



Skilled Negro workers like Bannie Hawthorne of Richmond, Va., who became specialists in the curing and processing of tobacco were employed in America's first tobacco factory operated by P. Lorillard Com-

pany in 1793. The makers of Old Gold cigarettes reveal these facts in "Brown Skin and Bright Leaf" the story of the Negro's role in the tobacco industry.

## BROWN SKIN AND BRIGHT LEAF

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

### Chapter III—Fields Of Gold

Where once a back-wary Negro father was traded into slavery for seventy-five pounds of fragrant tobacco, today his descendants trade tobacco for debt-free farms for education for their children for the modern appliances which make life easier...for the financial independence which leads to a respected position in the community.

A large portion of today's million Negro farmers look to tobacco for their livelihood. In the tobacco regions of Maryland, Virginia, and North and South Carolina, tobacco is the principal source of cash income for Negro farmers. In many farm areas like the county surrounding Rockingham, North Carolina, ninety-two per cent of the cash income of Negro farmers is derived from tobacco.

Tobacco growing is an arduous—yet particularly rewarding—chore. The cultivation of "Nicotiana Tobacum" is a constant battle with Nature. Long damp periods as well as unseasonably dry weather spells ruin to the grower who can sell only top-grade tobacco to fastidious companies like world-famous P.

Lorillard Company. And no other agricultural crop requires so much hard, back-bending labor and tedious hand cultivation. Early in April the shallow seedbeds are planted and covered with cheese-cloth for protection against a possible late frost. During May, the tiny plants must be set out by hand in wide rows three and a half feet apart. By midsummer, after weeks of dawn to dusk labor at spraying and hoeing and picking, the plants have grown to three or four feet in height and the farmer begins his "topping"—cutting the plants to prevent them from going to seed. Then comes the "suckers"—new sprouts—which the farmer must pull or kill with special chemicals. This occurs in the hot days of mid-summer, which are followed by anxious, watchful months when the crop may be threatened by storm, drought, insects or Disease.

After all this effort comes the harvest, the laborious curing process and the suspense of whether the crop will bring good prices at the auction. But Negro farmers have gambled on the capricious rewards of tobacco—and won. Skilled in the tradition of the fields cultivated by his fore-

the farm" is a Clarksville, Va., tobacco farmer.

A partially disabled veteran of World War II, he has brought the scientific knowledge he gained in his studies of agriculture under the GI Bill to bear on his 14 acres of tobacco... which have provided him with the funds to build a modern home and open a feed-grinding mill.

With autumn comes the harvesting of the ripened tobacco crop. The harvest is a neighborhood affair, and in Maryland's lush tobacco region at harvest time, a Negro farmer's wife can be seen helping her husband "prime" and tie the leaves together. This particular lady, an attractive brown-skinned woman, her face reflecting the healthy joys of watching the crop develop, is representative of the many husbands. She, too, knows the sweat and toil, the risks and dangers attendant upon the growing of tobacco.

Bright tobacco is picked leaf by leaf as it ripens. The farmers call this "priming"—a tedious task, since five or six priming the leaves are tied together in bundles called "hands," strung on poles, and raked up tier on tier in a curing barn—either the ventilated, air-curing type of barn or the tightly sealed, fired flue-curing barn. When, after the tobacco has been carefully cured to a bright golden color, it must be graded according to color, texture and aroma, all the farmer's skill and knowledge are brought into play.

Next comes the thrilling, suspenseful tobacco auction—a scene of pride for Negro farmers because their product is judged only for the qualities that make fine tobacco—not according to the race of its growers. Tobacco with a rich, golden color, a firm texture, and a pleasant aroma brings the highest prices because it can enter into the superb blend of a fine cigarette like Old Gold or Kent.

As the auctioneer with his rapid chant of "Sixty-eight, eight, eight, sixty-nine" moves down the long rows of tobacco-filled baskets in the auction rooms, the Negro farmer will learn the ultimate result of his efforts. But whether the crop has brought good or bad prices, he will return to his farm and work twice as hard to improve it next year—because tobacco growing is the best route he knows to security and good living.

Editor's Note: Next—Week, Chapter IV, Education For To-

## E. T. Browne Resigns Position With Association



The Rev. E. T. Browne, pastor of the Mount Vernon Baptist Church, has tendered his resignation both as chairman and member of the Executive Board of the New Hope Missionary Baptist Association.

In a letter to the moderator, the Rev. James Stewart, the Rev. Mr. Browne states that he will continue as a loyal supporter of the Association and requests that his resignation be considered effective as of the date of letter.

The Letter: Rev. James Stewart 404 Lawson Street Durham, North Carolina

Dear Brother Stewart: I take this means of resigning from the Office of Chairman of the Executive Board, and from Membership of the Executive Board of the New Hope Missionary Baptist Association, as of the above date. I shall continue my active support of the Association and shall pray for you and the work.

Very sincerely yours, E. T. Browne, Pastor Mt. Vernon Baptist Church Durham, North Carolina

morrow which reveals The Negro colleges where research in tobacco cultivation is a major program; the Negro extension agents of the U.S. Department of agriculture and their role; a day in the life of a typical agent; the youthful members of The New Farmers of America.

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- PULL DIAL TO FINGER STOP
- DO NOT FORCE OR RETARD DIAL

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## Capital Close-Up

(Continued from Page Two)

Gene's better half, is currently running a public service program "Our Other Brother," over Station WOOK, on Saturday's at 6 p.m. Edmonia, an alumna of Howard, Fisk, Rosenthal Fellow and National "Y" program secretary, did field work on Myrdal's "American Dilemma" with Arthur Raper, Ralph Bunche, and others, and is widely known, sociologically and socially. Her program aims to promote international understanding through interviews with guests from abroad. More on this, later.

Goodbye Herb and Anna Henegan

Press Clubbers and their friends said goodbye to Herb and Anna Smith Henegan at a party, last week, at the Tropical Room of the New Dunbar Hotel. This week the two are flying to New Delhi, where Herb will be on the "info" staff of USIS. The Capital Press Club observed Newspaper Week with a symposium on the Negro Press and Integration. Panelists were Hugo Warren of the Courier, Lois Taylor of the Afro, and Ethel Payne of the Chicago

Defender. Louise Beavers Sees Friend Nixon

Vice-President Nixon, back from serious and successful good-willing in the Caribbean,

vers, here with Mae West, insisted on seeing her—had his picture made with the film star who backed him when he was a struggling young politico in California.



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