

UC Research Fund Use Challenged

PHILIP HAGER

*Los Angeles Times (1886-Current File)*; Mar 12, 1984; ProQuest Historical Newspapers Los Angeles Times (1881 - 1986)  
pg. B3

# UC Research Fund Use Challenged

## Suit Accuses University of Misusing Public Money to Benefit Big Farmers

By PHILIP HAGER, *Times Staff Writer*

OAKLAND—A novel civil suit charging the University of California with illegally using public funds on research to benefit large farm concerns goes on trial here today.

Since 1979, lawyers for California Rural Legal Assistance and Public Advocates Inc., representing the plaintiffs in the action, have taken depositions from 39 university administrators, scientists and farm advisers and have obtained more than 20,000 pages of documents.

The plaintiffs plan to call as expert witnesses seven professors—including four from UC itself—to support their claims that the university's emphasis on developing labor-saving ma-

the university to create a special fund for use toward retraining and assisting displaced farm workers.

University lawyers have vigorously opposed the lawsuit, denying that UC is guilty of misusing public funds. They say that agricultural employment overall has not decreased, noting for example that California's processed tomato industry, which provides thousands with jobs, was actually saved by mechanization.

In a background paper issued Friday, the university said that mechanization represented only a "minor component" of the 69 research projects cited in the suit. It

**Farm Workers on Coast Challenge University's Agriculture Research**

By **ROBERT LINDSEY** Special to The New York Times

New York Times (J&P-Current,Mo) Mar 12, 1968; Project Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851 - 2000)

pg. B7

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# *Farm Workers on Coast Challenge University's Agriculture Research*

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By **ROBERT LINDSEY**

Special to The New York Times

OAKLAND, Calif., March 11 — The right of a public university to spend tax dollars to develop labor-saving machinery used by private farmers will be challenged in an unusual trial scheduled to begin here Monday.

The trial will focus specifically on agricultural research at the University

agricultural research to help the little person, the person most in need, not mechanization research for large industries."

The suit seeks to impose broad limitations on the University of California's right to conduct research on mechanical harvesting systems and other inno-

## The Social Costs of Agricultural Innovation

By ROBERT LINDSEY

*New York Times (1857-Current file)*; Mar 18, 1984; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2004)

pg. E3

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### *Farm Laborers Take a University to Court Over Labor-Saving Research*

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# The Social Costs of Agricultural Innovation

By ROBERT LINDSEY

OAKLAND, Calif. — There was standing room only in a courtroom here last week for the opening of a highly unusual lawsuit challenging the rights of university researchers to develop labor-saving machinery for farms.

A group of farm workers has brought the suit against the University of California. Over the past 20 years, they complained, huge, rumbling machines that harvest canning tomatoes and other crops have eliminated tens of thousands of jobs and contributed to the growth of ever larger corporate farms at the expense of small farmers.

The plaintiffs, represented by California Rural Legal Assistance, a public-interest law firm, are asking Judge Spurgeon Avakian of the Alameda County Superior Court to place sharp limits on the university. Specifically, they want to force the agriculture academics to assess the "social consequences" of their work before undertaking such mechanization projects. The plaintiffs also want the corporate farms that benefit from the machines to contribute to a fund to help displaced field hands and smaller farmers.

There has been considerable debate about the suit, which was filed in 1979. Some critics portray it as a hap-

less fight against the inevitable staged by a public interest law firm, whose battles on behalf of farm workers led it into a long-running feud with then Gov. Ronald Reagan. Newspaper editorials have compared the suit to efforts by the Luddites in 18th century England to halt the introduction of job-eliminating machinery.

There was general surprise when Judge Avakian allowed the lawsuit to go to trial. After all, not only did the suit propose to interfere with what is widely regarded as a basic academic freedom — the right of a university to select its own research projects — but, some analysts maintain, it challenged a fundamental precept — anything that enhances efficiency while reducing the need for hard, repetitive hand labor should be welcomed as progress. Every day, critics pointed out, only 40 miles south of the Oakland courtroom, workers in the region known as Silicon Valley, turn out tens of thousands of computer microchips that are used to help automate factories and offices, inevitably eliminating jobs.

Judge Avakian has explained that it was not his intention to decide "whether agricultural mechanization is good or bad for society," but that the lawsuit had raised a valid issue regarding whether public funds were being spent improperly to benefit private interests.

It became evident last week that two other questions

were going to be repeatedly raised during the trial, which may last as long as three months: What should be the proper relationship between tax-paid university researchers and private companies who may profit from their research? And what responsibility, if any, do scientists have for participating or ameliorating the effects of their work on society?

### **A Dispute Over Responsibility**

Although the dispute involves only the agricultural research program at the University of California, whose innovations have long received international acclaim, many other states have similar but smaller research efforts in which corporate farmers work closely with researchers at land grant colleges.

In opening arguments, William Hoerger, a lawyer for the farm workers, claimed, "The University of California has research for sale, and it is systemic." In what appeared to be the heart of his case, he asserted that evidence would show that university researchers spent public funds unlawfully on projects that are selected by large agribusiness corporations. By paying 20 percent of a project's cost, with state and Federal taxpayers footing the rest of the bill, Mr. Hoerger said, corporations effectively chart the course of the university's research.

The trial is probably no more likely than other efforts in the past to provide a conclusive answer to the matter of whether scientists should anticipate or try to control the consequences of their innovations. The plaintiffs argue that researchers must assess the potential impact on farm workers before undertaking a mechanization project, and, by inference, that they should not proceed with a project if the assessment shows there would be a high cost in terms of human suffering.

After the suit was first filed, some researchers said scientists were not responsible for studying such ancillary effects of their work; their principal concern, they said, had to be getting as much productivity as possible from California's farmland. More recently, university officials have endorsed the idea of making social-impact studies on a voluntary basis, but they have resisted the effort to make them mandatory.

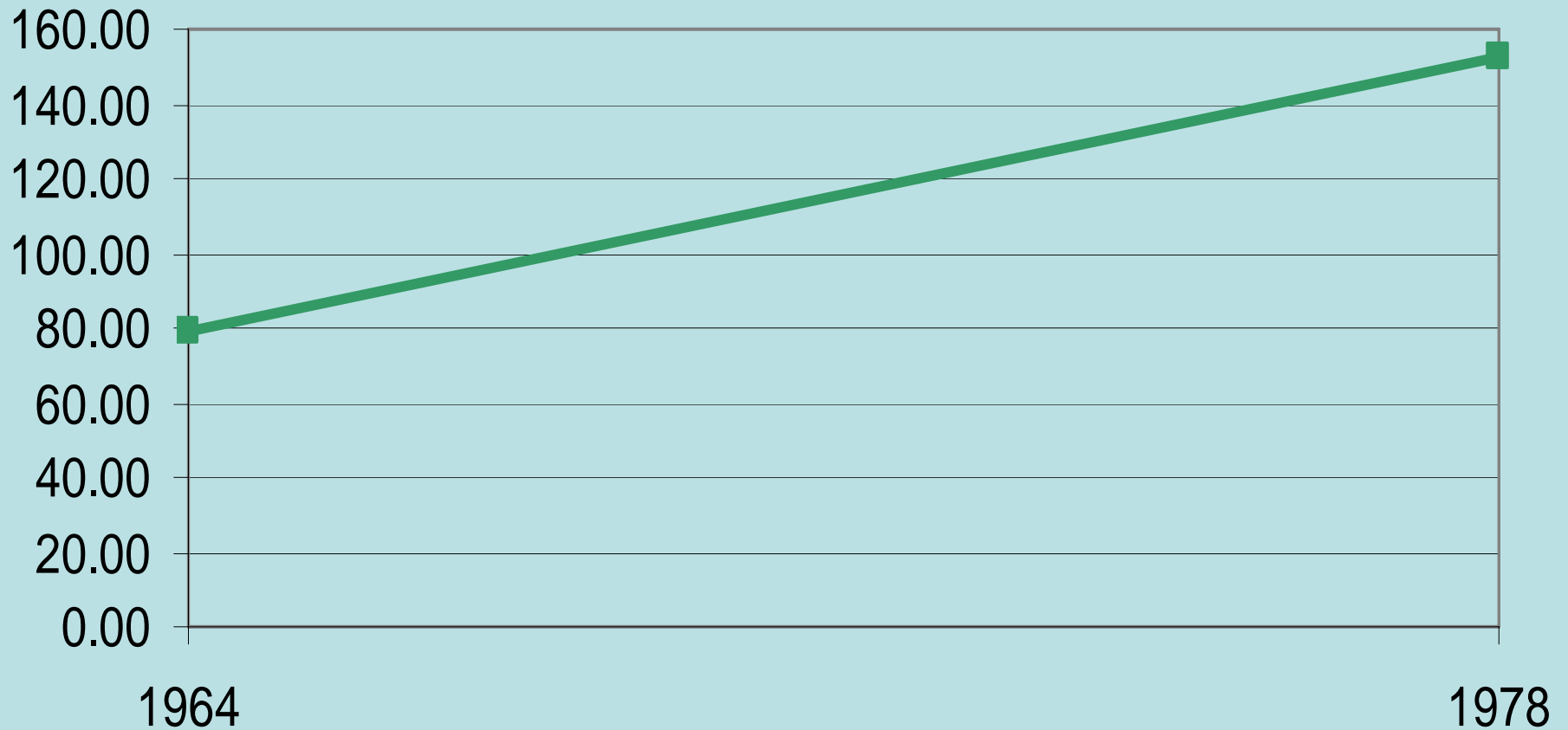
James B. Kendrick, University of California vice president for agriculture, compares the plaintiffs in the case to "the people who protested closing the buggy whip factories in England." The alternative to mechanization, he said, was "back breaking, hard labor."

"It's a legitimate concern that society should have for the displaced worker as a result of trying to increase productivity," he said, "but it is no different than the microchip industry. You can't leave agriculture behind." Mr. Kendrick, who denied that research "is for sale" at the University of California, said researchers consulted with corporations, but said such contacts were necessary for the work "to be relevant."

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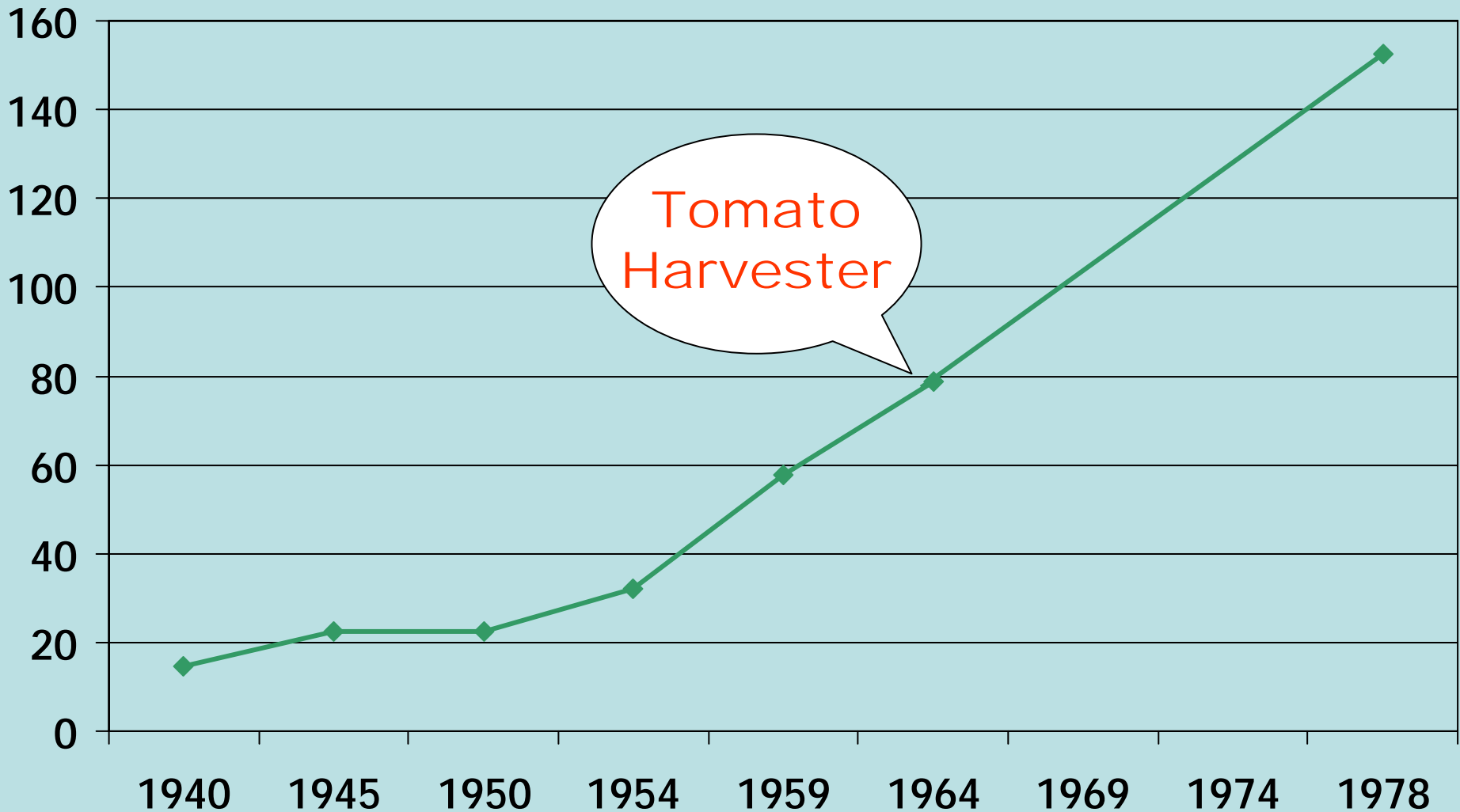
# California Tomato Industry Average Acreage 1964-1978



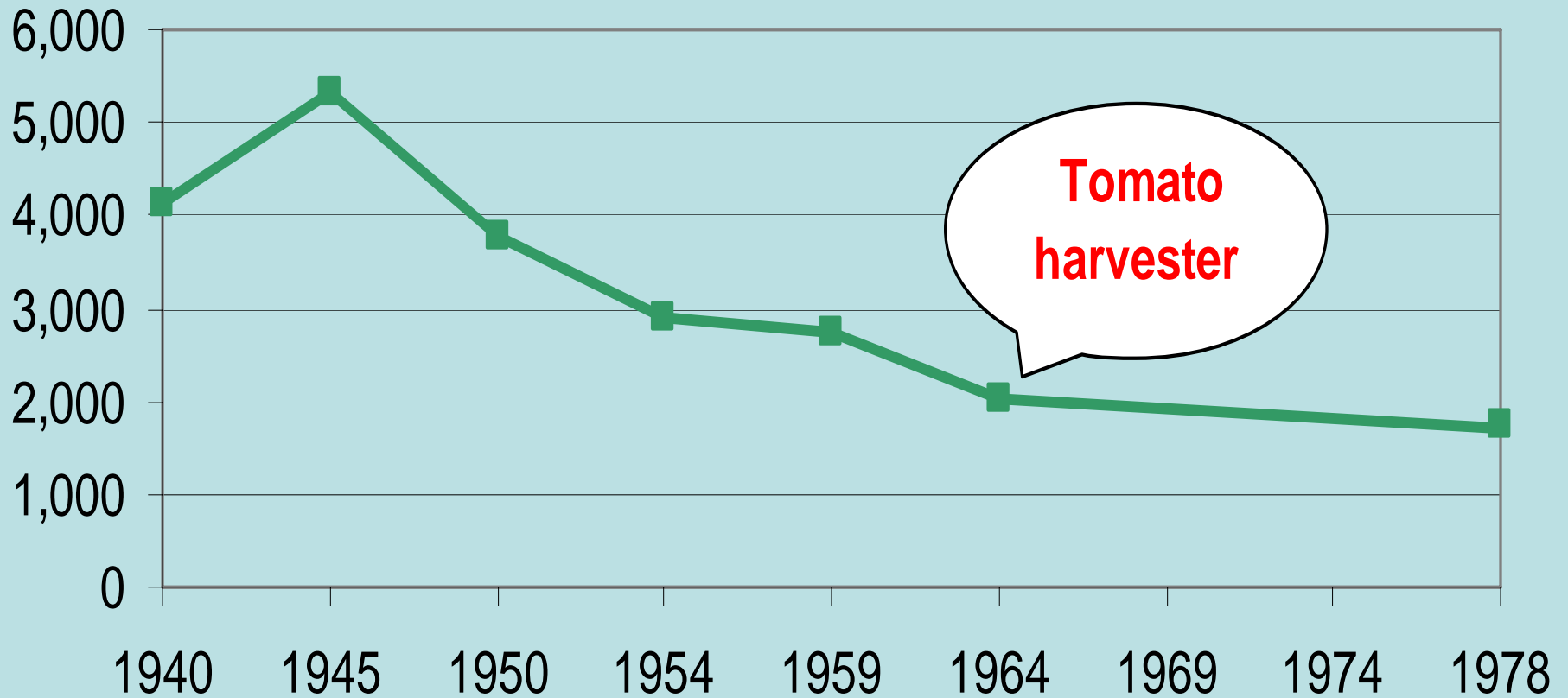
# California Tomato Industry Number of Farms 1964-1978



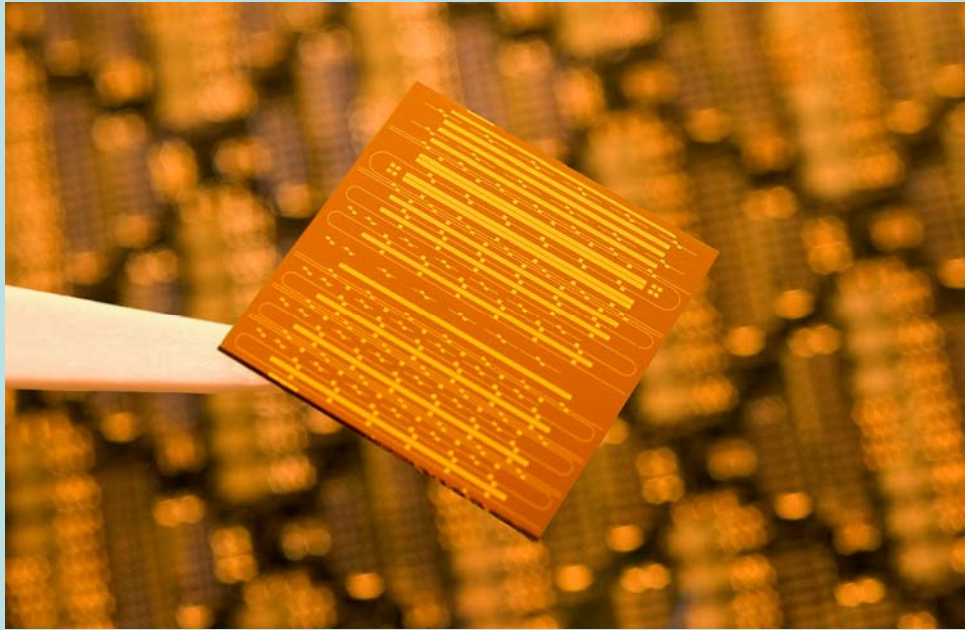
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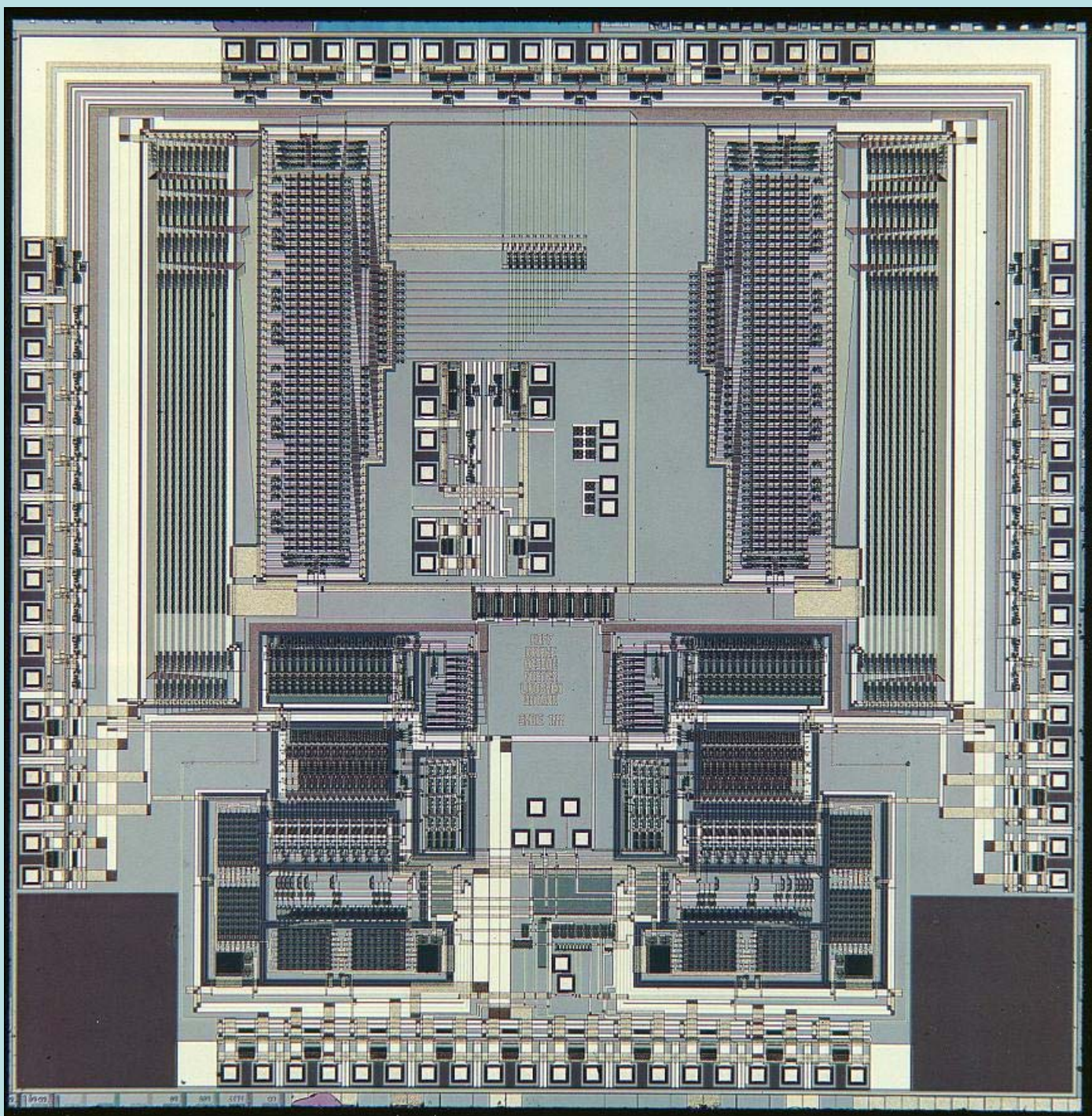


# California Tomato Industry Number of Farms 1940-1978

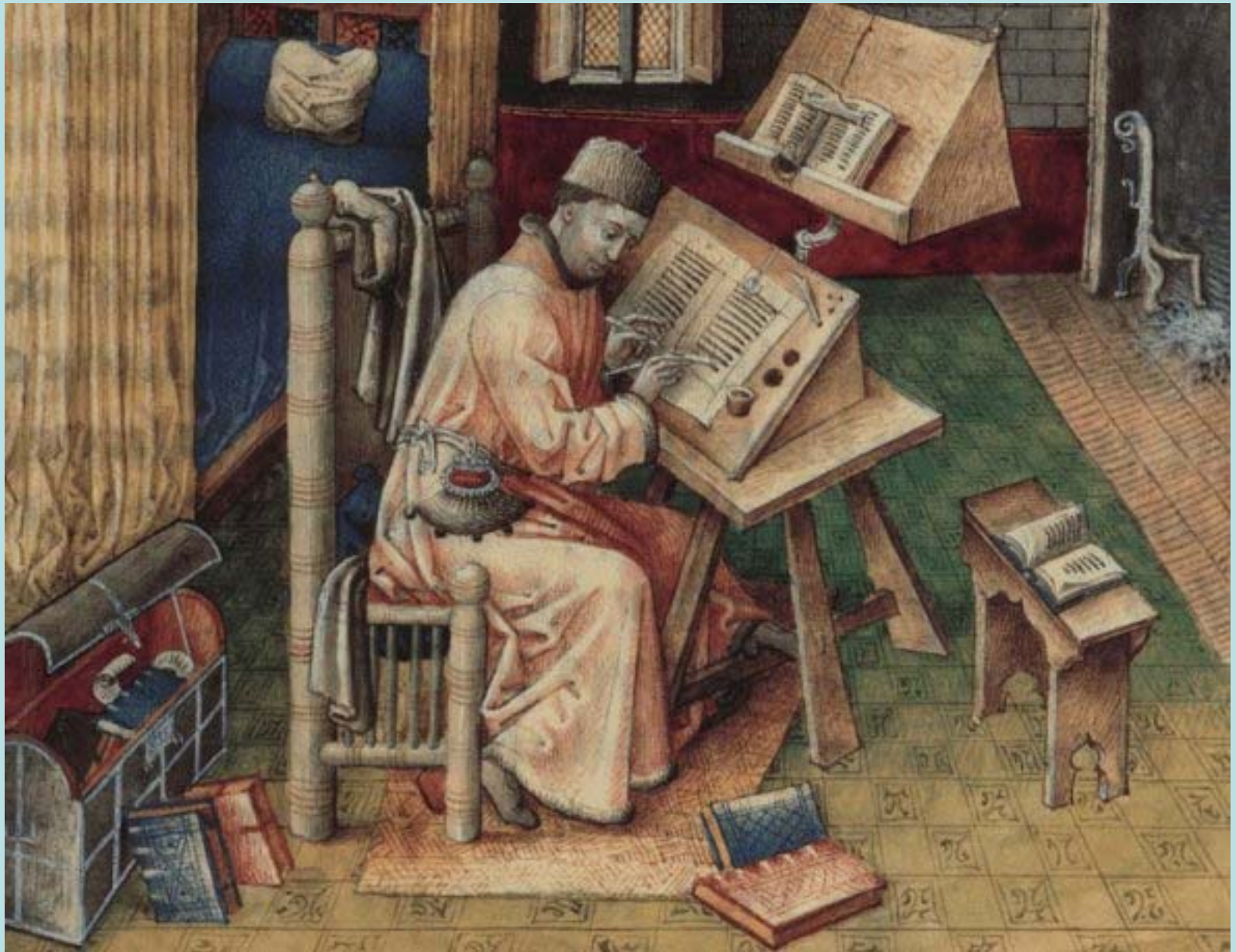






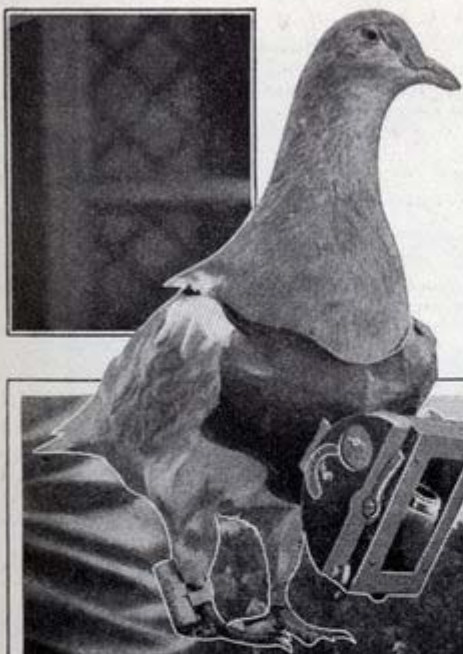








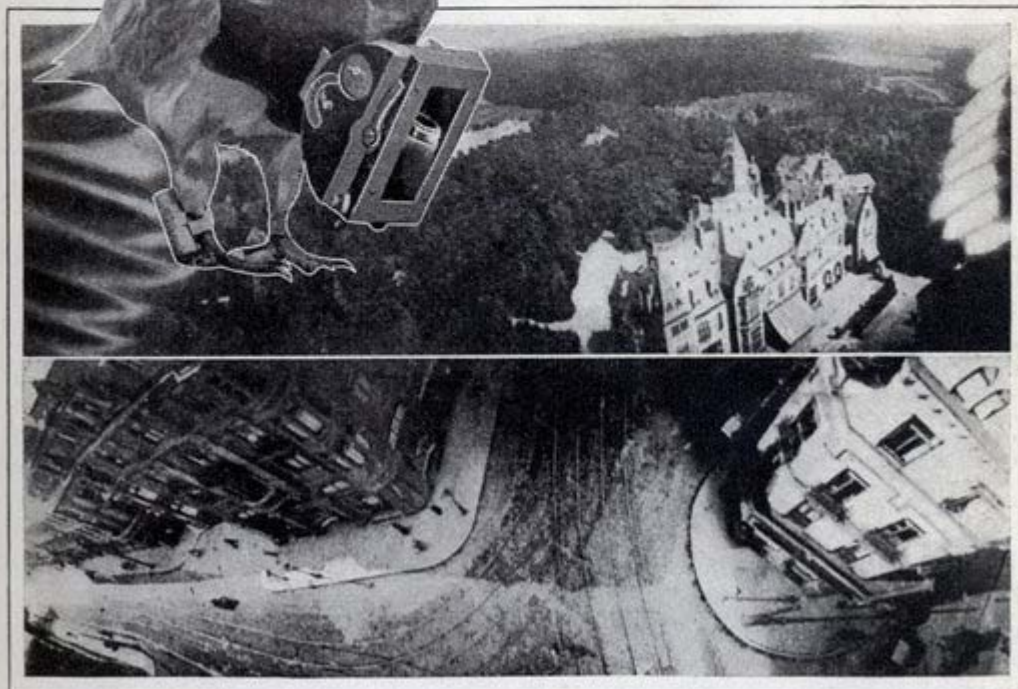
## Carrier Pigeons Take Aerial Photos With New Camera



**I**T IS no longer necessary to send planes over enemy lines to get photos of troop operations—carrier pigeons have now been pressed into service for this hazardous task.

This unusual feat is made possible by the development in Germany of a new diminutive aerial camera which is strapped to the pigeon's breast, as illustrated in the accompanying photo. Two hundred views may be taken while in flight, the shots being made possible only after the bird has left the ground. Each bird also carries a message tube strapped to its leg.

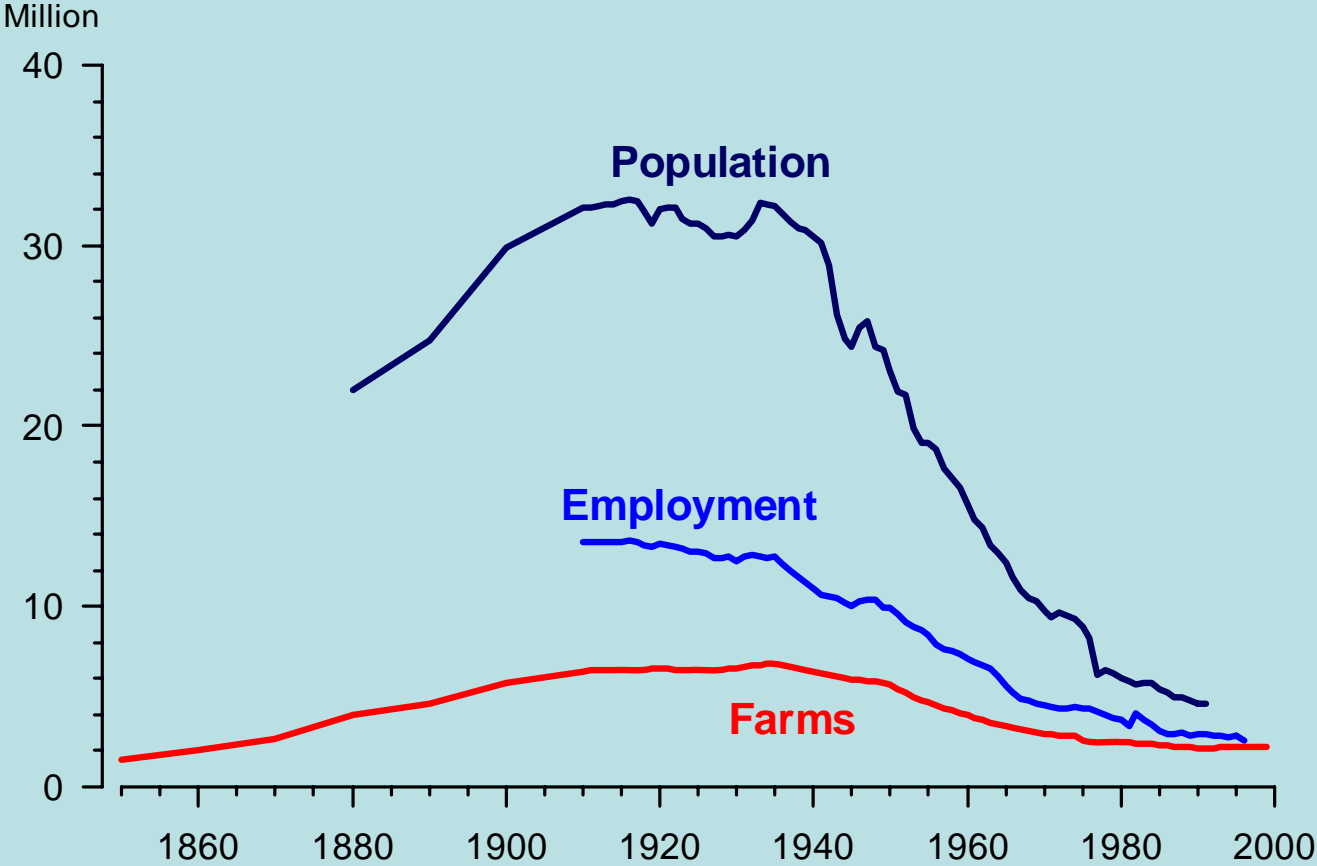
The German government has opened a school to train carrier pigeons for service in aerial photography.



Above are two remarkable panoramic views taken by pigeon carrying aerial camera. Insert shows how camera is carried.

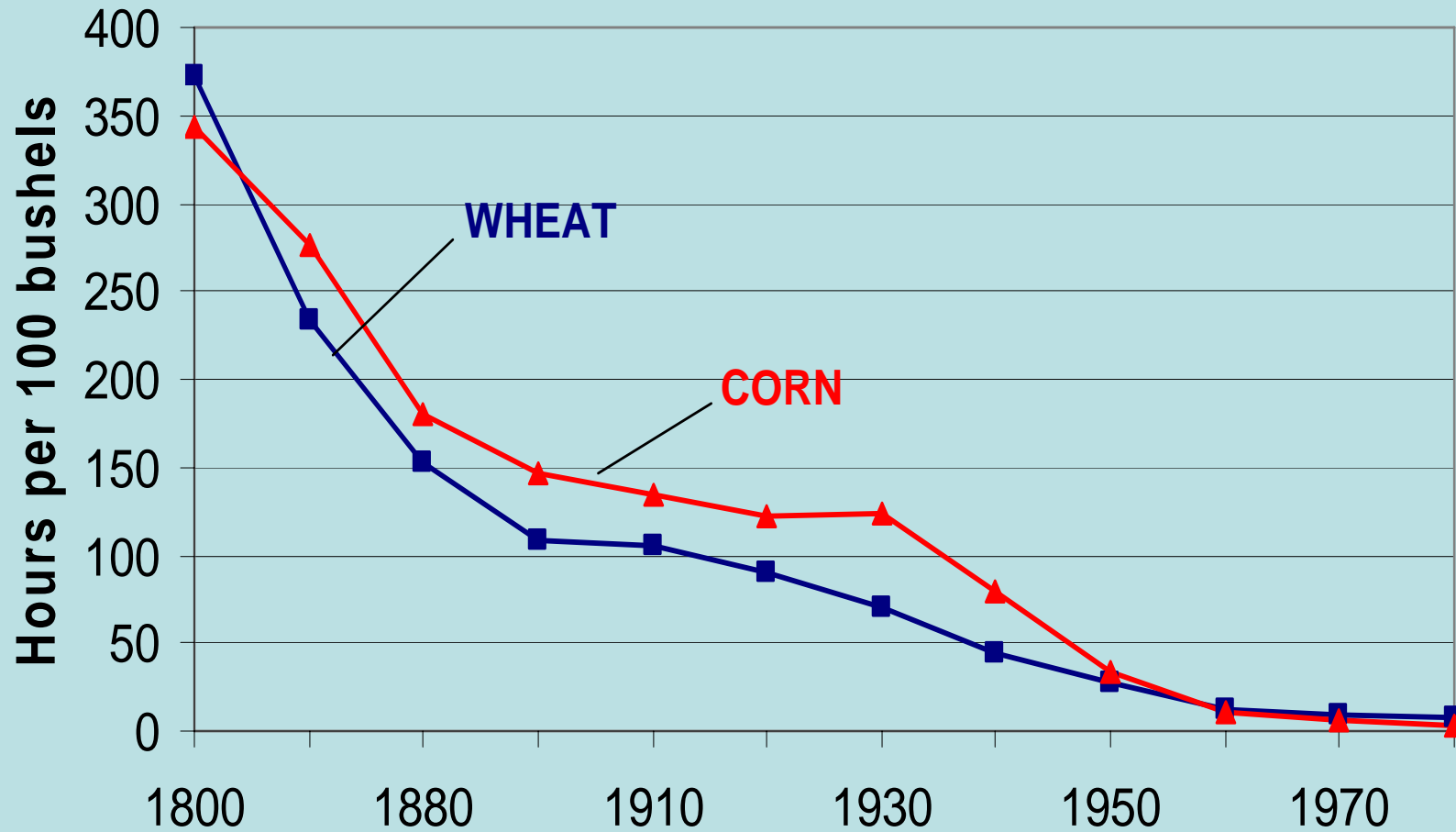
# Farm Productivity

# Farms, farm population, and farm employment: 1850-1999

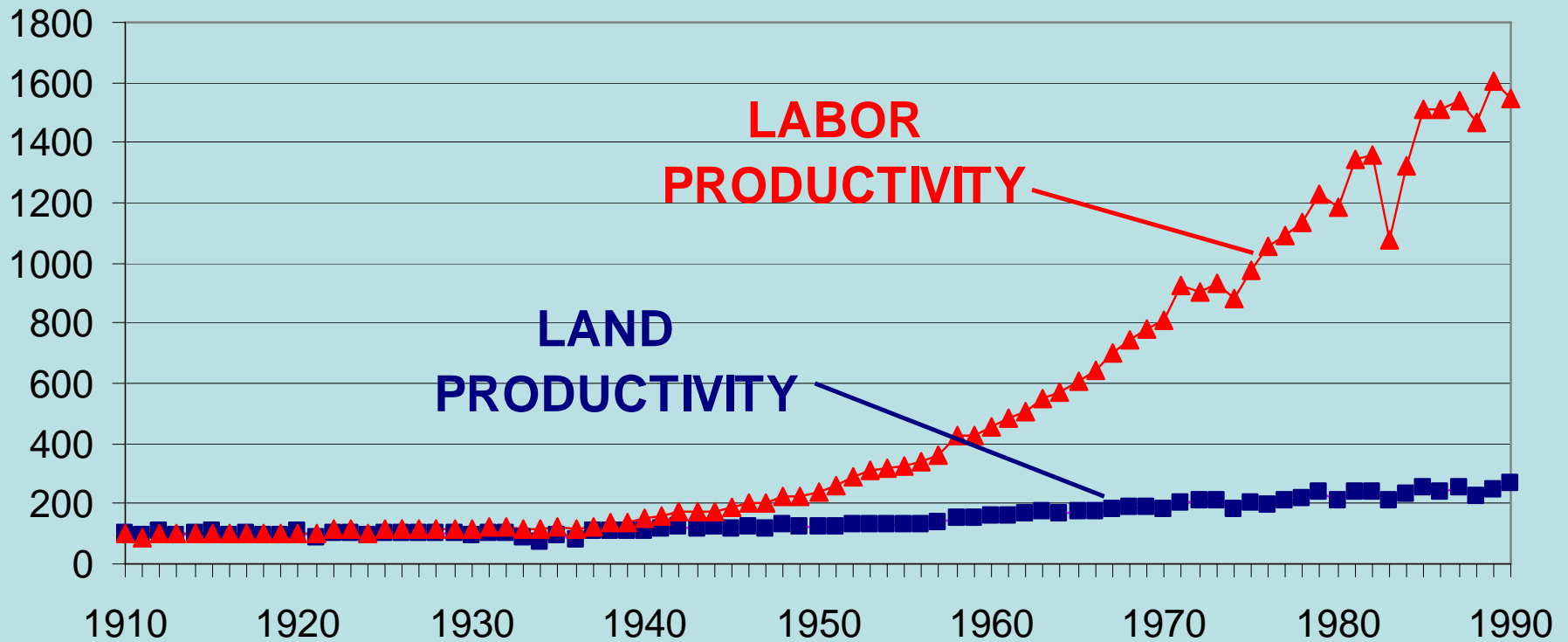




# LABOR PRODUCTIVITY CHANGES FOR WHEAT AND CORN PRODUCTION (1800-1980)



# AGRICULTURAL LAND AND LABOR PRODUCTIVITY INDICES (1910-1990)



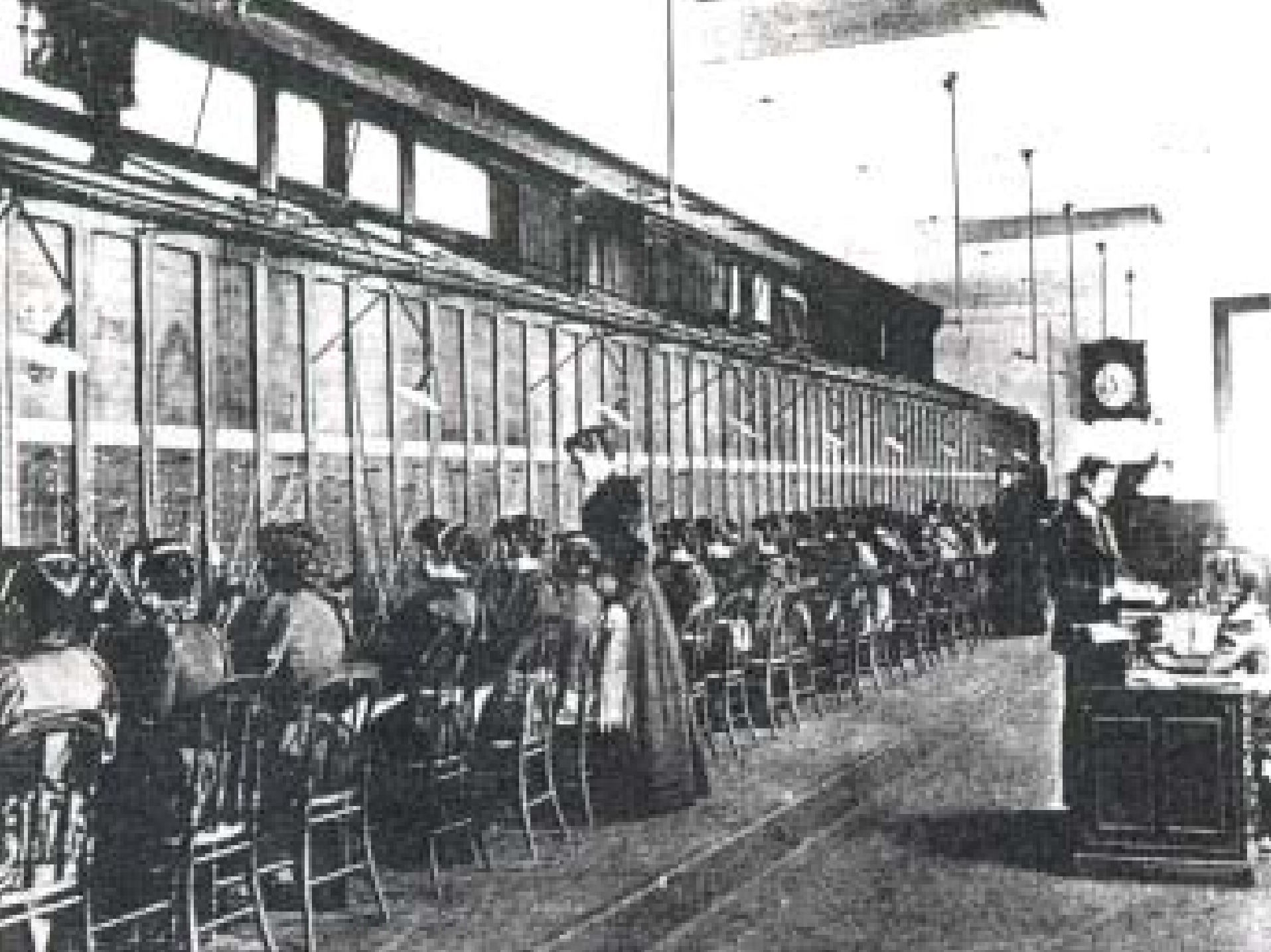






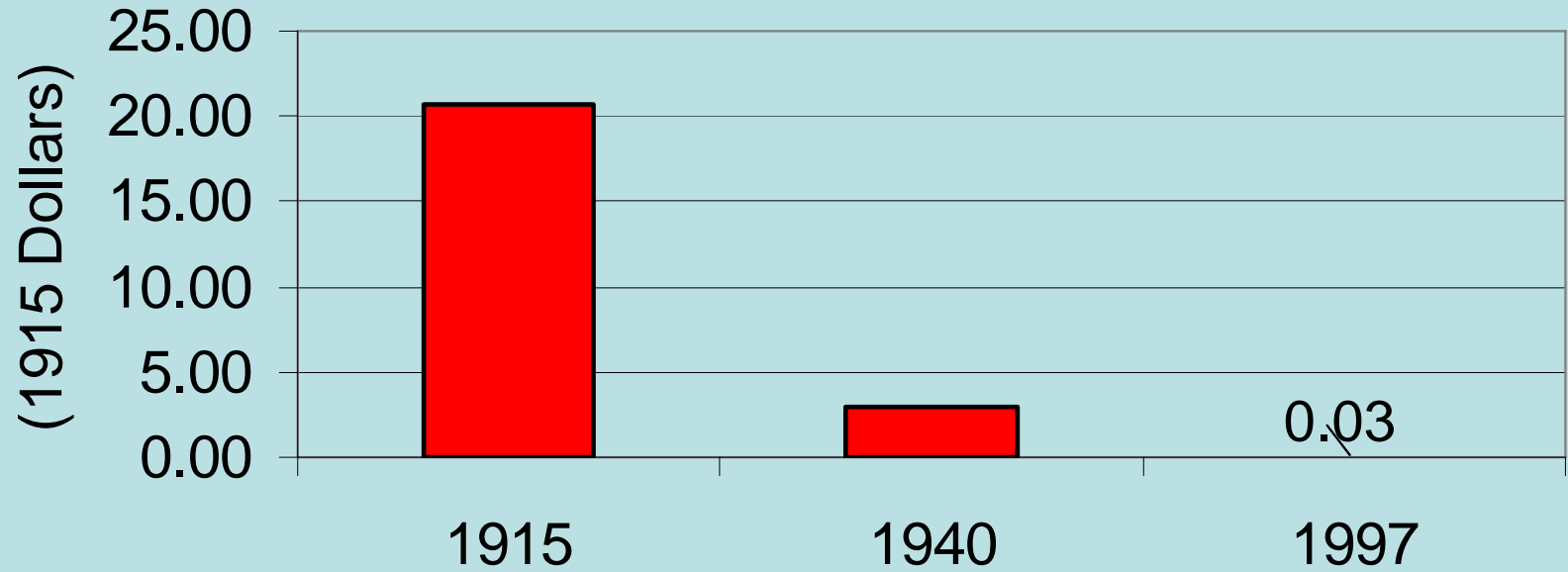


# Your Daily Phone Call to Your Child in New York

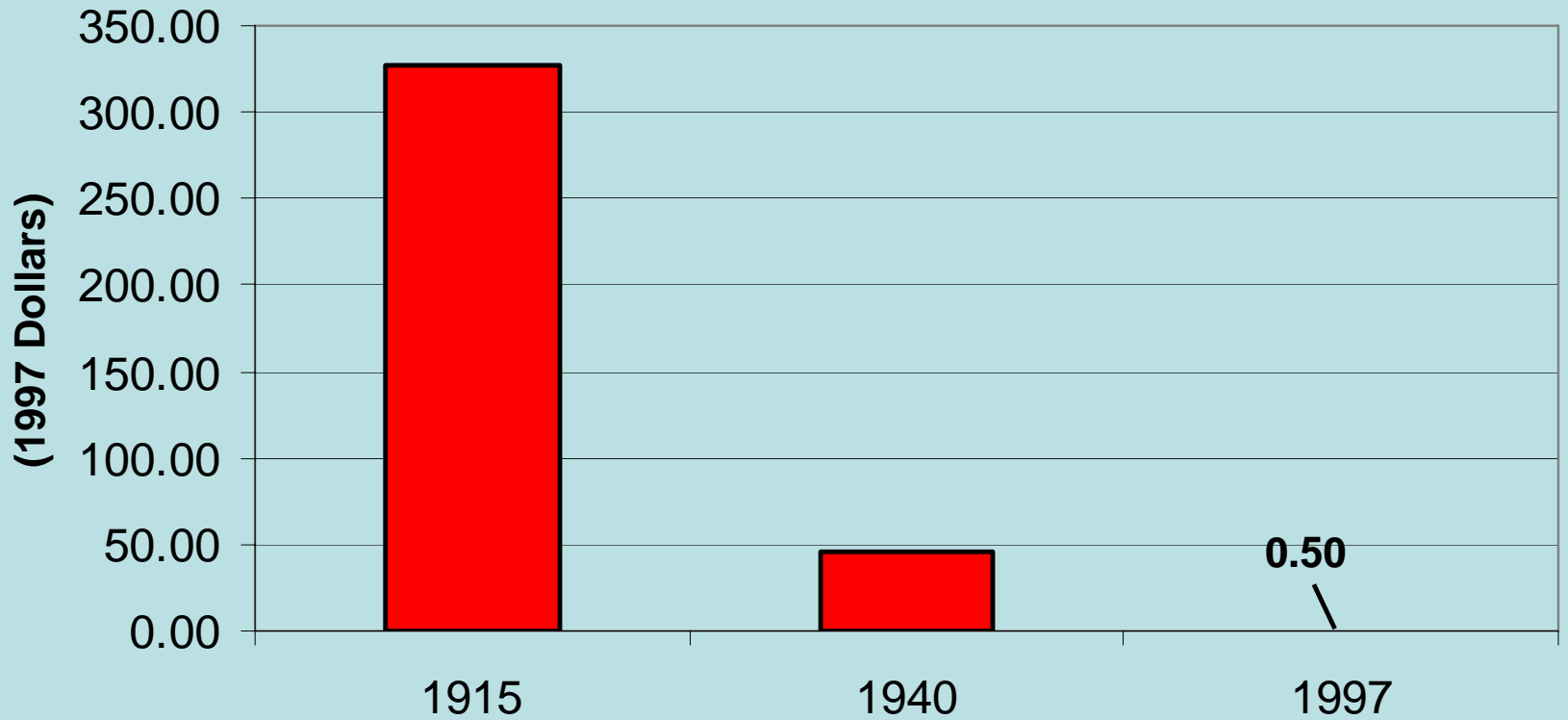




Real Cost of a 3-Min. Long Distance Call SF-  
NYC  
(Daytime, Station-to-station)



## Real Cost of a 3-Min. Long Distance Call SF-NYC (Daytime, Station-to-station)



# Financial Burden of a 3-Min. Long Distance Call SF-NYC (Daytime, Station-to-station)

