57	40

\*Differences not significant at .05 level.

to belong to more groups than nonfarm residents.

The presence or absence of children in the home as well as the ages of parents will influence social participation. The number or organizational membership reported by plant workers and white open-country household heads is shown in relation to family stage in Table 24. About four out of five in both groups reported one or more memberships, and 67 percent of the plant workers but only 58 percent of the open country sample reported two or more memberships. Over half of the plant worker families had preschool children, or both preschool and school children, and among these families a majority reported two or more group memberships. But proportionately fewer of the plant families with young children reported multiple memberships than did those with no children or with children beyond school age.

The extent and character of social participation is known to be influenced by the level of family income. Generally, families with higher incomes belong to more organizations. Table 25 provides evidence of this tendency. Three out of four plant workers with family incomes of \$3,000 or more reported two or more organizational memberships. But among open-country residents the income and membership are less clearly related as half of those in the lower income group and about 60 percent in the two higher income groups reported multiple memberships.

Measures of socio-economic status and income often depict the same sort of relationship to other factors. This is essentially the case here, as comparison of Tables 25 and 26 show. The proportion of plant workers with multiple memberships increases with socio-economic status as it did with income. However, for white

Table 25.—Social Participation of Plant Workers and Open-Country Household Heads by Total Family Income.\*

Number of memberships	Total family income					
	Plant workers			Open-Country White household heads		
	Under \$1000 (11)	\$1000-2999 (40)	\$3000 & over (52)	Under \$1000 (75)	\$1000-2999 (91)	\$3000 & over (44)
	Percent					
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Under 2	54	35	27	49	40	41
2 or more	46	65	73	51	60	59

\*Differences not significant at .05 level.

Table 26.—Social Participation of Plant Workers and Open-Country White Household Heads by Socio-Economic Status.

Number of Membership	Socio-economic status Score (Belcher)					
	Plant workers			Open-country white household heads		
	Under 35 (28)	35-44 (61)	45 and over (14)	Under 35 (66)	35-44 (96)	45 and over (52)
	Percent					
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Under 2	54	26	21	58	43	29
2 or more	46	74	79	42	57	71

open-country household heads the relationship is sharper between multiple membership and the measure of socio-economic status than was true for income.

Farm residents among both plant workers and open-country residents differed but slightly in organizational participa-

tion (Table 23). Among plant workers living on farms, 70 percent reported more than one membership as compared with 64 percent of white open-country farm residents. Open-country farm residents, however, averaged slightly more memberships—2.6 as compared with 2.3.

## FEELINGS ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

Changes in the opinions of residents concerning various aspects of community life are among the potential changes following establishment of an industry in a community. In this study the question was asked, "Would you say that in the past five years any of the following have changed for the better, the worse or remained about the same in the community?" Respondents then were asked to comment on such things as schools, churches, neighborliness and community pride. A majority of all respondents indicated they felt the factory was good for the community, with plant workers being more optimistic than open-country folks.

Generally there was close agreement among residents on their opinions toward various aspects of the community. People who thought schools were better since the factory went into operation also felt that churches, neighborliness and other aspects of community life were better. Half of the open-country residents and more than half of the plant workers indicated they thought the schools had improved, as shown in Table 27. Also, half of the open-country group felt that there had been little change in the schools while about a third, 35 percent, of the factory workers agreed. Two-thirds of those in both groups who said they thought churches in the community were better

also stated that schools were better. However, among the open-country folks nearly three in four, as compared with three in five, of the factory workers felt that little change had taken place with respect to churches also felt that schools were about the same.

Opinions are likely to be related to various traits of the individual expressing them. Opinions about schools, churches and other group activities of the community may be related to a host of characteristics of the individual, such as his age, occupation, family stage, residential mobility, income and extent of his social participation. While the number of combinations of such interrelationships and the smallness of the sample prohibit an exhaustive analysis here, a few illustrations may suggest certain patterns.

In Table 28, opinions of the plant work-

ers and open-country residents toward schools are shown in relation to the age of the respondent. Comparisons between the two groups are confined again to those under 50. Both plant workers and open-country residents aged 35 to 49 years more often indicated a favorable attitude towards the schools than did younger respondents.

Persons who have moved less frequently might be expected to express more favorable opinions about schools or at least to have more information about the local schools on which to base an opinion. Among plant workers, the persons who had only one place of residence over the previous decade were in fact slightly more favorable towards schools than more mobile persons according to Table 29. Open-country residents displayed little differences when divided into movers and non-

Table 27.—Opinions About Schools of Plant Workers and Open-Country Household Heads by Opinions about Churches.

Opinions about schools since factory came	Opinions about churches			
	All cases	Better	Same	Worse
Plant workers	(98)	(62)	(36)	(0)
		Percent		
Better	100	100	100	—
Same	57	68	39	—
Worse	35	21	58	—
	8	11	3	—
Open-country white household heads	(210)	(100)	(97)	(13)
		Percent		
Better	100	100	100	100
Same	49	70	27	54
Worse	49	27	72	33
	2	3	1	8

Table 28.—Opinions About Schools of Plant Workers and Open-Country White Household Heads by Age.\*

Opinions about schools since factory came	All cases	Age		
		Under 35	35-49	50 and over
Plant workers	(99)	(77)	(21)	— <sup>1</sup>
		Percent		
Better	100	100	100	—
Same or worse	58	53	76	—
	42	47	24	—
Open-country white household heads	(212)	(40)	(49)	(123)
		Percent		
Better	100	100	100	100
Same or worse	49	38	59	49
	51	62	41	51

<sup>1</sup>Only one plant worker was over 50 years of age.

\*Differences not significant at .05 level.

movers.

The majority of those with higher incomes expressed the opinion that schools had improved. In Table 30, 60 percent of the factory workers and 54 percent of the non-country residents in the income bracket of \$3,000 or more said schools were better.

People who are relatively active and involved in community affairs express their opinions from a background of greater activity and experience in community organizations. Therefore, their re-

actions to various things that happen in a community have a special interest. Plant workers who belonged to some organization were slightly more inclined to say schools had improved, 59 percent, than non-members, 44 percent, as shown in Table 31. Organizational membership, however, made virtually no difference in the open-country group's opinions about schools. Hence, for whatever reason, organizational membership had relatively little influence on opinions about school improvement among these respondents.

Table 29.—Opinions About Schools of Plant Workers and Open-Country White Household Heads by Residential Stability.\*

Opinions about schools since factory came	Number of residences since 1947			
	Plant workers		Open-country white household heads	
	One (33)	Two or more (66)	One (123)	Two or more (89)
	Percent			
All cases	100	100	100	100
Better	64	55	48	51
Same or worse	36	45	52	49

\*Differences not significant at .05 level.

Table 30.—Opinions About Schools of Plant Workers and Open-Country Household Heads by Total Family Income.\*

Opinions about schools since factory came	Total family income					
	Plant workers			Open-country white household heads		
	Under \$1000 (10)	\$1000-2999 (39)	\$3000 or more (50)	Under \$1000 (72)	\$1000-2999 (90)	\$3000 or more (46)
	Percent					
All cases	—	100	100	100	100	100
Better	—	56	60	49	48	54
Same	—	39	30	49	49	46
Worse	—	5	10	2	3	—

\*Differences not significant at .05 level.

Table 31.—Opinions About Schools of Plant Workers and Open-Country White Household Heads by Social Participation.\*

Opinions about schools since factory came	Social participation			
	Plant workers		Open-country white household heads	
	No membership (16)	One or more memberships (80)	No membership (48)	One or more memberships (160)
	Percent			
All cases	100	100	100	100
Better	44	59	46	49
Same	56	31	54	48
Worse	—	10	—	3

\*Differences not significant at .05 level.

### SOME IMPLICATIONS

Neither the long-run effects nor all the specific short-run effects of a new factory in a rural community have been examined here. This study has moved in the direction of identifying some of the more immediate consequences of a new factory in the community. Despite such obvious limitations as the small number of interviewees—too few to permit elaborate analysis and detailed cross-classifications—data in this study suggest several important considerations.

There is little question that a new factory in a low-income rural community helps provide jobs and incomes. But the selective nature of living and employment practices combined with migration potential places special importance on the factory jobs provided. Young white males may be deterred from moving away with the coming of the factory. Over the long run, however, keeping these people in the community depends on such things as the steadiness of employment and the opportunities for better earnings. Nation-wide conditions too play an important part, since opportunities elsewhere may become increasingly attractive. Wages in the furniture factory were relatively low by national standards—low enough to prove unattractive to some of the young farmers in the area.

Factory employment in a low-income community may help elevate level of

living and social status. There is much evidence that nonfarm workers enjoy far more of the fruits of our mass production system than do farm workers. Jobs provided in the Chickasaw County factory were unskilled and doubtless are what some would consider "dead end." Living levels are still relatively low and not appreciably higher for the factory workers than the farmer. So despite the gains from factory employment, many will regard the opportunities too limited in comparison with nonfarm opportunities elsewhere.

Opinions expressed about improvements in the community since the coming of the factory were mainly favorable. At the time of the interviews, however, only a short time had elapsed since the factory was established. Consequently the impact of the factory on opinions may not have been realized fully.

Finally, this study offers support for the notion that farm workers who leave agriculture do so gradually. Some of the plant workers were still farming and the extent of their farm work justifies calling them "part-time" farmers. There is also the interesting prospect that workers in this kind of community may find a combination of farming and factory work a solution to many of their problems.