

# Burley Growers Lose Much Money In Grading of Weed For Market

BY GEO. O. BALLARD  
Assistant Inspector Assigned to the Boone Market.

The history of the tobacco industry is a romantic one and old as the nation itself, embracing such persons as the Indian princess, Pocahontas, John Rolfe, Captain John Smith, Sir Walter Raleigh and on down through the present age of company president, buyers, warehousemen, auctioneers, factory workers, land-owners, share-croppers and tenants and last but not least, the U. S. inspector.

When the history of tobacco is mentioned there comes to mind the Jamestown Colony of Virginia, established in 1607 by Captain John Smith. Tobacco being unknown on the continent of Europe at that time—brings forth the story of Sir Walter Raleigh. Being seen smoking for the first time by his servant, who thinking him afire, doused him with a bucket of water.

John Rolfe, who married the Pocahontas, is believed to be the first man to export tobacco from this country, but it is a known fact that tobacco was raised in Virginia at that time and became a very important crop, being used in lieu of money as a medium of exchange.

Of course this is all known to folk who read history, but in this article I wish to take up something of the sorting or stripping as related to Burley tobacco, the type with which I am more familiar.

Tobacco being his principal money crop, the livelihood of he and his family depended largely upon its success. Most farmers are very careful through all stages of production even down to its cured state in the barn, but after producing otherwise a good crop of tobacco more farmers fail to get full value out of their crop, by failing to properly strip or sort according to group and color. Both play a very important part in Burley tobacco.

Let's take up the subject of group first. We find the principal groups to be X-C-B and sub-group T. X group takes care of the ground leaves, trash, flyings or spods, whichever you prefer to call them. C group includes the next leaves on the stalk that are more sound than the X leaves, yet thin and light in body. B group includes the balance of the leaves on the stalk until the length of less than 16 inches automatically places them in the sub-group T.

One of the greatest losses in dollars and cents and the practice most commonly done is to mix the groups C and B. Let's see just what happens when this occurs and it does occur too often. We see it on the sales floor every day. Now, assume that you have a crop of just fair quality tobacco, yet it is of a tan color, whereas the grader would use the letter F.

Now if you tie up C and B group (lugs and leaf) together and place them on the sales floor for sale, here is what takes place: The grader comes along to inspect the tobacco, in order to place on the U. S. standard grades, he takes a sample from the lot and tries to decide on the grade. Yes, he sees some C tobacco in the sample, but he also sees some B tobacco. He lays that sample down and pulls another one from a different part of the lot with the same results. Since the two groups were pulled and tied together he had C and B in the second sample.

Now here is what the farmer probably did not know, C tobacco being of a thinner, milder, lighter body, is not harmful to B tobacco. B tobacco being of a thicker, stronger, heavier body tobacco, is harmful to C tobacco, therefore, the only choice the grader has is to place the lot of tobacco in the B group. Since we have already decided the quality was only fair and the color tan, the grader would be obliged to grade the lot as B4FB. Under the present system of selling tobacco, the ceiling price would be \$43.00 per hundred. On the other hand, if the farmer had not tied his leaf and lugs together, but had kept his C tobacco separate, the grade on that part of his crop would be C4F. The ceiling price on C4F at the present time is \$55.00 per hundred, a difference of 12 cents per pound.

Now let's take another lot of only fair quality tobacco and let the color be red, whereby we use the letter R. Since the lugs and leaf were stripped together it would be placed in the B group. Only fair quality in red color, the grade could be none other than B4RM. The ceiling price on B4R is \$33.00 per hundred. If the lugs or C tobacco had been kept out of this lot, the grade would be C4R. The ceiling price on C4R is \$49.00 per hundred, a difference of 16 cents per pound.

Now, let's take up the subject of color. The spread in price range is not quite as great as the spread in price range in groups; yet it is of importance enough to warrant special attention. Some crops of tobacco have nothing but red color, while others have only tan, but a large majority have both red and tan colors, especially is this true in the B group. For example, when the grader comes to a lot of B group tobacco in which there is red and tan, or F color tied up together, he goes through about the same procedure of trying to decide the proper grade as he does with mixed groups. He knows it is B tobacco. Then he decides that it is fourth quality. So he is that far along with his grade—B4.

Now comes the question and the farmer really pays and pays heavy for the answer. Is it tan (or F) or is it red? There is tan color in the

lot of tobacco allright; one-half or maybe more, but there is also red. The same rule or decree holds good in the mixing of groups. F tobacco is a thinner leaf and lighter in body, while R is thicker leaf, heavy body and stronger, and is known as a filler or chewing tobacco; therefore, F cannot harm R, but R is very harmful to F, so the grader, knowing this finishes the grade by using R, making B4R. The ceiling price on B4R is \$33.00 per hundred.

If the farmer had kept the F color tobacco separate, the grade on that part would have been B4F. Since the ceiling price on B4F is \$46.00 per hundred, you will notice a difference of 13 cents per pound.

Please notice that by separating the C tobacco from the B group and the F tobacco from the R, you did not decrease the grade or value of either the B groups or the R tobacco. Since all grades are bringing ceiling prices they sold just as well without the better tobaccos as they could with them; therefore, the gain is a net gain. Yes, it pays to strip and sort them out according to group and color.

If I were a grower I would insist on the warehousemen furnishing me with the proper amount of space and baskets to take care of each grade separately and also to have them packed on baskets in a neat and orderly manner. After all no warehouseman wants to mix up a clean and well-handled crop. If you bring in a mixed and poorly handled crop, which shows you don't care, then why should he care? After all, his floor space is valuable.

### WRITES FROM IDAHO

Editor Watauga Democrat.  
Enclosed you will find money order for \$2.00 to pay for another year's subscription to your good paper.

I would like to wish The Democrat and all its readers a prosperous new year, and I especially want to send greetings to my sister, Mrs. J. C. Munday, Ceres, Calif., my cousins, Mrs. Ora Ward, Reese, N. C., and Mrs. J. C. Harbin, Shulls Mills, and to my old pal, Miss Jane Bingham, Sugar Grove.

Sincerely,  
MRS. F. E. BARNES,  
Box 63, Kuna, Idaho.

## Appalachian High School News Items

### STATESVILLE INVADES MOUNTAINEERS' DEN

On Friday night of this week at 8 o'clock the Appalachian High Blue Devils will meet one of the strongest opponents of the year when the Statesville High undefeated five come to Boone to play. Statesville boasts one of the strongest teams in Western North Carolina and is coached by Ray Sills, former Appalachian State boy. The Statesville High five upset Salisbury last week by a 20-point margin and from all reports received in Boone, the team is the best that the high school has had in several years.

The Boone boys have been practicing daily for the past two weeks and have scrimmaged twice against the college to get ready for the Statesville invader. The game will get under way at 8 o'clock in the high school gym and the admission will be 40c for adults and 25c for students and children. We hope the Boone patrons will turn out to support their high school team which again boasts one of the best fives in North Carolina.

### PLAYS TO BE PRESENTED SATURDAY NIGHT

On Saturday night of this week, the dramatics class of Appalachian High School, under the direction of Mr. Williams, will present three one-act plays at the college auditorium. These plays will be "Frank and Erna," under the student direction of Charles Boone, starring Finley Penick, Opal Phillips, Phil Vance, Helen Caudill, Marbeth Winkler, Margaret Eggers and Rachel Ann Vance; "Hillbilly Sue," under the student direction of Gordon Phillips, starring Joan Lovell, Norma Kerley, Ralph Moretz, Fred Hodges, Jimmie Marilyn Johnson, Jean Wilson, McConnell and Mary Kathryn Wilson. The third play to be presented will be a melodrama, "Her Fatal Beauty," which is under the student direction of Blanton Miller and this one stars Ted Hagaman, Mary Alice Moretz, Blanton Miller, Kenneth Clay, Ruth Tatum, Louise Miller, Mary Bingham and Mary Lois Howell.

So far this year the dramatics class has presented several one-act

plays before the high school student body and these plays have been met with decided approval on the part of the students. One of these plays was put on last Friday and was under the student direction of Gordon Phillips. We wish to congratulate Gordon on the fine play he turned out. The students were so impressed by it that they had to take two curtain calls before they would quit applauding. The plays to be given at the college this Saturday night will be the first opportunity for the parents to see their children perform and we wish to encourage them to take advantage of this opportunity to see the dramatics class present these one-act plays and we insure them an evening of good wholesome entertainment. The first play will begin about 7:30. There will be no admission charge.

### FOURTH WAR LOAN DRIVE

So far in the Fourth War Loan drive, the students and teachers of Appalachian High School have sold and bought \$4,139.36 worth of bonds

and stamps. The students are working hard to make the Fourth War Loan drive a success. Any person wishing to buy a bond may do so by contacting any one of the high school students.

### EGGS

Dried egg production during December totaled 21½ million pounds—an increase of 64 per cent over December, 1942.



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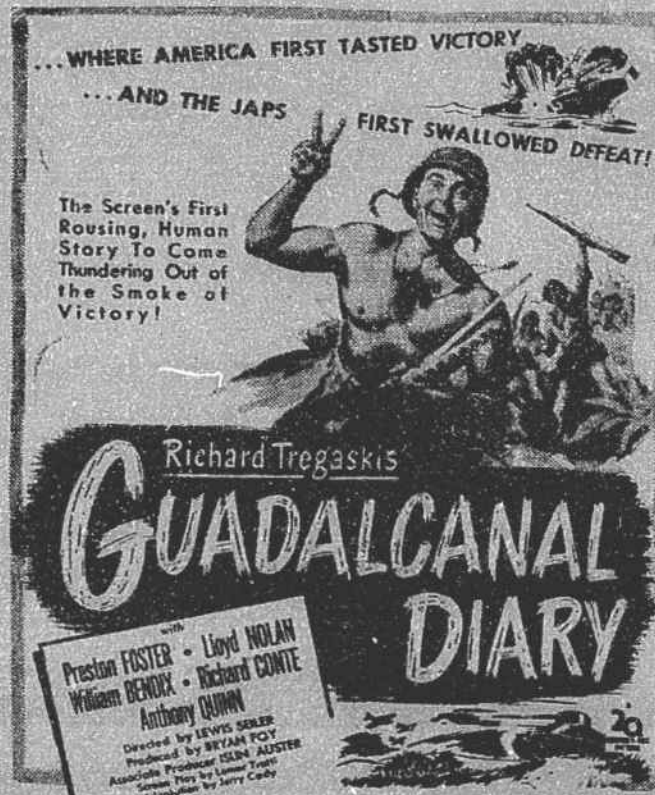
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The farmer is required to make application similar to what he did last year, and we are hoping to be favored with your business again this season. We like to do business with you and hope you like do do business with us. It is our endeavor to give you the best goods possible at a reasonable price.

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