THE JEW IN AGRICULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES[1]

By Gabriel Davidson

To associate Jews with farming may appear an anachronism. It still seems to be the general belief that, since their dispersion from their ancestral home, Jews have lost contact with the land so completely and irrevocably that in all of two thousand years they have never been able to thrust new roots into the soil. The truth is that during the whole Diaspora there never was a time when Jews were not engaged in agriculture to some extent. That more did not follow the plow was due largely to the fact that the lot of the majority of Jews was cast in countries where proscription against ownership of land and other restrictions barred access to the soil. Circumstances, not inclination or aptitude, forced them into occupations which did not necessitate a firm anchorage and which would enable them, when oppression became unbearable, to pull up stakes and move onward. When restrictions were lifted, Jews began to give vent to the agricultural urge. If the number on the land is still proportionately small, it must be remembered that it requires time to undo habits shaped during these many centuries. Yet, the Jewish agrarian population today is larger than most people suppose. Estimates lately made point to a world Jewish farm population of about 800,000. There is probably no country where Jews reside in which some are not occupied with agricultural pursuits. Russia, Palestine and, to a lesser degree, the United States, have witnessed large accessions in recent years.

In his "Agricultural Activities of the Jews in America", which appeared in the American Jewish Year Book for 5673, Leonard G. Robinson traced the beginnings of the

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Jewish agricultural movement in the United States and sketched its history up to 1912. This article, therefore, will treat of the later phases of the movement, going over the ground which Robinson covered only where it is necessary to bring out the results of later research.

Agricultural Colonization—Past and Present

As Robinson points out, the first half of the 1880 decade was a period of Jewish colonization activity under pressure. The persecutions which broke out in Russia upon the accession to the throne of Alexander III caused many Russian Jews to seek refuge in other lands. Many came to America. The ingenuity of American Jewry was taxed to the limit to provide for the newcomers and to put them on the road toward self-support. Farming was conceived as an outlet for a number, all the more because some of them came here with that in mind. Within a few years, sixteen known attempts at agricultural colonization were made in such far-flung places as Louisiana, Arkansas, Kansas, North and South Dakota, Colorado, Oregon and New Jersey. Reference to these colonies, with the exception of Arkansas, was made by Robinson. But later explorations by this writer shed much additional light upon this hectic colonization era. The results of these studies were published in various English-Jewish magazines. Limitation of space precludes detailed treatment in the present article, but brief mention of the Arkansas colony is here given because it has not heretofore appeared in any history of this period.

In the spring of 1883, a group said to have numbered about 150 people set out from New York to settle on farms on a tract of land about midway between Little Rock, Arkansas, and Memphis, Tennessee, which had been offered as a site for a Jewish colony. Upon their arrival they found a thick forest utterly unfit for farming. The whole visible means of making even a precarious living was the cutting and selling of staves. Before the colonists had a chance to become acclimated, the summer was upon them. Temperatures ranging up to 110 degrees were not uncommon. Frequent and torrential rains produced myriads of mosquitoes. Soon malaria and yellow fever

afflicted nine out of ten of the colonists, and eighteen or twenty persons succumbed to the disease. With starvation staring them in the face, the colonists took flight and by September 1883, a bare half year after its inception, the colony had become a matter of history.

All the colonies of this decade had a brief existence except only those in New Jersey. In Louisiana, it was flood; in Arkansas, disease; in Dakota, hail, drought and prairie fire; in Colorado, aridity; and in Kansas, a combination of untoward circumstances, that contributed to the early demise of these ill-fated ventures. In Oregon, the trouble lay not in the physical but in the spiritual domain. But the underlying causes were the same in each instance. These colonies were conceived in haste and planned under stress without thought to those factors upon which successful colonization depends. Geographical location, character of land, fitness of colonists, capital needs, farm experience, leadership—none of these vital requirements received sufficient consideration. These people had to be settled quickly, and thought was concentrated only upon the dispatch with which that could be accomplished. Yet, these projects served a useful purpose. The sad thing is that the experience gained from them should have cost so much in human suffering. These debacles resulted in focusing attention upon the need of enlightened direction for the proper development of a Jewish agricultural movement, and led to the establishment of the Baron de Hirsch Fund out of which grew The Jewish Agricultural Society. Under that guidance and the impetus of its own momentum, the movement has had a steady and healthy growth until today there is a sizable segment of Jews who derive their sustenance in whole or in part from American soil, exemplifying the ideal for the attainment of which these pioneers struggled so valiantly.

The following decade witnessed further attempts at the formation of Jewish agricultural settlements: Woodbine in New Jersey, founded by the Baron de Hirsch Fund in 1891, and the Palestine Colony in Bad Axe, Michigan, founded in the same year. The former is included in Robinson's treatise and will be referred to again later in this article. No mention of the Palestine Colony is made by

Robinson, and brief treatment of that undertaking is, therefore, in place here.

The *dramatis personae* were, with one exception, Russian Jews from Bay City, Michigan, all recent immigrants and all peddlers. They bought a tract of cheap land upon a nominal cash payment. Less than $200 represented the total investment of the initial group of twelve. Under the impulse of early enthusiasm, the population of the colony quickly grew to fifty-seven. With the depression of 1893 and the almost impossible task of meeting heavy contract payments, the colony soon reached an impasse. Only the aid rendered by the Bethel Relief Society of Detroit, under the determined lead of Martin Butzel, and later a loan from the Baron de Hirsch Fund, enabled the colonists to struggle until the close of the century.

To complete the list of the minor colonies undertaken before 1900 and of the known defunct colonies since then, mention is made of Carp Lake, Michigan, 1882; Washington, D. C., 1883; Water View, Virginia, 1886; Hebrew Colonial Society, Endicott, Maryland, 1903; Arpin, Wisconsin, formed by the Milwaukee Agricultural Association, 1904 (a colony which lasted till 1910 and where one family is still farming); Flora, Illinois, 1908; Clarion Colony, Utah, 1910; Bay Minette, Alabama, 1912; the Ida Straus Colony, near Albany, Georgia, 1915; the Jingo Colony, Tennessee, 1916.

The Fellowship, 1912, and Ferrer, 1914, Colonies at Stelton, New Jersey; the Chatham Colony, near Chatham, New Jersey, 1923; the Harmonia Colony near Plainfield, New Jersey, 1924; and the Mohegan Colony near Peekskill, New York, 1925, were either not colonies in the accepted sense of the term or broke away from the colony idea, and farming in those places is now conducted on individual lines.

Within the last two years, two rather ambitious and distinctive colonization projects have been initiated. In the summer of 1933, the Sun Rise Cooperative Farm Community bought a tract of land in the vicinity of Saginaw, Michigan, comprising almost nine thousand acres and containing about eighty buildings of various kinds. A large quantity of livestock, farm machinery, and crops

planted on over 2000 acres were included in the purchase. The land had belonged to a large estate and was acquired at what was considered an extremely low price and on very favorable terms. The colonists were drawn from the radical elements in the large cities and the colony was conceived as a strictly collectivistic enterprise, with the land and all personal property belonging to the community and all farm operations conducted for its collective benefit. The colony has suffered defections in membership and has had new accessions. At the beginning of 1935, the colony contained 97 families comprising 300 individuals. It is still too early to predict the outcome, but it is worth while to watch the development of this experiment.

During the same year a project known as the Jersey Homesteads, Inc., was launched. This will be treated elsewhere.

The Present Jewish Farm Scene

Jewish agricultural progress may be said to have begun with the opening of the present century. It is significant that the movement made its real growth only after the colony idea was abandoned and Jews began to settle on farms as individuals. No actual Jewish farm census has ever been taken. The Jewish Agricultural Society considered the matter on several occasions but it deemed the cost to be disproportionate to the practical results that could be derived from such a census. The Society places at 80,000 the number of Jews who are wholly or partly engaged in farming and in kindred agricultural pursuits. But these figures, though based on more than mere conjecture, are presented simply as estimates. In a study of the Jewish population of the United States made in 1927 by the Statistical Department of the American Jewish Committee, under the direction of Dr. H. S. Linfield, it was estimated that there were 109,600 Jews living in rural territory. It may be assumed that many of them were engaged in some form of agriculture.

Taking the average size of the American farm as a base, and making allowance for the recent tendency of Jews to operate small farms (owing to proximity to metropolitan

areas and specialization in crops demanding only small acreage) the combined holdings of Jewish farmers will reach over 1,500,000 acres. Under normal conditions Jewish farm holdings, real and personal, could be considered as having a total gross worth approximating $150,000,000. They are, of course, subject to mortgage. Tenant farming is almost non-existent.

Jewish farmsteads range in size from the less than an acre intensive nursery to the 30,000 acre grain fields of a Jewish farmer in Kansas. They are to be found in all of our forty-eight states. The largest numbers are in the northeast and in sections of the middlewest, where the bulk of the general Jewish population is situated. The natural tendency of Jews is to settle in or near places that already contain Jewish farm groups because they are thus afforded a freer outlet for their gregarious inclinations and enabled to maintain their ties with relatives and friends in the cities. But there are some lone spirits to whom proximity to urban centers or propinquity to Jewish neighbors is of no concern.

There is no type of agriculture practiced in the United States which is foreign to the Jew. Dairying, poultry raising, truck farming, floriculture, orcharding, viticulture, cattle raising, tobacco, grain, cotton, sugar beets—in short, every branch of farming has its Jewish votaries. As a rule, Jewish farmers engage in those forms of agriculture which are generally practiced in their sections, and raise those crops to which their land is best adapted and which are most profitably marketable.

Within the compass of this treatise it is possible to give only a bird's-eye view of the Jewish farm scene in those states which contain the largest Jewish agrarian population —Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, and Michigan. But the treatment of these will suffice to afford a good glimpse of American Jewish farm life in general.

CONNECTICUT.—Connecticut contains some of the oldest Jewish farm settlements in the United States. The settlements in Chesterfield and Colchester both had their beginnings in 1891. The former has declined, while the latter has grown into an active Jewish agricultural community. Besides Colchester the chief Jewish farm centers

are those around Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, New London, Norwich and Middletown, but Jewish farm families are scattered throughout the entire State. There are probably more diverse forms of farming practiced by Jews in Connecticut than in any other State. The Connecticut River Valley contains fertile fields especially adapted to tobacco raising. Large tobacco plantations were developed by Jews where both broad leaf and shade grown tobaccos are produced. During the World War period and for several years thereafter, the tobacco planters enjoyed great prosperity. Tobacco acreage was expanded. Dwellings which would grace the suburban periphery of a metropolitan city were constructed. Communal life was at its height. Then came the slump in the tobacco market. A hard period for the tobacco farmers ensued. Many farmers turned from tobacco to potatoes, and Jewish potato growers are now among the foremost in the State. In 1933, the largest individual producer of this crop was a Jew who raised in the neighborhood of 50,000 bushels. With the advent of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, an upswing has set in and these farmers' prospects have shown marked improvement.

Dairying, poultry raising, vegetable and fruit growing, constitute the other chief lines of farming in the State. The Jewish farm unit is large in size, an eighty or hundred acre farm being not uncommon. Except for pasture and woodland, the farms are fairly well cultivated and well stocked. The Connecticut Jewish farmer makes his living almost wholly from the soil. Summer boarding and rooming form part of the farm economy on some farms in scenically favored sections, but largely as a subsidiary rather than a major source of income.

The State contains intensive industrial areas which provide splendid outlets for farm products. The State's agricultural policy is directed toward the stimulation of the home market for home-grown products. Competition from the outside is reduced by regulations strictly defining marketing requirements. As a result, milk, poultry and other products command higher prices than in the neighboring States.

Jewish farmers have their local organizations for social, religious and recreational activity. Several of the large sized groups have their communal buildings. Some settlements are so close to towns and cities that they can participate in Jewish life there. Connecticut is the one State where the local Jewish farm associations are federated into a central state organization. In general agricultural and local affairs, the Connecticut Jewish farmers are part and parcel of their respective communities.

NEW JERSEY.—New Jersey has been properly termed the cradle of the Jewish farm movement in the United States. As already mentioned, the Jewish settlements in South Jersey are the sole survivors of all the early attempts at Jewish colonization in this country. Their proximity to large cities, in itself an advantage, made possible the enlistment of the active interest of public-spirited Jews in New York and Philadelphia, and saved these settlements from the fate that befell the distant colonies. The so-called South Jersey Colonies—Alliance, Rosenhayn, Carmel, Norma, Brotmanville, Garten Road—have been historicized by many Jewish writers, among them Charles S. Bernheimer, Jacob G. Lipman, Leonard G. Robinson, Philip R. Goldstein, Katherine Sabsovich, Samuel Joseph, Boris D. Bogen, Gustav Pollak, and lately in "Yovel" published on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Alliance Colony. Although still popularly referred to as colonies, these settlements never actually were colonies in the accepted sense of that term. From the beginning to the present time, farm ownership was vested in individuals. The farms were originally developed as truck farms, with strawberries, beans, sweet potatoes and peppers as the principal crops. Later, poultry was introduced and is now an important source of income. Although the high hopes entertained by their founders were not fully realized, the colonies have been able to maintain their continuity as Jewish farm centers, and today, though most of the original settlers have passed on, the children of some are still there, and a third generation of Jewish farmers is beginning to grow up.

Founded as an agro-industrial settlement, Woodbine has of late years developed a fresh agricultural impetus. Aided

by the Baron de Hirsch Fund and The Jewish Agricultural Society, new farmers have come in and modern poultry plants have been built up. As in the South Jersey Colonies, some Woodbine farms are in the hands of the children of the original settlers. The present Mayor is the grandson of a Woodbine pioneer.

With metropolitan New York near its northern extremity and Philadelphia dominating its southern end, and its many shore resorts, New Jersey has a large consuming public within short range, affording many farmers the opportunity of marketing without the intervention of middlemen. The same factors are favorable to the development of agro-industrial settlements such as have grown up around New Brunswick, Plainfield and Bound Brook, within the New York radius, as well as around the district contiguous to Philadelphia. Hence, the State has long been a favored locale for Jewish farm-seekers, and the Jewish farm population has grown here more rapidly than in other states. Jewish farm settlements and individual farmers are found in every part of the State, and New Jersey probably contains more Jewish farmers in proportion to the general Jewish population than any other state of the Union.

Varied types of farming are pursued, with poultry and truck farming in the lead. In Monmouth and Ocean Counties, around Lakewood, Toms River and Farmingdale, Jews are the predominant element in poultry farming. They have displayed unusual aptitude in mastering both the scientific and practical phases of poultry husbandry and are engaged in all branches of the industry. Their commercial plants range from a thousand to ten thousand bird capacity, entailing considerable investments for building and equipment and requiring large operating costs. New Jersey egg and poultry products command the highest prices on the New York market. Monmouth County, which ranks among the first ten agricultural counties in the United States, contains more Jewish farmers than any other county in the State. Jewish farmers around Freehold, Perrineville, and Englishtown raise substantial acreages of potatoes, the County's leading crop; also many acres of tomatoes, sweet corn and a large variety of other vegetables.

Buying and marketing cooperatives exist in virtually every Jewish settlement. Although formed mostly by Jews, they are not exclusively Jewish in their membership. They afford a splendid example of a union of effort which, though economic in its primary aim, also makes for better understanding among interracial groups. The Central Jersey Farmers Cooperative Association is a good example. Founded by a handful of Jewish farmers, it has grown to a membership of over one hundred and fifty Jews and non-Jews. Jewish poultry farmers also took an active part in federating local marketing associations into a state federation. The Jewish farmers in and around Perrineville formed the first credit union organized by farmers under the New Jersey law. Other Jewish groups were likewise the first to apply for charters for credit unions under the recently enacted Federal law.

The Jewish farming communities of New Jersey are well integrated, facilitating social activity and cooperative endeavor. Local Jewish organization is stronger here than among other Jewish farm groups. Practically every settlement has its own community center for religious, educational and social purposes.

NEW YORK.—Not until the turn of the century was there any marked farming activity in New York State. Now, Jewish farmers may be found in various parts of the State, including Long Island. The densest Jewish rural population in the State, indeed, in the entire United States, is centered in Sullivan and Ulster Counties. Once Jews began to go thither, a steady stream of migration was set in motion, attracted, no doubt, by the scenic beauty of these picturesque regions, their invigorating climate and their accessibility to metropolitan New York. Even before the advent of the Jew, these counties had been favorite summering places for people from the city. Following the economy of the older stock, the newcomers combined summer boarding with farming, to provide an added source of income to that which could be derived in short growing seasons from none too fertile soil. Gradually, boarding assumed larger proportions until, in the years preceding the depression, luxurious summer hotels were put up, hostelries embodying every modern device for comfort, convenience

and recreation. It is estimated that over a quarter of a million people spend their vacation periods in these pleasant mountain regions.

As the practice of summer vacationing became more general among modestly-circumstanced folk, a unique institution was evolved—the rooming house, distinguished from the boarding house, in that guests rent rooms only, and do their own cooking and housekeeping. In the beginning there was little to commend this, other than the fact that it brought the opportunity of a summer vacation within the range of families of small earning power. But rooming houses have been steadily improved. Overcrowding has been largely eliminated and sanitation standards lifted. These summer enterprises have screened the agricultural activity of the mountain regions, and there is a tendency to frown upon the so-called "boarding house" farmer. Yet a volume of farming, by no means inconsiderable, is carried on in this vacation hub, not a little by the very people who conduct the boarding and rooming places. There is probably more farming being done in these two counties now than at any time in their entire history. Leaving out of consideration the big hotels, the virtue of the combination of farming with boarding or rooming lies not only in providing farmers with additional income, but also in bringing a ready market for their farm products to their very doors.

A dairy section before the settlement of Jews, dairying still predominates in this region. Dairy herds have been improved with tested cows. Poultry farming on a commercial basis has been appreciably developed, and a Jewish farmer, a former New York City boy, was made president of a cooperative egg auction operating in five counties. Parenthetically, it might be mentioned that he is also president of the local Grange, the oldest farm organization in America. Potatoes are being raised in larger quantities than ever before and cauliflower as a commercial crop was introduced by Jewish farmers.

The Jewish farmers of the mountain districts brought in a large number of Jews engaged in business and professions. The population of the villages of Woodridge, Mountaindale, Hurleyville and South Fallsburgh, is preponderately Jewish.

The larger villages, Ellenville, Liberty and Monticello, have considerable Jewish populations. Ellenville contains 145 Jewish families, seventy of which were drawn from neighborhood farms. Because of its central location, Ellenville was selected as the seat of the branch office opened by The Jewish Agricultural Society in 1920 to serve the territory.

Groups of Jewish farmers are located in Rensselaer County in the environs of Nassau, East Nassau, Schodack and Brainard, within easy access of Albany and Troy. The first settlers went there in 1894, but it was not until ten years later that the movement thither actually began. Here, dairying, poultry raising, and a mixed form of farming are practiced. Summer boarding is very modest when compared with the Ulster-Sullivan districts. Within the last decade, Rockland County has witnessed an influx of Jewish farmers. This section is unique in that, though it is almost at the door of the metropolis and land values are high, Jewish farmers carry on an intensive type of farming on good-sized farms.

Synagogues and Jewish community center buildings are found in every sizable farm community throughout the State. Some villages have more than one. There are Talmud Torahs and Yiddish schools. In Sullivan and Ulster Counties, farm and village are close enough together to fuse activities. There are local Jewish organizations of all kinds, and branches of the large national Jewish organizations. Monticello and Liberty have hospitals built under Jewish auspices and maintained largely by Jewish contributions. Jews are members of school and village boards and hold civic office. Jewish farm girls teach in neighboring grade and high schools. Jewish young men raised on local farms have returned to these sections to practice professions.

Local farm cooperatives have been built up. In Sullivan and Ulster Counties, the farm associations are federated into a bi-county organization. The hotelmen in these counties have their Mountain Hotelmen's Association which publishes its own paper devoted to the interests of both hotelmen and farmers. The outstanding accomplishment

in the field of cooperation is a chain of five cooperative fire insurance companies with headquarters at Woodridge. Starting in 1913 with one company and a small amount of insurance, the volume of business has grown to almost twelve million dollars of insurance risks. These companies save their members many thousands of dollars annually in insurance premiums.

MICHIGAN AND OHIO.—The earliest historical record of Jewish farm effort in Michigan is the Palestine Colony (1891) already referred to.

The actual settlement of Jewish farmers began about thirty or more years ago, encouraged by the late Rabbi A. R. Levy of Chicago and The Jewish Agriculturists' Aid Society of America of which he was the founder. With the development of the automotive industry, the Jewish population of Detroit grew, and soon some Jews began to settle on farms within a radius of fifty to seventy-five miles from the city. Now there are Jewish farmers in the vicinity of every fair-sized city in the State. The largest numbers are in southwestern Michigan, whither they went from Chicago.

South Haven was originally a general farming area. Later, Jewish farmers turned to poultry and developed one of the largest commercial poultry groups in the section. In and near South Haven there have long been summer resorts. Twenty-five years ago there were only two or three Jewish boarding houses. Since then a number of expensive modern hotels have been built up, and some Jewish farmers have changed from farming to boarding. But the boarding business of the district is confined almost wholly to the places bordering Lake Michigan, and only a small percentage of Jewish farmers cater to summer guests. With the coming of the farmers, the Jewish urban population of South Haven slowly increased; it now numbers about seventy-five families. Assisted by a loan from The Jewish Agricultural Society, the urban and rural residents erected a synagogue and community center building, which would do credit to a community of much larger size.

In the neighborhood of Benton Harbor, Jews specialize in fruit-growing of various kinds. They have become

experts in raising berries, fruits and vegetables. Farms range in size from ten to eighty acres, and some Jews have paid as high as $1000 per acre. In the Eastern part of Michigan, the Jewish farmers near cities raise mostly truck and poultry, and those in the outlying districts run dairies and practice general farming. The Jewish farmers of Michigan also produce the specialties peculiar to the state,—celery, sugar beets, mint, etc. Though hard pressed as all farmers were during the depression years, the Jewish farmers were still able to donate several truck-loads of foodstuffs to the drought-stricken farmers in Arkansas and to contribute quantities of farm produce to soup kitchens in Chicago.

The Jewish farm settlements in Ohio are grouped around Cleveland and Youngstown, and there are individual Jewish farmers scattered over the State. About thirty years ago there was a small settlement near Cincinnati fostered by the late Boris D. Bogen, then head of the Federated Jewish Charities of that city, and by the late Professor Gotthard Deutsch of the Hebrew Union College. The settlement gradually dwindled because better opportunities during the World War and early post-War periods lured the younger element to the city, and the older people followed. The largest group in the State is located in the vicinity of Geneva, about forty-five miles from Cleveland, where Jews commenced to settle on farms about twenty-five years ago. Conforming to local practice, they engaged in viticulture as a specialty. They made rapid strides, increased their grape acreage and built up their vineyards until, at the height of the industry's prosperity (in the middle nineteen-twenties), the Jewish group, though a small minority, produced over sixty percent of the grapes raised in that section. Grapes brought high prices and land values soared. The neighborhood banks and non-Jewish businessmen pointed to the new element as a strong factor in the upbuilding and progress of Geneva. Unfortunately, specialization was pushed too far. When the cumulative effects of prohibition and competition from other grape areas made themselves felt, grapes dropped drastically in price and the grape-growers had little else

to fall back upon. Depression added to their woes, and the farmers of this section have for some time been confronted with critical conditions. Benefiting by their hard experience, they have in late years begun to diversify their fruit culture and to raise dairy, poultry and other products.

Depression and Its Effects

In a discussion of any phase of contemporary activity, the economic upheaval that set in in 1929 looms up as a big factor. In the years between 1929 and 1932, the cash income from farm marketings fell sixty percent. The best thought of the nation was put to work to find a solution to the farm problem. Through the Federal Farm Board, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, and the Farm Credit Administration in its various ramifications, the Federal Government took comprehensive measures to lift farm prices, lighten the debt load and ease the credit strain. As a result of these measures and a general upswing, the farmer's tenure was made more secure and farm income was brought up. Yet, 1934 was still forty percent behind 1929.

In common with their fellows, Jewish farmers severely felt the effect of the depression. But it is fortunate that only a minority concentrated on those agricultural staples which had been in the slough for ten years or so, since the export markets on which they depended began to decline. Most Jews are engaged in those branches of farming—dairying, poultry, vegetable and small fruit farming—which have suffered not so much from overproduction as from underconsumption, because of lack of domestic buying-power for the products of the farm. The initial operation of the agricultural adjustment program resulting in the increase of the cost of feed without a compensatory rise in the price of poultry and dairy products, worked to the disadvantage of farmers in these branches. But these farmers were not as hard hit as were the producers of the major export crops, and the inequities under the A.A.A. are steadily being corrected. Again, the effects of the agricultural slump were more severe in the hinterland

than in districts near large centers of population, especially in the Northeast. Most Jewish farmers are located in regions fairly close to cities. This is a distinct advantage. Markets are more favorable. Nearby farmers, especially Jews who have friends and relatives in the city, can engage in direct selling, thereby eliminating the middleman's profit. Such farmers can also supplement their incomes by using surplus housing accommodations for summer roomers or boarders. Coming from trades, many Jewish farmers can even in hard times find some city work to add a little to farm income. While these features by no means gave immunity, they mitigated the effects of the depression. Government aids, the help of The Jewish Agricultural Society, not always through loans but through advice and encouragement, were important factors. Doubtless many Jewish farmers stuck because they saw nothing to which they could return in the city. But the fact remains that there has been no general flight of Jews from the farm. A study, the findings of which are set forth in a later section of this article, shows that out of three hundred farmers among whom statistics were gathered, two hundred and sixty-two have been on their farms for more than five years and two hundred and forty-four for more than ten years. Jewish farmers have, by and large, managed in one way or another, to withstand the depression.

Agro-Industrial Plan of Settlement

The depression has given rise to cross currents of opinion as to effective methods to bring about recovery. Some students of affairs advocate the curtailment of agricultural production and the absorption of large numbers of farmers into industry. Others hold that a key to improvement is the turning of our unemployed city workers to the land. A third school of thought maintains that a good approach lies in the decentralization of industry and the redistribution of population through a combination of farming with industrial work.

Part-time farming is not new. There were always people who drew their living partly from farming and partly from industrial earnings. Some of these evolved into full-fledged

successful farmers. The Jewish Agricultural Society has long regarded this combination as a good means of establishing those who, for one reason or another, were not ready to launch immediately into full-time farming. The essence of the Society's idea is settlement on farms within commuting distance of cities, making possible entrance into farming without immediate severance from city occupations. The plan implies farms of small acreage, the high cost of land close to cities imposing that restriction. On a farm of this kind a moderate but appreciable amount of farming can be carried on by the farm wife and children while the wages of the head of the family continue to come in. Besides, most industries have slack seasons even in normal times which, with other spare hours, can be profitably employed on the farm. The family's food bill is cut down, the overhead of the farm about equals the rent of a city apartment and, since the farm is close to the city, the products, mainly eggs and poultry with some vegetables and small fruit on the side, can be readily marketed. The possibility of emergence into straight farming is always present. But, whether or not this is the ultimate result, the worker is provided with proper housing in healthful surroundings where his children can be in wholesome contact with nature, where the family can escape the city's drawbacks and yet take advantage of the city's opportunities.

The agro-industrial combination was followed to some extent by Jews long before the depression, in fact as far back as the South Jersey colonization period. With the trend on the increase, suitable small farms became scarcer and several groups bought tracts of land in New Jersey and elsewhere for subdivision. Chatham and Harmonia in New Jersey and Mohegan in New York, previously mentioned, are examples. Lacking guidance, they made mistakes which retarded their agricultural growth. To give this type of project proper direction, the Society in 1926 began to help in building an agro-industrial settlement in Bound Brook, New Jersey. Before the depression the settlement grew steadily to almost forty families and the settlers made good progress. Indeed, the outlook was so encouraging that in 1929 the Society launched a project

of its own along the same lines. It bought a tract of land two and three-quarter miles from the center of New Brunswick, New Jersey, and subdivided the land for development and resale in small units. After the initial group of nine had been settled, the economic storm broke out and operations have been temporarily suspended.

The agro-industrial idea began to spread in boom years and some of the earlier settlers yielded to the natural temptation to expand too quickly and to give up their city jobs too soon. Unfortunately, the depression came before they had been on their places long enough to strike firm root. During the last few years, agro-industrialists did not fare so well, principally because city work, the back-bone of the plan, was scarce. Some families were compelled to drop out. But this form of settlement, if undertaken on a more modest scale, will still afford an opportunity for those to get into farming who cannot command the means to go immediately into full-time farming or are fearful of cutting themselves off abruptly from their city moorings.

The subsistence homesteading projects being developed by the United States Department of the Interior are a species of agro-industrial farming except that they generally restrict production to home consumption. In that sense, they are industrial rather than agricultural. Such a project is the Jersey Homestead, Inc. being developed under government aegis and with grants from the Division of Subsistence Homesteads and the Public Works Administration. Eight contiguous farms, containing 1203 acres, near Hightstown, New Jersey, were bought, and the plans call for the establishment of two hundred families drawn largely from the ranks of Jewish needle-workers. Each family is to invest $500. A garment factory is to be located in the colony. Large dairy and poultry enterprises are to be conducted cooperatively, but the farming of the individual homesteaders will be limited mainly to raising vegetables for family consumption. The actual settlement of families was scheduled to begin in the summer of 1935. In some Jewish circles, the venture is regarded as having significant possibilities in opening an avenue for the rehabilitation of large bodies of unemployed and displaced Jewish

workers. But it is hardly likely that many, if any, government grants for other specifically Jewish homesteading projects will be forthcoming, surely not sufficient to make an appreciable dent in the ranks of Jewish industrial workers. For that matter, large-scale Jewish farm settlement, be it part-time farming, full-time farming, or both, would be exceedingly costly—so costly that mass transplantation movements as envisaged by some enthusiasts are likely to remain for a long time the devout wish of their protagonists. For monetary considerations, if for no other, it appears that the Jewish farm movement must, for some time at least, depend for its growth upon the individual and small group mode of settlement through which the movement has thus far been built up.

Jewish Agricultural Agencies

Although a number of Jewish agencies were, at various times since 1881, formed to promote Jewish farm settlement, the Jewish farm movement has not been a subsidized one. The aim has always been to render a type of aid which any self-respecting man can accept without the sacrifice of dignity. Some of these agencies were set up to carry out a specific colonization project and had a brief existence. Others had a wider scope. Only those that are still functioning will be treated here.

Baron de Hirsch Fund.—A history of the Baron de Hirsch Fund, written by Dr. Samuel Joseph, was recently published. It presents a complete account of that organization from its birth in 1891 to the present time. The Fund's activities covered a wide range. Its establishment gave the Jewish agricultural movement the support and direction which it had heretofore lacked. The Fund founded Woodbine, and, in 1894, established the Baron de Hirsch Agricultural School there. The school was the first in the United States to impart secondary education in agriculture. It was maintained until 1917 and had a total student body of over 1000. The Fund aided individual farmers in Connecticut and New Jersey, and, as already stated, gave succor to the struggling Palestine Colony in Michigan. With the creation of The Jewish Agricultural Society, the Baron

de Hirsch Fund withdrew from direct agricultural work except in Woodbine, but it always regarded farming as its major interest. Its annual subsidies to The Jewish Agritural Society have been continued without interruption and it has, on many occasions, made considerable sums available to the Society in the form of loans. A review of the Society's work is, therefore, also a review of the Fund's agricultural activities.

THE JEWISH AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY, INC.—In 1900, the Baron de Hirsch Fund joined the Jewish Colonization Association—also a Hirsch foundation with headquarters in Paris—in founding The Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society. At first, the objects of the new Society were not solely agricultural. They included removal of immigrants from crowded cities, and other industrial features. As the agricultural phase of the Society's work assumed progressively larger dimensions, the industrial activities were gradually reduced and finally completely abandoned. In 1922, the Society dropped the word "Industrial" from its name. At the same time it deleted the word "Aid" so as to remove all implications of eleemosynary favor.

In the beginning, the Society was little more than a lending agency. Agricultural credit was deplorably scarce in general, much more so for a new element. As the movement toward the farm grew and the Society's knowledge and experience of the needs of Jewish farmers became broader, its activities were expanded, until there was evolved a program which comprehends virtually every phase of farm life—farm employment, farm settlement, farm credit, agricultural extension, rural sanitation, and social, religious and, to some extent, welfare activities.

The Farm Employment Department was conceived as an instrumentality to afford vocational preparation for farm-minded Jewish youth. Many of the young men sent out to work on farms undertook it simply as a means of obtaining the necessary schooling for later farm operation. The Department has functioned since 1908 and effected 17,723 placements in thirty-two states.

The purpose of the Society's Farm Settlement Department is "the gradual creation of a class of real farmers."

The Society has studiously avoided all extravagant back-to-the-land propaganda. In the past seventeen years, the post-War period, 17,884 persons applied to the Society for advice about establishing themselves on farms. Through the direct instrumentality of this Department, 1356 families were settled; indirectly, a much larger number. It may be conservatively estimated that the Society was responsible in one way or another for the settlement of ten thousand persons in fifteen states during that period. Avoiding the mistakes of the early colonization efforts, when families were placed in the distant hinterland, the policy has been to locate new farmers not too far from Jewish urban centers, in sections where Jewish farmers had already settled. In this way a number of fairly compact Jewish agricultural communities were developed.

The Extension Department was the Society's response to the recognition that farming for the Jew is an acquisition, not an inheritance, and that the problem of making a Jewish farmer is a problem not only of craftsmanship but also of adjustment. The design was to supplement rather than supplant governmental extension service, and the Society still draws freely upon that service. The most effective instrument in the Society's extension work is the individual farm visit through the medium of which important agricultural information is brought directly to the farmer's door by men expertly trained and temperamentally equipped. During the year 1934, a total of 2,957 visits were made. Supplementing its work with individuals, the Department assists farmers in organizing themselves for cooperative buying and selling, and for other community purposes. Since 1908, the Department has published *The Jewish Farmer*, an agricultural magazine in Yiddish. It has also published agricultural text-books in Yiddish, and now issues monthly farm bulletins. This Department also maintains a purchasing service bureau to help farmers buy materials of approved quality at reduced prices. It conducts an agricultural night school for farm aspirants at its headquarters in New York. Between 1908 and 1930 the Society awarded 340 scholarships to children of Jewish farmers and other farm-minded Jewish youth to enable them to pursue agricultural courses at state agricultural

colleges. The awards have been discontinued because of budgetary limitations.

The Society made, first, outright grants and, later, loans without interest to help the erection of synagogues and community centers in Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin. In religious and kindred activities, it cooperated with the United Synagogue of America, the Jewish Chatauqua Society, and the National Council of Jewish Women, to the last two of which it, for a time, granted annual subsidies.

The Society maintains a Sanitation Department which carries on work to promote higher standards of cleanliness and to improve sanitary conditions in and about the farm home. This activity is confined mostly to the Jewish farm districts in New York and Connecticut, but other sections are occasionally reached. During the course of the year 1934, a total of 644 sanitary inspections were conducted. Through the media of educational talks, lectures and demonstrations, an audience estimated at 7,500 was reached that year.

The Farm Loan Department reaches those farmers who cannot obtain loans through other sources. Hence, loans are, with few exceptions, made against junior mortgages—a form of security not generally acceptable by lending institutions. The broadened Federal farm credit established during the past two years, part of which is purely of an emergency character, while temporarily easing the strain, did not lift the burden from the Society's shoulders. In its thirty-five years, the Society granted 11,441 loans aggregating $7,167,686 to farmers in forty states. This phase of the Society's work is unique in that, unlike endowed foundations where capital is invested purely for the sake of income, and unlike membership societies which depend upon uninterrupted support from the public, both the Society's capital and income are made to serve the very objectives for which the Society was founded. The income is employed to defray administration expense and the cost of a ramified educational service. The principal constitutes a revolving fund out of which farm loans are made. The difficulty has been that, with the growth in the number of Jewish farmers, the demands

upon the fund have outrun its capacity, and that, latterly, slow repayments caused by hard times have retarded rotation. Some years ago, the Society contemplated a drive for funds but abandoned the idea because it did not wish to compete with the various fund-raising campaigns for relief abroad. Before the onset of the depression, losses resulting from farm loans constituted less than five percent of the Society's turnover, over a period of almost thirty years. Since the depression, losses have naturally risen. The Society looks upon these losses simply as an item in the cost of building up a Jewish agricultural movement in the United States.

NATIONAL FARM SCHOOL.—The National Farm School was founded in 1896 by the late Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf of Philadelphia. It is located near Doylestown, Bucks County, Pennsylvania. With its associated farms, the School comprises twelve hundred acres, with spacious educational halls, student dormitories, modern farm buildings, fine livestock, and a full complement of up-to-date farm machinery. The course of instruction extends over three years, equally divided between classroom and laboratory instruction, and actual field work on the fields, in dairies, orchards, poultry plants, greenhouses, vegetable gardens, etc. A total of 972 boys have been graduated, over thirty-five percent of whom are engaged in agriculture or related pursuits. Among its graduates are such well known figures as Bernhard Ostrolenk and Jacob J. Taubenhaus, of whom mention will be made later. A history of the school, written by Herbert D. Allman, its President, will have made its appearance before this article is published.

FEDERATION OF JEWISH FARMERS OF AMERICA

The Federation differs from the agencies just treated in that it was an organization formed by the farmers themselves. It was, as its name indicates, a league of local Jewish farmers' associations. The Federation was formed at a convention held in New York City in 1909 and grew from a membership of thirteen to sixty-three constituent societies in eleven states. It entered into many phases of

Jewish farm life—economic, social and religious—and held yearly conventions and several expositions in New York City at which farm products raised by its members were exhibited. The Jewish Agricultural Society gave the Federation not only moral encouragement but liberal financial support. As the Jewish farmers grew in number and importance, it became increasingly evident that their economic problems could not well be dissociated from those of the communities in which these farmers resided. On the other hand, the non-economic problems with which the Federation dealt were of a purely local character, varying in different communities. Interest in the Federation, therefore waned, and, since 1922, the Federation has been inactive.

The constituent societies of the Federation furnished the nuclei for the establishment of a system of cooperative agricultural credit. Between 1911 and 1915, nineteen cooperative credit unions were formed in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Massachusetts, to each of which The Jewish Agricultural Society lent a thousand dollars at two percent interest, to start operations. These credit unions were managed cooperatively by the farmers themselves and were designed to supply emergency credit. They functioned for a number of years, but, beginning in 1918, they were gradually liquidated. The farmers viewed credit unions as free loan societies, not as miniature banks which they really were.

This experience gained from Federation and Credit Unions gave the farmers a good training in organization and a better understanding of the principles underlying cooperative endeavor, and thus led to the sounder farmers' associations and the more stable cooperatives that were formed later.

In concluding this section it should be said that the Jewish farm movement has not depended for growth solely upon the efforts of service agencies. There would have been Jewish farmers were there no agencies, and some farmers would have climbed to heights independently, as indeed they did. But these agencies unquestionably accelerated the pace of progress in both number and quality.

Successful Farmers

There is no branch of farming in which some Jews have not excelled. The few cases given here are not cited as typical of the average but as interesting examples of fine achievement.

On Long Island, a man who was brought up on the lower east side of New York City, is so outstanding in vegetable growing that his fields are selected by the New York State Experiment Station for researches in various types of truck growing. He is the crop reporter for the United States Department of Agriculture—a post given only to leading farmers.

A former sweater manufacturer in Brooklyn, New York, is now a leading tomato grower in Monmouth County, New Jersey. Even when other farmers find it hard to dispose of their output, buyers compete with one another for his crop.

Near Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a graduate of an agricultural school in Germany operates hothouses wherein are raised products that have won many medals and trophies for their excellence.

A graduate of the National Farm School, who started his farming career on the proverbial shoestring, conducts a nursery which supplies evergreens to the Conservation Department of the State of Connecticut for use in the State's forestation work.

Within the past few years two brothers have built up in Massachusetts what is probably the most perfectly mechanized poultry plant in the country. The plant has a capacity for a flock of twenty thousand laying hens and large quantities of chicks for sale to other poultry farmers.

In the Benton Harbor, Michigan, district, a young Jewish farmer and his wife, both children of farmers, keep a dairy herd of forty high-grade cows and produce grade A milk. They also raise a variety of truck crops and operate an orchard from which they harvested as many as 12,000 bushels of apples alone in one season. Their mode of fruit culture has called forth the commendation of the State's fruit experts. A similar combination is successfully carried

on by a man who started over twenty years ago when he was past fifty.

In the fertile Connecticut River Valley, there is a Jewish farmer who started his career almost thirty years ago, soon after his arrival in this country. He and his brother-in-law, who became his partner, had a combined capital of $500, and The Jewish Agricultural Society granted them a loan of $400. This year, this man is raising sixty-five acres of shade tobacco (a high-grade type) and fifty acres of potatoes, requiring the seasonal employment of seventy-five men and an operating cost of $20,000. Probaby the largest potato grower in Connecticut is a Jewish farmer, the president of the Connecticut Potato Growers' Marketing Association.

A graduate of the Baron de Hirsch Agricultural School was for a time the hog expert of South Dakota. Later, he became a seedsman and, in a state-wide competition last year, he won seven first, and four second, prizes.

One of the foremost breeders of White Leghorns in the entire country, formerly a shoe manufacturer, now runs a poultry farm in Ulster County, New York, which has become a Mecca for poultrymen seeking information on up-to-the-minute poultry practices. Breeders from Great Britain have paid as high as four dollars a piece for his eggs.

In Greene County, New York, along the banks of the Hudson, a Jew, formerly a laborer for the Knickerbocker Ice Company, started raising mushrooms about fourteen years ago in a run-down ice-house leased from the company. Later he bought the property, added to it and developed it, and today he has a $75,000 plant with private docks, and an annual turnover reaching as high as $60,000. His son and his son-in-law also operate a large mushroom farm in the same neighborhood.

A Jewish family is the largest producer of cattle and of blue-grass seed in Kentucky. The founder was a lecturer on land and livestock improvement at the University of Kentucky.

In the Sacramento River Delta, California, a Jewish farmer raised over a hundred thousand dollars worth of asparagus and broccoli last year. Another California

farmer, a graduate of the Baron de Hirsch Agricultural School, who was foreman of the poultry plant at the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, operates a 150 acre farm which yields, among other crops, 500 tons of peaches and pears and 60,000 pounds of beans.

A Jewish florist produces the largest volume and greatest variety of flowers raised by a single individual in the metropolitan New York area. His output for retail sale is said to be the largest in the country. Incidentally, the biggest independent establishment for the construction and equipment of green-houses is owned by two Jewish brothers of Brooklyn, New York.

Vineland, New Jersey, is regarded as the cradle of modern commercial poultry husbandry. A Jewish family, the head of which has been farming in the United States and Canada for about fifty years, conducts one of the most up-to-date poultry farms in the entire district. Numerous prizes have been awarded the operators at poultry shows and official egg-laying contests. The senior classes of the State's agricultural college are frequently taken to this farm to study the poultry methods practiced there. As part of the farm economy, an appreciable acreage of vegetables is intensively cultivated under overhead irrigation. The poultry enterprize is in charge of the sons, while the vegetable venture is under the active direction of the father, a man past seventy.

A father and a son operate two duck farms on Long Island, the combined annual capacity of which is over a quarter million ducks. A New York commission house vouchsafes the information that they are the largest duck-growers on the Island, which probably means in the whole country. The plant is highly mechanized and ultra-modern in every particular. The father is the usual immigrant type, while the son is a member of an exclusive golf club.

Reference has already been made to a thirty-thousand-acre wheat farm in Kansas. Its owner, now a State Senator, has shipped as high as a million bushels of wheat from his domain in a single year. His services to his community and to the State were recognized some years ago when his fellow townsmen declared a special holiday in his honor.

CONTRIBUTION OF JEWS TO AGRICULTURE

The numerical representation of Jews in farming is small, yet Jews have made notable contribution to American agriculture in the realms of science and economics and in related agricultural fields. Jews are found on the staffs of agricultural schools and colleges, experiment stations, in extension service, in state and federal agricultural bureaus, and in scientific work for commercial concerns. Some noteworthy achievements are here briefly recorded.

Jacob Joseph Taubenhaus is the Chief of the Division of Plant Pathology and Physiology at the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, and the author of several important books on plant diseases.

Selman A. Waksman is microbiologist at the New Jersey State Experiment Station and at the New Jersey Agricultural College Station. Though related more directly to the study of soils, his researches have also been of value to science in general.

Moses N. Levine, associated at various times with the Kansas State Agricultural College, the University of Minnesota, and the United States Department of Agriculture, is one of the leading pathologists in the country. He won special distinction through his researches in the diseases that attack grain.

Myer Edward Jaffa, Emeritus Professor of Nutrition at the University of California, and, at various times, Chief of the Bureau of Foods and Drugs in the California State Department of Health, Director of the State Food and Drug Laboratory, and Special Agent and Food Expert of the United States Department of Agriculture, did much to advance the interest of the fruit growers of California and elsewhere through his studies of the health-giving properties of fruit.

Joseph A. Rosen, the last Superintendent of the Baron de Hirsch School at Woodbine, and now in charge of the vast Jewish agricultural reconstruction work being carried on in Russia, was responsible for the introduction into the United States of Rosen Rye, a variety which grows on soil of moderate fertility.

Charles B. Lipman, Dean of the Graduate Division and Professor of Plant Physiology at the University of California, is one of the foremost soil scientists in this country. Lately, his discovery of the presence of bacterial life in meteorites created somewhat of a sensation in the scientific world.

Jacob G. Lipman, brother of Charles B., is the Dean of Rutgers College of Agriculture, the Director of the New Jersey State Experiment Station, and one of the world's authorities on soils. He has served as president of the International Society of Soil Science, and was president of the first International Congress of Soil Science held in Washington, in 1927. Last year, he was called by the United States Government to direct a national soil survey. Professor Lipman is the author of standard works on soil science, a member of scientific bodies in various lands, and the recipient of honorary degrees from universities in several countries. Last year he was awarded the Chandler medal by Columbia University,—a rare distinction.

The late H. L. Sabsovich, a graduate of the Zurich Polytechnicum, organized an agricultural department in the University of Colorado, which was probably the first of its kind in the west. He was the first superintendent of the Baron de Hirsch Agricultural School.

Bernhard Ostrolenk, formerly the director of the National Farm School and now instructor in economics in the College of the City of New York, is the author of works on agricultural economics and a writer in that field.

Leonard G. Robinson, a former general manager of The Jewish Agricultural Society, assisted in framing the federal farm loan law enacted in 1916, and organized, and became the first president of, the Federal Land Bank of Springfield, Mass., one of the twelve regional banks of the federal system.

Louis H. Bean was on the research staff of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in the United States Department of Agriculture from 1923 to 1933, when he became Economist in the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture and Chief of the Agricultural Industrial Relations Section in the Division of Program Planning of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

Nathan Koenig, a graduate of the Connecticut State Agricultural College, joined the staff of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration in June 1933. Later, he became the assistant chief of the Administration's press section and, in November 1934, he was placed in general charge of the Administration's information activities in the twelve northeastern states.

Mordecai Joseph Ezekiel is the economic advisor to the United States Secretary of Agriculture. He played an important role in shaping the policies of the old Federal Farm Board and of the present Agricultural Adjustment Administration. He represented the United States in the world wheat conference held at Rome last year.

Henry Morgenthau, Jr., the Secretary of the Treasury, who served on the Board of The Jewish Agricultural Society and as its Vice-President, was selected by President Roosevelt to organize and head the Farm Credit Administration. In that capacity he brought into being the largest and most comprehensive farm credit system that has ever been devised in any country.

In founding the International Institute of Agriculture at Rome, Italy, David Lubin rendered a service to agriculture which was world embracing. At a meeting held in October 1934, a tribute to Lubin's memory was paid by delegates from the sixty-three nations represented in the Institute.

A Sociological Study

Late in 1934, The Jewish Agricultural Society made a study which enables one to view Jewish farm life through the eyes of those who are living it. The study covered three hundred Jewish farmers residing in seventeen states, the majority in the northeast and middlewest. This cross-section may not reflect the status in the whole country with absolute accuracy. Yet it is a fairly representative sample. The facts adduced, with certain deductions therefrom, are presented solely with the view to giving, through the mouths of the farmers themselves, the answer to the question so often asked—"Who is the Jewish farmer?"

Almost sixty percent of the farmers comprised in the study are in the prime of life, under fifty. Only ten percent are over sixty. The largest age group is that between forty and fifty,—thirty-eight percent. Eighty-one percent have been in this country twenty years or more, while only a fraction of one percent have been here less than ten years. Only four percent are natives. The bulk of present-day Jewish farmers are foreign-born who came here early in life,—probably early enough to reap the benefit of some American schooling. That is why less than one percent cannot speak English, and why eighty-eight percent claim ability to read and write it. That also accounts for the fact that eighty-three percent are citizens, and three percent declarants.

American Jewish farmers are recruited from a large diversity of occupations: common labor, skilled trades, white-collar occupations, business and manufacturing, and even the professions. The needle and fur trades make up the largest group,—twenty-eight percent. Farmers and farm laborers constitute seven percent. Fifty-one percent of the farmers studied stated that they had had some farm experience. Seven percent attended farm schools or agricultural colleges here or abroad. The "experience" of the others probably consisted of work as farm laborers or on parental farms. Manifestly, the American Jewish farmer is not indigenous to the soil, but simply the immigrant Jew transplanted from American city to American farm.

The figures as to capital reveal that many Jewish farmers made the plunge into farming on slender means. Over twenty-one percent had a capital of not more than $500. Thirty-seven percent could boast of accumulations reaching up to $1000. Only fifty-seven percent had as much as $2000, while but fourteen percent were in the over $5000 class. The farmers in the smaller financial brackets are those who settled earliest, when farm lands were cheaper. It is evident that the Jewish agrarian population is not made up of urban failures. The immigrant Jew who comes to our shores destitute of means and is able to lay by even a small nest-egg must have achieved some measure of success in his city work.

General farming predominates—thirty-three percent—with poultry ranking next at thirty-two percent. Then comes dairying, eighteen percent, followed by truck, ten percent. Many of the farmers that are engaged in specialized farming also raise other crops, the specialty being a major, not an exclusive, line of production. Close to half the farmers surveyed have some supplemental source of income, chiefly boarding or rooming, or city work on the part of the head, or of some member of the family.

The survey revealed the interesting fact that the majority were not wholly motivated by the urge to better themselves financially, nor, as many believe, by considerations of health. In sixty-one percent, the driving force was the longing to exchange the restraints and inhibitions of the city for the peace and freedom of the country. This desire was expressed in such statements as: "To seek a quiet life," "To live close to nature," "Realization of life's ambition," "Tired of city life and working in shop." Health, either of the head, or of some member, of the family, was a factor in only thirteen percent of the cases. Eighteen percent gave economic reasons. One man vouchsafed the information that he went for "speculation" and another "as an experiment."

The data on tenure disclosed that thirteen percent of the farmers have been on their farms less than five years, while sixty-nine percent have been on their places over ten years, twenty-two percent over twenty years,—a fine indication of their stability. Ninety percent said that they would rather be on the farm now than in the city, eight percent expressed preference for the city, the rest were uncertain. Probably this singularly large percentage in favor of the farm is attributable not so much to smug satisfaction with prevailing farm conditions as to the realization by farmers that, with city conditions what they are, the farm is the better place for them.

To the question as to what benefit, if any, the farm brought to the farm family, ten percent said that they derived no benefit. One farmer, in disappointment, avowed that the benefits were not what he had expected, that the farm made slaves of his family; another, that it meant lots of hard work; two said that it threw them into debt.

One farmer made the simple assertion that the farm did him no harm, and one that, while it meant hard work and little pay, the farm brought good health. But by far the largest number, over eighty percent, recorded advantages in such terms as: "A more natural, healthful and honest living," "A home," "Contentment," "Independence," "Better outlook on life," "Enough to eat," "Peace of mind," "No worry about a job," "Old age insurance."

Many still picture the farm as drab and dreary and the farmer's life as crude and primitive. Yet the survey shows that seventy-six percent of the farms have sanitary plumbing; eighty-two percent, electricity; fifty-two percent, furnace heat. This is much higher than the average for American farms, owing partly to the fact that Jews had become accustomed to these conveniences in the city, and partly because some farmers cater to summer boarders as an adjunct to their farm operations. Sixty-nine percent have telephones; eighty-two percent, radios; sixty-nine percent own passenger automobiles,—again high figures.

The Jewish farmer is a man of social tendencies. Sixty-two percent of those surveyed belong to organizations; not a few, to several. These include farmers' organizations of various descriptions, synagogues, fraternal societies, lodges, labor unions and cooperative associations. Jewish farmers hold official positions in their respective communities, such as member of the school board, justice of the peace, member of fire or police department, town supervisor, deputy sheriff.

Data pertaining to farm children showed that thirty-seven percent of children over eighteen years of age have remained on the farm. About fifteen percent of those who left follow professional callings: medicine, law, engineering, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing, science, accountancy, pedagogy and social work. Forty percent had received a high school, and twenty-two percent, a college education. Some of the high school students will no doubt later enter the college group. Less than forty percent of the children in the cases studied received some form of religious instruction.

The farmers were almost unanimous in saying that they are getting along well with their non-Jewish neighbors. Over ninety percent described the relationship as good, nine percent as simply fair. "Just fine," "Excellent,"

"Splendid," "Better than with Jewish neighbors," was the tenor of the replies. Only one farmer out of the entire three hundred is not on friendly terms with his Christian neighbors.

The farmers were asked to state what they regarded as necessary for success in farming, and why, in their opinion, some Jewish farmers fail. Capital and experience, the latter in the sense of a rudimentary knowledge of farm practices, were given first place, and the lack of them was assigned as the main cause of failure. But "cooperation of wife and family," "hard work," "perseverance," "brains," "thrift," "love of the land," were also regarded as essentials. A few farmers, evidently laboring under stress, expressed themselves rather poignantly on the requisites for success: "Plenty of money and lots of hard work," "Either to have Rockefeller as a partner or to work forty-eight hours a day," "No idealism."

In view of the aroused interest on the part of various Jewish groups in a back-to-the-land movement and their advocacy of farm colonies, the opportunity was seized to obtain the reaction of the farmers themselves to colonization. The question was: "Do you believe in a form of farming where the land and equipment are owned by a colony and not by the individual farmer, and where the farm work is done under central management on a colony farm?" The arguments in favor were based on the premises that a colony would make possible the utilization of heavy machinery beyond the means of individual farmers, that it would meet the competition of the "big" farm, that it would provide security in case of incapacity, that it would enhance the opportunities for cultural life. On the other side, it was maintained that this form of settlement runs counter to the American spirit of freedom, that it robs the individual of initiative, that it dulls his incentive and destroys his independence, that it is "too difficult for farmers to work in harmony," that "even with competent management such a colony would not be better than its most incompetent individual."

Thirty-eight percent recorded themselves in the affirmative, but most of these hedged their replies with reservations

and qualifications that transform expressed approval into virtual disapproval, for example,—"Theoretically it is better to do farming cooperatively, but we have not such human material that would make it possible"; "Yes, if such could be controlled by federal or state government with individual privileges"; "It may succeed when the members are tied by a single religious or social ideal, when the members fit in physically and financially and have the backing of a strong organization (outside) or the government."

To judge by the tenor of the replies, the desire to be the possessor of one's own farmstead outweighs such benefits as may be derived from "colony" farming.

Fundamentally, all Jewish agricultural activity must revolve around the ability of the families settled on farms to wrest a livelihood from the land. No other consideration should count. The Jew who chooses farming is impelled by precisely the same considerations that move people to select other occupations,—the rewards, material or otherwise, that he expects to derive. He need not be glorified for his daring and deserves no halo for his spirit of enterprise. Neither should he be regarded with pity or condescension. Though his journey has latterly taken him over rough roads, he has, according to his own testimony, found in fair measure the compensations which he hoped to secure.

More Jews are today thinking in terms of the farm, than in any other period in the whole of American history. The disruption resulting from the withering depression has caused the eyes of the displaced worker, the dislocated white-collar man, the hard-pressed small merchant, the crowded-out professional, the groping youth, to turn to the farm. In any plan of Jewish vocational readjustment, farming must play an important part. Because adjustment in farming is costly, the drift to the land is not likely to assume the dimensions that enthusiastic proponents would wish it to attain. Many a promising farm aspirant will not be able to surmount the monetary barrier. If the

present economic uncertainties continue, this problem may present a challenge to American Jewry.

Every people in every age has regarded its farm class as vital not only for bodily sustenance, but also for physical, mental and spiritual virility. American Jewry is far too urban both in habitat and in occupational composition. Too often is the charge heard that the Jew has neither inclination nor aptitude to toil or to till. An agricultural strain contributes strength and balance to Jewish life. A sturdy, upstanding Jewish farm class is a leaven in the cause of good-will and better understanding.