

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

HISTORY

Jackson County was formed in 1822, three years after Florida was purchased from Spain. The county is "named after General Andrew Jackson, then Military Governor of Florida, and is one of the original counties organized on the acquisition of the Territory by the United States."¹ Marianna, the county seat, was incorporated in 1829.

William Nickels, one of the first settlers, came from North Carolina. He brought numerous slaves with him. Most of the settlers who were soon to follow him were of Scotch and English descent and came from the Carolinas and Georgia.

The "red land" in the northern and northwestern parts of the county was attractive to the early settlers. Considered more productive and more easily put under cultivation than the heavily wooded lands, the red lands were settled first. The few settlers in the southern part of the county confined their efforts to stock raising and later went into the turpentine and lumber business.

Prior to 1839 there were a number of changes in the area of the county. By 1839 the county was only slightly larger than it is today. Since that time very slight changes were made in 1873, 1875 and 1915.

POPULATION GROWTH

The population growth of Jackson County was rapid between 1840 and 1910. Not until 1920 was there evidence of a retarded increase. Year in and year out for 100 years Jackson County has had an average increase in population of 297 persons per year (Fig. 3). This growth was broken only during the Civil War.

The negro population of Jackson County has been relatively constant since 1890. There are now only about 1,000 more negroes in the county than there were in 1890. The negro population more than doubled between 1870 and 1890, so that by 1890 negroes composed 64 percent of the total population. Because of a rapid increase in the white race, by 1940 only 36 percent of the population of Jackson County was made up of negroes.

The importance of farming in Jackson County can scarcely be underestimated. Many people living in towns are dependent

¹ Cutler, Harry Gardner, "A History of Florida", 1:569-570. 1923. The Lewis Publishing Co.