

13,500,000 People Employed In Cotton Production In U. S.



JOHN W. MITCHELL,
Negro State Agent.

It is very appropriate that North Carolina should at this time pay homage to a basic crop not only of the south, but of the nation whose production and processing give employment to more than 13,500,000 people in the United States or 11 per cent of the population of continental United States on 2,000,000 cotton farms in the south and southwest. Over 10,000,000 persons depend on cotton for the greater part of their income. While approximately 3,000,000 more work in cotton textile manufacture and another 500,000 in marketing and processing cotton. These figures, large as they are do not include the many owners of stocks and bonds of cotton mills and other companies, the business of financing and banking, the growing and handling and manufacturing of cotton and the merchandising of cotton products, nor do these figures include the millions engaged in retail merchandising ranging from cross roads trading centers to the great city department stores.

It is true corn, wheat and hay occupy a larger acreage, but these products do not give employment to near so many people as cotton.

The Importance of Cotton.
Income from cotton in comparison to wheat and tobacco. Cotton yielded a cash income in 1936 of \$905,682,000 or a billion dollars which was \$30,000,000 more than the combined income from wheat and tobacco. Cotton enters the daily life of every person in the nation.

Cotton is used in more than 1,000 ways. There never has been a day in the lives of this audience here or the people in the United States when cotton has not been used in several ways. Some speak of cotton as white gold, some as the Aladdin lamp, cotton has been mentioned as the vegetable lamb. Cotton has long since out-ripped wool as a world fiber.

Cotton furnishes 56.4 per cent of the world fiber while wool, 7.7 per cent and rayon 4.9 per cent; silk less than 5 per cent.

For the past quarter of a century the annual consumption of lint cotton for each citizen of the United States has been approximately 26 pounds, varying from 20 to 30 pounds annually.

Forty per cent of cotton's annual consumption goes into clothes, the other into household articles and industry such as automobiles, bagging, belts. Cotton is grown on one-third of the farms of the nation, and in the past four-fifths of those on which cotton is grown it is the major source of cash income.

Importance of Cotton in State.
North Carolina ranks sixth in the production of cotton of the 10 southern states where cotton is grown. Forty-seven per cent of the farms in North Carolina grow cotton. North Carolina ranked first in the textile industry in the south in 1935. North Carolina also ranks first in the value of textiles manufactured in the south in 1935. North Carolina ranks first of the southern states in the yield of cotton per acre in major cotton states

five-year average ranking somewhat ahead of the state of Mississippi.

The History of Cotton.
In the days of King Nebuchadnezza of Babylon traders were selling exquisite pieces of handcraft, beautiful, delicate fascinating pieces of cloth the like of which the world had never seen. The origin of cotton is shrouded in obscurity. But there is reference made to a mystery cloth as early as 1500 B. C. In fact India from 1500 B. C. to that many years in the Christian era. India was the center of the cotton industry. India was the unrivaled country for cotton cloth. From India, cotton culture and cotton making seem to have spread to Persia and China. A Chinese emperor was presented a cotton robe 502 B. C.

The history of cotton culture in India is significantly related to America because Columbus sought a shorter route to India in order to carry on the trade with India in their valuable treasures, fine cotton cloth being some of those fine treasures. **Cotton in the Western Hemisphere.**
When Columbus came to America, he found cotton growing in the West Indies. Cortes, who made the conquest of Mexico, found the natives highly skilled in weaving, spinning and dyeing cotton. Bizarro who invaded Peru in 1522 found the natives clad in cotton garments. He also found mummies wrapped in cotton cloth. Cotton was planted by the English colonists almost as soon as they were established in the new world. The demand for cotton by England, the mother country influenced the colonists to plant and grow cotton which influenced the future of the states where the climatic conditions favored the growing of cotton which are the 10 southern states. Eli Whitney's invention which was patented in 1794 influenced cotton as nothing else.

In 1790 about 3,000 bales of cotton were produced a year. Within eight years after Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin 100,000 bales were being grown in the south. By 1858 James Henry Hammond, of South Carolina, stood in the senate chamber of the United States and said "you dare not make war on cotton. No power on earth dares to make war on it. Cotton is king."

In 1891-1892 the world production of cotton was only a little more than 12,000,000 bales, not including China. In 1937-1938, the world's cotton production, including China, reached a new peak. In that year 38,050,000 bales were grown. There are 60 or more countries in which some cotton is grown. Only five other than the United States are of great importance in cotton production. These are Brazil, China, Egypt, India and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic. The foreign countries produced 19,000,000 bales in 1937-1938.

Cotton in the Life of the Negro and The South.

Over 95 per cent of all the Negro farmers of the United States live in the south. It is the south where the cotton in America is grown.

As stated earlier, cotton was planted by the English colonists in America almost as soon as permanent settlements were started in the south. The demands of the mother country, England, influenced the colonists to plant, grow and ship to England all the cotton possible. To grow more of this crop an abundance of human labor was needed. In the Negro slave labor, this cheap labor could be found. Therefore, slavery proved to be more profitable on the cotton plantations of Virginia and the states farther south. By 1800, Negro slavery was a southern condition and the majority of these Negro slaves were to be found on the plantations. The principal cash crop being cotton. England and the other part of the world depend on the cotton belt of the United States to supply the cotton for textile industry. So great was England's dependency on the United States for cotton that when the war between the states started and the blockade shipment of cotton to England was put into effect that cotton

sold as high as \$1.78 a pound in England. The production of cotton in America dropped from over 5,000,000 bales in 1859 to 1,757,000 in 1868. As a result of the Negroes' attachment to cotton plantations that even as late as 1930, 85 per cent of all Negro farm operators were in the south. In 1929 cotton was produced on 83.5 per cent of all the farms operated by Negroes. Negroes produced that year 32.4 per cent of the total yield of cotton or around \$33,000,000 crop of cotton. While cotton has reigned as king for many years in America, yet like other kings and rulers there have been defects and objections to their usurp of power, therefore, are many criticisms laid at the door of King Cotton and his sway over the people of his kingdom of southern agriculture.

The southern farmer has produced billions of dollars worth of wealth for the world, but yet the south is looked upon as a land of opportunity populated by two races that have failed to overcome their economic problems, and as a result presents a grave national economic problem. The south is featured as having the lowest per capita per farm and per farm family income of any gross farm income in the United States. The average gross farm income in the United States is \$1,039. Twelve of the states where cotton is grown in the United States is below this average income per farm. California and Florida above because of other crops including fruits, etc. Poor housing, low per farm family income, ill-nourished, poverty and illiteracy are in a measure charged against our one crop system of cotton. It is the opinion that cotton will remain as an important cash crop of the south, but cotton must not be absolute king on southern farms, but to occupy a regulated place in southern agriculture. This is not a secret against King Cotton, but an open campaign.

Henry W. Grady, an eminent newspaper editor and orator in the "golden age" of cotton wished for cotton to take its place in a regulated southern agriculture in order that southern farmers might enjoy a higher economic standard of living. Henry Gray, in 1887, speaking under the spell of inspiration said: "Whenever a farmer eats bread from his own field, meat from his own pasture, disturbed by no creditors, enslaved by no debts, shall sit amidst his teeming gardens and orchards, and vineyards and dairies, and barnyards, pitching his crop to his own wisdom, and growing them in independence, making cotton his surplus crop, selling it in his own chosen market and not at a master's bidding—getting his pay in cash and not in a receipted mortgage that discharges his debt, but does not restore his freedom—then shall he be breaking the fullness of our day."

Congratulation, the Promoters of the First Cotton Festival.

At this point I desire to sincerely congratulate Mr. Irvin, the Carolina Times with headquarters in Durham, the Negro Chamber of Commerce, business men, educators and citizens of both races on setting the stage and making this important event possible. It comes at a time when national de-

fense for America and democracy of the world is at a tense crisis. To falter or fall at this time would probably turn back progress in civilization by centuries like turning back pages in a book. Agriculture, industry and commerce are bound up in what should be an inseparable bond with one another, with the principal element being the human element—the people—the welfare of the people.

If this festival can but focus the importance of the educators, business men and statesmen of the fact that the humblest farmer growing a small patch of cotton whether he be a tenant or a small landowner, white or black, that he is contributing in an important way to the welfare of his nation, much will be accomplished. If this festival can bring home to every farmer little or big, that as important as cotton may be, that he should include in his farm program home defense first which is food for his family, feed for his livestock and fertility for his land in order to insure future crops.

During or after the civil war, cotton went to 31.5 cents per pound (1866) in 1919 cotton went to around 38.2 cents per pound and cotton is now on the climb, so is food stuff and everything else. "What goes up must come down." But in the end will the people of the south be stronger because of being well fed? Will they enjoy a better standard of living, will there be more security for all people? These are questions, and problems that face us as Americans. Cotton was not intended to enslave people, producer or textile worker, but to be a means to a livelihood.

Dr. Seaman A. Knapp, pioneer of farm demonstration work who came to the rescue of the southern cotton farmer when the boll weevil was invading the southern cotton fields like the German armies are invading Europe. Dr. Knapp offered as a solution to the menace a balanced system of farming with emphasis on food, feed and fertility with livestock as an important part of the program. In the closing days of his outstanding career at one of the national agricultural gatherings he said:

"But today I am not viewing this campaign for production from the national standpoint. I am thinking of the people of rose covered cottages in the country, of the strong glad father and his contented, cheerful wife, of the whistling boy and the dancing girl with school books under their arms, so knowledge may soak into them as they go. I am thinking of the orchards and vineyards, of the flocks and herds, of the waving woodlands, of the hills carpeted with luxuriant verdure, of the valleys inviting to the golden harvest." What can bring these transformations to the south—greater earning capacity of people. The human element is the greatest essential in our endeavors.

Now that the formal opening of this very progressive cotton festival has begun in the metropolis of North Carolina, the Queen City, the city of Charlotte with its historic background and progressive program for future growth, we hope on the part of extension service a great measure of success to the event.

Chapel Built In 11 Months

(Continued From Page One)

balcony, seats about 900 persons. Little Theater in Separate Wing.
The Little Theater wing of the new building is connected with the Chapel by a short hall, but has its own entrance, as well. A wrought-iron balustrade leads up the limestone stairway to double entrance doors opening into an auditorium which accommodates nearly 300 people. The theater has complete lighting equipment, including first-class footlights and border-lights. Dressing-rooms are located behind the stage, which has a curtain of garnet velvet, contrasting with the pale green walls of the auditorium.

MRS. BETHUNE MAIN SPEAKER

(Continued From Page One)

her school merged with the Cookman Institute of Jacksonville, Fla., becoming co-educational. From the small rented cottage, it has steadily grown to 14 buildings and a plant appraised at \$500,000, an accredited junior college offering majors in teacher training and junior college work.

She founded the Southeastern Federation of Colored Women, which covers 14 states, and was its first president. She also founded the National Headquarters for the National Association of Colored Women and the Florida Delinquent Home for Colored Girls.

Mrs. Bethune, who is well known as an executive, orator and educator, is the director of the National Youth Administration in Washington, D. C., and is a member of the Commission on International Co-operation.

Special music for the occasion will be furnished by the college choir under the direction of Professor Warner Lawson.

SIX-YEAR PLAN IS SUCCESSFUL

(Continued From Page One)

fnctive institution, with a student body of nearly 400, and capital assets of \$1,774,783.93. It is the only college of its kind where the responsibility for administration, teaching, maintenance, and care of buildings and grounds is committed entirely to Negro men and women.

An independent private college under the auspices of the Methodist Church, the present-day Bennett is an outgrowth of the older, co-educational Bennett College, which was established in 1873, but which was reorganized under a new administration in 1926. Its attractive campus houses one of the most complete educational plants in the south. Moreover, a faculty composed of men and women of different ages and points of view offers a cross-section of the intellectual currents of the day to a student body which represents a selection from applicants too numerous for accommodation.

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