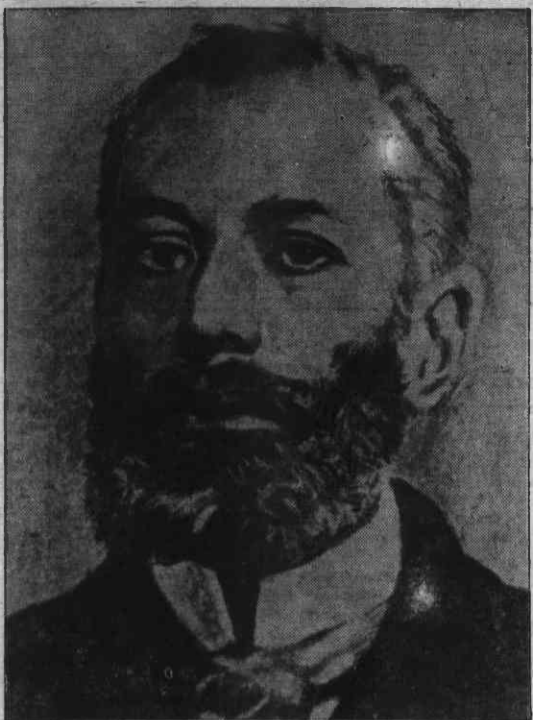


BROWN SKIN AND BRIGHT LEAF

The Story Of The Negro's Role In The Tobacco Industry



THE BOLD BEGINNING

Chapter II

With bold strokes, a brown hand wrote the first pages of tobacco's history in America.

Bold because it required initiative and daring for the Negro while still a slave to take the steps of experimentation and discovery that advanced the entire tobacco industry toward progress. While still a slave, the Negro dared to show his white overseers the best methods of producing, cultivating and exploiting his most profitable crop. While still less than a citizen, the Negro in the tobacco field had all of the characteristics of the free man: ambition, curiosity, initiative, love of his work and pride in his accomplishment.

The first money crop of the early Virginia colony was tobacco—planted, harvested and cured by Negro slaves who had been especially imported from the Caribbean Islands. These Negroes, among the first to set foot on American soil, had previously worked on Caribbean tobacco plantations. Once transplanted to the foreign soil of Virginia, they steadfastly applied their knowledge of the "tobacco" plant to the improvement of the colonial crop. The white masters and the white bond servants who toiled beside the Negroes in the fields alike respected the Negro slaves' superior knowledge of the mysterious ways of the tobacco plant, which grew strong and tall in good weather, but suffered drastically from severe storms and droughts. Progress resulted, and it is recorded that Virginia rapidly became a tobacco colony, with citizens abandoning their normal trades to take a hand in the raising of the crop that was "as good as gold"—so good, in fact, that it was preferred to gold and silver as legal tender. By 1640, exports had increased from 20,000 to 1,300,000 pounds of tobacco, and the Assembly was considering legislation to force farmers to return to the cultivation of food crops.

In the islands, therefore, Negroes had grown tobacco for as long as anyone could remember. Perhaps that is why, back in England, they had always been associated with the leaf and its pleasures. The wooden Indian that still symbolizes tobacco to us originated in England as a 1615 tobacco seller's figure—a resplendent African tribesman, drinking his Pe-toune, carrying a huge cigar under his arm, and wearing kilts made of tobacco leaves.

And, during the days of James I, it was customary for English tobacco venders to advertise their wares by hiring

16 to 18 hours dries the leaves thoroughly; and a still hotter fire, burning nearly another day, "kills" the sap and moisture in the stems. Slade's ingenious method is still the only one used in the curing of bright tobacco.

Another Negro, Lunsford Lane, a bondsman of Raleigh, North Carolina, earned his freedom by processing and marketing a blend of smoking tobacco which gained fame throughout the state. With the profits he earned from his "Lane Tobacco," Lane bought his own freedom.

About this time Negroes played an important part in another forward step in tobacco manufacturing. Previously tobacco had been sold loose—leaf upon raw leaf jammed into bulky packages. Negroes soon became skilled specialists in the new "lump-making" procedure, fashioning the fragile leaves into compact packets and twists. Later this process was mechanized with the help of an invention by John P. Parker, a Negro, who received several patents in 1884 and 1885 for his "Screw for Tobacco Presses." To produce these presses, forerunners of an

essential part of today's tobacco manufacture, Parker set up a machine shop in Ripley, Ohio.

Still another Negro—inventor Elijah McCoy of Virginia—made a name, from an improvement which indirectly led to the mass production of cigarettes. In 1872, McCoy introduced a lubricating cap which permitted machines to be oiled without stopping. His process was applied by another inventor who had been working on an automatic cigarette-making machine...and, within three years, the machine was in use and mass production was on the way. This invention, together with the development of bright Virginia tobacco, was the foundation for the great diversity of cigarette brands like Old Gold and Kent, etc. that we have today. As a consequence, American cigarettes have become known and used the world over to the tune of a multi-billion dollars in production each year.

Most of the foregoing developments, it must be remembered took place before the abolition of slavery. Yet on the great day of the proclamation, the Negro's role in the drama of America's third largest field crop was just beginning.

Editor's Note: Next Week Chapter III—Fields of Gold which reveals, The Negro farmer in Tobaccoland; his contributions and his progress; statistics on his growing income and standards of living; inspiring individual case histories.

Here, in a small frame building in New York, Pierre Lorillard manufactured snuff—later in 1792, he built a mill on the Bronx River where smoking tobacco was manufactured for the first time in the United States, with Negroes employed in both skilled and unskilled operations.

The publication of this story may bring additional pride to the descendants of Negroes like Stephen Slade, who discovered the flue-curing of bright tobacco. A slave in Caswell County, North Carolina, Slade in 1839, worked out the complicated process of flue-curing which involves the use of brick or stone "kilns" or fireplaces with flues leading into tightly sealed barns that imprison all the smoke used in the drying of tobacco.

A slow fire burning for some 48 hours turns the leaves to a bright lemon yellow; then a higher temperature for another

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New Anti-Negro Group Threatens The South With KKK-Type Terror

NEW YORK — A secret vigilante group, dedicated to the prevention of desegregation at all costs, has risen in the deep South and now threatens to become a modern day Klu Klux Klan, it was revealed today.

This white supremacy group, called the Citizens Councils, was founded in July 1954 to combat last year's Supreme Court decision against segregation in the public schools. It is currently under investigation by the F. B. I. for possible violations of civil liberties.

These disclosures of the power and activities of the Citizens Councils were made today by Pulitzer Prize-winning editor Hodding Carter in an article in the new issue of Look Magazine entitled, "A Wave of Terror Threatens the South."

Mr. Carter, who is the editor of the Greenville, Mississippi, Democrat-Times, revealed that

the Councils Movement has spread unchecked through the states of Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, South Carolina, and northern Florida. It has met no organized opposition, Mr. Carter said, and claims 25,000 members in Mississippi alone.

In addition to its anti-Negro bias, the Councils are spreading anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic propaganda as well, Mr. Carter charged in his Look article.

The group was founded in Mississippi in July and has its permanent headquarters in Wilona in that state, Mr. Carter revealed.

While no direct physical violence has resulted from the Councils' activities to date, the group has won each fight it has entered in the last six months, Mr. Carter said. It operates by exerting economic and social pressures on recalcitrant Negroes and whites.

The greatest danger posed by the Councils, Mr. Carter found, was the possibility that "the extremist fringe," the "viciously uncontrollable," and the "hoodlum element" would take control of the organization and lead it to "widespread, organized and racially motivated terrorism."

Hughes

(Continued from Page Two) organist.

Hughes is the son of Rev. and Mrs. E. A. Hughes of Watville, Virginia, in the Delaware Conference of the Methodist Church. He began taking organ lessons when he was seven. He also plays the piano, harp and violin. He was a music major at Clark College, Atlanta, Ga., before entering the Army.

Miller First Of Race To Offer Prayer for Senate

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — The Rev. Levi B. Miller, Jr., executive secretary of Christian education in the Washington Conference of the Methodist Church, became the first Negro to offer prayer in the Maryland State Senate when he performed that function on Thursday, February 24th.

The following day, the Rev. A. J. Payne of Enon Baptist Church, Baltimore, offered the prayer. Both ministers were chosen through the efforts of State Senator Harry Cole. First Negro to be elected to the body.



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