

The Story of Tobacco in Martin County

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INTERVIEWS

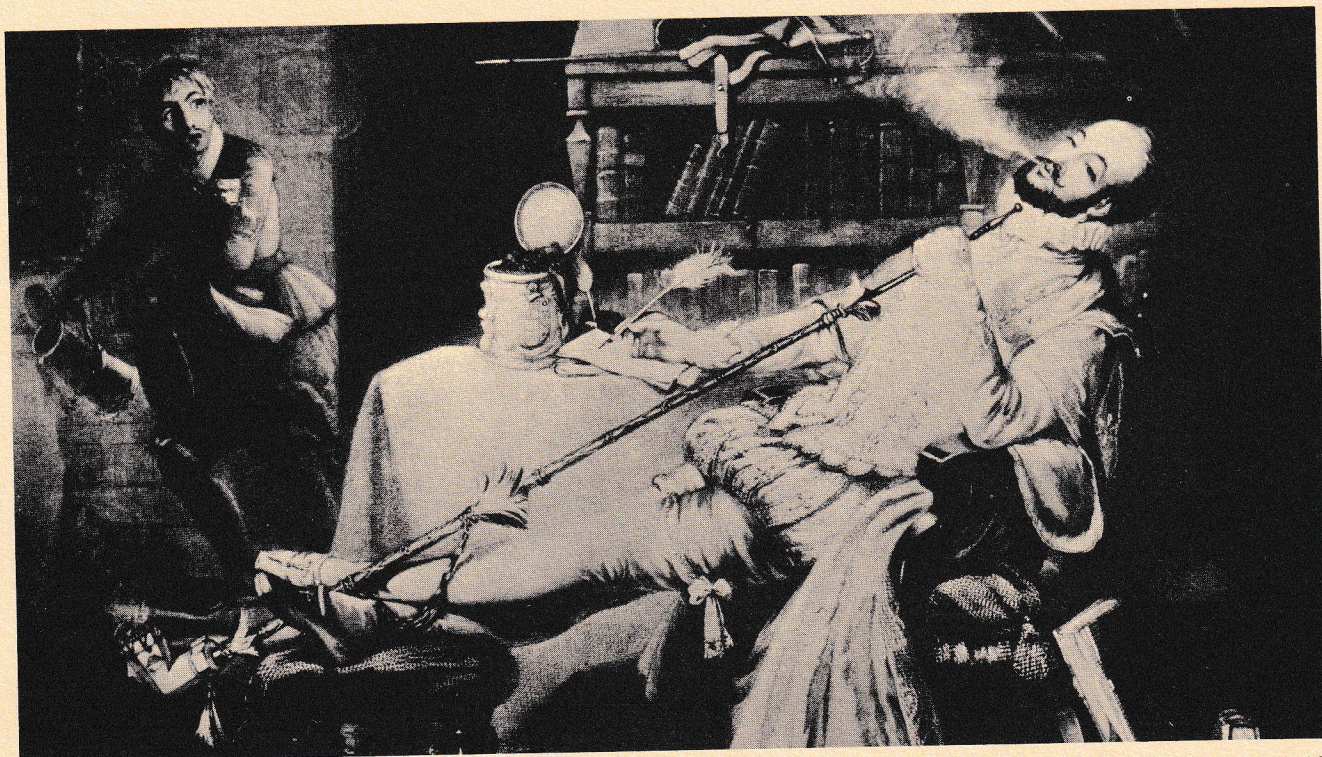
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Rogers, Joan + Gene

Smoke to Gold

by
The Skewarkian Junior Historian Club
Bear Grass School





England's most famous smoker about to be doused by his frightened servant. An imaginative concept by R.W. Buss (a mid-nineteenth century artist), engraved by James Egan. (Frontispiece from Jerome E. Brooks' *GREEN LEAF AND GOLD: TOBACCO IN NORTH CAROLINA*. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1975. Used by permission.)

SMOKE TO GOLD

A wager between Queen Elizabeth and Sir Walter Raleigh is recounted in the "EPISTOLAE HO-ELIANAE", London, 1650 by James Howell. Raleigh declared that he would weigh the smoke of a pipeful of tobacco. First he weighed the tobacco, then the ashes - the difference he contended, was the weight of the smoke. "Many an alchemist," exclaimed the surprised Queen, "hath turned their gold to smoke, but you are the first to turn smoke to gold!"

INTRODUCTION

You cannot drive down any road in eastern North Carolina in July or August and not see long rows of green tobacco plants waving in the summer breeze. These plants are a beautiful sight to the farmer as he looks out at his fields, but he doesn't just see green leaves, but instead he sees shoes for his children, a new stove for his wife, or a new Ford pick-up truck he's been wanting to buy. This is because in eastern North Carolina, tobacco is synonymous with money and it's the backbone of the economy in our country.

It is for this reason that I have had my 8th grade students, all rural kids, take a new look at this "weed" they work in so diligently each summer, and to see a new aspect of its culture. These young people have taken tobacco pretty much for granted and have never really known how it all started here in Martin County. They just know that it has been here as long as they have.

I felt that this was the opportune time for them to get information from people still living, who still remember how it was working in tobacco in the "old days". In a few years many of these people will be gone and with them so many delightful stories about tobacco that we might never have known about. For instance, I doubt in a few years any body in Martin County would have remembered hearing about the mule in Griffins Township that shared a chew of tobacco with the farmer who was plowing with him, or the intricate method the farmers of that section of the county had in "checkering" the fields for planting. We wonder how many more stories there are like these that no one ever wrote down which are already lost to us now!

I have been teaching school for 14 years and seeing the completion of this book is one of the greatest thrills of my teaching career. Working with this group of young people has been a marvelous experience and has proven a point I've long known to be true, that young people are a vital part of our society and are the greatest untapped resource we have in our country today. These young authors are leaving part of themselves for future generations to benefit from. They have touched my life in a special way and I feel much richer for having known them!

Elizabeth Roberson
Williamston, N.C.
1978

METHODS OF TRANSPORTING TOBACCO TO MARKET

King James I of England. "Tobacco is loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain and dangerous to the lungs."

In "NEW BOOK OF PLANTS", written in Latin by the botanist Matthias de Lobel in 1570, tobacco was called ("Indorum sana sancta"), the holy, healing plant of the Indians.

A physician Beintemar of Palma, wrote in 1650 - "Smoking is a necessity for a person engaged in study - it stimulates the intellect and revives the spirit should lassitude set in."

"Tobacco has ever calmed the thoughts
And Soothed the aching brow
Of men for ages past and gone,
And gladdens millions now."
Anonymous

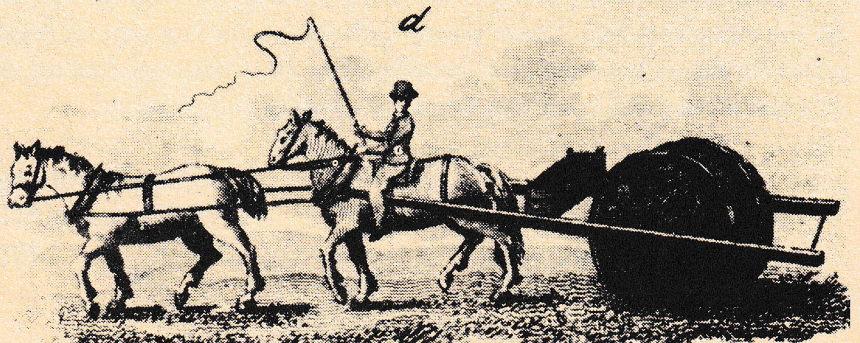
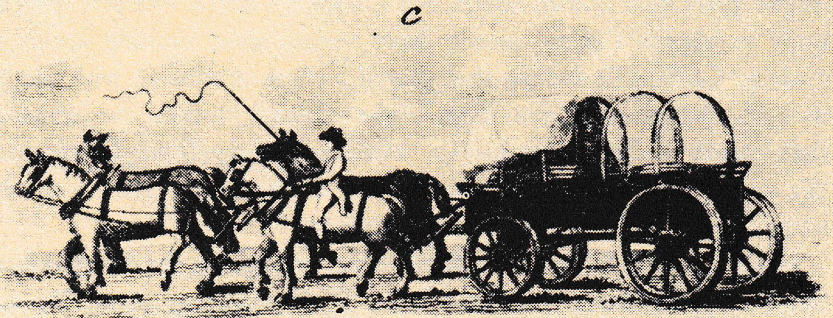
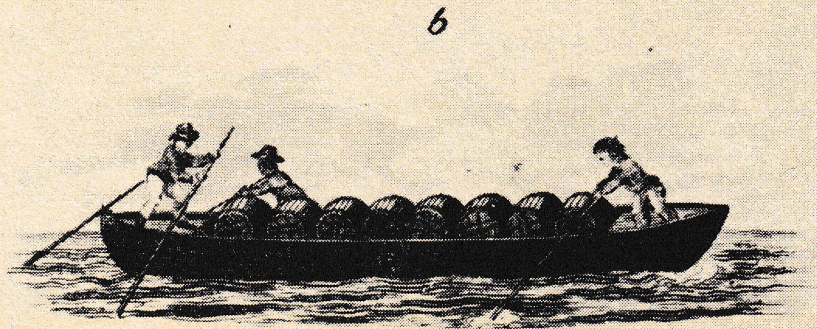
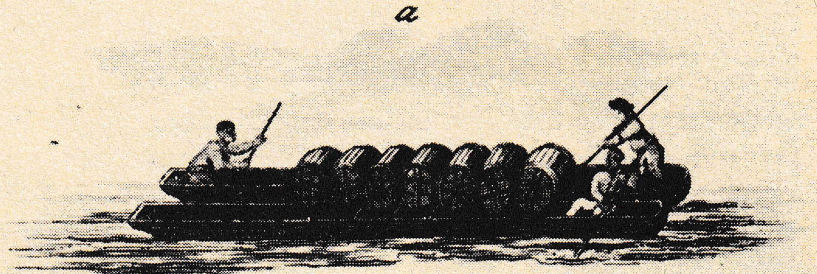
Edmund Gardiner in his "TRIAL OF TOBACCO" - 1610, wrote the epitaph for a social smoker who had passed away. It read like this:

Here lieth he, had lived longer
if
He had not chokt himself with
a Tobbaco whiff.

Pope Urban VIII decreed ex-communication from the church to all snuff users!

In Europe it was known as the "holy herb".

In Russian in 1634, there was a penalty of cutting off the nose of a person smoking tobacco!



(Illustration from Melvin Herndon's *Tobacco in Colonial Virginia*. Williamsburg, Virginia: The Virginia 350th Anniversary Celebration Corporation, 1957. Used by permission from the JAMESTOWN-YORKTOWN FOUNDATION.)

TOBACCO COMES TO CAROLINA, BRINGING SMOKE AND GOLD

by
Stephen Klinedinst

Tobacco was unquestionably a New World American Indian plant. The "first encounter of the smoking kind" was Columbus' sighting of "smoke-breathing natives" in the West Indies. The Spaniards called the weed they used in smoking, "tobacco." The word "tobacco" comes from the Hebrew word, "tob (bonus), Ach (fumus), A (ejis), which means, "Good is the smoke thereof."

In 1585, Sir Walter Raleigh sent a group of men to what is now North Carolina, looking for a place to begin an English colony in the New World. This first expedition was very much impressed with the land they found, and they went back to England to report their findings to Raleigh and Queen Elizabeth. They took with them some of the "treasures" they had found in the New World. It consisted of a few pearls, some Indian corn, some dried tobacco leaves, and some tobacco seeds. Since the Queen had hoped for a big gold strike, she wasn't very impressed with what they brought her. Little did she know that the colonist *had* struck gold; not the mineral, but the "golden weed"!

Sir Walter Raleigh planted some of the seeds brought back to England, and the tobacco grew well, since Raleigh seemed to have a natural instinct about growing it. He became an enthusiastic smoker and was one of the first to smoke publicly in the streets of London, much to the amazement of the people. Smoking soon became fashionable among "persons of quality" and became a very popular habit. It was also an expensive one since a pound of tobacco was equal to a pound of silver coins, which by today's standards would be worth about \$125.!

One evening Raleigh was sitting in his room taking a little smoke. His servant was bringing him some ale and when he got into the room and found a wreath of smoke around his master's head, he thought he was on fire! Quickly he threw the ale he was carrying on Raleigh's head to put out the fire. He not only wet Raleigh's pipe tobacco, but his spirits as well!

After Queen Elizabeth died, James I became King of England. He hated smoking and tried to ban it in England. Some historians believe that James blamed Sir Walter Raleigh for the popularity of smoking in England and that he actually hastened his execution because of it. James ordered Raleigh's execution and it has been said that Raleigh smoked one or two pipes of tobacco on the morning of his execution!

After the death of Raleigh, the people in Jamestown made a booming business of tobacco. They used it in trade and commerce as a medium of exchange. For instance, a clergyman was paid 16,000 pounds of tobacco a year for his work. He was paid an additional 400 pounds for a funeral service and 200 pounds for a wedding ceremony. The price of rum was set at 25 pounds of tobacco per gallon!



Sir Walter Raleigh, founder of English colony on Roanoke Island in 1587. Credited with beginning the tobacco industry in America.



An actual photograph of Sir Walter Raleigh's tobacco pouch.

Cornelius Bontekow in his Encyclopedia "ON THE LIFE, HEALTH, ILLNESS, AND DEATH OF MAN" - 1685, said,

"Nothing serves life and soundness of body so well nor is so necessary as the smoke of the royal plant, tobacco!"

One of the earliest men to write about the virtues of tobacco was Francisco Hernandez, physician to Phillip II of Spain in the 16th Century. He wrote that when tobacco smoke was "swallowed through the mouth, it gently soothes the sense of all labor and fatigue." No one since then has much improved on his observation!

"The Tobacco Pipe" was an aria composed by Bach - dedicated to his favorite pipe.

In the 1650's, people from Virginia pushed into the Albemarle region, of what was to later become North Carolina. They were told not to plant tobacco and be in competition with Virginia. Since these people in Carolina had been accustomed to growing tobacco however, it was only natural for them to continue doing so. In 1663, King Charles II confirmed the charter for the Lords Proprietors to settle in North Carolina. At first the Proprietors would not let the people in their colony plant tobacco, but they later changed their minds when they saw the vast fields of green and gold and realized that it could really be profitable for them.

Developing the tobacco industry in North Carolina was an "up-hill" fight from the beginning because there were no roads on which hogsheads could be transported, or harbors from which to ship them. Therefore, the Carolinians at first exported their tobacco from Virginia ports, but the Virginians began to refuse them this privilege since the tobacco from Carolina was selling better than theirs. They finally prohibited any tobacco from Carolina to be brought into Virginia except for payment of a debt. Virginia often referred to the Albemarle Sound region as "Rogues Harbor", showing the resentment they felt for the people there.

At this time traders from New England became interested in the tobacco business, seeing a chance to make money by carrying it out of North Carolina for the farmers there. They sailed down to the Carolinas in shoal-draft boats that could navigate in the shallow sounds and rivers and transported the tobacco out of the country. They did this in defiance of the Navigation Acts and the Plantation Act passed by Parliament, taxing tobacco shipped from one colony to another. They evaded this tax and would smuggle the tobacco to ocean-going ships



Tobacco Being Shipped from an Early Colonial Port.

and send it to many countries in Europe. Without the help of these Yankee traders, the tobacco industry in North Carolina would have gotten off to a much later start. The people of North Carolina were very grateful for their help and some people called them "The Saints of New England."

In 1712, the two Carolinas split up and became separate states. North Carolina kept their "green thumbs" however, and made a booming business of tobacco. They also developed good roads and ports in order to export their "golden weed". They didn't have to have New Englanders to smuggle it for them any longer. Roads were used for rolling hogsheads of tobacco to market. By end of the 1700's, tobacco production had greatly increased, so that by the mid 1800's, it had become a major industry and brought about the beginning of cities such as Durham, Winston, Salem, and others.

Due to the good climate and soil that was suitable for growing tobacco, as well as improved harvesting and curing methods, the tobacco industry has steadily grown to become a major industry in the state. Virginia used to rule over the tobacco world, but the "tarheels" are leading the race now! North Carolina has grown to be the biggest and best producer of flue-cured tobacco in the nation. It seems ironic that at one time the people of North Carolina couldn't ship their tobacco at all, and now today, they can't ship it fast enough to meet the demands for it all over the world!

OLD TOBACCO BILL OF SALE
September 1775

3,644 lbs. - \$1,022.40

\$ 5.00 - duty
2.25 - entry fee
2.00 - drayage
3.00 - warehouse rent

2.25 - warehouse broker
25.00 - straight commissions

This bill was for a Virginia farmer named Clopton, and is believed to be one of the earliest on record. This shows that there were taxes even in 1775!

Roanoke Warehouse

Opening Sale, August 6-1902

Next Wednesday.

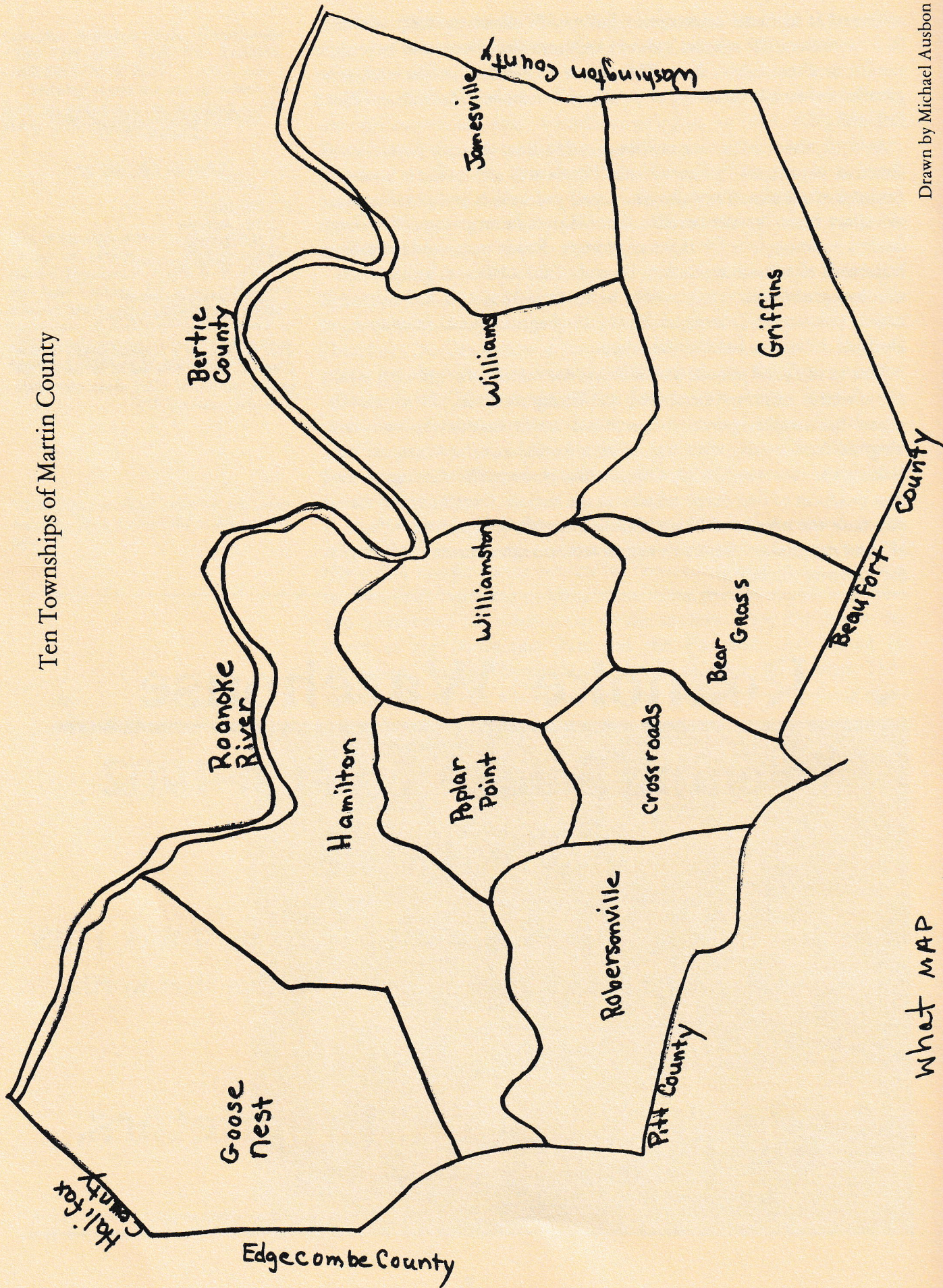
Be sure you sell at the Roanoke Warehouse the TWO JIMS will see that your Tobacco brings every dollar that it is worth.

Yours for High Prices,

Leggett & Staton, Proprietors,

WILLIAMSTON, N. C.

Ten Townships of Martin County



THE FIRST GROWERS OF TOBACCO IN MARTIN COUNTY

by Mariann Moore

No one really knows for sure who the very first planter of tobacco was in Martin County, but it all started around the year 1889. It was at that time people came here from Granville and Caswell Counties to show the farmers of Martin County how to grow, cultivate, and harvest the crop. Even though tobacco was only a weed, it required special care in all stages of growth and professional knowledge in its cultivation.

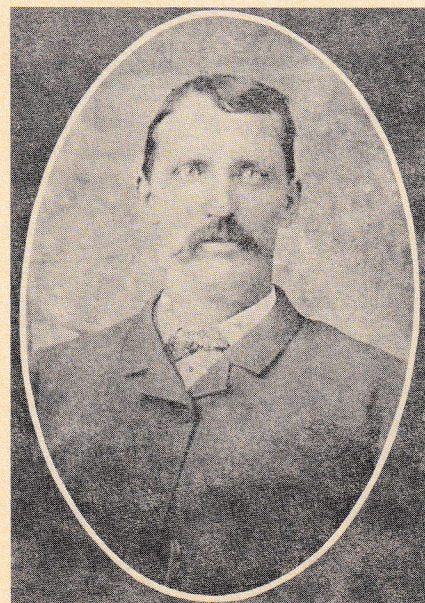
In the 1890's, Levi S. Jones of Bear Grass began to cultivate tobacco on his farm. His daughter married a Mr. Edward Inscoe from Henderson who had experience in raising tobacco. He helped grow the first crops in Bear Grass. An article published in a Greenville newspaper concerning the sale of his second crop of tobacco there reads as follows:

"Mr. L. S. Jones of Martin County has sold the finest tobacco on our market this season. He was here Friday with a lot that netted him over 27¢. It was a big lot too! One barn sold some time ago, netted him \$208.62! This is Mr. Jones' second year of tobacco. He cultivated 10 acres, hiring no help at all, all the work being done by his family. Off the 10 acres he had already sold more than \$1000 worth and has over 1/3 of his crops, the best too, still on the ground. He says his crops will net him over \$150 per acre! Mr. Jones is an honest, industrious farmer. His success is simply an example of what industry will do!"

Other early farmers of tobacco in Bear Grass were State and Warner Bailey. Warner planted 4 acres in 1892 and sold it in Durham for \$885.10. When it was first grown in this county, \$85 an acre was considered a good price for the crop. John Edward Cooke of Williamston was another of these early growers of tobacco. He hired a man from Oxford to come here in 1892 to show him how to plant tobacco. That year he planted a few acres where the town cemetery in Williamston is now located.

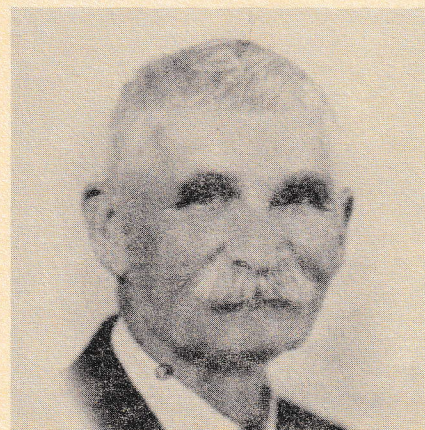
In 1898, Roger S. Critcher came to Williamston from Granville County, at the request of Jim Staton. Little did he know the impact his visit to Martin County would have! Prior to his coming, there had been very little tobacco grown in the county, mainly because no one knew how to go about raising it properly. As early as 1880 only one acre of tobacco had been grown in Martin County and it was for the farmer's own use. Mr. Critcher described his coming to Martin County in this way:

"In the winter of 1898 we laid plans for the cultivation of 50 acres of tobacco. Seed were sown in beds just as they are sown today, and plans were laid for the construction of 10 curing barns on or near the site where Jim Staton now has a number of barns. We had very little trouble raising plants, and in due season we started transplanting, using a peg and dropper. It was a slow method, to be sure, but we were in no big hurry, and we took great care in handling the crops. Cultivation centered around work with a hoe to a great extent to pull dirt to all sides of the stalk that new roots



William Edward Tice
1859-1936

Builder of the first tobacco barn in Griffins Township



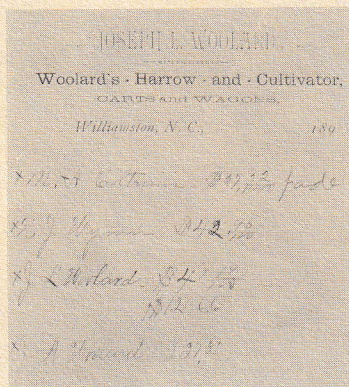
Roger Critcher
1856-1957

Mr. Critcher came to Williamston from Granville County in 1898 to show the farmers of the area how to raise and cure tobacco.

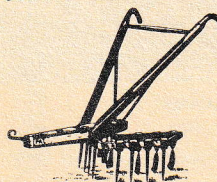


William Harmon Daniel
1847-1924

First grower of Tobacco in Griffins Township P



-- WOOLARD'S --
Combined Harrow and Cultivator
 A Saving of One
 Horse and Two
 Horses.



Works both sides of row
 at one time. Breaks the
 clods and cultivates with as
 much ease as any ordinary
 plow.

What Every Farmer Needs

For cotton, corn and rice, and the very thing truck gardeners
 need. Sells on its merits when seen at work.

All Kinds and Sizes Tobacco Flues Made to Order.

For information and prices call on or address

J. L. WOOLARD,

3-9 if

Williamston, N. C.

Another Big Lot of Flue Iron Just Received

AND I AM MAKING AND SHIPPING DAILY

Tobacco Flues

See that my prices are placed in time to get your price. All orders
 fill from WILLIAMSTON or from my County Residence.

Wagons and Carts Made to Order.

Season is Now Open For Cultivators.

For information and prices call on or address

J. L. WOOLARD, - Williamston, N. C.

**INVENTOR OF COMBINATION
 HARROW-CULTIVATOR**

*In about the year 1890, when tobacco
 started being grown in larger quantities in
 the county, Joseph Woolard and his
 brother, James Asa invented and began
 producing the "straddle" plow. This plow
 was an improvement over the old cotton
 and turning plows since it cultivated both
 sides of a row at the same time.*

*All of the iron used on the plows was
 hand-wrought with a hand operated
 bellows. Woolard and his workers were
 able to make about five plows a day and
 sold them for about \$3.50 each!*

*It is thought that Joseph Woolard made
 the first tobacco flues in the county, even
 though this cannot be verified. He not only
 made plows and tobacco flues, but also
 tobacco trucks, wagons, and carts.*

might develop. The tobacco grew to a considerable height and each stalk had an average of 25 leaves. The crop was suckered promptly, and the season was ideal. There were very few worms that year, but the following year they came in great numbers. Six weeks were required to harvest the crop, and in August of that year, plants for marketing were well-advanced. No sale houses were in this county, and the crop was cultivated on such a small scale at that time, that none was considered until several years later. Graded and prepared for market, the tobacco was packed in crates and freighted to Rocky Mount for sale. Some was carried on mule-drawn vehicles to Greenville."

After showing the people of the Staton farm how to grow tobacco, Mr. Critcher went to other farms in the county, instructing each one in the culture of this most precious crop. He liked the area so much that he moved his family from Granville County and made this his home.

The builder of the first tobacco barn in Griffins Township was William E. Tice. The original blueprints for this barn came from Pitt County and the brick foundation for the barn was laid by Simon Daniel Griffin. Noah Tice, William's son, described the barn as "having logs of some size, which when hewn down, measured about 12 inches square." The tobacco flues were not made in the county at that time, but had to be brought here by carts from out of town. Many of the barns were built on hillsides with the lower timbers partially buried, making the foundation air-tight. Noah told about his father's first sale of tobacco.

"Pa sold his first load of tobacco for about \$30. It was the most money he possibly ever had at one time, and he often told me that when that much money was turned over to him, he felt as if he had robbed somebody!"

Another early grower of tobacco in Griffins Township was Noah Daniel. He was quoted as saying:

"That year we planted 80 yards of tobacco seed beds for 4 acres. At transplanting time we ran the rows and then checked them with a homemade contraption, making the distance between the plants equal just as the rows were. A hole was dug and a handful of stable manure was placed there. Using a measuring glass, we then poured a commercial fertilizer into the hole and covered it up. Plants were placed by hand directly over the fertilizer. The rows were plowed up and down and cross, and our father saw to it that the crop was well cultivated and done carefully too. After we started priming tobacco, we carried leaves from the field in a homemade apron direct to the barn. Later we used baskets, and then the high-bodied cart, one that would straddle the tobacco was used. Along about 1908, we built two or three tobacco trucks very similar to those in use today and I remember very well when and where they were built - in the community blacksmith's shop right where Claudius Roberson lives."

The process of looping tobacco on sticks for curing was begun in Martin County in 1896 in Griffins Township by Mary Ann Daniel. Her father, William Harmon Daniel had sent her to Beaufort County to

learn this method from people there who knew the skill. This method saved a great deal of time since the first method used had been to cut the whole stalk and cure all the leaves at once. The second method used was the breaking of the leaves and then sewing them on sticks with a needle and thread. The looping method learned by Mary Ann simply involved looping the string around each leaf of tobacco so that it was held firmly on the stick. It took skillful hands to loop the tobacco as fast as it was handed to you by several "handlers", but people soon caught on to the method and used it until a few years ago when the bulk barn method was begun.

In an interview with Mary Ann in 1935, she told about the early cultivation of tobacco on her farm and how they transplanted the tobacco from seed beds to the fields. She said,

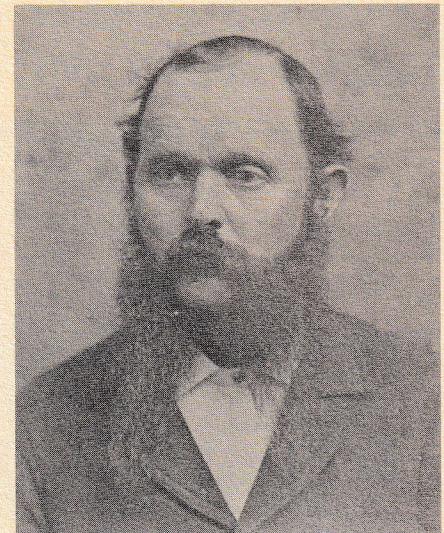
"We took biscuit pans, wash pans, and all other pans on the plantation and with a spoon we dug the plants up and placed them in pans, carrying them in small numbers to the field. Every plant had some dirt left around the roots. By doing it this way, there was very little need for transplanting."

This method was discontinued however, and the first mechanical transplanter was used in Martin County in 1900.

There were other farmers in Martin County who were among those first to grow the "Golden Weed". Some of them were John Manning, Marion Burroughs, H. P. Hedgepeth, John D. Simpson, Simon Griffin, and Jim Manning. It really doesn't matter who the first one was to grow tobacco, but the important thing is that tobacco *did* come to Martin County, bringing a new prosperity to the people who live here. Soon after it was planted and shown to be successful, it became one of the major crops of the area. The people of Martin County have become very dependent on tobacco for money and it is hoped that the work these early pioneers in tobacco cultivation in Martin County did, hasn't been for nothing!



John Jordan Manning
1866-1941



Harmon James "Jim" Manning
1856-1916



Levi Staton Jones
1849-1904

Levi Jones was the first grower of tobacco in Bear Grass Township. He is shown here with his wife, Chrissie at the old homeplace in Bear Grass.



Mary Ann Daniel
1875-1966

Mary Ann was the daughter of William Harmon Daniel. He sent her to Beaufort County to learn how to "loop" tobacco and she brought this skill to Martin County.

Dixie Warehouse

MEADOWS & STATON, Proprietors

For the Sale of Leaf Tobacco

TO OUR FRIENDS AND CUSTOMERS OF MARTIN
AND ADJOINING COUNTIES:

We take this method to inform you that we will run the DIXIE WAREHOUSE this Season under the style of Meadows & Staton. We want to see you all on our opening sales, Friday, August 2, 1907. We have stood by you since the market was opened here in 1902, and will always look after your interest. We have the experience, "Money and Grit" to push your tobacco to the "Top Notch" and "Will do it." Come down and bring us a load of your First Curings.

Yours to please,

W. T. Meadows,

J. G. Staton,

Proprietors

DIXIE WAREHOUSE

WILLIAMSTON, N. C.

OPENING SALE

Friday, August 2, 1907

HISTORY OF WILLIAMSTON TOBACCO MARKET

"In October, 1901, a group of citizens met in Williamston to plan a tobacco market. The meeting was held in the Roanoke Hotel (later named the George Reynolds Hotel.) Seven thousand dollars was subscribed to build and establish a market in Williamston. It was reported that the meeting was enthusiastic and well attended. The officers who were elected were: Dennis S. Biggs, President - Alonzo Hassell, Vice-President - Asa T. Crawford, Secretary - W. A. Ellison, Treasurer.

This group was called the Williamston Warehouse Company. Several months later, a contract was awarded to D. J. Rose of Rocky Mount and Eli Gurganus of Williamston to build the warehouse. The price was to be \$9,123. The contract stated that the warehouse was to be finished in August 1902. The deadline was met and two warehouses, the Roanoke and the Dixie were open and ready for business. In back of these warehouses were 3 prize houses (2 story structures with a one-story jump.) All were built for less than \$10,000. One of these "prize" houses later was used for the town's first power plant. The second burned and the third is still a part of the W. I. Skinner Tobacco Company."

The Dixie Warehouse was operated by E. L. Morgan.

The Roanoke Warehouse was operated by J. G. Staton and Jim Leggett.

These two were later combined into the Roanoke-Dixie Warehouse.

The Williamston market was one of the leading markets in this belt and has had one of the strongest warehouse organizations of the state.



Main Street in Williamston just after the turn of the Century.

OPENING OF FIRST TOBACCO MARKET IN WILLIAMSTON

Editorial from THE ENTERPRISE - August 1, 1902

"Next Wednesday, August 6, is the opening day for the Williamston tobacco market. Nearly every man, woman and child, both white and black have been looking forward to this day since last Christmas, and as the day draws nearer, the interest and enthusiasm runs higher, 'till now, only 5 days before the long-looked-for day shall arrive, everything is almost at white heat. There are all kinds of estimates as to the number of pounds that will be sold the first day, and some (who can't tell whether there are 1,000 acres or 20,000 acres planted in tobacco in the county), will name some amount the first they think of, and will "Bet" that it will be the amount sold.

The Enterprise is pleased to see this interest manifested, it goes to prove that the people are united in the effort to establish a market, and when everybody is interested in and working for the success of anything, their efforts will surely be blest."

... STATEMENT ...			
OF			
BANK OF MARTIN COUNTY.			
JANUARY 31ST, 1902.			
J. G. GODARD, Cashier.			
RESOURCES:		LIABILITIES:	
Loans & Discounts	\$ 25,493.15	Capital Stock,	\$ 5,000.00
Furniture & Fixtures,	575.45	Surplus,	1,300.00
Cash Items,	10.50	Deposits,	48,452.60
Over Drafts,	157.45		
U. S. Bonds,	500.00		
Due From Banks,	27,715.25		
Cash on hand,	1,070.00		
Total,	55,952.60	Total,	55,952.60

Financial Report from 1902



Main Street in Williamston as it looked in 1907.

THE OPENING OF THE FIRST MARKET IN WILLIAMSTON - AUGUST, 1902

Reprinted From
THE ENTERPRISE, August 8, 1902

"The long looked for day arrived at last. For several days prior to the opening day, the question everyone was asking was, 'how much tobacco

..Talk is Cheap..

It takes Money to buy 'BACCO, this is what we use at the

ROANOKE WAREHOUSE.

LEGGETT & STATON, Props.

WILLIAMSTON, N. C. ;

Opening Sale August 6th, 1902.

Don't Forget the Date.

Advertisement for opening sale on August 6, 1902. This was the first year the tobacco market opened in Williamston.

Farmers !

If you are raising a crop of tobacco this year

Don't forget to Insure your Pack House

against loss or damage by fire.

An investment of a few dollars with us may save you money.

We also write everything else known as Insurance.

ED. F. HUFFINES & CO.,

Office in New Bank Building

Early Advertisement for Tobacco Insurance 1903

Just Received A

CAR LOAD

Nova Scotia Paris Green Mixture.

Prepared especially for
the control of all
Tobacco Worms and
all insects.

Give it a trial.

N. S. Peel & Co.

Before the days of modern insecticides, Paris Green was used to kill tobacco worms on the plants. Before Paris Green was used, turkeys were turned into the fields to eat the worms instead!

do you think will be sold the opening day?' Everyone had his answer and scarcely any two were alike. Everybody thought there would be a goodly showing and were in high spirits. But late Tuesday evening the confidence of the majority of the town people began to wane, and frequently one could hear an expression of doubt as to the success of the opening. But on the following morning, the day looked for and much talked about, there was a great change in the expressions heard. Everybody was confident of a big day. The warehouses were full of wagons and carts loaded with the golden weed, and others were constantly arriving. It was after 12 o'clock when the last came in. Seven counties represented: Edgecombe, Pitt, Beaufort, Washington, Bertie, Lenoir, and Martin.

The Morgan Warehouse secured the first sale and promptly at 11 A.M. the auburn head of E. L. Morgan was seen to bob up above the vast crowd that thronged the Morgan Warehouse, and with a whoop and shout the crowd was quieted a little and it was then Mr. Morgan invited the Honorable Harry W. Stubbs to extend to the farmers and visitors a welcome to the Williamston market.

In his usual free and easy way Mr. Stubbs extended the welcome as no other man could. The welcome was the best ever heard on the opening of any market. It was short and to the point, and the people who heard it knew they were as welcome as though he had spoken for an hour.

Some of the oldest tobacco men in the State were on the market, and pronounced it the finest opening they had ever seen! Several visiting tobacco men said that the tobacco was selling for one and a half to three cents a pound higher than they had ever seen it sell "anywhere, under any conditions. Your tobacco market will be a success."

The amount of tobacco sold was about 60,000 pounds and the average price paid was 10 cents a pound. The proprietors of both houses did everything in their power to make the sales a success, and how admirably they succeeded the prices obtained will tell. One gentleman turned his tags, and when asked the cause, said he was not satisfied. He was heard to say, 'I got too much; I never got over 6 cents for this grade in my life, and this sold for 8 1/2'.

The prices were high and everybody went home with more money than they had expected to get.

All the buyers were hot and were going their limit. The American and the Imperial Tobacco Co's men went their limit on every pile. The sales were the hottest the writer has ever seen; it looked like the buyers thought there was not another pound in the country.

A large delegation of tobacco men from Rocky Mount and Greenville were on hand, and several of them were heard to say that the prices were too high for them, that they could buy cheaper on their own markets.

It was an awfully hot day, and the buyers and auctioneers suffered from the heat. Mr. J. C. McAdams, one of the buyers had to be carried to the hotel, nearly prostrated from heat.

Mr. Burton, Auctioneer for W. T. Lipscomb and Co., Greenville, N.C. was here and spelled each of the buyers for several rows. He is an auctioneer of rare ability and is hard to beat."

ESTABLISHMENT AND GROWTH OF THE MARTIN COUNTY TOBACCO WAREHOUSE COMPANY

by Harry A. Biggs

(As printed in THE ENTERPRISE, September 20, 1907)

A stranger coming to Williamston after an absence of seven years - I say stranger because in truth he would be one - would notice the wonderful, one might say, marvelous growth of the town. On every hand would be seen marks of progress. Where years ago were fields in cultivation there are now as handsome residences as are to be found in any locality of North Carolina; in the place of the once disagreeable hotels, one sees the new and up to date places for the entertainment of visitors. The side walks are paved, and the streets have been made good by means of using material which is so plentiful in our very midst. So many new buildings have been erected even on Main Street that the visitor would have to inquire for the ones for which he was looking, for instead of the former insignificant houses on this street, there are as good places where business is carried on as are to be found in any town the size of Williamston. Not only has there been a change in the growth and progress along these lines, the citizen himself seems to have taken on new spirit and no longer does one see the population wandering aimlessly along the thoroughfare, instead however, every one has a purposeful expression, one that is typical of the up-to-date century in which we are now living. A stranger would know that each man has something in which he is interested and something which he is going to accomplish. I think it is said too, that the climate of this section of the state has improved, certainly these fine September mornings are more invigorating than those of the summer, which happily are a thing of the past. The natural question for the stranger to ask would be: What has caused this great change in town? If he had looked when he alighted from the train he would have seen the up-to-date buildings of the Martin County Tobacco Warehouse Company. This had been the cause of the wonderful growth of Williamston and financial prosperity of the town. He could have easily seen that these modern, handsome tobacco warehouses represent the progressiveness of the stockholders, most of whom represent the best businessmen of Williamston. The answer to this question would be then, the Martin County Tobacco Warehouse Company has been the cause of the change in our town!

During the spring of 1902, the leading lights of the business world of Williamston formed an idea that the town should throw aside its seeming deadness, that it should take new life, and in view of the splendid quality of tobacco grown in this section of the state, and in Martin County particularly, it was decided that a tobacco warehouse company should be formed. In accordance with this decision, land was bought upon which to erect the buildings of the company. On the morning of the third day of August of that year, long before many of the residents of the town had arisen, the farmers of the county, and surrounding counties as well, began to arrive upon the scene of action. That day was

Big Premium Sale

September 25, 1907

Sales Open 9:30 a. m.

The premiums apply to the Roanoke Warehouse, Dixie Warehouse and Farmers Warehouse, at Williamston, N. C. We will have plenty of good lively buyers and we want everybody to bring a load of tobacco. Whether you have any hopes of a premium or not, you can rest assured of a high price for your tobacco. Also there will be a big horse race and plenty of fine music all day. We will have disinterested judges to give the "Gold Out." Premiums will be as follows:

For the largest one hundred lb. load of Tobacco and over 5 miles distance from Williamston. \$50.00 in Gold.

For the largest two hundred lb. load of Tobacco and over 5 miles distance from Williamston. \$50.00 in Gold.

For the largest one horse load of Tobacco over 5 miles and under 10 miles distance from Williamston. \$25.00 in Gold.

For the largest two horse load of Tobacco over 5 miles and under 10 miles distance from Williamston. \$25.00 in Gold.

For the largest one horse load of Tobacco over 10 miles distance from Williamston. \$50.00 in Gold.

For the largest two horse load of Tobacco over 10 miles distance from Williamston. \$50.00 in Gold.

For the man who comes the longest distance with a load of Tobacco, to weigh 500 pounds or more, \$10.00 in Gold.

T. S. Graham, Eli Gurganus and J. G. Staton, being Farmers are debarred from competing for these premiums.

Everybody bring a load of Tobacco on the 25th of September and you stand a good chance to get the GOLD. If you don't get a Premium you will get a big pile of Gold anyway, for your Tobacco will sell high.

DON'T FORGET THE DATE

Wednesday, September 25, 1907

And Come Along. It will be the Next Thing to the Jamestown Exposition
COME ONE. COME ALL.

William Shakespeare Thackeray, the 19th Century novelist said - "I vow and believe that smoking has been one of the greatest creature-comforts of my life - a kind companion, as gentle stimulant, an amiable anodyne, a cementer of friendship!"

RECIPE FOR SCENTING TOBACCO

For a hundredweight of tobacco, take 70 oz. roseleaves, 3½ oz. China tea, 17½ oz. lemon peel, 17½ oz. violet root, 5 oz. clove wood and 4½ oz. cardamon.

AN EARLY METHOD OF TRANSPLANTING TOBACCO



(1) The transplanter was stuck firmly into the ground and the large opening was filled with water.



(2) A tobacco plant was dropped into the smaller opening.



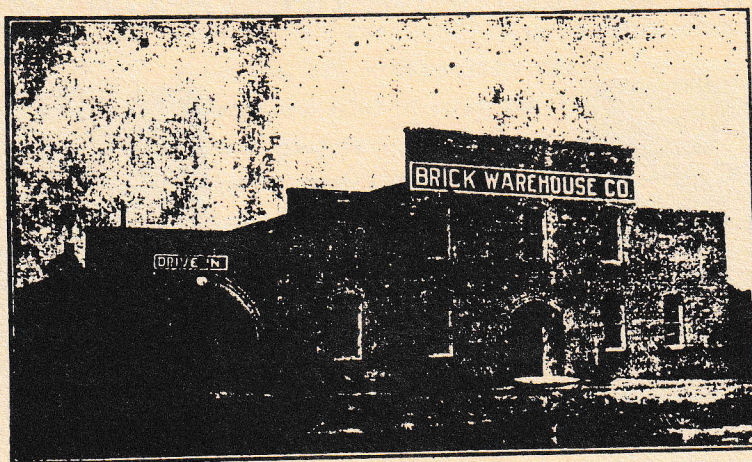
(3) As the transplanter was pulled up, the trigger and



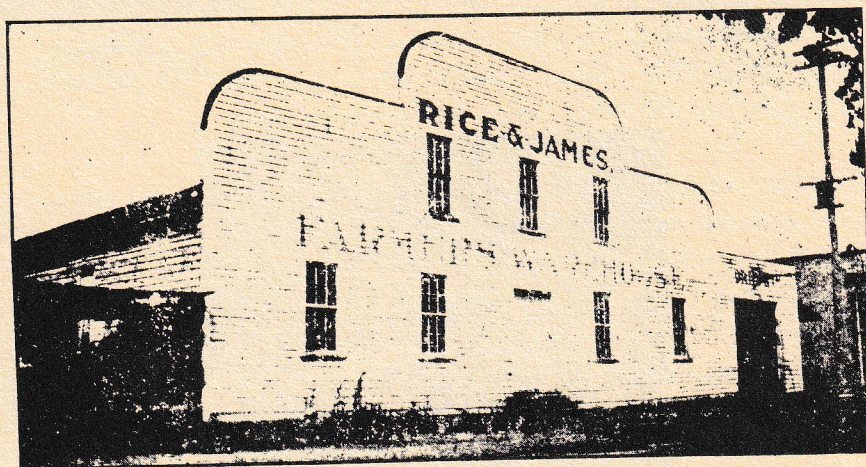
(4) Mechanism in your hand released the tobacco plant and some water at the same



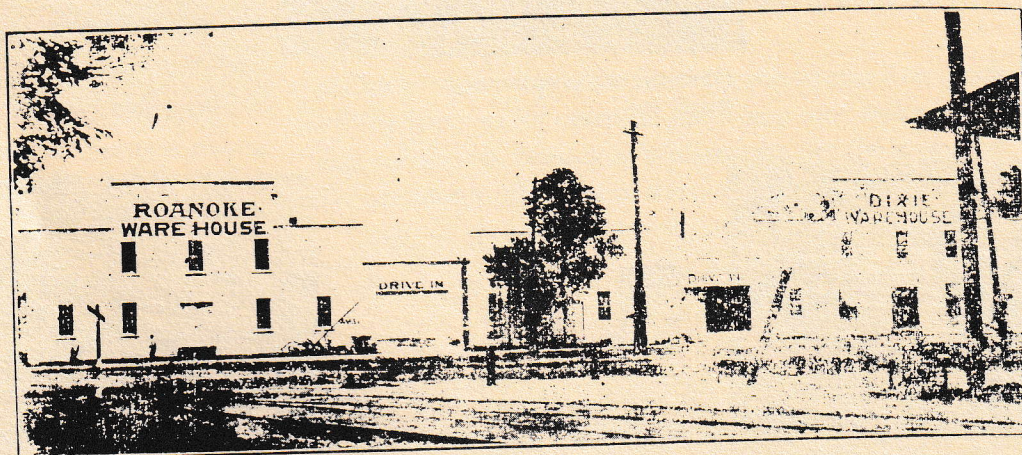
(5) The dirt was then packed around the plant with your foot so that the plant would stand up and grow straight.



The Brick Warehouse was built in Williamston in 1917. The manager of this warehouse was W. A. James.



The Farmers Warehouse was built in 1910. The first proprietors of this warehouse were Rice and James.



The Roanoke and Dixie Warehouses opened in 1902. This picture was taken around the year 1925 and shows sales of tobacco at that time.

THE OLD VS. THE NEW IN THE CULTURE OF TOBACCO

by

Susan Gibbs and Becky Harrison
"In The Good 'Old Days'"

Some of the steps in the culture of tobacco have changed very much in the past fifty years, however some of the steps are done very much the same way. For instance, the planting of the seed beds was done very much like it is today.

The first step in planting these seed beds was to clear a site for the plant bed in the woods and then burn the brush that they had cut, to sterilize the soil. Then the soil was plowed and fertilized. The seeds were so tiny that they had to be mixed with sand, fertilizer, ashes, or lime. After the seed were sown, tobacco cloth was stretched over the beds to protect the young plants from insects and the weather which was still cold at the time of the sowing. The plants stayed in the beds from 6 to 9 weeks. When they were about 8 inches high, they were ready for transplanting into the fields.

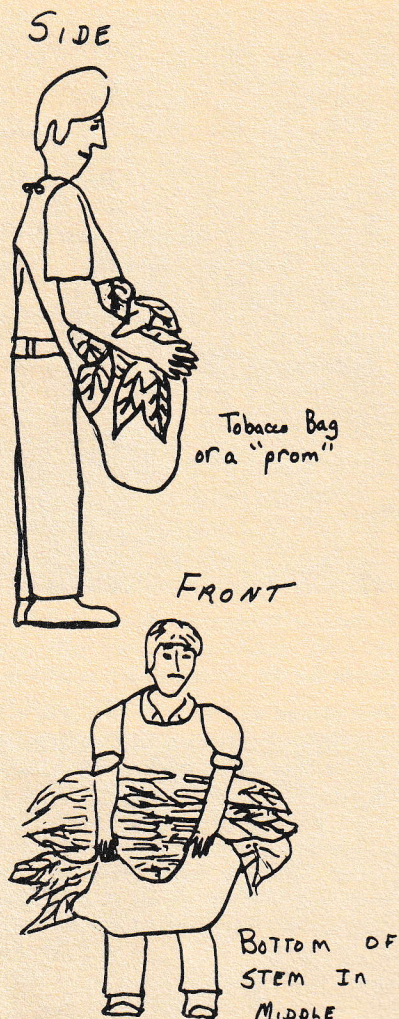
The plants were set out in the fields between March 20 to early May, rarely varying more than a few days each year. Before the transplanting was done however, the fields were prepared by repeatedly disking or harrowing, and furrowing the surface soil. This was a time consuming job and it took 7 mules and 7 people working all day to prepare only 3 acres of land for transplanting!

Transplanting was done by hand. In the very early days, a stick or peg made the hole and a plant was dropped in. This operation took 3 people to carry out. One person would make the hole with the peg, the next one would drop the plant in it, and the third would pour water around it and pack the dirt around it. A little later however, a metal tube transplanter was invented. It had an opening through which the plant was dropped. It made a hole in the soil, dropped in the plant, and released the proper amount of water. The worker then had to press the soil around the plant with his foot. This was the beginning of mechanization in the growing of tobacco. The first transplanter used in Martin County was around the year 1900 when a man, whose name is unknown to us, made a hand tobacco setter.

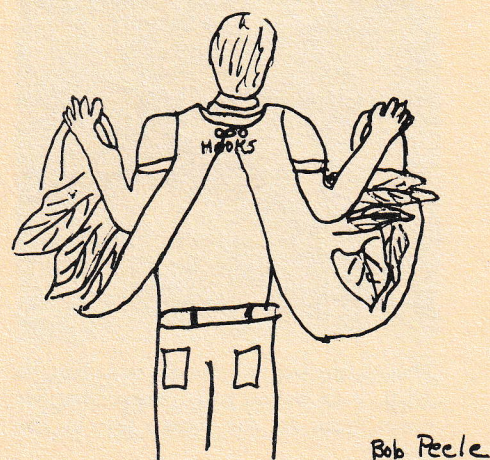
The width between the rows of tobacco averaged three to four feet and the plants were set from twelve to twenty four inches apart in the row. This provided for from five thousand to eleven thousand plants per acre.

Now the work really began! Even though tobacco was only a weed, it had to have tender, loving care. It had to be plowed, hoed, wormed, topped, and suckered. All of this was done by hand and took many hours in the hot sun.

In the early days of growing tobacco, there were no insecticides on the market with which to kill the tobacco worms. In order to get rid of the worms, the farmers grew turkeys just for this purpose and would turn them into the fields to clean the plants of worms. If a farmer didn't



These drawings show the burlap apron used to carry the tobacco leaves in. The men who wore this apron, walked up and down the rows picking tobacco leaves until it was full and they couldn't carry any more. They would unload their aprons at the end of the row and then go back and fill it up again. (These were drawn according to the descriptions provided by W. O. Peele, Sr.)



"When the blazing sun tortures the peasant, it is good to the tobacco."

Bosnian Saying

"Where there is idleness, weeds thrive; where there is diligence, tobacco flourishes."

Bulgarian Saying

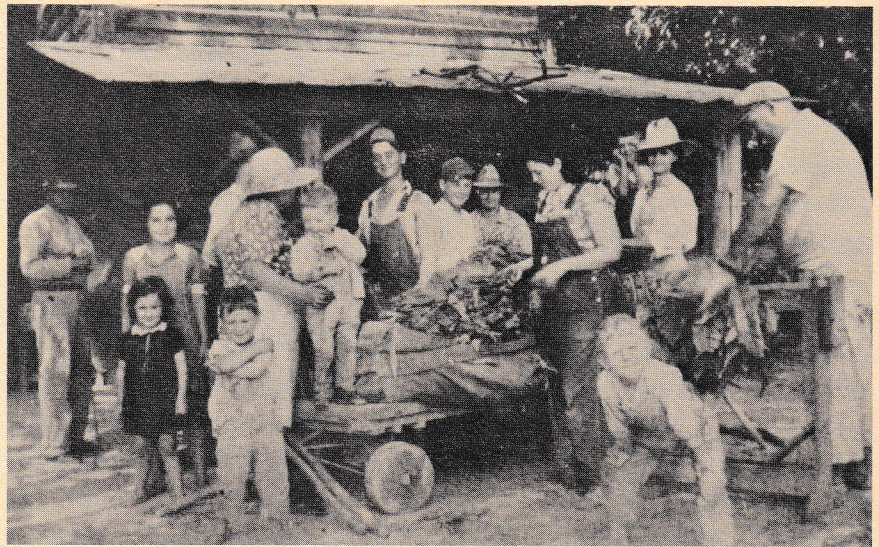
This picture was taken in the 1930's on the farm of William Dave Manning. Among those pictured here are: Darrell (Shug) Manning, William Dave Manning, Thelma Clyde Manning, Bettie Idell Manning (Chesson), Buck Manning, Fannie Roberson, Jacy Manning, Irvin Manning, Bobby Manning, Aubelle Manning, Audry Manning, Larry Woolard, Mildred Manning (Griffin), Julius Manning, Jerald Woolard.



This picture was taken at the same barn in 1978. It shows the great change that has taken place on the farm scene in the county!

have any turkeys of his own, his friends would lend him theirs.

Tobacco was usually fully mature from 60 to 90 days after transplanting. To have a crop that would cure satisfactorily, the farmer had to harvest the crop at the height of its maturity. This next step in the harvesting was called "priming", which simply meant picking the leaves from the stalk one at a time. This was done by men walking up and down the rows, pulling the leaves by hand and then putting the leaves in a burlap apron or as in later years, into a wooden sleigh pulled by a mule. This sleigh later had wheels added and became known as a "truck". The leaves were carried to a shelter near the barn to be looped onto tobacco sticks. A good stringer could loop tobacco as fast as two helpers could hand them to her. She would stand beside a wooden "horse" across which was placed a four-foot stick. The stringer would grasp the leaves, loop a length of string around it, and then let it fall to one side and then on the other, alternately. Their hands would move so fast that it was hard to see what was going on. There was quite an art to this skill and it took a great deal of practice to master. About 112 leaves of tobacco were tied on each stick.



As each stick was finished being looped, it was hung on a rack outside the barn. When the racks were full, the sticks were passed up to a man in the barn who hung them across the tier poles. When a barn was completely filled, it usually held from 1200 to 1500 sticks. Log barns were usually 16 feet square with a total of 7 tier poles. As the price of cotton dropped, farmers in Martin County increased their acreage of tobacco and increased the size of the curing barn as well as the number. Heat was carried from the wood furnace by metal flues to the hanging leaves, thus giving it the name flue-cured tobacco.

When the racks in the barn were full, it was time to fire up the furnace. Wood for these furnaces had to be cut during the winter months so that there would be enough for the entire curing process. It took about 125 loads of wood for one barn, per season, so the farmer had to cut wood all fall and winter in order to have enough for the summer's curing. The types of wood that were used were those that kept a long, slow burning, such as oak, gum, and pine. As late as 1946, as much as 2

million cords of wood were used in curing tobacco in the South. This was 1/5 of all pulpwood cut each year in the entire South.

It was very important that the farmer fill his barns with each curing so that the leaves would be uniform in color and quality. It was also important to maintain a slow constant heat. Too much heat or too little heat would ruin the entire barn. The man tending the fire had to have experience in this as well as good judgment. He had to not only know the soil in which the tobacco was grown, but also the condition of the tobacco and the state of the weather while curing it. Knowing all these things helped guide him in applying the correct temperature at just the correct time.

Someone had to stay at the barn all the time when the curing began so that the fire wouldn't go out. The sound of alarm clocks could be heard going off, waking the farmers who were trying to catch a few winks of sleep before it was time to check the temperature of the barn again.

The curing went through 3 stages. In the first, the yellowing stage, the heat was held at 90-100 degrees for 24-40 hours. In the second stage, the drying stage, the heat was moved up quickly to 135-140 degrees which would dry the leaf and fix the color. This stage took from 30-36 hours. The third and last stage caused the drying of the stem and at that time the heat was gradually raised to 180 degrees and kept there until the stems were thoroughly dry. This state, also known as "killing the steam", usually took about 24 hours. The entire process of curing would take from 4 to 7 days and during the entire time it had to be watched very carefully. There was always the danger of losing an entire barn of tobacco at this time, since one dry leaf falling on the hot pipes would set the barn on fire.

The leaves were now a deep yellow color, and very dry and brittle. When the leaf was first pulled from the stalk, it contained 80% water, but now the leaves only had about 20% of their moisture. To keep the leaves from shattering in your hand, they had to be brought in "case" or in "order". The doors of the barn were opened and the humidity in the air would usually make the leaves pliable enough to handle. Sometimes the farmer had to lay the tobacco on the ground and let the dew fall on it giving it back its moisture. If the leaf could be folded in your hand without breaking the stem, then it was considered to be in "order."

The sticks of tobacco were then carried to a packhouse where the strings were removed from the leaves. The tobacco was carefully taken off the sticks and laid on a large piece of burlap. It was then graded or sorted into groups of like quality, texture, and color. There were usually 4 or 5 different grades of tobacco in any one lot. After the different grades were selected, a grader would tie from 16 to 20 leaves into a bundle, wrapping an extra leaf around the bundle. This bundle was called a "head" or "hand" of tobacco. The hands of tobacco were then put back on a shorter, grading stick and pressed flat with a board. This flattened the leaves, making them more attractive. One farmer in Griffin's Township in Martin County actually ironed his tobacco with a flat iron



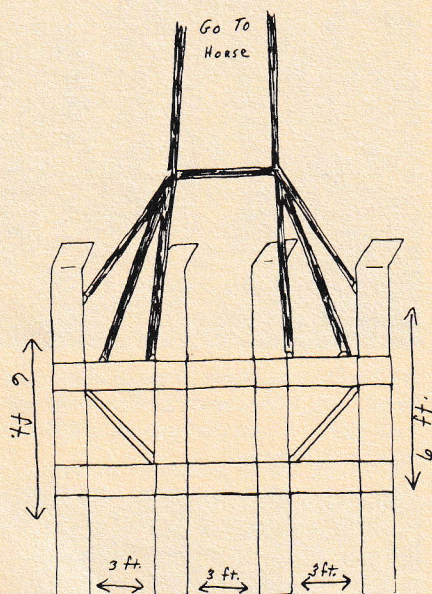
(1) This picture shows priming tobacco by hand. The leaves were broken from the stalk one at a time and put on a sled and taken to the barn.



(2) The tobacco sled, pulled by a mule, was used to carry the tobacco leaves to the barn. In later years, wheels were added to it and it was called a tobacco truck.

"Smoking - The Joy Eternal of the Gods."

The Mayans



A row marker made of boards 5 or 6 feet long and about 6 inches wide was pulled by a horse to mark the rows in a tobacco field. The first time you went down the field with a plow and then you would come back across these rows in the opposite direction with this row marker. At every point where the two rows would cross, a plant of tobacco was planted. This method of planting tobacco was called "checkerboarding".

(Sketch drawn by W.O. Peele, Sr.)

before taking it to market!

After the grading was finished, the farmers would load a 2 horse wagon with the tobacco. They had to do this carefully because the roads were so bumpy and full of ruts that the loosely piled tobacco would fall off. The boys would have to lie on the tobacco to hold it down. When they would get to town they could smell the odor of all kinds of good food cooking. In the warehouse, the tobacco was unloaded and then placed very neatly in large baskets provided by the warehouse. These baskets usually held 500 pounds of tobacco each. The bundles of tobacco were neatly arranged because the arrangement of the tobacco would certainly make a difference in the amount you were paid for it. Neat, carefully tied bundles brought a premium price. Since more than likely the sale would not be until the next day, the boys had to wrap the baskets to keep them from drying or taking on too much moisture. They would then spend the night in the wagon waiting for the big sale the next day. The day of the sale brought people from every corner of the county. This would be the only day of the year many of them ever came into town. After the movie theaters were built in Williamston, several thousand free tickets were given away on tobacco market opening day. A person could sit in the movie from 9:00 in the morning until 6:00 in the evening if he wanted to, seeing everything from a Gene Autry movie to the Green Hornet serial. Some times real live cowboys like Johnny Mack Brown or Lash LaRue would be at the theater in person on opening day! The warehouses had free barbecue for the farmers and their families and they could eat all they could hold and have all the soda pop they wanted without paying a cent!

The Williamston market was one of the leading markets in this belt and had one of the strongest warehouse organizations in the state.

From start to finish, the raising, curing, and marketing of tobacco took a great deal of time. It took 350 hours to raise one acre of tobacco as compared to 3 hours for an acre of corn. There was no easy way out and it meant very long hours in the field and packhouse for the farmer and his family. Tobacco farmers actually counted a thirteenth month in their calendar called "TOBACCUARY." This month was made up of all the extra hours of the day and night that were needed to produce the crop of tobacco.

Tobacco Flues!

65,000 lbs.

FLUE = IRON

JUST ARRIVED.

Don't be afraid of getting your flue this season. As advertised I am now prepared to fill all orders on short notice.

GEO. R. DIXON,

Rocky Mount, N. C.

Williamston, N. C.

AN ACCIDENT IN CASWELL COUNTY REALLY CHANGED THINGS!

by Bob Peele

In 1839 in Caswell County, the curing of bright leaf tobacco was discovered by accident. The new bright leaf tobacco was much in demand because of its mild taste and low nicotine content.

It all happened on the farm of Abisha Slade when his Negro servant, Stephen, fell asleep next to the warm furnace at the barn. When he

wake up, he realized that the fire had almost gone out. He was scared that he had ruined the barn of tobacco and ran over to a pile of charcoal and piled some on the dying embers of the fire. The application of this sudden drying heat cured the brightest yellow tobacco anyone had ever seen. It brought a very high price on the market and everyone was anxious to find out how Stephen had done it. When he was asked about it, he said, "... to tell the truth about it, 'twas a accident. I commenced to cure it and it commenced to git yallow'. It kep' on yallowin' and kep' on yallowin' and kep' on yallowin' 'twell it got clar up. . . it looked so purty. I kep' making it yallow and when it was cured it was 'musement for folks to come and see it.'" This new method of curing tobacco quickly spread up into Virginia and into eastern North Carolina.

In 1875, another accident on the Slade farm created news again and revolutionized the growing of tobacco. Some of the hands working for Mr. Slade, noticed the thin soil in which the tobacco was planted and they put out 200 pounds of guano to the acre. The resulting crop of tobacco doubled in price since each acre produced more tobacco and of a better quality.

DISCOVERER OF FLUE-CURING SYSTEM

In 1869, William T. Ballou of South Boston, Virginia was looking for a way to dry his fruits for the winter. That year had been unusually rainy and he had not been able to dry his apples, peaches, and pears for the winter.

One day by chance, an itinerant "tinner", named Mr. Bowden, came by Ballou's farm asking for work. When Mr. Ballou found out Bowden's profession, he asked him if he could build a metal flue to carry heat into a barn for drying his fruit. Bowden built the pipes and when he tried them out, they worked even better than either had expected. Mr. Ballou reasoned that this same system of carrying heat might be used in curing tobacco. At this time, the heat for curing tobacco came from several open charcoal fires built right on the floor of the barn. It was a very dirty, smoky job to cure tobacco and the smoke discolored the leaves.

The new system of flues worked so well that Ballou arranged for Bowden to open a shop and to manufacture these flues for sale. They were named "The Bowden Flues." He only stayed with Ballou for two years however, and moved on down into North Carolina. He began manufacturing his flues there, and the knowledge of using these flues soon spread to the eastern counties of Martin and Pitt.

Fertilizer For Tobacco.
The Best on the Market is

BAUGH'S High Grade Tobacco Guano

Which has been tested for years by the most successful Tobacco growers and has always given entire satisfaction

If you want to make Fine Tobacco it will pay you to give it a trial.
For sale by

Anderson, Hassell & Co.,

WILLIAMSTON, N. C.

BAUGH & SONS COMPANY, MANUFACTURERS,

PHILADELPHIA, BALTIMORE AND NORFOLK.

19-222

In 1875, the use of guano for fertilizing tobacco was discovered by accident. It proved to be an excellent fertilizer and produced very fine crops which doubled in price.

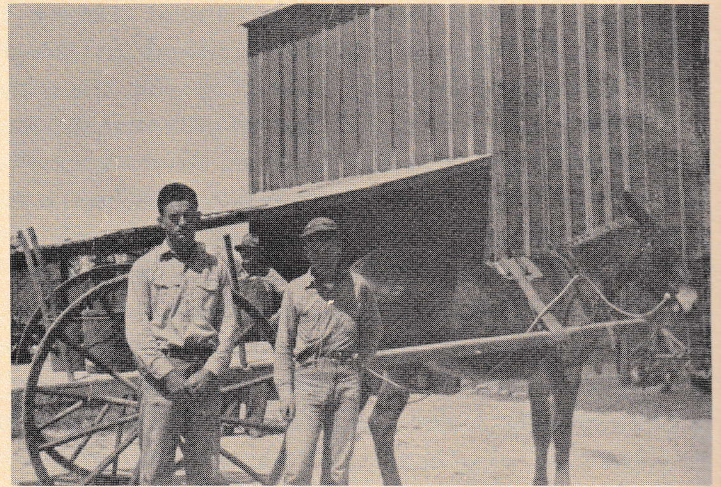
WORDS FROM FAMOUS PEOPLE ON THE

"DEVILISH WEED" TOBACCO

The book, "ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY" by Burton, written during the early part of the 17th century, describes tobacco in this way:

"Tobacco, divine, rare, superexcellent tobacco, which goes far beyond all their panaceas, potable gold, and philosopher's stones - a good vomit, I confesse - a vertuous herbe, it be well qualified, opportunely taken, and medicinally used, but as it is commonly abused by most men, a mischief, a violent purger of goods, lands, health; bellish, develish, and damned tobacco, the ruine, and overthros of body and soil."

This was a very common sight all over Martin County up until just a few years ago. The farmer could never have harvested his crop of tobacco without the help of the mule. One is shown here in his role of hauling equipment to the barn. When he was not doing this, he was plowing or hauling tobacco leaves out of the field.



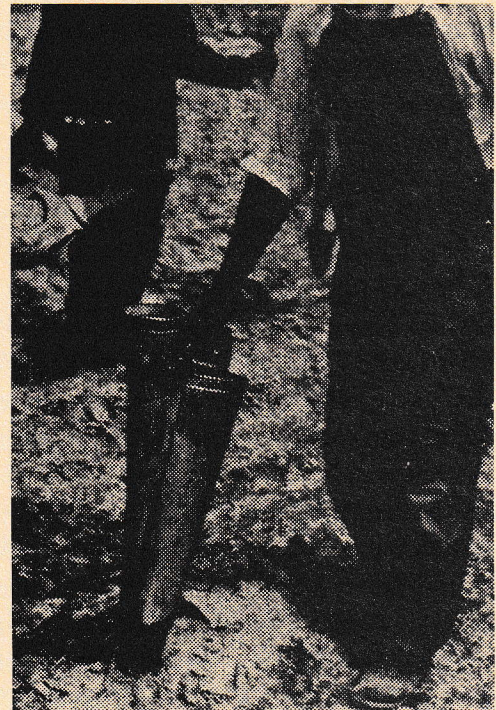
"Tobacco - The stay of nations, the poor man's Luxury, and the rich man's Solace."

Anonymous

"Allah made gold (tobacco) grow to put a smile on the faces of men."

"Old Style" Transplanting

This hand-operated transplanter replaced the old method of using a wooden peg to make the hole. It was easier on the back than the old method, but still took a lot of strength to operate. This operation is entirely mechanized today and takes half the time to plant a field than in the old days.



Ben Johnson said, "Mother Earth's most soothing precious word."

"Stoking" the furnace of a log tobacco barn back in the days when the curing of tobacco was done with wood. The farmer had to sit up all night and watch the fire so that it wouldn't go out and ruin the entire barn of tobacco. This lasted for about 6 weeks.



Tobacco Edition - THE ENTERPRISE - 1938

Found in papers of Warren Biggs, this process for curing tobacco. It was patented by John W. Barnett of Big Spring, Montgomery County, Virginia in January 1879.

"Place the tobacco in barn in the ordinary way. The first fires should be placed under the tobacco at 80 degrees or 90 degrees of heat, applying the water at the renewal of every fire. The first 12 hours, the fire should be renewed every 2 hours and 24 minutes, making 5 renewals of the fires at 85 degrees or 90 degrees; each fire should not be kept at the above heat longer than 40 minutes. The second 12 hours there should be 7 renewals of the fire, the first three fires at 85 or 90 degrees, the next four fires at 90 to 95 degrees each, the heat not to remain over 45 minutes; the time between each firing is one hour and 43 minutes. The third 12 hours there should be eight renewals of the fires, the first four fires at 95 degrees, the next four fires at 100 degrees each, and the heat should not fall below 75 or 80 degrees; the time between each renewal of the fires is one hour and 30 minutes.

The next six hours there should be seven renewals of the fires, the first four fires at 105 degrees of heat, the next three fires at 110 to 112 degrees, the last seven fires are renewed about every 51 minutes apart, and the heat should not fall below 80 or 85 degrees. By this time the tobacco should be yellow and tough enough to commence raising the fires for curing. The first hour the heat shall range from 100 to 112 degrees, the second hour from 112 to 120 degrees, the third hour from 120 to 130 degrees, fourth hour from 130 to 145 degrees; fifth hour from 142 to 157 degrees, sixth hour from 155 to 162 degrees, seventh hour from 162 to 168 degrees, eighth hour from 165 to 170 degrees, ninth hour from 170 to 175 degrees, tenth hour from 175 to 180 degrees, eleventh hour from 180 to 185 degrees, and continue the heat until stalks and stems are cured; large barns run the heat to 200 degrees until cured. This process is for fine tobacco which has been well toughened and yellowed; if not sufficiently toughened and yellowed, the curing process should be carried on more slowly.

HOW THE WATER SHOULD BE APPLIED

In a house 22 ft. sq. there should be 16 holes in the ground, spaced at equal distances apart under the tobacco, that will hold a bushel of charcoal, so when the heat gets up to 185 degrees, the coal will fall together as it burns. Place the charcoal for the fires in the holes as described, and while waiting for the fires to commence burning, apply the water by sprinkling around each fire on the ground and on the inside of the holes, but not on the fires, causing the ground to be wet, so when the fires commence to burn and get to their hottest, the dampness will be the greatest. In order to keep the tobacco from drying and setting the green in it, in all cases keep the door closed while using the water up to 115 degrees; then you should open the door and give the house some



Aunt Lucy Rogerson on her way to the field with her hoe.



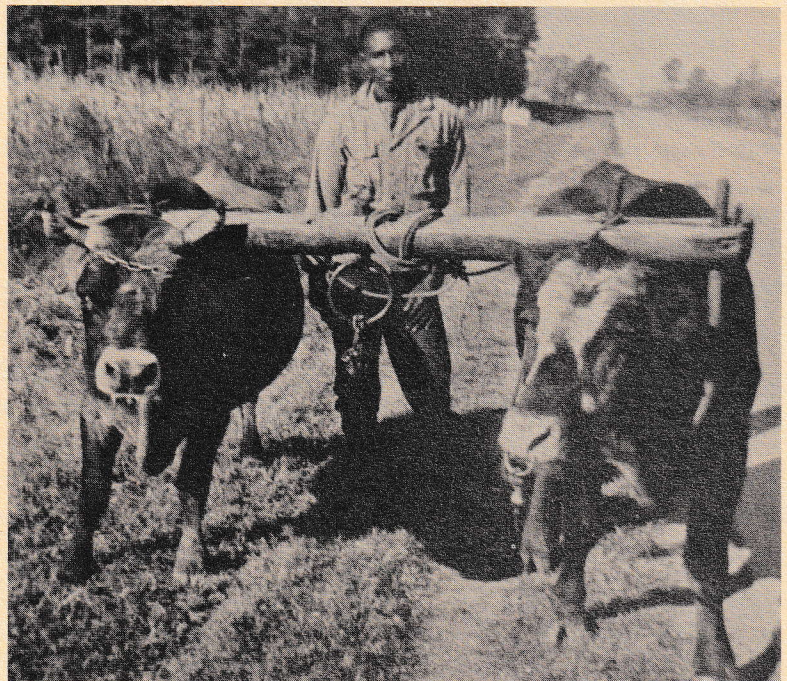
"Plowing the old way"

air for 10 or 15 minutes each hour up to 135 degrees; thence discontinue the water and open the door wide and windows in the gables from one hour and a half to two hours. The more sap you have in your tobacco, the more air you need. Where flues are used put the water on the ground between the flues, and use enough to wet the ground well. If sheet-iron pipe flues are used, sprinkle the water on the ground under and between the flues. It will take about 6 gallons of water at the renewals of every firing up to 135 degrees. When your tobacco needs more heat it will redden on the inside of the leaf and get thick and spongy; and when you have given it too much fire it shows the buff on both sides of the leaf, or shows the scald in the fold of the leaf.

The old log barn had furnaces in which wood was burned, furnishing heat for curing the tobacco. This barn still standing in Martin County, has 2 furnaces, still left intact.

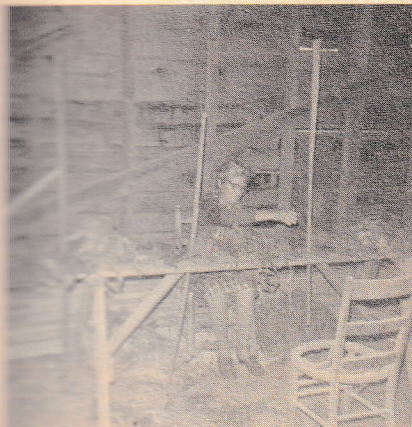


Yokes of oxen were used to haul tobacco if mules weren't available. These oxen were filmed along a road in Martin County many years ago.





(3) Tobacco is taken from the sticks.



(4) Tobacco is arranged on grading bench in piles according to color and quality.



(5) 18 to 20 leaves of tobacco from each grade are wrapped in a bundle called a "head" or "hand".



(7) The pressed tobacco was arranged neatly in baskets at the warehouse. The neater the arrangement, the more money you were paid for your tobacco.



(4) A "head" of tobacco.



(5) "Heads" of tobacco on a grading stick.

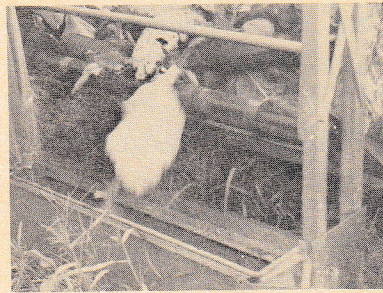


(6) The tobacco pressed flat with a board called a presser. This made the tobacco smooth and more attractive to arrange.

THE BULK METHOD OF HARVESTING



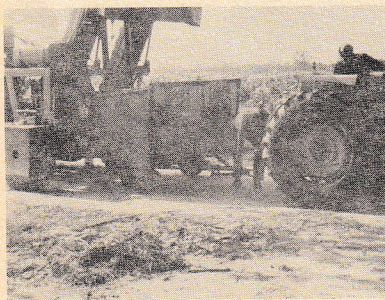
(1) The harvester enters the field and begins breaking



(2) the leaves from the stalk.



(3) The leaves fall into this container, called a palette or flat, that is attached to the back of the harvester.



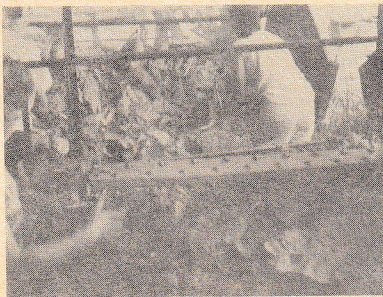
(4) When the harvester gets to the end of the row, this trailer is taken off the harvester by a tractor and carried to the barn.



(5) The tobacco is taken from the palette and



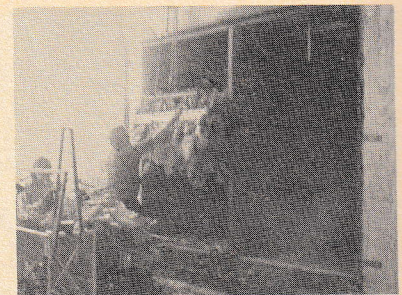
(6) put on a table where it is pressed into racks to be put in the bulk barn.



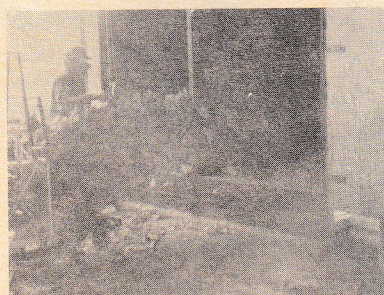
(7) This shows the tobacco being pressed into



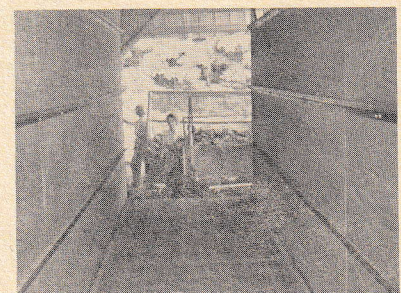
(8) the racks where it is secured by pins.



(9) After the tobacco is pressed into



(10) racks, it is taken from the table and put inside the barns. These racks slide back into the barn on rails mounted on the sides of the barn.



(11) Inside views of the bulk barn.

"EVEN TODAY, IT'S STILL HARD WORK!"

by

Becky Harrison and Susan Gibbs

The culture of tobacco today as compared with that of the early 1900's has changed in many ways. The one step however, that is done much the same way today as in years past is the planting of the tobacco seed beds. One of the differences is in the preparation of the soil for planting. In order to kill any diseases in the soil, methyrbromide gas is injected into the soil and then immediately covered with a plastic cover. This cover remains over the beds for at least 48 hours before the seed are sown. Some farmers even today sow the seed which have been mixed with ashes or fertilizer, by hand, but many others use a mechanical sowing machine. After the seeds are sown, they are covered with wheat straw and the plastic cover rolled back over the beds. Holes are punched in the plastic to allow the plants to breathe. On very warm days the plastic is rolled back to keep the plants from being cooked.

From this point on, the process is entirely mechanical, from stalk to packhouse. The plants are pulled from the beds by hand, but are set out by an automatic transplanter that digs the hole and places the plant in it. Any plants that do not survive the transplanting, however, have to be replaced by hand.

As the plants grow, a blossom appears on the top of the plant and must be removed. Many farmers have a machine which travels down the rows breaking off the blooms, but many still do this by hand. Another step that must be taken as the plants reach maturity is "suckering", which involves breaking the sprouts or "suckers" off the stalks. These left on a plant will take much needed nourishment from the plant and make smaller leaves for curing. Machines have been invented to do this job, but it has been found that it is difficult to replace the person with an experienced eye to see them. Scientists have developed a chemical, M.H. - 30, which retards the growth of these suckers, but it is thought that the addition of this chemical makes a more dangerous smoking product. It will be difficult for farmers to refrain from using this chemical however, since it is difficult to get the hand labor to do it.

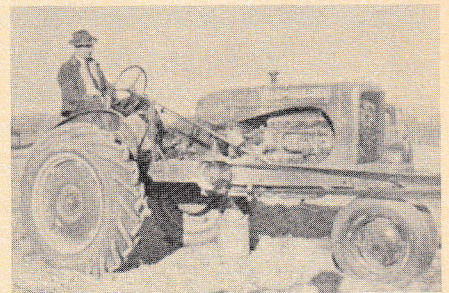
When the plant has reached maturity, the mechanical harvester moves into the field. This harvester was invented in 1953 by Jim Holliday of Jamesville, but was not used by many people in this area until 1967. This machine revolutionized the harvesting of tobacco and solved the problem of the dwindling labor supply. Seven people could cover 10 acres a day and do the same work it would have taken twice that many people, twice the length of time to do.

The leaves were broken from the stalk and passed up to loopers standing on top. When they got to the end of the rows, the sticks were put on trucks and carried to the barn.

There have been many improvements to this system of harvesting and in the past two years there have been even more improvements to cut down on the amount of time and work in the field. There was a new

"While to many people smoking is fun, and a reward in itself, it more often accompanies other pleasures. At meals, a cigarette is somewhat like another course. In general, smoking introduces a holiday spirit into everyday living. It rounds out other forms of employment and makes them one hundred per cent satisfactory."

Ernest Dichter in his book, "THE PSYCHOLOGY OF EVERYDAY LIVING".



In "NEW BOOK OF PLANTS", written in Latin by the botanist Matthias de Lobel in 1570, tobacco was called ("Indorum sana sancta"), the holy, healing plant of the Indians.

*Earth ne're did breed
Such a Jovial weed,
Whereof to boast so proudly.
Holyday in his play, "TECHNO-
GAMIN" - 1618.*

TO MANUFACTURE TOBACCO WHICH IS FLAVORED

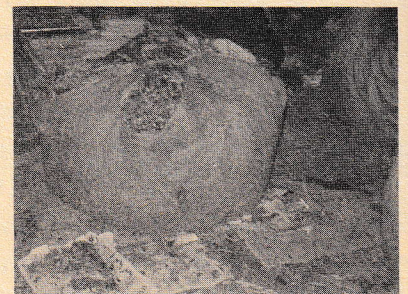
“One part salt, 3 parts sugar, six parts licorice, and one drachm saccharine. Pour sugar in clean pot and pour in clean water until it covers sugar $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. Boil slowly until it thickens. Then it is cooked. Stir it continually. Chop up licorice fine with axe and put in put with sugar; pour in 3 gallons of clear water; keep it below a boiling point until licorice dissolves. Take pot off fire and put in salt, then dissolve saccharine in one or two gallons of hot water and pour in clean water until it rests at 10. Then keep solution as warm as you can bear your hands in it and dip the tobacco into the bottom of pot every time. Attach a common clothes wringer to the pot, run the bundles of tobacco through this wringer tail foremost. Bulk it 12 hours then shake out. Hang it on sticks or lay in on dryers and fire it (flue heat) at from 125 degrees to 140 degrees by thermometer for 12 hours or more until dry. Let it hand. When leaf orders and half of stem is dry, lay it straight in box and spray rum lightly over each layer, and dust over very lightly with powdered cinnamon or other dry flavoring (cassia); press down each layer with a man's weight on an inside heading. Then stamp and sell.

The above is for flavored leaf in bundles. If you wish to put it in penny goods shape to retail, after the tobacco has been shaken up from bulk of 12 hours from wringer, take the butt of the stem in the left hand and fold it around the end of the fingers, tucking the tail under fold, and stick down on table or bench and dry it. When dry put in box to draw. Watch it. As soon as it will give to the squeeze, of the hand without cracking, then put it in 19 lb. thin kiln-dried boxes, with tinfoil or oil paper between the layers then stamp it and sell to merchants. You will find it saleable. The world wants a clean leaf chew at 40¢ a pound, which will net 25¢ for the tobacco.”

GETTING TOBACCO READY FOR MARKET AS IT IS DONE TODAY



(1) A burlap sheet is laid on the floor and a form is put on the sheet. The tobacco is taken off the sticks and packed into this form, until it is full to the top.



(2) After the form is full, it is removed and the sheet is tied around the tobacco. Each sheet holds about 200 pounds of tobacco and it takes 2 or 3 people to manage this step of the operation.



(3) The tied sheets of tobacco are then loaded on a truck to be taken to the market.

sewing machine developed around 1970 that sewed the leaves onto sticks. This saved time, but many people felt that the looping by hand was better since the machine-tied leaves would often times slip off the stick.

By 1930, the oil burner was introduced in Martin County. It rapidly replaced the old wood burners and made wood-curing obsolete. When it was first used, it took about 800 gallons of oil per barn each season. By 1944, Martin County farmers had about one curing barn for every 3½ acres.

Many farmers in Martin County still use the old wood or tile barns to do their curing, but more and more of them are converting to bulk barns. These barns were developed as early as 1954, but have been used here in this county only since the latter part of the 1960's. In this method, the leaves are packed into racks right on the harvester and are secured with sharpened rods. These rods hold the leaves in place and the entire rack is put into the curing barn. Since too much handling damages the tobacco, people using this method feel that the tobacco is in better shape after curing since it goes off the stalk into bulk racks into the barn with a minimum of handling. The curing procedure in the bulk barn is the same as in the old log barns, except that fans are used to force the heated air through the closely packed racks of tobacco. In time, these barns will no doubt replace the older barns. In 1977 there were approximately 32,485 bulk barns being used in North Carolina.

After the tobacco is taken out of the barn, it is unloaded from the racks and carried to the packhouse. Instead of grading the tobacco as before, it is loaded into large burlap sheets and tied up. It is now ready for market, with a minimum of effort.

The farmer takes these bundles to market, sells them, and is back home in just a few hours. How different this is from the way his father had to do it! Another great difference is the tobacco market opening day. Now that day comes and goes with many people never realizing it. The carnival atmosphere of opening day twenty years ago is gone.

Improvements are being made every day in the growing and harvesting of tobacco. One of the newest inventions is the solar heat barn in which the temperature will get up to 170 degrees. The barn is constructed with transparent outer walls and black inner walls to capture the sun's rays. This barn will not replace other barns entirely however, and at this time they are only used for supplementary heat.

Another experimental method of curing, known as Big Box Bulk Curing, has not become too popular at this time, but it is believed in time this method will replace all the others. The tobacco is packed into big boxes right in the fields and put directly into the barn, eliminating many steps formerly taken.

Fifty years ago Martin County farmers thought they had worked out all the details of growing and harvesting tobacco. Today, farmers think the same thing, but the next fifty years may bring more changes than anyone ever dreamed possible.

Controversies about tobacco and its effect on the people smoking it, rage on, but in Martin County, farmers are beginning another year's work to produce another crop of the "Golden Weed".

GROWING LIKE A WEED

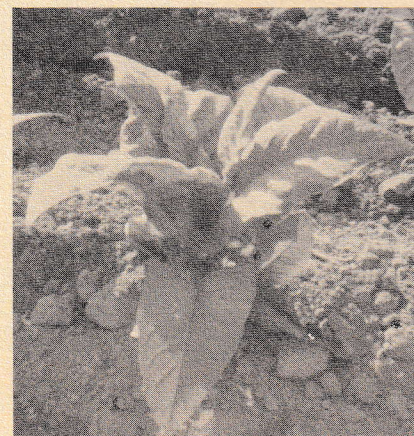
Once the tobacco plants are transplanted into the field, they really begin to grow." These plants are just the beginning of a beautiful crop of tobacco which will be harvested sometime in July.



A tobacco plant that has been in the field only 2 days.



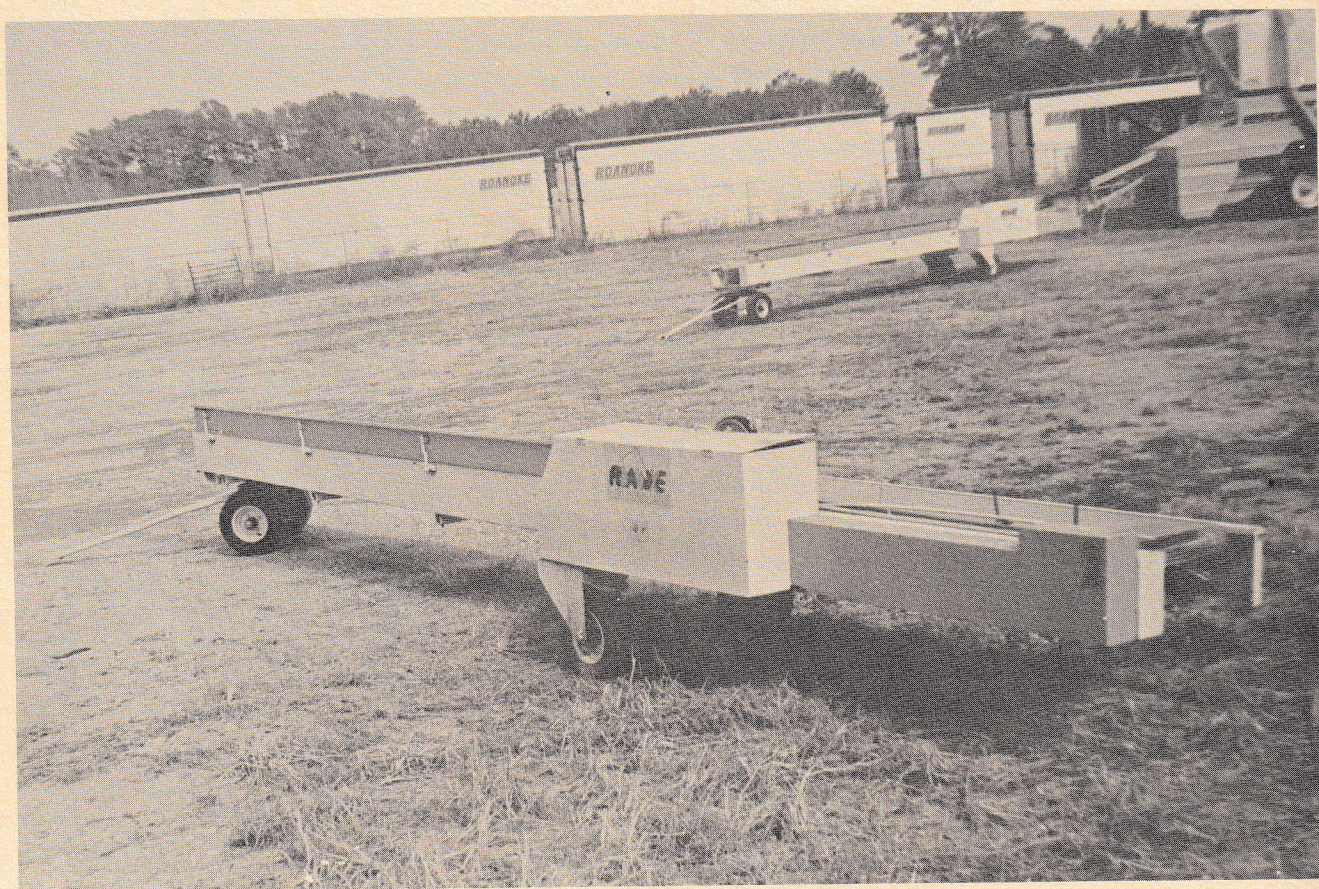
This is the same plant 14 days after having been reset.



This is the same plant 18 days after having been reset.



Here you see the very latest in tobacco harvesting equipment. On the left is the newest harvester on the market. In the center is the bulk barn and on the right is the machine that is used to top the tobacco plants, saving all the man-hours previously needed for this one step in growing tobacco. All of this equipment is manufactured by Harrington Manufacturing Company in Lewiston, North Carolina.



This is the automatic looping machine. This machine loops the tobacco on sticks and replaces a large group of people once needed for this operation. This machine is manufactured by Harrington Manufacturing Company, Lewiston, North Carolina.



(Picture courtesy of Powell Manufacturing Company)

TOPPING TOBACCO

by
Paula Stokes

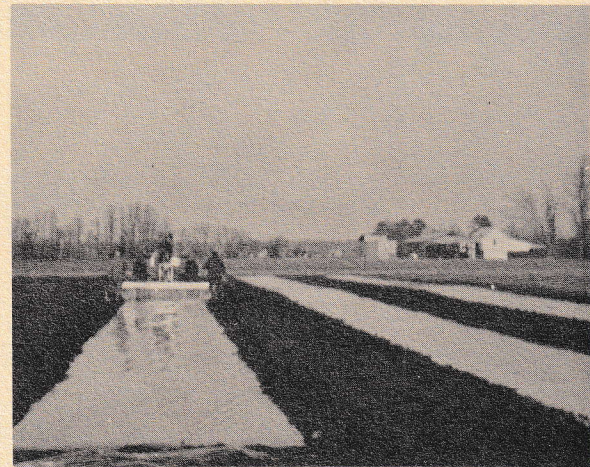
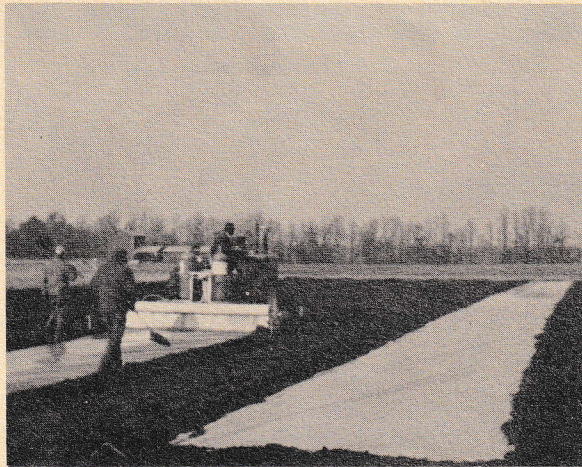
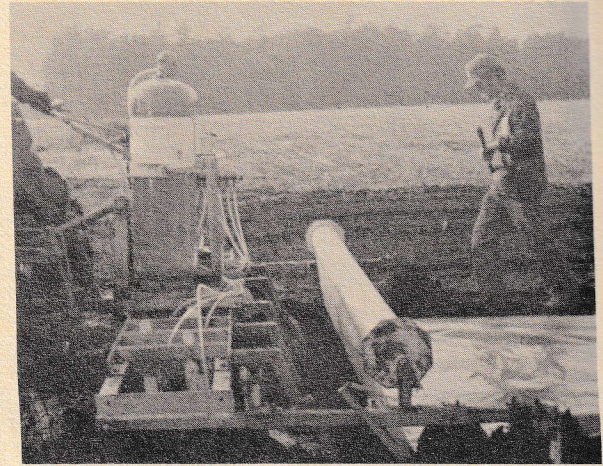
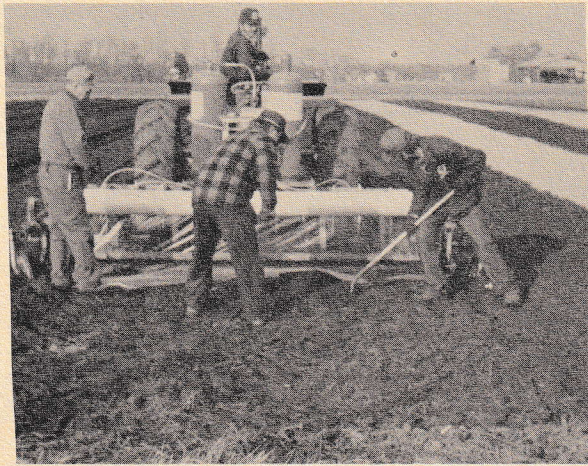
Topping tobacco means breaking the flower off the top of the plant. This should be done early so as to increase the weight and body of the tobacco leaf. Each day that the tobacco goes untopped could cause a reduction of about 25 pounds of cured leaf per acre!

Untopped plants will produce thin-bodied leaves all the way to the top of the plant. The heavier bodied tobacco sells for a higher price, so the grower needs to top tobacco at just the right time to produce the best quality leaf possible. Laboratory tests have also found that early topping helps produce leaves with a moderate nicotine level in them.

The machine shown in this picture is operated by one man and can top up to 20 acres of tobacco a day. In the early days of growing tobacco in our county, this had to be done by hand and it would have taken many men long grueling hours in the sun to accomplish this task.

To break the top off the plant, this machine depresses the tip leaves with a strong air stream. This leaves the flower exposed so that it can be removed by a rotary blade without damaging the surrounding tip leaves. The tops fall into the rows as the machine passes by.

GASSING THE TOBACCO BEDS



The soil in the seed beds is treated with a fumigant to destroy the weeds and diseases that tobacco is susceptible to. The beds are covered with heavy plastic and the methylbromide gas is released into the ground under the plastic. After the gas is released, farmers leave the plastic cover on the plant bed for at least 48 hours before planting the seed. If any of the fumigant lingers, it will kill the tobacco seeds, so the farmer must allow plenty of time for the gas to dissipate.

SOWING THE PLANT BEDS



(1) Preparation of the plant bed after it has been gassed. The soil is broken up very finely and raked as smooth as possible.



(2) The seed is sown either by hand as shown here or with a machine made especially for the tiny seed. The seeds are mixed with ashes or fertilizer so they will be sown evenly.



(3) After the seed are sown, they are covered with wheat straw which will protect the young plants when they sprout. This straw has to be treated with the gas as well as the soil in the plant bed. This kills any weeds or diseases that might infect the new plants. Here you see the straw covered with plastic while being treated with the gas.



(4) A roller with spikes in it is used to punch holes in the plastic after the beds are planted. These holes allow the plants to breathe and helps control the heat under the plastic.



(5) A close-up view of the roller used to punch holes in the plastic. This one is home-made from a small log with nails imbedded in it.

Farmers in Martin County like to have their seed beds planted and covered by March 1. Planting the tobacco seeds is no easy job. The seeds are extremely small and are very expensive. There are about 350,000 seeds in each ounce. One ounce of seeds cost about \$20.00 This ounce will plant about 600 square yards of plant beds and will produce enough plants for about 12 acres of tobacco. Because the seeds are so small, farmers mix them with ashes or fertilizer before scattering them in the beds. After the seeds are sown, the plastic is rolled back over the beds and fastened down. Holes are punched in the plastic for ventilation. These beds, covered with plastic, will produce plants ready for transplanting in about 65 days. As the plants get bigger, the farmer will take the cover off the plants to help toughen them and to help them withstand the shock of transplanting.

MODERN METHOD TRANSPLANTING



These are the tobacco seed beds as they look about 6 weeks after they have been sown. The plants are ready to be transplanted into the field and are pulled up one at the time, placed in baskets, and then carried to the crew working on the transplanting machine. As you can see, this is a "family affair", with women and children alike sharing in the work!



This picture shows a two-row transplanter at work. It takes 5 men to operate this machine. One drives while the other 4 drop the plants into the clamps.



This close-up view of the operation shows how the people on the harvester pick up the tobacco plants one at the time.



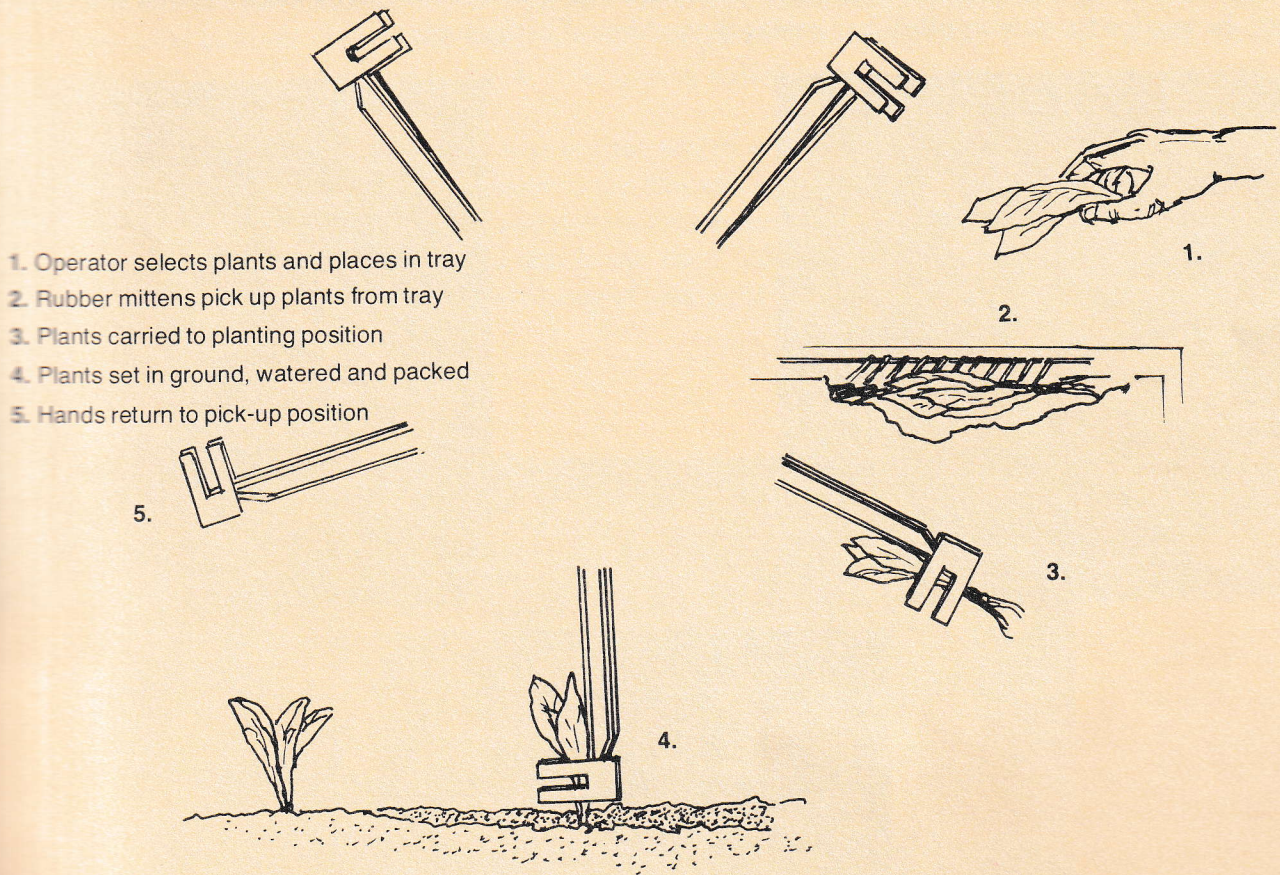
They've reached the end of the row and will turn around and repeat this operation until the field has been completely planted.

Sometimes a person has to walk behind the transplanter and find the spots that the machine has missed. When he finds an empty space, he pokes a hole in the soft ground with a stick, drops a plant in it, and covers it with dirt. In the early days of growing tobacco, this was the way *all* of the tobacco had to be set out in the fields! The round stick used for this purpose was usually made of a pine "lighter knot" and curved to fit the palm of a person's hand.



How it works

TRANSPLANTING TOBACCO



Powell's Exclusive Plant Pick-Up System

The Automatic Plant Pick-Up System is the secret to fast transplanting. The operator selects the plant and places it in the tray. That's all! The machine does the rest. Rubber mittens remove the plant from the tray and release it in the soil. This frees the operator to prepare the next plant rather than having to wait for revolving hands or pockets to take the plant.



(Pictures and diagrams courtesy of Powell Manufacturing Company, Bennettsville, S.C.)

HOW TO MAKE THE BRICK FURNACE IN THE TOBACCO BARN

The first step in making the furnace was to make a wooden U-shaped frame. This was set into place where the furnace was to be used. About 4 thicknesses of bricks were laid over this wooden frame and then the entire thing was covered with cement or clay. This was allowed to harden for quite a long time and when finally set, the wooden frame was pulled out, leaving the archway of bricks intact.



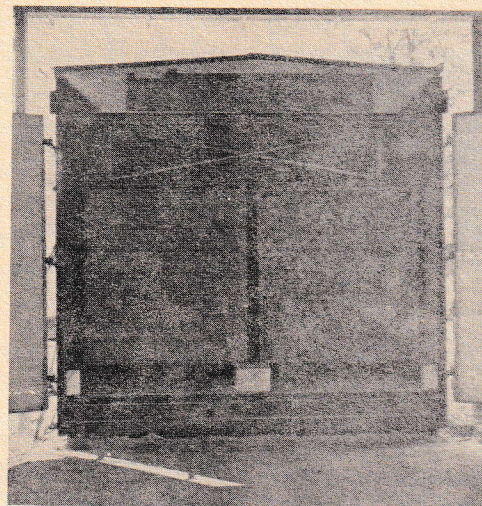
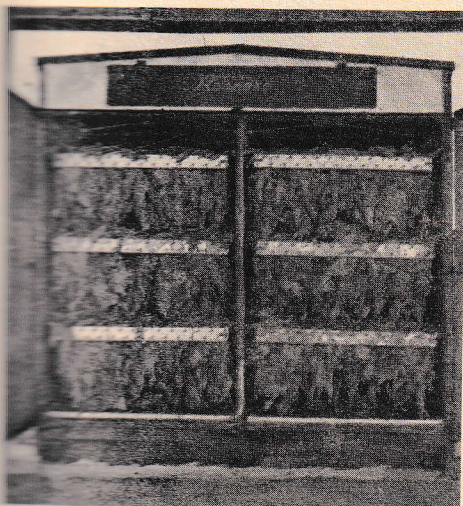
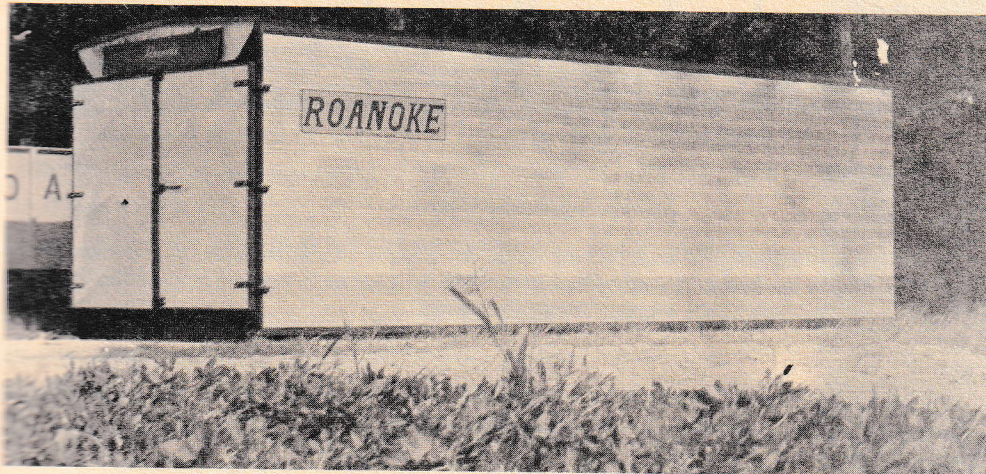
The end of a log tobacco barn showing the way the logs were notched to hold them in place. Using this method there was no need for nails to secure the logs.

BULK BARNES

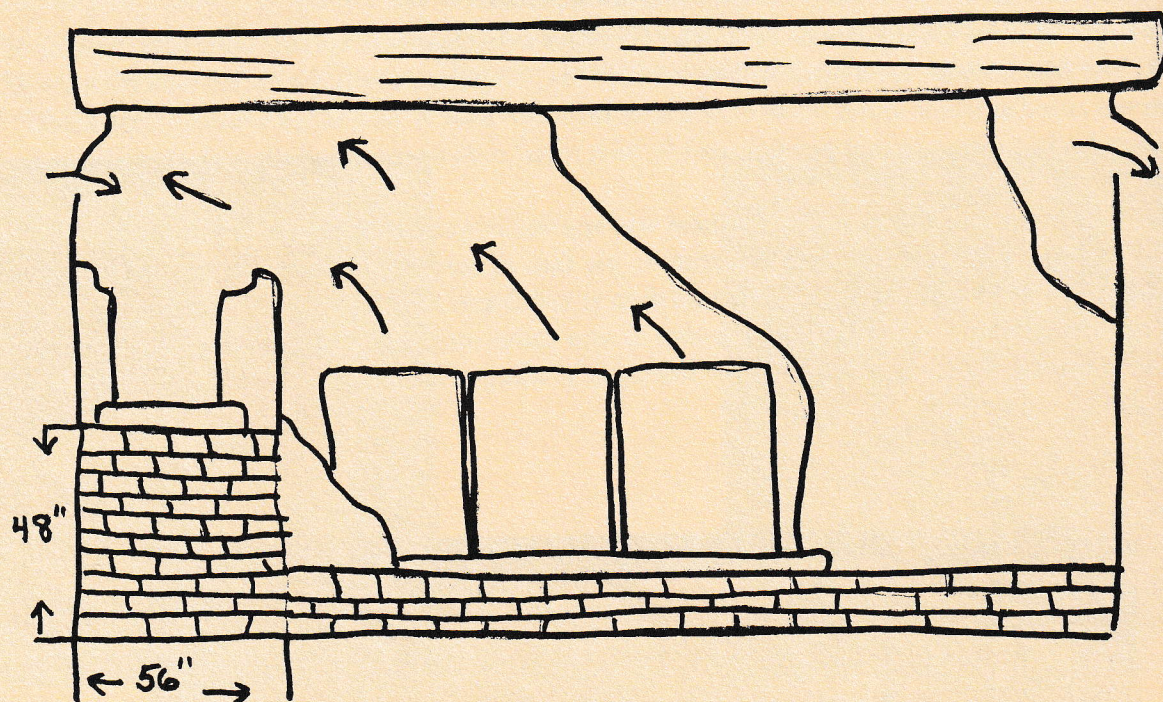
Tests began in using these barns in 1954. The first ones were chambers holding about 200 pounds of tobacco each. The burners were fired directly into the fan. The temperature was controlled by a thermostat. Some tobacco was cured as whole leaves while others were shredded into $\frac{1}{2}$ inch strips with reel-type blades. Whole leaves were bulked into a vertical position and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch metal rods were pushed through the tobacco for added support.

When curing tobacco this new way, no heat was applied in yellowing because normal respiration caused heat to build up in the piles so it was necessary to use fans to keep the temperature below 100 degrees. The tobacco dried for 8-15 hours at 103 degrees and then at 170 degrees until completely dry.

The advantage of this new method was that it was more compact, had greater curing efficiency, gave greater uniformity of color, and required less sorting or grading of leaves.

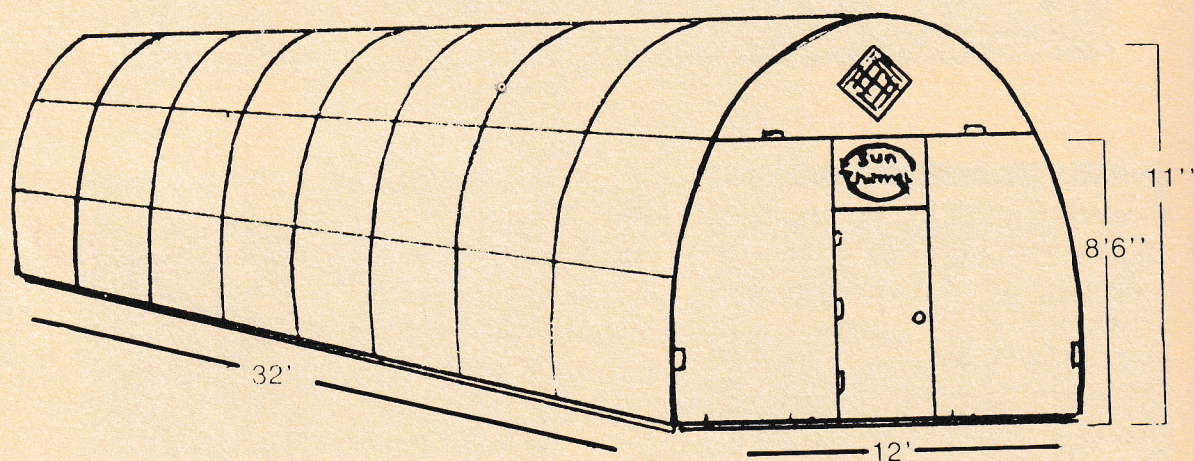


A BULK BARN



BIG BOX BULK CURING

Bulk boxes save labor by eliminating the barn-racking operation. One or two workers on the harvester spread the leaves out evenly within the box as the leaves fall in it. This do-it-yourself method permits the farmer to build his own bulk barns and bulk boxes, thereby saving him money.



SOLAR HEAT BARN

The solar heat barn is one of the newest inventions in the curing of tobacco. The temperature will get up to 170 degrees. The barn is constructed with transparent outer walls and black inner walls to capture the sun's rays. This barn will not replace other more conventional barns however, and at this time they are only used for supplementary heat.