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Book Review: This Changing South

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This Changing South. By John M. MacLachlan and Joe S. Floyd, Jr. (Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1956. xii, 154 pp. Appendix, Index, Tables \$4.00.)

This useful little book is a socio-economic study of population changes in the South, principally in the decade, 1940-1950, and is based largely upon the reports of the United States Bureau of the Census for those years. It is the last of a series of studies commissioned by the Committee of the South, which was terminated in 1955. The object of the projects was to promote the sound growth and development of the southern economy by providing reliable data.

The value of the study does not lie so much in new conclusions, but rather in 72 statistical tables and the accompanying analyses and explanations which show the pattern of population movement, its extent, its direction, and its makeup with some suggestion of causes and possible consequences. It shows urbanization taking place more rapidly in the South than elsewhere in the nation; but it also shows the region as merely catching up with the rest of the country in this respect, for the southern population is still more rural and less urban than in the regions industrialized earlier.

Negroes have been leaving the rural farm areas more rapidly than their white counterparts as they have also been going north in proportionately greater numbers. The authors estimate that by 1960 one-half of the Negroes in the United States may be living outside the South whereas in 1920, 81 per cent of them were living in thirteen southeastern states. Nor has the rapid exodus of workers from the farms meant a decline in the agricultural output. On the contrary, the use of machinery, new crops, and new techniques have more than offset the loss of farm workers.

Floridians may be pleased to note these respects in which their state is typical of the region as well as those in which it is not. For example, of 32 counties in the United States showing population increases of 100 per cent or more in the decade, 19 were in the South, and five of them in Florida, namely: Clay, Okaloosa, Monroe, Broward and Bay.

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